



## Panchayat Raj on the Ground

Issues in Village-Level Panchayat Raj Operation

Ravi Deshpande and Marcella D'Souza

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# Research Report

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## **Panchayat Raj on the Ground** Issues in Village-Level Panchayat Raj Operation

Ravi Deshpande and Marcella D'Souza



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# Table of Contents

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Forward		7
Preface		8
Acknowledgement		9
Executive Summary		10
<b>SECTION I</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>13</b>
Chapter I	- Introduction	13
Chapter II	- Panchayat Raj in Historical Context	18
<b>SECTION II</b>	<b>THE CAPACITIES OF VILLAGE LEVEL PRIS &amp; THE GROUND REALITY: FINDINGS, INSIGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS</b>	<b>25</b>
Chapter III	- Enabling Factors & Strategies	26
Chapter IV	- Awareness and understanding of the Current Role of Village PRIs	39
Chapter V	- The Gram Panchayat - and its Functioning	44
Chapter VI	- Transparency, Accountability and Monitoring Mechanisms	51
Chapter VII	- Addressing Fundamental Issues in Development: Gender and Equity	62
Chapter VIII	- Critical Management Capabilities	71
Chapter IX	- Conclusions and Suggestions	87
References		96
<b>SECTION III</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>99</b>
Annexure I	- Profile of Sample villages	99
Annexure II	- Accounting & Administrative Information of two selected GPs	100

## List of Boxes, Tables and Figures

---

Box 1	-	Constitutional obligation	18
Box 2	-	Inauguration of 'Panchayat Raj'	19
Box 3	-	Changes introduced by the 73rd Amendment in Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra	24
BOX 4	-	Creative Enhancement of Local Income	28
BOX 5	-	Working Together over Issues of Common Concern	29
BOX 6	-	The Collection and use of data by the Zada GP	30
BOX 7	-	The Power of Collective Bargaining	31
Box 8	-	Activating the GP body and Functional Committees	32
Box 9	-	An Image Building Strategy	33
Box 10	-	Engaging SHGs in the Development Process	34
Box 11	-	Making Governance Transparent	35
Box 12	-	Awareness regarding Gram Sabhas	40
Box 13	-	Balancing Act Skills evoked	40
Box 14	-	Consulting the GRs when required	41
Box 15	-	Co-option of Members	41
Box 16	-	Sarpanch in Inspirational role	44
Box 17	-	Even the Traditional Panch System can work Phulsare	45
Box 18	-	Where is the Gram Sevak?	46
Box 19	-	Impact of woman Gram Sevak on women	47
Box 20	-	Undesired Coping Mechanisms to Address Administrative Demands	48
Box 21	-	Committee System	48
Box 22	-	Displaying List of Beneficiaries	52
Box 23	-	Gram Sabha - Instrument for mobilising and motivating people	56
Box 24	-	Gram Sabha on paper?	58
Box 25	-	'Job Sharing' of the Woman Sarpanch	63
Box 26	-	Paper SHGs for seeking Government Schemes	64
Box 27	-	Information Collection and Utilization by the GP	73
Box 28	-	Examples of generating local funds	78
Box 29	-	By-passing GPs for being 'political'	80
Box 30	-	Greater awareness of role in NRM among IGWDP villages	73

Table 1	-	Profile of the Sample Villages	15
Table 2	-	Issues, Challenges and Suggested Action	89
Graph 1	-	Tracking the history of Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra	23
Figure 1	-	Components of Development Ethos	36
Figure 2	-	Gender Issues at Gram Panchayat Level	65
Figure 3	-	Equity Issues at GP Level	67
Figure 4	-	Determinants of Operational Success	92
Figure 5	-	Enabling Successful Operation of Panchayat Raj	94

## Glossary

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<i>Adarsh Gram Takta</i>	-	Model village chart
<i>Dawandi</i>	-	Traditional public announcement system
<i>Gram Sabha</i>	-	Assembly of voters
<i>Gram Sewak</i>	-	Gram panchayat secretary
<i>Gram Swatchhata Abhiyan</i>	-	Village cleanliness campaign
<i>Gram Vikas Adhikari</i>	-	Village development officer
<i>Gramasthanchi Sanad</i>	-	Citizen's Charter
<i>Kondwada</i>	-	Animal lock-up
<i>Mandal</i>	-	Cluster of villages
<i>Panchayat Samiti</i>	-	Block level elected body under panchayat raj
<i>Sarpanch</i>	-	Head of village panchayat
<i>Talathi</i>	-	Revenue clerk
<i>Zilla Parishad</i>	-	District council

## Abbreviations

---

BDO	-	Block Development Office / Officer
BOT	-	Built Operate & Transfer
BPL	-	Below Poverty Line
CBO	-	Community Based Organisation
CCPPRI	-	Committee for the Concept Paper on Panchayati Raj Institutions
CSS	-	Centrally Sponsored Schemes
DPC	-	District Planning Committee
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FPC	-	Forest Protection Committee
GP	-	Gram Panchayat
GR	-	Government Resolution
GS	-	Gram Sabha
JFM	-	Joint Forest Management
KIIs	-	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organisation
NREGA	-	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRM	-	Natural Resource Management
NT	-	Nomadic Tribes
OBC	-	Other Backward Classes
PESA	-	Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act
PRIs	-	Panchayat Raj Institutions
RTI	-	Right To Information
SAC	-	Social Audit Committee
SC	-	Scheduled Caste
SEC	-	State Election Commission
SFC	-	State Finance Commission
SHG	-	Self Help Group
ST	-	Scheduled Tribe
UG	-	User Group
VDO	-	Village Development Officer
VWC	-	Village Watershed Committee
WOTR	-	Watershed Organisation Trust
WSD	-	Watershed Development
ZP	-	Zilla Parishad (District Council)

# Foreword

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CHANDRAKANT DALVI  
I. A. S.

Collector, Pune

Pune Date : 24.02.09

## **FORWARD**

The 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment followed by the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) has indeed laid the legal foundations for ushering a revolution in the institution and governance structure of India, for it has recognised that the villages of India where the bulk of its people live truly constitute the bedrock of society and the nation.

Significant administrative & financial resources have been allocated to the Gram Panchayat, which is the lowest administrative unit of the country. However, despite the opportunities created this potential lies largely untapped, resulting in promises belied and hopes left unrealized.

WOTR, which has been engaged with rural communities since the last 15 years, undertook a study in 12 villages from the regions of North Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra in Maharashtra. The purpose was to map the existing situation in regard to the role of GP, the functioning, the constraints they labour under, the challenges they face, the potential they have as well as the possibilities, in order to identify areas that can be strengthened and the means to do so.

The findings of this study underscores the urgent need to build capacities of GP functionaries as well as of the communities to handle the requirements of the PR act as well as to implement efficiently, transparently & consciously the reporting and accountability mechanisms prescribed, since an aware citizenry is a pre-condition for accountable governance. A systematic and sustained effort would have to be launched in order to make people aware of their rights and duties as well as the redressal and accountability mechanisms available to them and the manner in which they can be accessed and deployed. Furthermore, the issue of equity, social and gender inclusiveness, whereby the voice of the marginalized and women are represented in the deliberations of the GP have also to be seriously addressed. These challenges have to be urgently addressed given the fact that the GPs, besides being the traditional administrative units are increasingly being viewed as developmental agencies at the grassroots.

This study by WOTR endorses the faith reposed in people's ability to govern themselves at the grassroots. But also points to the serious challenges in regard to capacity building, accountability and inclusiveness that must be addressed urgently if the hopes enshrined in the constitutional amendment are to be realized.

Pune

  
(Chandrakant Dalvi)  
Collector & Dist. Magistrate, Pune.

# Preface

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The actual operation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is of greater significance now more than ever before. PRIs are considered as partners of the central and state governments in carrying out development functions. Article 243-G introduced by the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the Constitution empowers state governments to vest village Panchayats with powers and responsibilities to prepare plans for their economic development and social justice and implement schemes to achieve these objectives. PRIs are also seen as a vehicle to implement major development programmes as laid down clearly by the Hariyali Guidelines and now in the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development.

Consequently, there is a continuous effort on the part of policy-makers to evolve systems and mechanisms to enable PRIs to perform and deliver their newer roles more effectively. The vision for Panchayat Raj is realized only to the extent to which it is translated on the ground. This report is the outcome of a study that was conducted primarily to understand these concerns.

More than the theoretical correctness of any act or policy on paper, what happens at the field level is of relevance and importance. Hence, instead of dwelling on the debate of different issues in general regarding the role of PRIs, attention on the ground reality is required. It is necessary to understand the opportunities and space offered by the legislation and policies, as well as constraints of actors to avail them. This report focuses on analyzing the working of village level PRIs with a view to obtain practical solutions. By bringing to the fore the ground reality of operational issues of village level PRIs, the findings of the study can be useful for policy-makers, donor institutions, NGOs and development practitioners.

The experience of the study was enriching. We are thankful to all the respondents, especially the villagers, who sacrificed their precious time during a busy season. The Sarpanch, GP Committee Members and Gram Sevaks of all the villages of the sample were quite cooperative and responsive. Government functionaries at different levels were pleasantly forthcoming during interviews and discussions. Insights and suggestions given during the study and the report preparation by Mr Thomas Paldagmal and Lalita Joshi (staff of WOTR) were valuable. In fact, the report is the product of good teamwork.

*Ravi Deshpande*

# Acknowledgement

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We are thankful to Mr Vijay Ugale, former sarpanch of village Zada for sharing his valuable experience of the change process at the village level. Our special thanks to the sarpanch of Aundha Nagnath for sharing her experience of leading the women of her village to shut down the liquor shop through plebiscite.

We would also like to mention that various government officers at the block and district level, such as extension officers and BDOs shared their significant views, experiences and insights.

Our sincere thanks to Prof Gangadhar Agwane for facilitating local support while conducting the study in Saskal, Nibhore and Dhawalewadi villages. We are grateful to the various NGOs engaged in working with PRIs for sharing their experiences and insights.

Kishor Telang (Administrative Officer, WOTR) and the RRC staff at Amaravati, Aurangabad, Nandurbar provided timely and appropriate support that facilitated the smooth conduct of the study.

# Executive Summary

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Panchayat Raj offers enormous possibilities of making local governance and the rural development process more need-based, participatory and productive, while at the same time being accountable and transparent.

WOTR conducted a study of the functioning of the PRIs in 12 villages, three each in the regions of North Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra during the year 2007. This report is the outcome of the conducted study. It has documented the possibilities and potentials of Panchayat Raj, the strategies adopted by enthusiastic leaders, the gaps and problems identified, and the tools that need to be put in place so as to make Panchayat Raj a productive set-up for development and progress. A set-up that would make Mahatma Gandhi's dreams of local governance at the lowest level a reality. From the study of the 12 villages, the following observations were made.

- Positive trends are visible in the current operation of PRIs
  - GPs are becoming more proactive in governance and development.
  - Possibilities exist of making GPs manage funds efficiently and transparently.
  - Rural governance has become more participatory and accountable.
  - Reservation for women has given them a space in the rural public and political scene.
  
- Strategies adopted by innovative GP leaders that are found to be effective in bringing about success in the development process include:
  - Optimal use of the existing assets, resources and powers
  - Mechanisms developed to activate functionaries and committees
  - Collection and effective use of relevant data by GP
  - Image-building and good communication by GP
  - Collective bargaining for village development
  - Prioritizing and implementing unifying issues
  - Efficient SHG development and management
  - Transparency and accountability in GP functioning
  
- Main Conclusions
  - The potential of Panchayat Raj can be realised when a 'development ethos' is evolved.
  - The village and its leaders will assume their respective responsibilities when they clearly understand the role of the GP functionaries and that of the community.

- To realize the objectives of Panchayat Raj, it is necessary to strengthen the basic executive mechanism by galvanizing and activating the whole GP body and its organs to operate in a collective and systematic manner.
- There is a need for a set of tools, systems and accountability mechanisms to assist the GP fulfil its role and responsibilities objectively (that address the needs especially of the marginalized, according to priority and with gender sensitivity).
- Pressure from below through a capacitated and an awakened community alone can make village governance participatory, transparent and accountable.
- Issue-specific sensitisation and capacity-building of both functionaries and the community.
- Capacity and skill-building in critical management areas is essential prior to entrusting PRIs the role of a development agency.

The major capacity constraint of GPs to emerge as exclusive development agencies is the lack of social and technical skills to analyse, motivate and mobilise the community for planned development. If the GP has a dedicated team within to undertake the required interventions, it can initiate and sustain local development.

The core challenge before PRIs is how to operationalise the well worked out systems. These are excellent on paper and would be very effective when realized on the ground. Basically, the systems and mechanisms are mainly not understood, or are implemented in half-hearted measure (mainly for reporting purposes) or are not put into practice. The reason is that the stakeholder community and the key actors are not adequately aware of and capacitated regarding the outcomes, their role and the process. Hence, the adoption of a twin-track strategy of capacitating both functionaries and community simultaneously is necessary to make the system and mechanisms deliver the expected Panchayat Raj.



# Section I : Introduction

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Chapter I : Introduction

Chapter II : Panchayat Raj In Historical Context

## Chapter I : Introduction

This report is the outcome of a study conducted by WOTR on the issues pertaining to the development process under village-level PRIs. The study aims at a further understanding of the changing milieu of development practice in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment phase. The study throws light on the actual operation of Panchayat Raj at the village level in Maharashtra. It thus presents a view from the field and brings to fore issues that need to be addressed to enable village level PRIs perform roles envisaged by Panchayat Raj.

### I. Relevance

The process of strengthening the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), received a great fillip with the enactment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment. It introduced full-scale Panchayat Raj in the country. The Panchayat Raj and subsequent policies of different government departments have envisaged a greater role of village level PRIs such as Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat (GP) in local development. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment and consequent State Acts have provided various mechanisms to enable PRIs to perform this role more effectively. These Acts aim at transforming representative democracy to participatory democracy and reverse the top-to-down model of planning and development. The process initiated by Panchayat Raj provides significant opportunities for introducing inclusion, transparency and accountability into PRIs / Gram Panchayat operations.

PRIs throughout their evolution have been assigned different roles by policy-makers. However, each time their competency to execute the assigned job was under doubt and provoked debate. More recently it has been considered as an appropriate institution to handle major responsibilities in the development process by various guidelines such as the Hariyali Guidelines and the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects. This new position assigned to PRIs again raises many concerns that need to be addressed.

PRIs have an irreplaceable role to play in rural development. However, its ability to shoulder this responsibility is under the scanner due to issues related to governance, accountability, equity, gender, participation. If PRIs are here to stay as prime holders of development projects, it is necessary that

they are adequately capacitated and strengthened. Mechanisms need to be developed to make PRIs more responsible and accountable through capacity building of the entire village community. Here the role of the government, NGOs and development practitioners becomes crucial.

In view of these concerns, a study of village level development process within the changed role of PRIs is relevant and of immense importance. WOTR conducted this study to identify strengths and weaknesses and gaps in this more recent model of development. This study report identifies various concerns and suggests appropriate strategies and actions to address them. Further, the report proposes activities to enable village communities to undertake their development on their own through capable PRIs and CBOs.

## II. Objectives

The focus of the study is on Gram Panchayats (GPs) within the PRIs. The study seeks to understand the inter-play, inter-linkages and conflicts between the various key actors and institutions within the village milieu and their impact on development and governance. It aims to identify enabling strategies, factors and obstacles faced by village level PRIs and the community in furthering their development process. The study adopted the following specific objectives:

1. To study village level planning and decision-making processes, transparency and accountability mechanisms, management and monitoring systems in development activities initiated through Gram Panchayats (PRIs)
2. To examine the strategies adopted by Gram Panchayats (PRIs) for conflict resolution, equity, participation, gender strengthening and sustainability
3. To assess the role and competency of Gram Panchayats (PRIs) as development agencies in terms of governance, equity, gender sensitivity and participation
4. To identify key enabling factors and obstacles before village communities to participate, control and sustain development process through Gram Panchayats (PRIs) and CBOs
5. To formulate capacity-building measures required to enable Gram Panchayats (PRIs) and village communities to undertake their development process effectively on an equitable and sustainable basis

## III. Methodology

### *a. Selection of sample villages*

The study was conducted in 12 sample villages covering four regions of Maharashtra. The selection of villages was done with a purposive sampling method. The following criteria were adopted while selecting sample villages.

1. Three villages were selected from four regions of Maharashtra viz. North Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra to understand sub-regional variations.
2. From the total of 12, four villages with heterogeneous population were selected to understand differences between villages with homogeneous and mixed composition.
3. Four villages from two different regions with group Gram Panchayats were selected to understand their different dynamics.
4. Three villages that have won national or state level awards were selected to identify success strategies.
5. Three villages with a majority of ST population were selected from two distinct regions to understand differences in their character as compared to villages without or with a minority tribal population.
6. Five villages with sizable SC, ST, OBC or NT population were selected to understand variation in the political and development dynamics.

**Table 1: Profile of the Sample Villages**

<i>No</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Features</i>
1	Saskal	Western Maharashtra	Sizeable SC and heterogeneous population
2	Nibhore	Western Maharashtra	Majority SC population
3	Dhawalewadi	Western Maharashtra	Woman sarpanch and newly constituted Gram Panchayat
4	Mandva	Vidarbha	Recipient of national awards, NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programme
5	Zada	Vidarbha	Recipient of many national and state level awards, woman sarpanch, GP led model of development without any NGO support
6	Kannamwargram	Vidarbha	NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programme, Group Gram Panchayat
7	Karmad	Marathwada	Bigger village with heterogeneous population
8	Aundha Nagnath	Marathwada	Woman sarpanch, bigger village with heterogeneous population
9	Shirasgaon Gathi	Marathwada	NT sarpanch, NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programmes, Group Gram Panchayat
10	Chakle	North Maharashtra	Majority ST population, ST sarpanch
11	Phulsare	North Maharashtra	Majority ST population, ST woman sarpanch
12	Baripada (Manjari)	North Maharashtra	Majority ST population, ST sarpanch, JFM programme

7. Four villages with women sarpanch were selected to observe impact of women's reservation on the governance, development and village society.
8. Three villages with the sarpanch from a reserved category were chosen to have an insight into the impact of reservation on the development process.
9. Each selected village was to have undertaken or in the process of initiating major development activities such as drinking water or sanitation or watershed development projects.
10. Four villages with major NGO intervention and experience of having implemented full scale NRM programme were selected.
11. One village with outstanding achievement through implementation of JFM program was selected to have an insight into this variation.

**b. *Methods And The Tools Of Data Collection***

Given the qualitative character of the objectives, the following informal and semi-structured methods and tools were used for *primary data* collection.

1. Key informants interviews (KIs)
2. Interviews with GP members and officials with the help of checklist
3. Interviews with PRI block level officials with the help of checklist
4. Discussion with NGO activists working with PRIs
5. Focused group discussion with KIs

*Secondary data* available with NGOs or Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samiti (Block Panchayat) in the form of reports, paper clippings, booklets and other documents were also used for supplementing and reconstructing information about the process in the sample villages. Existing literature and research reports on PRIs and different government schemes were referred to while analysing the collected data and in report preparation.

**c. *Report structure***

There was some overlap among the objectives. Hence, the findings of the study are presented under different headings and not objective-wise. The report is divided into three sections:

The first introductory section contains two chapters, the first of which provides details about the study and the second chapter discusses the evolution and significance of Panchayat Raj process.

Findings and conclusions of the study are presented in the second section of the report. It contains seven chapters, beginning from chapter III to chapter IX. The first six chapters of Section 2 contain

the findings, grouped according to different issues. Chapter III discusses the positive developments in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment phase and strategies adopted by the sample villages to achieve success. Chapter IV presents the findings of the overall awareness and perceptions of Panchayat Raj and its different provisions among the functionaries and the community. Chapter V throws light on the functioning of GP as the basic executive mechanism on the ground. Chapter VII reveals the functioning of transparency and accountability mechanisms used at village levels. Chapter VIII assesses the ability of the village level PRIs to address issues of gender and equity which are critical to governance and development. Chapter IX assesses the management capacities of PRIs and identifies critical gaps within for effectively undertaking the role of a development agency.

#### **IV. Limitations of the Study**

It is necessary to define the limitations of this study and its findings in the report.

1. Firstly, the study sample did not include any villages of the Konkan, an important region of Maharashtra. Given the cultural, social, political, spatial and geographical uniqueness of the villages of this region, they may present different dynamics.
2. Villages were selected by purposive sampling method with preset criteria and there may be an obvious variation in the findings of a study based on random sampling.
3. Further the sample of 12 is certainly small considering the number of GPs in Maharashtra and India. However, the study basically aims at indicative findings pertaining to specific issues and the sample size is useful in this regard.
4. The study has given little emphasis to identifying the exact variation in the PRI operation due to initiation of the PESA. Though one-fourth of the sampled villages came under PESA administration, not much of a difference was observed in the study. This can be either due to less emphasis or the actual reality.
5. The study was conducted during the wedding season and it was not possible to conduct FGDs in each village. Further, it reduced the total number of women participants compared to men in the study.
6. The study findings are based on key informants' interviews and FGDs, though attempt has been made to include respondents from all, especially marginalised sections. However, there was a difference in the ratio of respondents from various strata in different villages.
7. This study report suggests only broad trends and indications in the Panchayat Raj operation at the village level with emphasis on GP, Gram Sabha and CBOs.

## Chapter II : Panchayat Raj in Historical Context

Systems and institutions with the potential to effect crucial transformation do not emerge in a vacuum. It is usually the fruition of decades of effort and significant processes. They emerge into a particular time context and have a historical role and future. The history of Panchayat Raj clearly suggests that it has all the elements of such a phenomenal system. It is important to walk the development trail of Panchayat Raj in proper perspective to understand the significance of the findings of this study pertaining to its current ground level operation. The process of emergence and establishment of Panchayat Raj is illustrative and important. It explicitly presents the reasons behind the enormity of expectations surrounding the system. Delving into its evolution is necessary to grasp its significance, historical context and potential of the model of development and governance that Panchayat Raj stands for.

Historically, the institution of *Panchayat* has been an integral part of rural Indian polity and society. The idea of *Panchayats* in modern India was first evoked in the colonial period. However, during that period, *Panchayats* were primarily perceived as means of achieving village solidarity and unity, rather than as instruments of governance or development.

The traditional village *Panchayat* system was always close to Mahatma Gandhi's heart. He prescribed the idea of establishing village republics as a fundamental unit of governance. The Gandhian model of governance for independent India envisaged greater autonomy to villages under a five-tier system of village *Panchayats*, *taluka Panchayats*, district *Panchayats*, provincial *Panchayats* and all-India *Panchayats*. However, this vision was not shared by all and there were equally strong ideological currents against giving such power to village *Panchayats*.

The socialist model of centralized planning, power and authority espoused by Jawaharlal Nehru was dominant at that time. Another school of thought led by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, also had views contradicting the idealism attached by Gandhiji to Indian villages. Consequently, the Gandhian vision of a decentralized model of governance was not accepted by independent India. However, as a middle path between these conflicting ideologies, a mere formal acceptance of the idea was reflected in the incorporation of self-governance through

BOX  
1

### *Constitutional Obligation*

*'The state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self governance.'*  
(Article 40, Constitution of India)

village *Panchayats* only in the directive principles of the Indian Constitution. The mention in the directive principle did not directly bind the state to establish Panchayat Raj institutions, which accounts for the slow and checkered progress even after independence. (Refer Box 1)

### **Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957)**

The real impetus in the evolution of Panchayat Raj came in 1957 through the recommendations of the committee headed by Balwantrai Mehta, former Chief Minister of Gujarat. The committee was appointed to examine the best possible way to enable people to participate in community development programs and to integrate these with PRIs.

The committee observed that it was almost impossible to expect popular participation merely through extension programs. It strongly advocated the need of a “*statutory and elective body, comprehensive in its duties and functions, equipped with the necessary executive machinery and in possession of adequate resources*” in this regard. The committee recommended the establishment of three-tier Panchayat bodies. The structure envisaged included directly elected *Panchayat* for a village or a group of villages, an executive body called *Panchayat Samiti* for a block with directly elected and co-opted members and an advisory body, *Zilla Parishad*, with an ex-officio member from the lower tier and the District Collector as the chairman.

It was left to the states to accept and act upon the recommendations of the committee as per the demands of the situation. Consequently, only a few states established PRIs. No uniform structure throughout India could be evolved on the basis of these recommendations. Even these *Panchayats* played only a marginal role in the implementation of development schemes mainly due to resistance of the bureaucracy. Further, many factors such as lack of resources, lack of political support, bureaucratic apathy and the domination of rural elite led to the degeneration of Panchayati Raj institutions.

#### ***Inauguration of “Panchayat Raj”***

*Following the Balwantrai Mehta Committee recommendation, the three-tier Panchayat Raj structure first came into existence in Rajasthan on 2nd Oct. 1959. During the inauguration ceremony, it was Nehru who coined the term Panchayat Raj.*

**BOX  
2**

### **Ashoka Mehta Committee (1977)**

There was slow progress of Panchayati institutions during the 1960s and it declined in the early 70s for various reasons. Scholars point out that by the 1960s, the strategy for administration of rural development had itself undergone a change with greater emphasis now being placed on intensive area development, 'target group' approach and assertion of 'line' administration of departmental handling of development. Consequently, another committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta to suggest measures for revitalising the Panchayati Raj institutions. The committee recommended that development schemes should be implemented through PRIs. Surprisingly, the committee suggested a two-tier model at district and *mandal* (cluster of villages) level covering a population of 15,000 to 20,000. It recommended the abolition of the block as an administrative unit altogether. However, the idea of a two-tier system was rejected by the Chief Ministers' Conference in 1979 and the three-tier system continued. Significantly, Mehta suggested drafting of a Bill for amending the Constitution for establishing Panchayats as a necessary extension of democracy.

### **Rapid Progress in the Late 1980s**

The Panchayat Raj development process gained momentum in the late 1980s because of various factors. The failure of the 'top down' approach to solve problems of the rural poor was increasingly been recognized by many state governments, development agencies and NGOs over the decades since the 1970s. This finally compelled policy-makers and development practitioners to seek alternative strategies based on the principles of equity, participation and bottom-up planning. It was also a period when a Centre-State relation was an important issue with rising regional aspirations and demand for greater federal polity. Equally, there was an attempt on the part of the Centre to bypass the states and route funds directly to Panchayats.

It was also observed that few benefits reach the people through the bureaucratic filters and Panchayat Raj was seen as a mechanism to bypass this to extend power and benefits to the bottom. The top-to-down model of development was losing sheen in this light and adoption of the grassroot and bottom-up approach in planning and development became necessary. Against this background, Rajiv Gandhi and his government made Panchayat Raj the main agenda. All this accelerated the process leading to the emergence of Panchayat Raj.

### **G V K Rao Committee (1985)**

The G V K Rao Committee was constituted in 1985 for reviewing the administrative mechanisms for implementation of developmental programs. The committee recommended making districts the basic unit of policy planning and programming implementation. Importantly, it emphasized the necessity of holding regular elections to the Panchayats.

### **L M Singhvi Committee (1986)**

A committee for a Concept Paper on Panchayati Raj Institutions (CCPPRI) also known as the L M Singhvi Committee was formed in 1987 for reviewing the functioning of Panchayati Raj institutions. It recommended the reorganization of villages for creating viable Gram Panchayats. The committee strongly recommended that greater financial resources be made available to these institutions. It opined that the Gram Sabha should be considered as the base of a decentralized democracy. Most importantly, it recommended that local self-government should be constitutionally recognized, protected and preserved by the inclusion of a new chapter in the Constitution.

### **Constitution 64th Amendment Bill-1989**

By the end of 1988, a sub-committee of the Ministry of Rural Development was constituted under the chairmanship of P K Thungon, which also suggested constitutional recognition for Panchayats. Following these recommendations, a Constitution (64<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill, modelled on the L M Singhvi draft amendment appended to the Mehta Committee Report, was introduced in the parliament in 1989. It failed to be passed due to growing doubts among the opposition parties and state governments.

### **Constitution 73rd Amendment Act-1993**

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment providing constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions was the fruition of the efforts and process for institutionalising the Panchayati Raj system. A vastly debated and delayed Panchayati Raj Bill was reintroduced in the parliament as the Constitution 73rd Amendment Bill. The 73rd Amendment Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha with near unanimity on the 22nd and 23rd December, 1992 respectively. This Bill was ratified by 17 State Assemblies in 1993 and came into force as 'Constitution 73rd Amendment Act' from 24th April, 1993. The Act provides constitutional status to the Panchayats and gives it uniformity by making the three-tier system a permanent feature. Panchayat Raj was included in Article 243 of the Indian Constitution after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment. The key features of the Act are as follows:

- Establishment of a uniform three-tier Panchayat structure.
- Constitution of a Gram Sabha in each village exercising such powers and performing such functions at the village level as the legislature of a State may provide by law.
- Direct election of Panchayat members. The election of the chairperson at the intermediate and district level will be through indirect elections and the mode of election of the chairperson of the village Panchayat has been left to the respective States.
- Not less than one-third of seats to be reserved for women among members and the posts are on a rotational basis.
- Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at all level according to their population at each level.
- Provision of uniform five-year term to the Panchayats.

- Mandatory holding of elections within six months of the date of dissolution in case of dissolution or supercession.
- State legislatures to confer on the Panchayats such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self governance.
- Mandatory constitution of a State Election Commission to ensure free, fair and time bound elections to the Panchayats.
- Mandatory constitution of a State Finance Commission to strengthen PRIs financially.

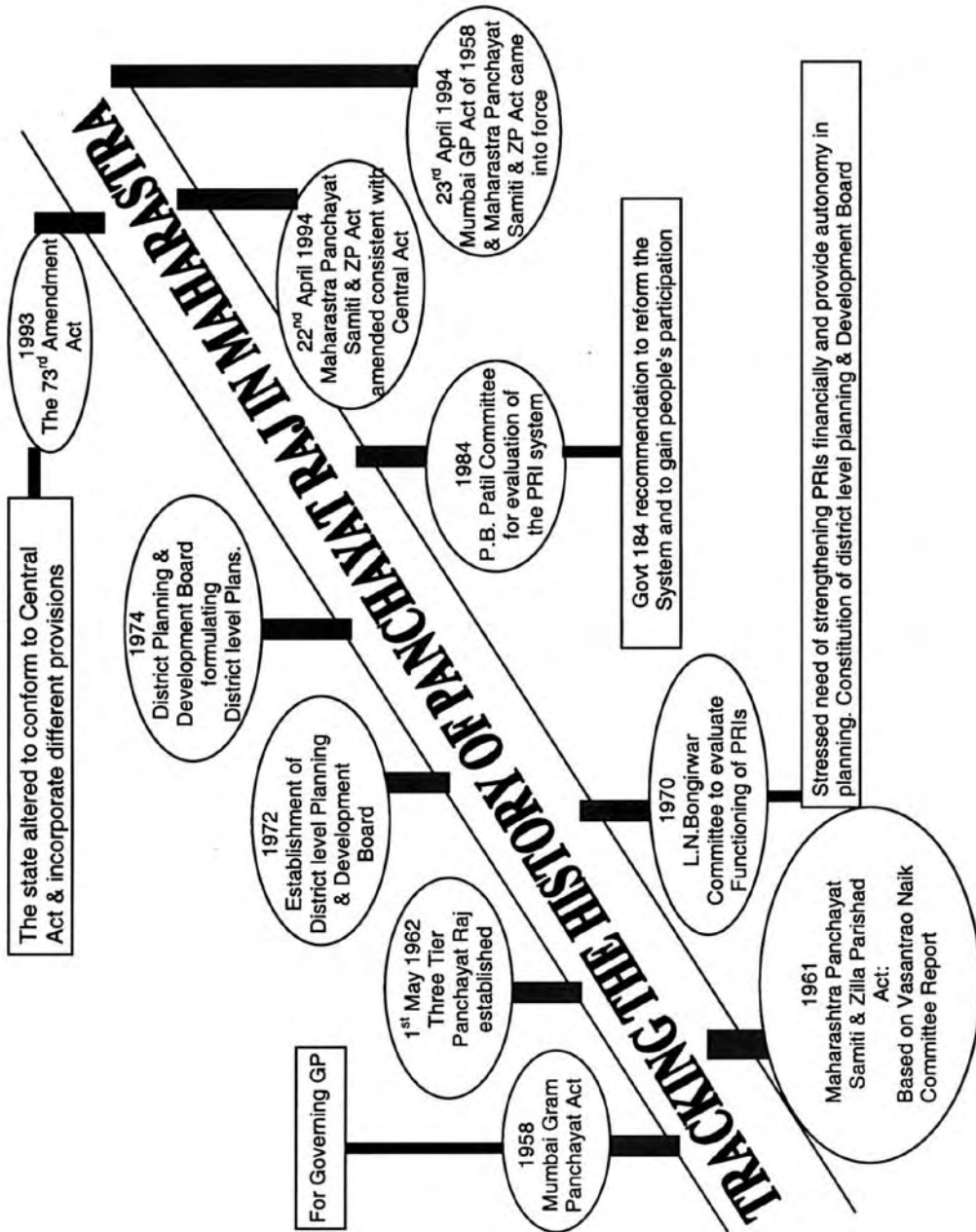
A revolutionary change in the role of the PRIs was brought by this constitutional act. It established a full fledged Panchayat Raj system. The significance of this amendment rests in the fact that it accorded legal status to the Panchayat as a third tier of government, the other two being the Central and State governments. Finally, it assumes significance in terms of the range of subjects that have been brought under the purview of the Panchayat. The 73rd Amendment mentions that the State Legislature may by law endow the PRIs with powers and responsibilities at the appropriate level with respect to (a) preparation of plans for economic development and social justice [and] (b) implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice, as may be entrusted to them, including those in relation to matters listed in the 'Eleventh Schedule' (Article 243 G). The Eleventh Schedule thus forms an important reference point for the kind of functions envisaged for Panchayats under the Constitution. The Eleventh Schedule of the Act gives a list of 29 subjects on which the Panchayat may act.

### **Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra**

Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra has its own progression path. It was among the first few states to implement the Balwantrai Mehta Committee recommendation of establishing a three-tier Panchayat Raj structure. It constituted a committee on the subject in 1961, under the chairmanship of the then revenue minister Vasant Rao Naik. Maharashtra already had the Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act, 1958 for governing Gram Panchayats. However, on the basis of recommendations of the Vasant Rao Naik Committee report, the State enacted the Maharashtra Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1961. Consequently, the three-tier Panchayat Raj system was established and became functional in the State on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1962.

The Maharashtra government constituted several committees in the following decades to improve the functioning of the Panchayat Raj and strengthen PRIs. In 1970, the L N Bongirwar Committee was formed to evaluate the functioning of PRIs. The committee stressed the need of strengthening PRIs financially and provide more autonomy to them in planning. One of the main recommendations of the committee was the constitution of District Planning and Development Boards. Such boards were established in 1972 and began formulating district level plans from 1974. Similarly, the P B Patil Committee was constituted for the evaluation of the Panchayat Raj system in 1984. The

committee emphasised involving people and gave 184 recommendations for reforming the system and enabling greater participation. Despite all these efforts, PRIs in Maharashtra were weak and the 73rd Amendment was as much necessary as the rest of the country to infuse real life into them.



The state of Maharashtra already had the Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act, 1958 and the Maharashtra Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1961. However, with the enactment of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1993, the state Act had to be altered to make it conform to the central Act and to incorporate its different provisions. Thus, on 22nd April, 1994 both the Acts were amended to be consistent with the central Act thereby according it a constitutional status in Maharashtra. On 23rd April, 1994 the amended Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act, 1958 and the Maharashtra Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1961 came into force in Maharashtra. Most of the provisions of the central Act such as the reservation for SCs, STs OBCs and women, election procedures etc have been incorporated in the Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act, 1958 and the Maharashtra Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1961.

BOX  
3

### ***Changes introduced by the 73rd Amendment in Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra***

#### ***Significant changes introduced in Maharashtra by the 73rd Amendment***

- *Constitutional status to Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha*
- *Holding annually six Gram Sabha became mandatory for the GP*
- *A uniform five year term for Gram Panchayat without any extension.*
- *Co-option of members is illegal and the GP committee to have only directly elected members.*
- *Constitution of a State Finance Commission (SFC) for the financial strengthening of PRIs.*
- *Constitution of an independent State Election Commission (SEC) to conduct free, fair and time bound local elections*
- *1/3 of reserved seats for women among members, for the post of Sarpanch and within SC/ST seats*

## **Section II : The Capacities of Village level PRIs & the Ground Reality: Findings, Insights and Suggestions**

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Whatever may be the basis for entrusting PRIs a pivotal role in local development and governance, the reality at the ground level is important and relevant. In this section the findings and insights from the study of 12 selected villages are presented to throw light on the actual reality of Panchayat Raj at the village level.

The findings are grouped under following SEVEN chapters:

- Chapter III      Enabling Factors & Strategies**
- Chapter IV      Awareness and Understanding of the Current Role of Village PRIs**
- Chapter V        The Gram Panchayat And Its Functioning**
- Chapter VI      Transparency, Accountability and Monitoring Mechanisms**
- Chapter VII     Addressing Fundamental Issues in Development: Gender and Equity**
- Chapter VIII    Critical Management Capabilities**
- Chapter IX      Conclusions and Suggestions**

## Chapter III : Enabling Factors & Strategies

Panchayat Raj has initiated crucial changes in local governance and development practices. It has introduced several notable processes. It is important to recognize and strengthen these. Similarly, Panchayat Raj provides systems and mechanisms with potential to ensure efficient, transparent, accountable governance and development. Through this, Panchayat Raj has created enormous possibilities for making the development process under PRIs well-organized, accountable and participatory. While some villages have achieved considerable success availing of opportunities presented by Panchayat Raj, many still lag behind. This study tries to identify the factors responsible for the variation and strategies that trigger success.

In this chapter we will look at the important processes provoked by Panchayat Raj and the factors and strategies that generate success.

### A. Positive Trends Observed

Panchayat Raj has definitely set off a change process in certain areas for the first time. The following are some of the prominent positive trends visible in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment period.

#### *GPs In A Proactive Role*

GP are now engaged in the implementation process particularly in schemes and campaigns that demand people's participation. Involvement of GPs in campaigns such as 'Gram Swatchhata Abhiyan' (Village Cleanliness Campaign) has proved to be productive. Implementing health, sanitation and drinking water projects through GPs is gradually increasing the capacity of the body to manage these. Various awards such as 'Nirmal Gram' (Clean Village), 'Adarsh Gram' (Model Village) are stimulating village leadership to initiate behavioural changes and to achieve self proposed progress. Similarly, the possibility of greater inflow of funds in the form of awards and development aid through projects such as 'Jal Swaraj', 'Yashwant Gram Samrudhhi Yojana' etc. has a positive impact on villages. All this encourages GPs in Maharashtra to take up a more proactive role than ever before.

#### *Financial Empowerment of the GP*

Provisions pertaining to taxation have created the possibility for the first time for GPs to legally generate their own funds. Larger villages, especially those located near cities or highways, are likely to gain handsome revenue in the form of rents or service charges due to the new provisions. For example, the Zada GP annually earns more than Rs 5,00,000 through running *Kondwada* (animal lock-up) in a creative and efficient manner (Refer Box No. 4, P. 27).

### *Creative Enhancement of Local Income*

- *Vijay Ugale, ex-Sarpanch of Zada, who spearheaded a change process in the village, had initiated action against illegal encroachment on the GP land. This was a risky decision in terms of electoral arithmetic as the majority of people had encroached to a greater or lesser extent. Despite severe opposition, he was able to convince people about giving the land back to the GP. Removal of illegal encroachments created huge available land assets in the village and enabled the GP to undertake systematic settlement planning. Many GPs face scarcity of land. Adopting a similar policy would be beneficial.*
- *Zada GP also demonstrates an innovative way of utilizing provisions of Panchayat Raj to increase its income. The GP annually earns more than Rs.5,00,000/- through running a Kondwada (animal lock-up) creatively and efficiently. It has developed an effective incentive system for those who arrest straying livestock and bring them to the lock-ups. Apart from giving transportation cost, the GP pays a particular amount per stray livestock to the catchers. Consequently, rather than submitting straying animals to lock ups of their own or nearby village, the people even from far off places tend to bring them to Zada.*
- *Similarly, the Zada GP has also developed a vermin-culture plant, compost plant within its campus and generates income from its sale.*
- *Zada GP was able to purchase land through its own resources. The GP was able to build an office and hall which has the ambience similar to Taluka or district Panchayat Samiti hall. It instils pride and respect among the villagers about the GP body, making people more receptive to its leadership. The Zada GP has exercised creative leadership that has created a development centred social climate in the village.*
- *Other GPs of this study sample - Karmad, Kannamwargram and Aundha Nagnath - have constructed shopping complexes. These GPs are earning handsome recurring rent income through them.*

### *Rural Governance More Participatory and Accountable*

Though the institution of the Gram Sabha existed before the 73rd Amendment in Maharashtra, it now has a statutory status. Further, the provision of the mandatory convening of six Gram Sabhas a year has introduced a powerful statutory accountability mechanism, thus making democracy truly participatory. It presents an opportunity of the GP to be accountable to the people they govern on a continuous basis. A Gram Sabha can also become a platform to further common issues in development. For example, a Gram Sabha was held on the issue of farmers' suicides in Kannamwargram, one of the sample villages in Vidarbha. And when given the opportunity, the people will take it up.

### *Entry of Women in Public and Political Spaces*

Despite the flaws, the introduction of women's reservation has certainly initiated change at the village level. It is as simple as giving **entry to women in Panchayat offices**. This in itself does have some positive impact on the perception of gender by both men and women. The mere presence of women functionaries in Panchayat offices as Sarpanch, member or Gram Sevak makes the GP more accessible to women. It was observed during the study visits that the number of women visiting the Panchayat office was greater in the three villages where women are Sarpanch and at one place where there is a woman Gram Sevak. (See Box 5, P. 29)

Thus, despite the various aspects that still remain to be addressed, Panchayat Raj has created the prospect of significant transformation in local governance on the lowest rung. These trends show that it has created possibilities to introduce responsive, capable, participatory and accountable local governance and to open up spaces for marginalized sections and women. This suggests that *Panchayat Raj holds immense potential of ushering change and self-propelled development in the rural milieu*. However, it would be important to see how this potential within the system can be realized on ground.

## **B. Strategies Adopted**

The villages under this study have adopted various strategies to achieve success. The following are some of the strategies that can be useful for village-level PRIs to achieve the objectives of Panchayat Raj.

### *1. Exercising Power to Create Funds by use of Existing Assets and Resources*

Several new provisions of the Panchayat Raj give powers to the GP to levy certain taxes and / or collect charges for various services. These provisions enable GPs to raise resources on their own. Such internally generated funds can give GPs greater financial independence and also makes GPs more acceptable to communities. When GPs raise resources by good use of their assets and powers and/or by initiating micro-economic activities it is bound to have positive impact on the whole

village. Internally generated revenue can be utilised by the GP for those expenses for which no government or project grant is available. Being their own fund, they can use it for any initiative of interest to the village.

Thus, GPs with innovative ideas can use their assets for increasing financial returns and create regular income flow in innovative ways.

## *2. Taking up Unifying Issues*

Any issue of common concern, at least for the majority of the village, will bring the people together. Repeated droughts and degraded lands have encouraged villages (of different caste and class communities) to come together and undertake watershed development. In such a situation, they are willing and open to terms and conditions and rules and regulations.

Thus, focusing on issues that can unite and rally around majority of the village is an effective strategy for village level PRIs to facilitate the 'development ethos' (Refer to Fig.1 - Components of the 'Development Ethos', P. 36).

BOX  
5

### *Working Together over Issues of Common Concern*

*Aundha Nagnath shows how a woman Sarpanch can unite and rally people around a single issue. The Woman Sarpanch mobilized women to relocate the liquor shop outside of the village boundary. Due to pressure of this campaign, a referendum was conducted of women voters on the issue. Though they lost marginally on technical grounds, it united the people. A majority of men also supported the campaign. Apart from helping women to enter the centre stage in village politics, it united a majority of people on an issue of common concern.*

*Similarly, one of the main factors behind the spectacular success of Zada was also the taking up of another common issue. In 1989, there were deaths of four persons due to diarrhea. It was the result of years of neglect of the water and sanitation facilities by the then GP leadership, which was in power for over a decade. Vijay Ugale, an educated and awakened person, rallied the village around this issue and was elected unopposed as Sarpanch. He made health, drinking water and sanitation his main agenda and was able to unite the village as never before, to carry out total transformation. The village never looked back since then and now it is considered role model for development.*

### 3. Collection and Use of Relevant Data

Every scheme or project for which the GP has to apply for its inhabitants requires the submission with appropriate data. Availability of such data will increase the flow of benefits through soliciting of customized schemes for different individuals and groups within village. Often GPs are not able to avail of schemes as they do not have relevant data at hand.

Similarly, in the sample villages that have had NGO interventions, there is a lot of relevant data and information. However, this data is mainly with the NGO and may also be with the CBOs created by the project. If the CBOs have synergetic relations with the GPs, the data can be well utilized to avail of government schemes.

Every GP must adopt a mechanism for collecting and compiling relevant data and utilizing it to bring more benefits and services to the people through different schemes.

<b>BOX 6</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>The Collection and use of data by the Zada GP</i></b></p> <p><i>Zada GP is exemplary in data collection and use. The GP has its own data collection mechanism. It has calculated and recorded Gross Income as well as Per Capita Income of the village for almost 15 years. Similarly, the GP has maintained data of its senior citizens. It has compiled and used data such as Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) collected by Health departments to avail different health related schemes. It has used this data to avail of different Government schemes.</i></p>
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### 4. Collective bargaining

When development of the village becomes the main agenda and there is political unity, villages can leverage the relationship with higher level politicians for their progress. Given the competitiveness and stakes involved in the electoral politics, every vote counts and is valued. More recently, contestants and political parties have *invested* large amounts in election campaigns. This strategy of collective bargaining with politicians is tough given the differences even within any small village. However, if unity is forged among the villagers and development or collective gain takes priority over petty differences then a village can strike a good deal from contesting candidates. (Please See Box No. 7, P. 31)

### 5. Mechanisms to Activate Functionaries and Committees

The quality of functioning of any collective body depends to an extent on the number of active members within that body. It was observed within the sample villages that governance was more

BOX  
7

### *The Power of Collective Bargaining*

*Zada has used electoral campaigns to its maximum advantage. In almost every parliamentary, state or ZP elections, the village bargains collectively with candidates with a set of demands and it votes for those who agrees to the maximum deliverables. Apart from demands to be met after winning election, Zada also insists on cash donations from candidates before voting. This is for any developmental activity for which there is a fund crunch. This approach is followed to minimise loss in case the supported candidate gets defeated in election. This bargaining is done openly and transparently to avoid any bickering within the village over the dealings.*

efficient and the development process was dynamic where a greater number of functionaries and subject committees were active. The efficiency of the GP body increases when more, if not all elected members are active. Within the GP structure, apart from the elected GP body, there are subject committees and sub-committees. Similarly, when a greater number of committees and sub-committees become functional, the overall performance of the GP is enhanced.

Some of the sample villages such as Mandva, Kannamwargram and Shirasgaon Gathi have implemented major development projects facilitated by external NGOs. Many elected members of GP in these villages are also office-bearers of the CBOs created during implementation of the other project. These office bearers have received valuable experience, exposure and have earlier undergone training as CBO functionaries. Consequently, most of them are quite active and eager to initiate changes to improve the efficiency of the respective GP bodies.

Various NGOs working with PRIs also give emphasis on activating elected functionaries and committees using different strategies. One such NGO called 'Janarth' works in the tribal region of Dhule on the issues related to Panchayat Raj. It has adopted a strategy of evolving an alternate structure to GP committees for service delivery. For example, it has formed health committees comprised of interested and trained local individuals. These parallel committees liaison with local PHCs, the work supposed to be done by GP-constituted health committees. Many PHCs in the area recognise these committees unofficially and cooperate with them to provide improved services to rural clients. This has not only enabled the villagers to gain better services but also created pressure on GP committees to become active.<sup>1</sup>

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1. This paragraph is based on the interaction with Vikram Kanhere, director of 'Janarth' and his colleagues.

BOX  
8

### *Activating the GP body and Functional Committees*

*Zada GP has made a systematic effort to activate its members and committees. Dates of the monthly meetings of each functional committee, as well as of the GP body are displayed on the blackboard placed in the office. Everyone is encouraged to attend these meetings. This not only brings transparency in the functioning of these bodies, but also puts community pressure on those who remain absent or inactive.*

*Similarly, each functional committee in Zada also has expert and active co-opted members. Though the 73rd amendment provisions disallows co-option of non-elected members in GP body, there is no clear cut direction regarding committees constituted to look after different subject areas such as health, education or water and sanitation. Hence, Zada has inducted non-elected capable individuals with aptitude in specific subjects into these committees. Consequently, these bodies are active. They prepare sector plans and portion of budget is assigned to each committee.*

On the whole, it is important that all the functionaries and GP committees remain functional to improve the quality of governance and to promote all round development. Different strategies as mentioned above can be used to make them active and efficient. Evolving a support structure in the form of unofficial co-opted members as in Zada, and / or facilitating parallel competent committees as is generally promoted by NGOs can make the established structures function. The outcome desired is developing trained local groups to support the GP structure and may include involving non-elected persons to motivate and mobilize the community and elected functionaries to act.

#### *6. Image-Building and Development Communication*

Building the image of the village by communicating achievements and efforts made by the GP is an 'image-building' strategy that is important to draw attention to a village.

Given the meagre external resources or aid, every village has to compete with others. Further, there is always a possibility that only few villages fit the equations of the higher level politicians and for varied reasons may corner much of the benefits, aid, schemes and projects. The upper level bureaucracy tends to ignore villages which do not have political patrons. Not only do such villages

### ***An Image Building Strategy***

*Zada GP publishes annual reports giving every bit of information and this practice is very helpful. It documents of all its activities and achievements in the form of photos, newspaper clippings and reports. It also regularly updates information displayed on the walls of GP office that include basic data on the village, schemes implemented, list of beneficiaries, awards and achievements.*

**BOX  
9**

receive far fewer of schemes, their grievances are also not properly addressed. It is important that villages attract the attention of the upper level bureaucracy. Hence, visibility of a village becomes crucial to obtain governmental schemes and to draw attention towards issues and grievances. Apart from catching attention of the bureaucracy, image building and development communication enable villages to win various awards and since many of these are in the form of cash prizes, the money can be used for purposes for which no governmental grant is available.

Internally, image building and development communication leads to favourable response from the people for GP initiated activities. It increases credibility of GP leadership. Communication with the internal audience also makes the GP function more transparently and increases the willing participation of the people, who would always like to back a winning horse.

## ***2. Efficient SHG Development and Management***

Currently, rural women are being organised in to SHGs under different government programs and by various NGOs too. (Inspired by women-folk, men too have recently started their SHGs.) The SHGs present an opportunity for poor women to address their financial needs collectively. Such SHGs can spark and sustain micro-enterprises if they are properly strengthened. The SHGs are also a base for social development of the group and the village in general.

Successful implementation of this strategy will enable GPs and village leadership to gain greater community acceptance. Participation of the people and especially of women in different programmes initiated or supported by the GP will increased when there is a network of SHGs. This will contribute greatly to creating the necessary 'ethos' for all round development of the village. Therefore, taking proactive role in the formation, strengthening and management of SHGs seems to be quite effective strategy that village level PRIs can adopt to achieve visible success.

### ***Engaging SHGs in the Development Process***

*Despite its relatively small population, Zada has its maximum number of women and men SHGs. Village leadership and the GP has played key role in promoting and strengthening the SHGs. It has encouraged and facilitated SHGs to go beyond saving, lending or subsidy seeking objectives and has encouraged micro-enterprises through capacitated SHGs of both women and men. Groups of four to five SHGs are encouraged to come together to build enterprises that require greater capital investment. The GP had helped some of the SHGs to link up with Nagpur-based NGOs for marketing of their produce. Groups of SHGs have purchased land jointly for building an industrial estate and to undertake collective farming. All this has not only increased the income of the members of these SHGs but also enabled the GP to levy tax on some of the thriving enterprises. Zada GP has consciously adopted a strategy to bring about all round development through SHGs and in the process it has also strengthened itself to a great extent. The whole economy of Zada is booming through efficient management of thriving SHGs.*

### **3. Transparency and Openness**

Transparency and openness in its functioning will enable a GP to secure the trust and participation of the people. This has proven to be a key factor of success and achievement in rural development. Transparency and accountability require systems to be put in place that will facilitate easy understanding of the situation, the reasons behind action and the decisions taken especially with regard to beneficiaries of the government and other schemes. (See Box No. 11, P. 35)

### **B. The 'Development Ethos' That Triggers Progress**

Though Panchayat Raj has the capacity to enable positive change in local governance and development, this potential is not always realised. Some of the sample villages such as Zada, Mandva and Phulsare have achieved spectacular success in terms of development of the village and can be considered as '*models*'. Easily noticeable common feature in these three villages is a set of condition, which may well be termed as '*Development Ethos*'. This '*Development Ethos*' implies a culture where development of the village is given top-most priority. This is visible in the greater social, political unity and an active consensus. People are more concerned about bringing more

### *Making Governance Transparent*

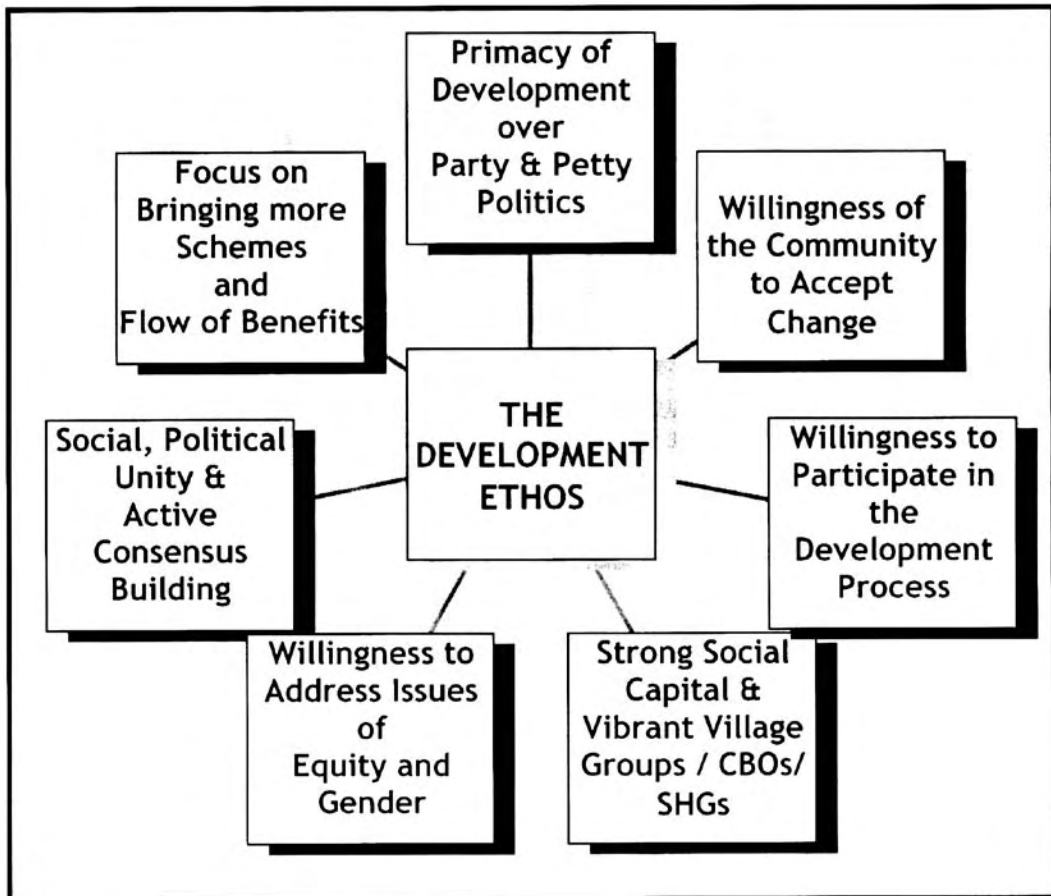
- *Zada GP displays the 'Adarsh Gram Takta' (Chart of a model Village) on the walls of its office, which contains all the relevant data about the village, implemented schemes, budget, amount spent, work done and work in progress in most legible manner. Further, it has an appropriate way of displaying the lists of beneficiaries for the respective scheme which includes their caste - class profile.*
- *GP committee meetings are kept open to all in Zada. The date and timings of GP and subject committee meetings are displayed on the painted board in the office, so everyone would know and can attend meetings of his or her choice.*
- *Zada GP uses the material testing facility available at the district HQ for ensuring quality of material to be used in construction activity. Villagers are encouraged to keep watch on the construction work. Contract for construction work is mostly given to local SHGs as they tend to do quality work due to pressure from whole community.*
- *Zada GP uses a computer for administrative purposes. Most of the data is fed, updated and stored and it is planning to make it available online in the future.*

BOX  
11

and more schemes, aid and awards and are willing to overcome petty differences in favour of the former. Furthermore, the village is prepared to make the necessary efforts and contributions for the development initiative to succeed. There is greater willingness in the village to accept change. There is general consensus on addressing equity and gender issues. Above all development has become the main agenda of the village community and the GPs.

Though sparked and facilitated by different factors, the '*Development Ethos*' is evident in these three villages. In the case of Zada, the strong, committed and proficient leadership of the Sarpanch sparked the process. The NGO intervention and implementation of a large scale development project facilitated the '*ethos*' in Mandva. The existence of a strong traditional tribal Panchayat evolved such an environment in Phulsare. These villages have seized the opportunities presented by the new form of Panchayat Raj more effectively. We can therefore say that the potential in the Panchayat Raj system can be realised if the '*Development Ethos*' is cultivated in a village. The key

Figure 1: Components of the 'Development Ethos'



for triggering the evolution of such conditions lay in the 'change agent' be it the leadership (Zada), external agency (Mandva) or local institution (Phulsare) in the village. This acceptance comes from demonstrated success, which is the result of adoption of certain strategies.

## CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY

### Key findings

Emerging Positive Trends (though observed in a few villages only)

- GPs become proactive when given an opportunity to participate in Campaigns and compete for Awards.
- GPs gain financial empowerment when they levy their own taxes and fines
- The six mandatory Gram Sabhas have introduced accountability to the village and addressing issues of local concern.
- Reservation for women has opened the doors of public spaces and offices to women. A woman Sarpanch or Gram Sevak in a village has a huge beneficial impact on women.

### Strategies Adopted

- Powers exercised to generate funds by creative use of assets and resources.
- Common concerns, especially priority issues, unite a village defying the caste and class divide.
- The ability to collect and use relevant and good data assists in proactive fund / project/scheme seeking.
- Collective Bargaining brings development returns and pulls local politics to the development track.
- Inclusion of local subject based champions into the Subject Committees of the GP introduces enthusiasm and 'objective oriented' development.
- 'Image building' through good communication and public display of village information, scheme allocation, fund utilization and of achievements enhances pride and self-respect, wins the confidence and participation of the local inhabitants and attracts outside interest.
- An inclusive and efficient SHG development and management will bring in positive financial returns to all, as well as to the GP.

### The Development Ethos Triggers Progress

#### Components of the Development Ethos include

- Primacy of development over party and petty politics
- Willingness of the community to accept change

- Willingness to participate in the development process
- Strong social capital & vibrant village CBOs
- Willingness to address Issues of equity and gender
- Social and political unity and active consensus building
- Attentive to bringing in a flow of benefits into the village.

### Suggestions

- *NGOs and other village interventions should strengthen the existing GP mechanism (or create official links) instead of creating parallel systems that are not sustainable and that distract the community.*
- Data, when collected from any village should always be given back to the village so it can *be used for further development.*

## Chapter- IV: Awareness and understanding of the Current Role of Village PRIs

Though Panchayat Raj existed in Maharashtra since long, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment revolutionized the roles, functions and responsibility. The Panchayat Acts of the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment and the subsequent related Government Resolutions (GRs) are aimed not merely at administrative changes, but have expanded the role and introduced changes in the process at village level. GPs are expected to be direct implementers and partners for various development projects that involve behavioural change. These include participation as primary stakeholders in healthcare, water & sanitation, NRM and others. The change warrants a degree of awareness regarding the newer expanded role of village bodies, among the people and communities involved in the process. It is important to see whether this change has been grasped by those involved in the PRIs at the village level.

Therefore, this study in the first place tries to ascertain an understanding of Panchayat Raj among the key actors and community. In this chapter the findings and insights related to awareness, perceptions and understanding of Panchayat Raj based on the study are given.

### Awareness, perception and understanding of *Panchayat Raj*

#### 1. Awareness regarding role of PRIs at village level following the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment

Overall among all the key actors at the village level, there is little awareness regarding the role of PRI bodies, (GP and *Gram Sabha*) in local development and governance. By and large common people in all the villages regard village administration as the primary responsibility of GP. They do not view GP as an institution responsible for bringing about development of the village.

- i. Of the 12 sample villages, the Sarpanch of only four villages (33%) were aware of the expanded role of GP i.e. as a development agency and not merely a local organ of government. They are aware of the new role of PRIs as of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment.
- ii. Committee members of only two villages (20 %) were aware of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment that empowered the GP and *Gram Sabha*.
- iii. Very few participants of FGDs in different villages were aware of the legal clauses and obligations of GP, the *Sarpanch* and Secretary, that came into existence after 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment and subsequent GRs issued by State Government.
- iv. Not many people, including committee members are aware of the statutory obligation that demands the holding six *Gram Sabhas* in a financial year as mandatory and that a *Sarpanch* can be suspended if s/he fails to convene even a single *Gram Sabha*.

BOX  
12

### ***Awareness regarding Gram Sabhas***

*One of the villages of the sample has a ST woman Sarpanch. In a FDG held in the GP office in which Sarpanch and another woman committee member participated, they insisted that no Gram Sabha was held during the previous year. However, later on it was revealed that they were not exactly aware of difference between regular meetings and Gram Sabha. Besides, as a Sarpanch she was not aware of the fact that she can be removed from her post if it is proved.*

- v. However, except for one, the *Sarpanch* of all villages, are aware of the legal obligation of *Sarpanch* to hold six *Gram Sabhas* in the year.
- vi. The *Sarpanch* of three tribal villages of the sample are not aware of powers entrusted to the *Gram Sabha* under PESA.
- vii. Overall, the awareness and understanding of the different provisions of the PRI Acts is very low in villages with a majority tribal population.
- viii. Male committee members, key actors and the *Sarpanch* of almost all villages can mark the difference in GP functioning of the pre and post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment period.
- ix. The *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevaks* of eight villages opine that after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment paper work and bureaucratic procedures have increased for them.
- x. Village Development Officers (VDOs) or *Gram Vikas Adhikari* and *Gram Sevaks*, who are secretaries of GP, are well aware of the legal clauses regarding administration. Many of them do not share this knowledge with elected members as many of the obligations are strictly followed in writing rather than actuality.
- xi. *Gram Sevaks* in the capacity of secretary of the Panchayat have to facilitate the functions of the Panchayat but they have almost taken over as the executive due to lack of awareness of the *Sarpanch* and other committee members.

BOX  
13

### ***Balancing Act Skills evoked***

*VDOs and Gram Sevaks have become expert in fulfilling the requirements of 'tough' clauses on paper. While analysing the annual balance sheet of the previous year, the Gram Sevak of one village of the sample, adjusted all the figures thrice, so as to make it ideal as per accounting instructions. Similar practices seem to be followed to fulfil other 'difficult' obligations too.*

### *Consulting the GRs when required*

*One small but very notable incident happened while interviewing the woman Sarpanch of Aundha Nagnath, a village of the sample. The Gram Sevak was constantly pursuing a matter and was asking the Sarpanch between the interview to sign the document. She reminded him that when that matter was brought to her previously, she had asked for the GR pertaining to it. She refused to sign the document till she was provided with the relevant GR.*

BOX  
14

- xii. While the *Gram Sevak* does not share all information with the elected representatives (which leads to information gaps), the *Sarpanch* of the villages have a reasonably high level of information of the GP accounts, which they obtain from the *Gram Sevak*.
- xiii. The Role of different subject committees is becoming increasingly important. These committees are being entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of a specific project at village level. However, the elected representatives of the GP and even the *Gram Sevak* do not have a clear picture of the totality of the concerned activity and how to take it ahead.
- xiv. It is difficult for members of different subject committees to describe their role, responsibilities, duties and authority. Besides, some of the members were not even aware that they were part of such committees! However, the awareness level of those members of the committee, who were previously or presently associated with some NGO is found to be greater.
- xv. The PRI has a whole range of functions to perform such as obtaining or providing information, opinion, suggestions, giving concurrence, contributing resources, partnering with Government departments, acting as an autonomous unit. The exact role of the PRI would vary from scheme to scheme as well as subject to subject. The level of scheme

### *Co-option of Members*

*In one village which is most aware and progressive of the sample villages, the incidence of co-option of unelected members into the GP committee was found. The Sarpanch insisted that this was permitted by the rules. And it works effectively for the good of all.*

BOX  
15

**specific role clarity is quite low** among the *Sarpanch* and GP committee members. The population in general has an even lesser degree of clarity about the nature and responsibilities of the GP in the different schemes.

- xvi. The Panchayat representatives are unaware or ill-informed about their rights, functions, powers and authority, which has led to an under-estimation or over-estimation of their roles. There is much confusion among the elected representatives regarding the functioning of *Panchayati Raj*.
- xvii. Awareness regarding social audit, participatory monitoring and powers of *Gram Sabha* is significantly low in villages where no major development programme was previously implemented.

#### 4. Reasons for low awareness and understanding

This study found that there was no substantial difference in the perceptions of the various actors at the village level regarding the role and responsibilities of the GP as outlined in the 73rd Amendment.

Though elaborate training modules and good infrastructure has been developed to capacitate members of the Panchayat, few members actually attend these trainings. The *Gram Sevak* and VDOs undergo trainings regularly while the elected representatives find excuses and skip these. The latter depend on *Gram Sevaks* and VDOs for knowledge of rules and regulations. Very few elected women members attend the trainings conducted by the government machinery since these are organized far from their village. The *Sarpanch* generally prefers to attend only scheme specific training.

Looking at the percentage of villages in any district with capacitated *Sarpanch* and Panchayat members, it appears that these trainings are low on their priority list. They do not realize the importance of their own empowerment through such trainings. Their attitude demonstrates a lack of motivation.

## CHAPTER 4 : SUMMARY

### Key Findings & Suggestions

Competency and effectiveness of PRIs depends on the level of perception, level of awareness and understanding of all actors involved.

#### This study surfaces the following gaps

- Both GP functionaries and the community primarily perceive the role of
- GP as an administrative body and not as an institution that is equally responsible for the development of village.
- There is lack of awareness regarding rules, procedures and provisions related to functioning of GP, functional committees and Gram Sabha among elected functionaries.
- The elected representatives of GPs are yet to seriously grasp the importance of the opportunity, responsibility and authority vested in them. They depend of Gram Sevaks and VDOs instead of being empowered through trainings.

### Suggestions

The capacity of GP functionaries, as well as the community, needs to be enhanced so that they understand the possibilities and the power that are theirs. A stronger motivation for the GP members is required so that they participate in trainings. The location of the trainings should be such that encourage them, especially the women, to avail of trainings.

## Chapter V : The Gram Panchayat - and its Functioning

The Gram Panchayat as a basic executive body has greater powers than any other institution at the village level. It is the most important of PRIs and is the elected executive body responsible for governance, development and progress of the village. Panchayat Raj assigns it the role of implementation of development schemes and programs. To fulfill this entrusted role, operational effectiveness of the GP is of prime importance. Success of the PRI depends on the effective operation at the Gram Panchayat level. It is precisely for this reason that issues pertaining to the various GP actors - Sarpanch, GP committees, and bureaucracy - are crucial for the basic functioning of this body. This chapter tries to locate and address the issues related to the functioning of the GP.

The findings of the study related to basic functioning of GP and its committees are given below:

### 1. The functionaries and their roles

- a. The *Sarpanch* is still figured as the most important position in village level governance, despite emerging mechanisms to check this individual power centre. There are also several examples of how a dedicated, committed and enlightened *Sarpanch* has transformed their villages in Maharashtra.
  - The Sarpanch is found to be the most informed among the elected representatives in nine out of twelve villages, in terms of understanding the provisions of the 73rd amendment and the various other rules and regulations governing GP.
  - The basis of gaining the position of a “power centre” is *skills, information and knowledge about the working of Panchayat Raj*. This is of great significance, since with the introduction of *Panchayat Raj*, the *administrative processes* have become

BOX  
16

### *Sarpanch in Inspirational role*

*Zada Gram Panchayat presents a role model of good governance which was inspired and guided by a committed, skilled, & capable Sarpanch. Today, this Ex- Sarpanch, Vijay Ubale continues to inspire the village to achieve all round development with an efficient administration. As Sarpanch he took up challenging decisions, such as removing illegal encroachment on GP land. His knowledge of technical affairs of administration and capacity to mobilise resources has played important role in making him an acceptable leader. Today the village has achieved remarkable progress and to date, it has won 68 awards and recognitions including national and state level prestigious awards.*

### *Even the Traditional Panch System can work Phulsare*

*A tribal village in the sample is notable for the existence of the Tribal Panchayat as a real power centre. All major decisions are made by traditional "Panch" system and the GP carries it out. Even the election of representatives and the Sarpanch is done consensually through this age-old Tribal Panchayat system. The village has excelled in the field of cleanliness and sanitation. It was able to create many collective assets through resource mobilisation and it has no political groupings or infighting.*

BOX  
17

*more complicated, involve greater technicalities, increased paper work and with upward accountability.*

- The authority of Sarpanch tends to be more complete and unchecked where there is political consensus and unopposed elections. However such a dominating influence is found in only one of the sample villages.
- Collective power centres and a decision making process is evident in the two villages where there was major NGO intervention and implementation of a large scale development project in the past.

**b. The Gram Sevak / Village Development Officer (VDO)**, who is the secretary of Gram Panchayat, is another very important power position in GP administration, representing the bureaucracy. As mentioned earlier, these secretaries not only draw power from their post in the government hierarchy, but also due to the greater legal and technical knowledge and information they have on Panchayat Raj. When the Sarpanch is poorly informed and has insufficient knowledge, the community and the GP committee members make a Gram Sevak the real centre of power.

- Gram Sevak or VDOs appointed by the government are often not from their assigned villages nor do they usually reside there. The ratio of the number of appointed Gram Sevak and the GPs is more than 1:2. Each Gram Sevak is assigned the charge of at least two villages and in some cases, even more. This has affected the functioning of GP in many ways.
  - i. Attention given by the Gram Sevak to a village is not as expected.
  - ii. It provides the Gram Sevak an excuse for absence as it is difficult for the GP to monitor the attendance of the Gram Sevak.

BOX  
18

### *Where is the Gram Sevak?*

*It was difficult to locate and meet the Gram Sevak throughout this study. The wedding season was at its peak and the Gram Sevak cannot afford to avoid attending marriages of kin and relatives of local politicians. Many Gram Sevaks who are in-charge of the villages with large funds also do not pick up unrecognised numbers as they are hounded by local journalists for extracting bribes.*

- iii. There lies a bone of contention between an efficient Sarpanch and a Gram Sevak, as the latter is often not available when required.
- iv. The workload of the poorly paid Gram Sevak is tremendous and this results in low quality work, lesser dedication and even corruption.
- Gram Sevaks and clerks are over burdened with preparation and maintenance of too many (to be exact, 27 registers + 5 important files) registers, of which, much of the information collected is not very useful. Obviously, the Gram Sevaks are reluctant to mobilise schemes and development projects which would only bring them additional burden.
- It will be wrong to assume that only the *Gram Sevak* appointed by the government as a part of bureaucracy are more corrupt than the elected representatives of GP. In some cases the Gram Sevak is coerced to adopt malpractice by GP members too.

BOX  
19

### *Impact of woman Gram Sevak on women*

*Of the twelve GPs in the sample, only Saskal, a village in Satara district of Western Maharashtra has woman Gram Sevak. She came to village on Sunday to participate in the study. Women, both GP members and SHG representatives were quite comfortable in her presence. They easily participated in FGDs held in the Panchayat office. There is need to increase number of woman Gram Sevaks for this particular reason.*

- c. The Clerk cum Peon, appointed by the Gram Panchayat is invariably a local semi-educated person. The clerk is usually very poorly paid and is generally a needy person from the village. While this is the most neglected functionary of GP, the Clerk cum Peon is the

most stable, always available and easily accessible village functionary that provides the link between former and present elected and appointed functionaries. The *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevak* do change but this man (they are invariably men) work for a longer duration. He is also a link between villagers and GP. In the absence of the *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevak* he is practically in charge of the GP affairs. He is a greater expert in village matters than the *Gram Sevak* and knows each beneficiary of each scheme. The *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevak* rely heavily on the clerk for decision making and management. Capacity and skill building of these clerks can go long way in increasing efficiency of GP.

## Administrative requirements at Gram Panchayat level

Despite the functioning of the Panchayats since several years, Maharashtra has not been able to build capacities of the majority of elected representatives to maintain financial records, and implement development schemes. Moreover, in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment period, administrative procedures and legal obligations have increased. Majority of the GP members are grossly untrained, ill-informed and inexpert in meeting the required bureaucratic procedures, paper work, technicalities and legalities of administration. The support from the upper level PRIs and bureaucracy seems inadequate. Consequently, the few people skilled in maintaining the records and procedures become far too important and dominating, preventing decision-making from become broad-based, inclusive, objective and for overall progress. In such a situation, when the GP becomes dependent on these few individuals or a group, there is the strong possibility of misuse of powers & funds as these gradually cultivate vested interests.

The capacity of the GP to genuinely operate as a collective body needs to be developed in order to discharge more effectively the greater role assign to it under the Panchayat Raj. Mere provisions such as mandatory meetings, maintenance of proceedings, setting up of functional committees etc. does not make the GP function collectively. On the contrary, the many demands and procedures seem to make the operationalization more complicated and would increase the power of expert individuals, unless capacities of the GP officials are regularly developed and updated.

### d. The Committee System

The Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act under Article-49 allow GPs to constitute a number of committees for the various issues and sectors. It is necessary that the decision-making process at GP level is collective and committee based. All GPs have display boards with the names of different committees and their respective members. However, it was evident during the study that the committee system is quite weak and unable to take decisions, hence the decision making processes in the village, is dominated by *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevak* in combination.

BOX  
20

### *Undesired Coping Mechanisms to Address Administrative Demands*

*Knowledge of the rules, provisions and formats have become more important than everbefore. A Gram Sevak along with either a Sarpanch or few experienced committee members do have skills of “fabricating” facts as per administrative requirement. This expertise is not always used for monetary corruption. It has also becomes necessary for GP to manipulate information in order to fulfil requirement on paper to hide failures and shortcomings. At times it is a challenge for the GP due its incapacity to observe some conditions or follow procedures that are mandatory. All this makes the few ‘skilled’ and ‘informed’ individuals very powerful and for all practical purposes GPs in most of the villages seem to be hijacked by such “clique.”*

- i. During two FGDs in which GP committee members participated it was observed that many of them do not exactly know to which committee they belong.
- ii. The representation in committees is more symbolic than substantial, as most of the members of the committees were not able to describe their duties, role and responsibilities.
- iii. Except for one village, no subject committees of the sample villages had prepared their sectoral plan or a separate budget.
- iv. Except in one village, none of the subject committees of the other 11 sample villages meet regularly or maintain registers systematically.
- v. There is **lack of subject specific expertise and skills** among the committee members of almost all villages. Very few committee members have received subject specific training.

### *Committee System*

- *Study findings show that the potentially effective committee system is not active, capable and efficient enough.*
- *There is a need to activate, sensitise and capacitate these functional committees and sub-committees as they have the potential to make GP governance more collective, development / service oriented and resourceful.*

BOX  
21

- vi. Three villages have used the system of constituting sub-committees to support and share the workload of the main subject committees and that was due to project specific needs.
- vii. SC, ST and women representation on the committee is more cosmetic in nature and has no impact on their quality of functioning or representation.

e. Relationship with bureaucracy

For the GP to function effectively, all officials of the three tier system need to have a close working relationship. The study finds that the Gram Sevak is generally the only link between the GP and the bureaucracy. This is built on frequent meetings.

- Communication between elected representatives and the appointed officials needs to improve at GP level as also other levels. *GP committee members other than Sarpanch, generally lack confidence to interact equally with upper level bureaucrats.*
- Government functionaries (of the three tiers) do not share information with elected GP representatives. Instead of facilitating, the processes are made more complex. For most tasks, substantial paper work is required and members of Panchayats do not have the capacity for it.
- Except for the extension officers, generally the block and district level bureaucracy share information selectively. Hence information does not reach the lowest level (GP).
- Despite clear cut allocation of roles, power and responsibility within the three tiers of the Panchayat system, the upper tiers are either encroaching on the functions of Gram Panchayats or are poorly performing the functions actually assigned to them, because of which the GP bear the brunt.
- All officials in the rural sector work within the Gram Panchayat jurisdiction. There are some field level functionaries more than others, whose work touches the lives of almost every person in the village, such as teachers, doctors, ANMs, anganwadi workers, agricultural assistants, veterinary doctors and MSEB linemen. However, attendance of these field level workers, whose work is vital for the village, is not properly monitored by Gram Panchayats.
- More often than not, activities are imposed on the villages according to plans of Departments of the district level.
- There is no active coordination mechanism to bring a convergence at GP level.
- Overall support from upper tiers of government is not adequate in terms of building awareness, perspective and capacities.

## CHAPTER 5 : SUMMARY

### Key findings

- Knowledge of administrative rules and procedures gives actual powers to GP functionaries. The current widespread lack of this relevant knowledge forces GPs to be dependent on few capable individuals, who know how to tackle the growing technicalities required at GP level governance by ‘legally correct’ reporting. This is the main reason for a non-collective process in decision-making within GP.
- Subject committees lack capability and related knowledge. Hence these are not active. However, if capacitated, they have the potential to improve functioning of GP.
- The heavy work-load of the Gram Sevak, who is usually not based in village and who has to work with more than one poorly capacitated and informed GPs has a negative impact on the functioning of the GP.
- There is poor support and little interest shown from upper levels to GP functionaries to make the village level GP governance capable. Information may be passed down with little focus on knowhow for sustainable processes.
- The proactive role from within the village / GP is what will make the rest of the system (Gram Sevaks, upper level GP officials) respond.

### Suggestions

- The key is making the village level GP representatives capable of managing their components. Since the holders of this post change with the elections, a system will need to be developed to build the capacities of every elected body.
- The systems and procedures have to be maintained at the village level, hence simplified systems for procedures, accounts and record keeping need to be developed. The optimum number of records should be maintained that meets the efficiency standards.
- Higher authorities (of the GP system) should be assessed by the number of effective, efficient and empowered GPs in their jurisdiction.

# Chapter VI : Transparency, Accountability and Monitoring Mechanisms

Panchayat Raj aims at providing 'good governance' to rural areas. Good governance is beyond providing mere administration. As one definition describes, *"Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable... Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources."*<sup>1</sup> Thus, good governance involves not only efficient governance but also provides it in the most transparent and accountable manner. This can be achieved if there are operational mechanisms in the place.

Transparency, accountability and monitoring are important at all levels and are crucial for the success in the functioning of the GP. The ability of PRIs to realise its statutory objectives rely on these three inter-dependent components. The Panchayat Raj provides for mechanisms to ensure transparent, responsive and answerable village governance.

In this chapter, we will look at existing framework for ensuring monitoring and accountability in PRIs and will see how far these mechanisms are effective in realising the objective of good governance.

## Existing Mechanisms

The basic constituents of existing monitoring and accountability mechanism for Panchayats are as follows:

1. Statutory rules governing the conduct of business by Panchayats, such as frequency and method of conducting GP meetings, maintenance and disclosure of records.
2. State Panchayat Raj legislation and government orders empowering *Gram Sabhas* to approve plans, select beneficiaries, monitor plan implementation, approve payment and conduct social audit.
3. Instituting the *Social Audit mechanism*.
4. Clear guidelines and structure of budgeting of the Panchayats.
5. Legislative provisions of a '*Right To Information*' and a structure to govern periodic disclosure of information.

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1. As defined by S.M. Vijayanand, Member Secretary, State Planning Board & Secretary (Planning & Economic Affairs) Government of Kerala

6. Provision for a system of *Standing Committees* to ensure that decisions are committee based and collective.
7. Comprehensive manuals and formats to standardize GP functioning and the decision-making process.

The findings of this study reveal the following:

### Transparency in the GP functioning

- State Governments have issued several orders and have also come out with the Citizen's Charter to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of PRIs. This Charter is important as it clearly delineates the task wise roles and responsibility of different functionaries along with maximum time limit to accomplish or redress the issue.

*This widely celebrated 'Citizen's Charter' (Gramasthanchi Sanad) was found to be displayed only in one village of the sample. Nevertheless, the Charter is invariably painted on the walls or exhibited on the boards at all BDO offices.*

- There are directions through various government orders for mandatory display of accounting documents, bills at GP office.

*Most of these display provisions were found to be observed.* However, display of the accounting details on GP office notice board is of 'limited' importance in terms of making the Gram Panchayat administration transparent, as it is difficult even for educated persons to understand these account sheets properly and identify irregularities if any.

- Lists of beneficiaries of different schemes are **mostly displayed at BDO office notice board and not at GP offices** hampering transparency in the process of selection and benefit distribution.

*Lists of beneficiaries of some schemes are also displayed on the GP office notice board. However, the manner of display is generally ineffective and aimed mainly at educated*

BOX 22	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Displaying List of Beneficiaries</b></p> <p><i>Zada GP presents an ideal way of displaying lists of beneficiaries. On a huge wall it displays not only names of the beneficiaries but also their caste - class profile. Similarly it displays all relevant data about village and GP administration systematically in a legible form.</i></p>
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*visitors, rather than villagers. It is difficult for visitors to analyse lists from caste and class point of view.*

- BPL list has been found to be **displayed at many GP offices**. Guidelines about display boards at work done places are also by and large **found to be observed by PRIs** during the study.

*Most of the display at the GP office is cosmetic and contributes little in making the administrative process transparent and accountable. Except for Zada, none of the 12 villages have displayed in the office The 'Adarsh Gram Takta' (Model village chart), which should contain all the relevant data regarding the village and its progress.*

Zada has gone a step further, while GP committee meetings are generally not expected to be open to all, in the Zada GP office there exists a permanently painted board for GP as well as subject committee meetings with blank space for date and timings, regularly filled up.

- At the district level, there exists material testing facility for use at the GP level. This is to ensure the quality of material to be used in construction *activities*. **Only Zada uses the material testing facility regularly.**
- Some Constraints in GP Transparency
  - (a) Transparency becomes an issue when the village is large. The bigger the village, the greater the possibility of opposition, hence, lesser openness in the functioning of the GP. One must understand that there is tendency in village politics of “opposing for the sake of opposition”. Transparency in such a situation is a difficult proposition.
  - (b) *Manipulation of accounts to accommodate legitimate expenditures*: During one FGD, participants unanimously expressed that ‘*corruption*’ was inevitable in the GP functioning. One reason mentioned behind this inevitability was because of unavoidable expenses that cannot be accounted or claimed but still has to be incurred by GP functionaries. The Sarpanch of each and every village has to incur a number of additional expenses such as travel and food, local hospitality for visitors, government officers etc. These expenditures cannot be claimed as working expenses. They have to be ‘*adjusted*’ against other expense categories with the help of Gram Sevak, and sometimes with the involvement of other GP committee members. These committee members aware of such petty accounting manipulations. This manipulation in turn tends to be extended to other areas also.
  - (c) Compensation for expenditures made during elections: In the last few years there is cumulative increase in the amount spent in Panchayat elections by candidates and head of the political groups within villages. The elected representatives, after they win, consider it their right to be compensated for expenses incurred when contesting elections. They do so by ‘*adjusting*’ the accounts. Transparency obviously becomes difficult in such situation.

# The Statutory Accountability and Monitoring Mechanisms

## 1. Gram Sabha

Mandatory meetings of all voters within the GP area are rated as a strong accountability mechanism by *Panchayat Raj* Acts. There is constant effort made by the State government to increase the powers of the *Gram Sabha* to make it more effective. Now it is compulsory to hold six *Gram Sabhas* in a financial year. Failure to conduct even single mandatory *Gram Sabha* can remove the *Sarpanch* from the post. Provisions also prescribe a quorum and holding of the Women's *Gram Sabha* one day before general *Gram Sabha*.

Mechanisms and procedures for making the GP and other bodies accountable and transparent to the *Gram Sabha* exist within the *Panchayat Raj* System. The GP budget has to be presented to the *Gram Sabha* for approval. Similarly, GP and government departments *are expected* to obtain the approval of *Gram Sabha* in identifying beneficiaries for different schemes and programmes. However, due to low awareness, low attendance and weak participation, the *Gram Sabha* is far from being an effective accountability mechanism at village level.

## 2. Periodic disclosure of information

Apart from presenting the budget and accounts in the Gram Sabha, periodic release of information in writing, such as annual statements of GP accounts is mandatory. Given the level of literacy and accounting knowledge of common people, these disclosures are not so effective. Only Zada, publishes annual reports giving every bit of information and this practice would be very beneficial if it is made mandatory in the other GPs.

## 3. Right to Information

There is statutory provision of Right to Information under the RTI Act. This is an effective instrument in making administration transparent and answerable. However, due to lack of awareness regarding its provisions, procedure and efficacy, it has not been used extensively. Of the 12 villages, the use of RTI by citizens is found to be remarkably low, barring Aundha Nagnath and Karmad. These two villages are big and they are more like mini towns. Further, land prices are soaring in these two places due to their locations. The RTI is mostly used here in land ownership related issues and not regarding GP functioning and decisions.

The RTI as an instrument of transparency and accountability has limitations considering the level of legal and constitutional awareness among the rural masses. However, during visits to different block level offices as a part of this study an extensive use of RTI was observed. At one place, the concerned officer blamed a prominent figure claiming that it is difficult to spare time for work due to such a large number of RTI applications.

#### 4. Social Audit Committees (SACs)

These committees are only formed in the villages where the NREGA and *Jal Swaraj* scheme are implemented. Since NREGA has yet to take off on full scale in the sample of villages they have still not constituted these committees. Of the twelve villages only two have SACs. During this study it was not possible to ascertain the effectiveness of the SACs as mechanisms of accountability and monitoring. But one obvious fact stands out, “*these committees are looked at from a project specific point of view*” by the village community and therefore cannot be regarded as a long term audit mechanism for PRIs at village level.

#### 5. Citizen Evaluations

There seems to be complete absence of any other system-s or method-s of making the GP answerable in the 12 villages. In the villages where some kind of NGO intervention has taken place, any other citizenry evaluation methods, such as Report Card or scoring are not in use.

It appears from the findings of this study that despite all the statutory provisions, mechanisms and systems developed to make the *Panchayati Raj* institutions efficient, transparent and accountable to the people, they have largely been unused or unsuccessful.

### The Gram Sabha - A Mechanism for Accountability and Monitoring

#### Assessment of the functioning and effectiveness of the Gram Sabha

We will now look at the detailed assessment of the Gram Sabha made during this study as it is the most important accountability and monitoring mechanism in a Panchayat Raj.

Architects of the Panchayat Raj have several expectations from Gram Sabha or assembly of all voters in the village. It is expected to provide a good accountability and monitoring mechanism at the lowest level of the Panchayat system. As a popular village assembly, it is viewed as check on executive powers of the elected GP body. Through the Gram Sabha, democratic processes initiated by the Panchayat Raj are deemed to become participatory. Being an inclusive people’s institution it is expected to articulate the needs and aspirations of all sections of village and initiate village level planning and a participatory development process.

It is necessary to examine these high expectations in the light of field study of the 12 villages in the sample.

#### I. Awareness regarding powers of the Gram Sabha

- FGDs revealed that villagers possess little awareness about the role, functions and powers of the Gram Sabha. There is a complete lack of awareness about the Gram Sabha as a

body that can make the GP and government accountable and that empowers the village community to have self governance.

- Most respondents showed little interest in the Gram Sabha's functioning and mentioned issues such as inclusion in various beneficiaries' lists and avoiding punitive actions from GP as reasons for attending the Gram Sabha.
- In all group discussions, it was found that people were unaware of the outcome of recommendations and decisions of the previously held Gram Sabhas.

## II. Motives for holding Gram Sabha meetings

- It is a statutory obligation of the Sarpanch to hold six Gram Sabha annually and is the single most common reason for calling a Gram Sabha. All 12 Gram Panchayats of the sample barring three had held only the mandatory Gram Sabha meetings during the previous year.
- It is mandatory to involve the Gram Sabha in selection of beneficiaries for different government schemes. This is another reason for holding *Gram Sabha* meetings.

## III. Quality of functioning and participation in the Gram sabha

- *The people are not consulted in drawing up the Gram Sabha agenda.* Generally there is *pre-set agenda imposed from above i.e. the Panchayat Samitee* at the district level and there is not much space for local issues.

BOX  
23

### ***Gram Sabha Instrument for mobilizing and motivating people***

*During the study visits to Karmad, one of the 12 villages, the GP committee was vigorously propagating for a forthcoming Gram Sabha meeting. The FGD revealed the reason behind the effort. The GP was planning to buy one generator for the drinking water distribution system to counter the load shedding. Purchase of generator involves not only a one time investment but also recurring daily expenditure on diesel. This cannot be achieved without regular people's contribution. The Gram Sabha here was going to act both as an instrument for mobilizing contribution for a major purchase and to endorse a long-term regular cash contribution.*

*In Kannamwargram, one of the sample villages in Vidarbha, a Gram Sabha was held on the issue of farmers' suicides. There is long term NGO intervention in this village and people seem to be more aware of development issues.*

- There is complete absence of any local organizational mechanisms below the *Gram Sabha*, such as hamlet *Sabha*, *Ward Sabhas* and *Mahila Sabhas* to ensure that every socio economic section is properly represented and mobilized in the *Gram Sabha*.
- CBOs and SHGs are not involved in the preparatory and follow up process of the *Gram Sabha*.
- No effort was observed in any of the 12 villages to develop a village level development plan through *Gram Sabha*.
- The *Gram Sabha* in all the sample villages have not developed any monitoring mechanism to improve GP functioning or implementation of government schemes by other PRIs and line departments.
- Attendance in the *Gram Sabha* meetings, even as per data provided by *Gram Sevaks* is dismally low across all the sample villages.
- According to respondents, the quorum is often not as prescribed. Sometimes the meeting is adjourned and sometimes the register is taken from house to house to get signatures for the requisite quorum.
- According to a few respondents, mandatory *Gram Sabhas* wherein statements of accounts, administrative reports, development plans are presented are usually adjourned or held at timings suitable to the *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sevak* to pursue their hidden agenda.
- The provision of doing away with the need for quorum for adjourned meetings of the *Gram Sabha* reinforces the tendency to view *Gram Sabha* meetings as a mere formality. Hence most *Gram Sabha* meetings are adjourned ones.
- The provision of holding *Gram Sabha* in all the constituent villages of a Panchayat on a rotational basis is not always followed and majority of meetings are conducted in dominant village within Group *Gram Panchayat*.
- There is little if any difference between tribal and non-tribal areas with respect to the role of the *Gram Sabha* in post-PESA period.

#### IV. Reasons cited for low participation in the *Gram Sabha*

1. Since there is *no need of a quorum for adjourned meetings*, the importance of the *Gram Sabha* is reduced. This also provides an escape clause for a GP not to make the extra effort to mobilize attendance for a *Gram Sabha*.
2. Some cite *frequent cancellation of meetings* due to incomplete quorum as a reason for not taking notice of meetings seriously.
3. Some mention that many times *meetings are announced at short notice* and one cannot change plans at the last moment to attend meetings.

4. There is a *tendency* among GP functionaries *to discourage wider attendance in Gram Sabhas* using various ploys, especially in villages with less political consensus. Many GP functionaries cite tendency of adversaries to settle scores through quarrels, hence they detest Gram Sabha meetings.
5. In one village respondents from the common people expressed that as *decisions are taken only by the Sarpanch*, it is futile to attend Gram Sabha meetings.
6. In the same village people complained that usually *opportunity is not given to everyone to speak* and only influential people speak in Gram Sabha. This creates apathy among common people about Gram Sabha meetings.
7. Villagers are generally *not aware of meetings due to the ineffective methods of communication*. The common methods of announcement such as a *dawandi*, pasting notices on walls, or circulating a register.
8. *Gram Sabha* is conducted in highly *ritualistic, long drawn and boring* manner.
9. Where the *Gram Sabha* comprises of more than one village, *the meetings of the Gram Sabha fails to attract people from villages other than place of meeting. The provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act do not recognize that the very size and distances between the villages in a Panchayat work to weaken Gram Sabha.*
10. *Women respondents cite improper timing of GS meetings as reason for not attending. Distance from the meeting venue and inflexible timings pose constraints for effective participation of women, daily wage earners and people living in distant hamlets.*
11. *GP functionaries in some villages, especially in North Maharashtra (Nandurbar), point out the inability of people to attend Gram Sabha meetings for half the year or more due to distress seasonal migration.*
12. *Gram Sabha in the present form, is able to attract only the potential 'beneficiaries' and there is lack of participation of non-beneficiaries. According to many respondents, Gram Sabha meetings are well attended when the agenda involves selection of beneficiaries for selected schemes.*

BOX  
24

### Gram Sabha on Paper?

*Looking at the data collected of dates and attendance of Gram Sabha in different sample villages, one is hit by the striking similarity observed. One gets the impression that at least two or three meetings are being documented as the six mandatory meetings per annum. It appears a difficult task to comply with 6 meetings. FDGs reveal that the Women Gram Sabha with its perceived meaninglessness is mostly paperwork.*

13. *With limited resources - mobilized through the government, benefits are allocated to a very few. Most of the people return empty-handed from the Gram Sabha. This discourages people from attending meetings.*
14. *The focus of Gram Sabha meetings are on fulfilling targets for the bureaucracy and thus important village issues are sidelined or neglected. This dampens the enthusiasm of villagers to attend Gram Sabha meetings.*
15. *According to the GP and upper level PRI functionaries' ignorance regarding the usefulness of Gram Sabha meetings is major cause of low attendance. Many people in the sample villages do not find any use in attending Gram Sabha meetings. NGO functionaries working for strengthening of PRIs are of the opinion that major cause of low attendance is that the people and their elected representatives do not know the powers vested in the Gram Sabha.*

#### V. Women's Gram Sabha and its impact

- *It appears that the mandatory rule of holding the Women's Gram Sabha one day prior to general the Gram Sabha is flouted practically everywhere in the sample villages.*
- *Holding the Women's Gram Sabha a day prior to the 'real' Gram Sabha has turned it into mere formality for the organizers. Secondly, as perceived by villagers, it has rendered participation of women in the general Gram Sabha meaningless. The number of women attending the general Gram Sabha is almost nil or negligible due to provision of the separate women's Gram Sabha.*
- *Even in Panchayats with a woman Sarpanch, generally issues of women's empowerment and betterment are not discussed in the general Gram Sabha.*
- *One tends to feel that the general Gram Sabha is not a forum for women in its present form. Its meeting venue, timings, composition, the way it is conducted, almost everything about it, makes it unattractive and difficult for women to participate it in effectively.*

#### VI. Effectiveness of the Gram Sabha

- *Though it is mandatory for government officials to attend Gram Sabha meetings very few actually attend it. This makes the Gram Sabha ineffective in holding upper bureaucracy accountable.*
- *Similarly, with lack of awareness about powers, possibilities and responsibilities, low attendance, pathetic quality of participation and absence of any supportive mechanism, the Gram Sabha is not in a position to check executive powers of GP. It has not emerged as a powerful accountability mechanism at village level as expected by architects of Panchayat Raj.*

- The Gram Sabha was expected to articulate needs and aspirations of the village community and to initiate a village level planning process. However, in reality the agenda of the Gram Sabha is dictated from the higher rungs of the PRI. In the current form the *Gram Sabha* lacks the capacity to turn the planning process upside down. It has failed to emerge as a **participatory planning mechanism** at the village level.
- The *Gram Sabha* was expected to be the people's institution and thereby provide mechanism to increase participation in governance and development. It was assumed that while the GP would provide *representative democracy*, the *Gram Sabha* would establish *participatory democracy* at the village level. However, as currently implemented, the *Gram Sabha* is unsuccessful in making *Panchayat Raj* a participatory democratic process as hoped for.
- The *Gram Sabha*, despite its potential to strengthen local governance and make it transparent, accountable, participatory and truly democratic, has remained under-utilized and idle so far. It is clear from the field level findings that most of the empowerment measures to provide effective participatory planning, development and accountability mechanism at village level, are just on paper and so is the functioning of the *Gram Sabha*.

## CHAPTER 6 - SUMMARY

### Important Findings

The systems for transparency, accountability and monitoring are well formulated. But these are not observed as expected; hence fail to deliver the expected results.

- Display of information is complex, hence while being 'fulfilled' it does not effectively communicate the information to the locals. In the complexity of information displayed, key information regarding list of beneficiaries, their caste and economic status is not clearly displayed at the *GP* level.
- The mere display information and of decisions taken in the *Gram Sabha* does not make rural governance transparent, although it is a step towards that.
- The Existing transparency, accountability and monitoring mechanisms and systems are not functioning, even in the *Gram Sabha*. The main reason for this failure is the lack of awareness of the power and possibilities vested in the *Gram Sabha*.
- There is *no mechanism below the GP and Gram Sabha level* (hamlets, wards, villages of the group GP) to enable community to make the governing bodies transparent, responsive and accountable.

### Suggestions

- Serious attention should be given to building capacities of the local villages to understand and exercise their responsibilities as members of the *Gram Sabha*. It should be mandatory that the Citizen's Charter and the Adarsh *Gram Takta* be painted on a wall outside the *Gram Panchayat Office*.
- Formats for display should be simplified and clear and that can easily be understood by the local community.
- Women should present their concerns and interests at the general *Gram Sabha*. These should have been discussed in their SHG and Apex body (of women's SHGs) meetings.

# Chapter VII : Addressing Fundamental Issues in Development: Gender and Equity

Panchayat Raj envisages the role as development agency for PRIs and especially the GP besides its traditional local administrative function. Obviously, village level PRIs would need special capabilities to undertake this latest role effectively. The success of any development process in terms of sustainability depends on how critical issues of gender and equity are addressed. Addressing these effectively require sensitisation, perspective and certain capacities and some tools.

Here we will look into the existing scenario to assess the ability of village level PRIs to deal with these two critical issues.

## 1. Gender Issues at Gram Panchayat Level

There are a number of provisions in the Panchayat Raj Act and the subsequent government orders aimed at enhancing participation, representation and empowerment of women in the process. One set of laws stipulates reservation for women in GP and its functional committees and makes the holding of the *Women's Gram Sabha* mandatory. Other laws provide for earmarking funds for women in the Panchayat budget. The government has also initiated several women-oriented schemes through PRIs. The following issues regarding inclusion of women at village level PRIs were observed during the study.

### I Regarding Elected Women Members

- i. The male GP members (and the women also) do not expect women members to attend all the GP meetings this indicates a gender biased mindset of the Panchayat members. Proxy representations of women members of Gram Panchayat are regular. Their male counterparts attend meetings and take decisions.
- ii. Despite the flaws, the reservation for women has led to the entry of women into the **Panchayat office** on various occasions. This in itself has a positive impact on gender perception of both men and women. The mere presence of women functionaries in the Panchayat office, be it as Sarpanch, member or Gram Sevak can make the GP more accessible to women. It was observed during the study visit to three villages where women are the Sarpanch and in one village where there was woman Gram Sevak that the number of women visiting the Panchayat office was greater than in other villages.
- iii. Woman Sarpanch of one of the sample villages, Aundha Nagnath, opines that rotational reservation has a negative impact on governance. It takes away the motivation of a person to perform. Those coming through 'reservation' are aware that they will get only one term due to the rotation. Whereas, while representatives not coming through 'reservation' may get the opportunity to stand again, an uncertainty exists that if their ward comes under

BOX  
25

### *'Job Sharing' of the Woman Sarpanch*

*In at least four of the sample villages, the husbands of elected women representatives were introduced by villagers as members of the GP committees to take part in the FDGs during the study visit.*

*At one village a 'job sharing' was observed. The Woman Sarpanch attends to visitors (including this researcher), reporters and officials while her husband deals with contractors, suppliers and benefit seekers etc.*

the 'reservation' category, they will lose the opportunity of being re-elected. Thus their effort can go in vain.

## II Training for Elected Women Members

- i. A very negligible number of elected women representatives attend trainings meant for them.
- ii. Women committee members particularly lack knowledge of legal provisions and procedures of Panchayat Raj administration.
- iii. Women in the functional committees constituted by the Gram Sabha on health and other sectors lack subject specific knowledge and are unable to alter prevailing practices or respond to important situational needs.

## III Understanding of the Provisions given to Women

- i. Existing training and awareness building efforts have not dented the mindset of the key actors regarding gender roles. The various provisions to ensure both qualitative and quantitative participation of women in Panchayat Raj process have very little success.
- ii. There is a noticeable lack of gender awareness and sensitivity among the majority of the GP functionaries (with the exception of a few). Most do not have an understanding of gender equity with reference to roles, labor, wages, participation (active engagement in decision-making), holding of post, work distribution, etc.
- iii. GP functionaries lack awareness of subject specific issues related to women such as health.
- iv. It is possible to address some issues of concern to women while implementing government projects. Yet, no such conscious effort was found in the sample villages to address needs of women. For example, while executing a social forestry project, preference or even thought is not given to the selection of trees to be planted e.g trees that provide fuel

wood which would reduce the drudgery of women. Usually trees chosen for plantation in such schemes are mainly of timber, fruit, and others generally selected. This happens not because of a lack of resources for development but due to the absence of a proper perspective and knowledge.

- v. Except Zada, no other GP included in this study has the adequate required data to avail of various schemes targeting women.

#### IV Participation of Women in the Gram Sabha

- i. As mentioned earlier, the *Women's Gram Sabha* is mostly a paper documentation. Instead of increasing women's participation, the provision has in fact, resulted in a **complete exclusion of women from the general Gram Sabha**. Since the *women's Gram Sabha* is either held or shown on paper, villagers perceive women's attendance at the general Gram Sabha meaningless and unnecessary. This is particularly so since the Women's Gram Sabha is held on a day prior to the general Gram Sabha and becomes repetitive for women to participate.
- ii. The GP functionaries do not have adequate knowledge of the various laws pertaining to women

#### V Utilization of the Budget Allocated for Women's Concerns

- i. No process of consultation was reported for identifying needs of women in any of the sample villages.
- ii. Women's concerns are not discussed of given attention even in GPs where a woman is the Sarpanch.
- iii. In none of the sample villages, women were consulted regarding their needs for utilization of the 10% GP Budget that is earmarked for women as per the PRI Act.

#### VI The Missed Opportunity - The SHGs

- i. Again except for Zada, the SHGs under the sole GP regime have not been able to go beyond loan and subsidy seeking objectives.

BOX  
26

#### ***Paper SHGs for seeking Government Schemes***

*A tribal village of the sample has only one SHG and that too, only on paper. It was formed just to avail of the contract for the mid-day meal scheme, which prescribes this as a condition in its guidelines.*

- ii. Organizing women in SHGs is not only a powerful mechanism for women’s development but also for their empowerment. Except for Zada and Saskal, among nine sample villages where there was no major NGO intervention, SHG development is quite weak.

On the whole it can be said that many provisions exist to ensure both qualitative and quantitative participation of women in Panchayat Raj process. However, they have little success in addressing gender issues at the village level. Further mechanisms are required to make village level PRIs and the communities capable of addressing issues such as gender and women’s development.

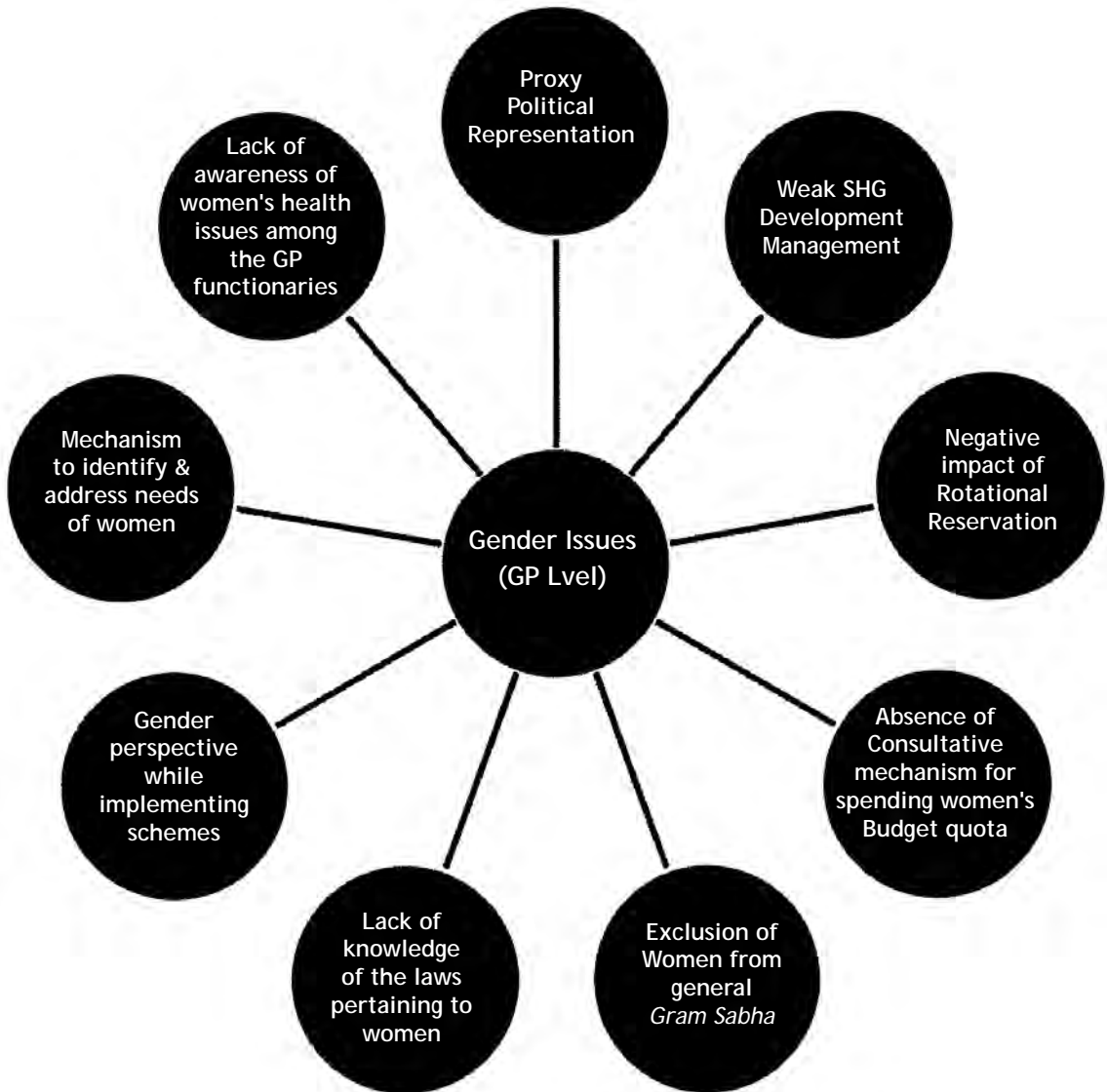


Fig. 2: Gender Issues at Gram Panchayat Level

## 2. Equity

To ensure sustainability of the impacts of any development program it is necessary to address the sensitive subject of equity. PRIs have to acquire the capacity to understand the facts, promote and manage equity issues if it has to perform the role of a development agency as envisaged by planners and mainly for the overall progress of the village. This study tried to assess this capacity of village level PRIs to handle this delicate issue of equity.

- **Equity needs to be addressed from the aspects of availability and accessibility of (a) natural resources (b) developmental benefits and (c) services.**

The availability and accessibility of natural resources such as water, food, fuel-wood, grazing lands are essential for basic living within a rural setup. These are becoming scarce by the day. Hence accessibility by the poor and marginalized population to these resources is important.

*It was observed that in none of the sample villages any conscious effort was made to provide for resource accessibility by the marginalized households and communities.*

- Equity also needs to be addressed from the point of view of (i) individual households; (ii) group/community and (iii) location related to the main village especially within the Group Gram Panchayat.
- Equity in benefit distribution is important in the development process. Competence to address equity issues in this regard depends on perspective, sensitivity as well as certain capabilities of the leaders.

One has to keep in mind that with scarcity of resource inflow, there is a constant competition **between different individuals, sections, castes and classes to secure their share of benefits.** Hence, those with greater power are able to corner greater benefits for themselves.

- **At the Individual level: PRIs would not bestow benefits to any individual or section on a pure "equity" consideration.** It is observed that advantage is taken by benefit seeking individuals who use their power through different means such as numerical strength of their caste, socio-economic status, location in the village and level of their awareness, knowledge to gain the maximum benefits for themselves.

It is also observed that some external *service providers such as* line departments, banks or upper level PRIs, tend to ignore the GP and Gram Sabha, while they approach individual clients directly. PRIs are in fact not motivated and strong enough to make these service providers accountable or to insist on addressing equity.

- **According to Groups / communities**

As in the case of distribution of benefits, each group within any village *competes for entitlement to services.* Here, Electoral considerations plays a role in prioritizing areas for providing greater and better services, which results in a skewed pattern of service delivery within the GP area.

- According to location within the village set-up

Distribution of benefits is *uneven between the main village of GP and other peripheral villages or hamlets and the member villages of a Group Gram Panchayat.*

Individuals and sections from village within GP area from where a Sarpanch comes, tend to get preferential treatment with more benefits and services.

- Delivery of quality services is another area of concern in village level. PRIs and different government departments provide different services at village level such as drinking water, health services, education, roads, electricity, credit, veterinary assistance etc.

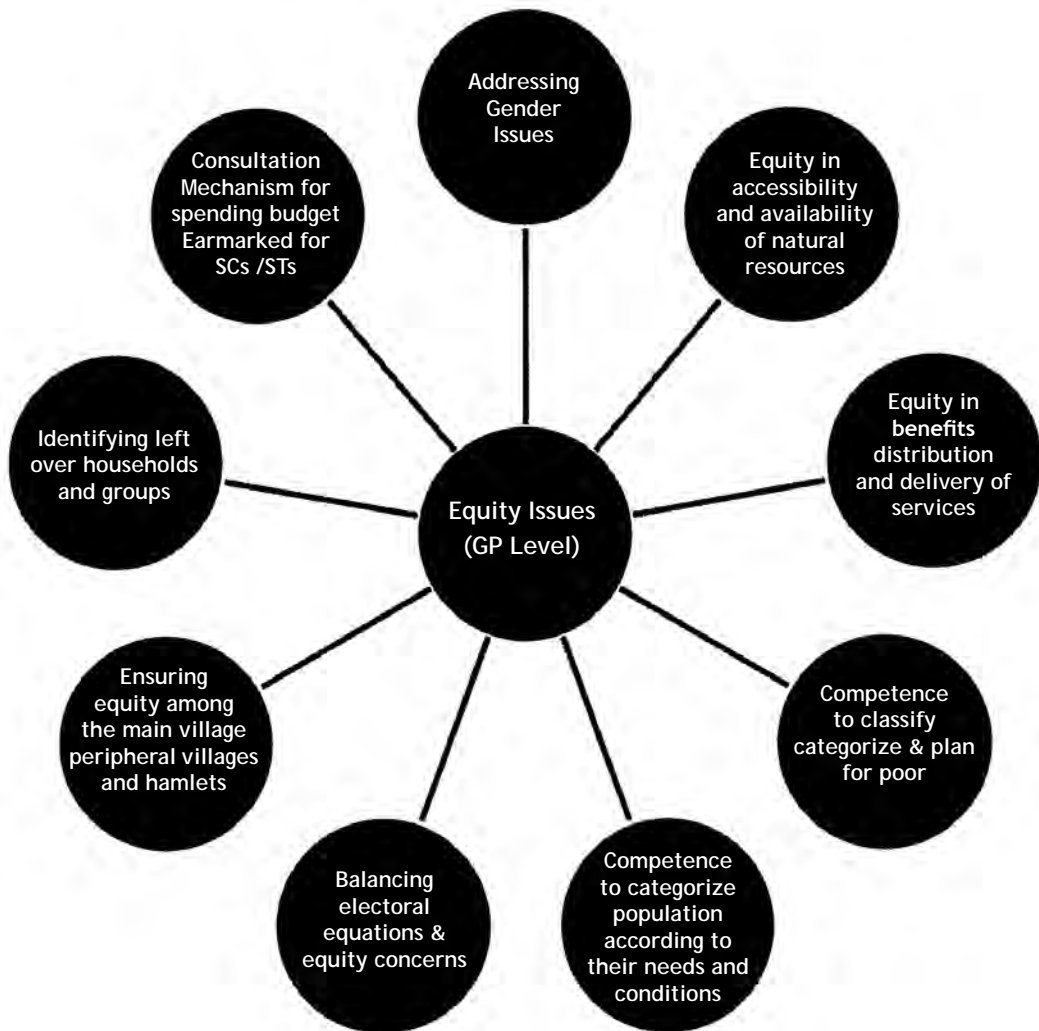


Fig. 3: Equity issues at GP level

It was disclosed in the FGDs that the **delivery of services and their quality** are *not uniform, standardized and consistent for all* within village. It differs from area to area in some cases. The ratio of hand pumps / water taps with the size of user population is often unequal. Similarly, **availability of community assets and public utility equipment** is also not uniformly distributed. PRIs do not have consistent **promptness** in maintenance and repairs of community assets across the village. The more powerful, the socio-economically better off have more access to resources and benefits.

- Satellite, peripheral villages and hamlets generally get *low priority* in delivery of services. The quality of service is also lower in these areas.

In certain cases it was observed that availability and accessibility of services is said to be *unsatisfactory in SC populated parts* of the village.

- The severity of **inequitable** service delivery depends on the *size of the village*. The incidence of inequity is observed to be greater in villages that are bigger in size or have group GP.

Connectivity of different villages and hamlets is also uneven as usually the *construction or maintenance of connecting roads* to various hamlets and satellite villages are assigned low priority.

### 3. The Gaps

Some critical gaps in the implementing mechanism were identified during this study in village level PRIs.

#### a. In the selection of beneficiaries

- *The Gram Sabha* is supposed to identify and select beneficiaries for many programs and schemes implemented by upper level PRIs and line departments. However, the GS *does not have expertise in participatory methods to categorize the population according to their needs and conditions*. Hence the selection process resorted to is often subjective ad hoc and discriminatory.
- *Presently, in none of the sample villages any mechanism other than the BPL list is used while selection of beneficiaries*. These lists have several discrepancies and its indiscriminate use for beneficiary targeted schemes create more inequity than resolving them.
- PRIs are democratic bodies. It is composed of and managed by elected members. *FDGs revealed that the decisions related to selection of beneficiaries are made more on the basis of electoral arithmetic than overall development concerns*. The prime consideration of elected representatives is to cater to their respective constituencies within village by cornering a greater share of the resource inflow. *Their performance is judged not on the basis of their contribution to equitable distribution of benefits, but by their ability to clinch more for their voters*. Therefore equity cannot be a prime consideration of

the elected representatives. This is a *systemic limitation* of PRIs in assuming role of a development agency responsible for ensuring equity.

- The GP does not keep a list of those left out of different schemes, so as to ensure distribution of benefits by turn. Neither does it maintain a *profile of beneficiaries* of different programs, so that recipient households are not repeat beneficiaries.

(b) Competence to address the Equity issue

- Village level PRIs do not have the competence to classify and categorize the poor according severity and particularity of their poverty. Poverty has many dimensions and each dimension warrants a different development measure. Distribution of assets, benefits and subsidies without categorizing the poor leads to inequity as well as ill targeted programme implementation.
- It is expected that the Gram Sabha as an assembly of all voters in the village would be able to raise their voice for the poor and marginalized population. However, it has failed to emerge as people's institution and to ensure equity in benefit distribution.

(c) Interference

- Often *beneficiaries are selected by upper level PRIs or line departments* and are merely announced in the Gram Sabha. As we have seen earlier, the weaknesses in the village level PRIs functioning has rendered it incapable of holding governmental bureaucracy accountable.
- FDGs disclosed that there is **interference from higher level politicians in the selection process of beneficiaries**. The block level elected representatives do play a role and use different schemes to reward their supporters with benefits. In such a situation maintaining equity of benefit distribution is rather difficult.

## CHAPTER 7 - SUMMARY

### Key Findings and Suggestions

- Looking at the operation of PRIs at the village level it is clear that they lack awareness, perspective, capacity and mechanism to address gender issues effectively.
- PRIs are not sensitized and capacitated to address equity issues in the absence of an effective tools and accountability mechanisms as well as pressure from below.

### Suggestions

Broadly, the competence of PRIs to address Gender and equity issues can be enhanced by attending to the following areas:

1. Continuous sensitization of both the women and men of the village / GP regarding gender issues is essential.
2. The Gram Sabha should be one that includes the women members (the separate GS for women should be done away with) and the women's groups be assigned to plan for the fund allocated for their use.
3. A systematic process of empowerment of the weaker and marginalized sections to demand and achieve a uniform and fair access to resources, benefits and services is necessary to ensure that the marginalized get their dues.
4. Tools and systems need to be put in place at GP level, that ensure proper identification of the poor and a transparent system of an overall display of the various schemes / programs and the beneficiaries.
5. Need to build capacity to mobilise greater resources to extend benefits and services to a greater number of people and reach as many as possible.
6. Capacities also need to be developed for managing and utilising the limited resources more efficiently and to extend benefits & services to targeted population through the use of scientific, standardised and consistent norms for prioritisation of needs and selection of beneficiaries.

# Chapter VIII: Critical Management Capabilities

The 73rd Amendment and the related Guidelines confers on the Gram Panchayat the role of a development agency at the village level, besides its function as a local administrative body. Executing this role expects of the GP certain critical management capacities. In this chapter we study the findings in the 12 sample villages with respect to these management capabilities.

## Planning and Managing Development Initiatives

The important components for undertaking development initiatives are:

1. Collecting and Managing Information
2. Undertaking Participatory Village Planning
3. Resource Mobilization
4. Institutional Convergence
5. Managing Social Aspects
6. Managing NRM / WSD initiatives

### 1. Collecting and Managing Information

Information and data are basic requirements for planning and decision making. Good data, especially base-line data helps understand the current situation and assists in setting goals, objectives and targets for development and progress. When data and information is not available, priority needs will not be identified. There will be mere implementation of activities and poor selection of target beneficiaries. When activities of low priority are implemented, there will be general disinterest in the village as a whole, which will be reflected in low participation and indifference. Only when priority needs be identified and addressed will the people be interested in other developmental initiatives.

To know their situation and the village better, at the Gram Panchayat level, data and information regarding fiscal, human, physical assets, incomes, natural resources etc are required and needs to be collected at (a) individual households (b) the village and GP as a whole (c) the natural resource base and also of (d) services/ schemes / benefits available and availed of. Based on the data obtained, the GP can prepare and maintain the list of identified needs according to priority and needy (potential beneficiaries). Maintaining a list of different schemes implemented, the beneficiary households and their profile will enhance effectiveness of the GP in service delivery. Having factual data of households with particular emphasis on the “Profile of the Poor” is an urgent need. Data and good information is especially important for the many ‘special purpose’, area-specific and target group specific projects that are currently being given attention.

A good data management system is of immense value at the local level for both the GP planners and the villagers as well as the upper level PRIs.

With regard to village level data, its use and management, the following are the findings of this study:

- There is total *lack of awareness* regarding the importance and usefulness of data and information for micro-level planning, implementation of development projects and for its management. There is insufficient sensitization given to the GP regarding the importance of good village level data at their level.
- In the 12 villages of the sample, data is being collected through special household surveys designed for individual programs. This data flows out of village and is used by the different government offices and NGOs. It is the talathi who has the important data regarding landholding, natural resources and thereby socio-economic conditions. Yet, despite the continuous data generation and record keeping by and for various departments that takes place at the village level, the GP that requires this data for its regular use rarely has relevant information for its routine planning and functioning. The reason for this situation is that since planning and distribution of projects are undertaken by the upper level district authorities, and since the GP is not directly involved in planning for the various development schemes in its village (although expected to do so), the GP does not consider itself a unit for data collection and aggregation, nor does it maintain a record of schemes / projects implemented and the list of beneficiaries.
- GPs are unaware of the usefulness of data for generating funds to address their development needs. If the GP collects, updates and keep ready such data which can be useful for different targeted programs, it will be able to mobilize more resources, extend benefits to more people by availing these schemes. Having their own data will also help the GPs to bargain for priority needs from the district and other authorities.
- Data collection requires both technical and financial resources which the GP lacks. Extensive data is already generated at the district and block PRIs, which is collected through household and school surveys. It is essential that the Gram Panchayat becomes party to the process of data collection because information such as BPL list, NREGA registered families other information can easily be integrated. Thus they can create a powerful database that will enrich village level planning. At present the GP does not have adequate expertise to collect data or integrate it.
- For data to be beneficial at the community/village level, it is necessary that the data be owned by the community. Collecting it in a participative manner bears the best results. This is a desirable prerequisite for participatory planning. The process of data collection on its citizens can be well handled by Gram Panchayats that see in it their own empowerment. Handling it in this manner creates a climate of participation and ownership in the PRI operation. In order

### *Information Collection & Utilization by the GP*

*Zada* is the only village of the sample that tried to access and obtain data collected by different government departments for their own use. Besides this it has its own data collection mechanism. *Zada* GP has calculated and recorded Gross Income as well as Per Capita Income of the village for almost 15 years. Similarly, it has maintained data on senior citizens. It has used health data including Infant Mortality Rate collected by Health departments. The GP had used this data for availing of different schemes. It is no wonder that the GP and village has so far secured wide publicity and visibility as a role model and has won 68 different awards.

The GP of *Zada* is also the only village of the sample that uses the computer for administrative purposes. Most of the data is fed, updated and stored and it is planned to make it available online in future.

Interestingly, in another of the sample village (*Kannamwargram*) a computer is available in the Talathi office obtained under Gram Doot scheme and all land documents and records are readily available through it. Strangely, the GP does not use it for storing other of useful data.

to manage participatory data collection, the GP functionaries, sub-committee members and village level staff should be trained in low cost and easy to understand and implement PRA methods that enable the GP to establish its own data generation system.

- The different functional sub-committees of the GP pertain to important sectors such as health care, water; sanitation etc. and each **can generate and maintain sector specific data** at village level. Availability of sector specific data will enable the GP and sub-committees to prepare sectoral plans, set development targets and to develop monitoring indicators and.
- GP need to be trained in using data for planning, decision-making and monitoring purposes.
- The Natural resources database is not available at the GP level. Having this will assist the GPs to avail of the various schemes especially the NREGA.

*Maintenance of data management system* by the Gram Panchayat can have the following impacts:

1. Ownership of GP of the data it collects, especially if it is obtained in a participatory manner.
2. It would motivate the village level PRIs and the community to undertake need based initiatives in a participative manner, thus it would kick-start the participatory planning and development process.
3. Gram Panchayats will begin to take decisions based on data facts which will assist in a better village level planning. The various schemes will reach the respective groups / individuals.
4. A good monitoring system can be set up which will help the GP to improve its performance and efficiency. This whole process will be transparent which will itself encourage more participation.
5. The process of data collection will educate the elected members of GP as well as others of the village.
6. The GP and village can get more visibility and consequently more attention.
7. Having and using data will also help the community to mobilize resources to address the needs.
8. It would generate a data bank needed for comprehensive local-level and macro plans.

## **2. Undertaking Participatory Village Planning**

Tools, mechanisms and competence to undertake village level planning is important for PRIs to fulfill expectations both as administrative and as for implementing development initiatives.

An important task of the PRIs is the preparation of plans to foster overall village development. It is expected that Gram Sabha would list out priorities and assist in the selection of beneficiaries for various programs and schemes. When undertaken in this way, the aspirations of the people would be articulated. Thereafter, village level plans are supposed to be prepared which then could be incorporated in the intermediate plans (block level) and finally be merged into a district plan. The district development plans are expected to be prepared through the institution of the District Planning Committees (DPCs). However, it is imperative to have a village development plan because it is mandatory in the act. When this plan is generated from the people's felt need and perceptions, there will be wholehearted participation and sustainability is assured. In fact, the first task of every village Panchayat should be to have a plan to guide development of the village which should also include protection, regeneration (where required) of the natural resources and management of the eco-space to ensure sustainable development.

In the light of the expectations regarding ability to and undertaking Village Planning, the following are the findings in the sample villages of this study:

- None of the villages in the study sample had an overall village plan to guide the development process. In fact no village had a village level planning mechanism established. The GP representatives totally depend on the development agenda sent from above, rather than prepare a development plan based on the local needs. Thus, *ad hoc* decisions are made based on availability of projects, which are decided at the district level. Since this approach is supply driven and generally time bound, the targeted programs / schemes are often misdirected, lack people's active participation and reach only a selected population who can corner these schemes for themselves. There is thus enormous waste of precious resources of the state.

Hence, creating capable planning machinery at the village level is critical for enabling the Panchayat to discharge its role of a development agency.

- **Lacunae with regard to important aspects with regard to establishing an effective planning mechanism include:**
  - A dream and vision for the village
  - Skills among GP functionaries and village community.
  - Support from the upper level PRIs and government machinery for participatory and qualitative planning
  - Adequate and comprehensive information at the Gram Panchayat level
- **Important Capacity Gaps in terms of planning:**
  - *Inability to set development priorities*

Currently, methods adopted for choice of development initiatives / schemes are informal, supply driven and based on availability of schemes which are designed at the district and state levels, rather than planned on data and information from the base where it is to be applied. Even simple planning techniques for capturing people's perception of needs are not put to use. A listing of needs of the various groups / hamlets and the prioritization of these needs, supported by the appropriate factual data is essential.
  - *Inability to design a single overall development plan*

Village level PRIs are unable to design a single development plan and undertake holistic development as there is little or no coordinating and integrating mechanism involved to bring convergence at the village level. When the village envisions its development based on priorities, and integrates it with the existing resources (as obtained from data and PRA maps), an overall development plan can be generated. None of the sample villages had a village development plan prepared.
  - *Unfamiliarity with participatory tools and planning processes*

PRA tools are low cost and a swift means of data generation and collection. These tools are

extremely useful to embark upon participatory development. However, PRI functionaries are not conversant with simple PRA tools and participatory planning processes. Only in villages with major NGO intervention, do they have some exposure to participatory processes and methods. This is major hurdle in initiating participatory planning process at village level. Participatory planning is important as it holds the key to success and sustainability since it creates a buy-in of all groups of the village.

- ***Lack of expertise to classify the poor***

Village level PRIs particularly lack expertise to plan for the poor, the marginalized and the voiceless. It is necessary that PRIs and the community become conversant with various facets and aspects of poverty. Currently assets and subsidies are distributed without categorizing households on the severity of poverty. Hence, reaching the schemes and services to the intended target population is hit by a lack of clarity on how to prioritize the different vulnerabilities of the poor.

Simple capacities are required to handle tools such as '*wealth ranking*' of all households, so as to identify appropriate categories of beneficiaries for the various schemes.

- ***Deficiencies in planning for socially disadvantaged groups***

Village level PRIs lack perspective and expertise in planning for socially disadvantaged groups such as women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and physically and mentally challenged and senior citizens. Currently the funds and schemes earmarked for these groups are spent as per list of the activities prescribed from above without taking into account specific needs.

### 3. Resource Mobilisation

The next essential capacity after establishing a participatory planning mechanism is mobilization of financial (funds inclusive of material) resources from internal and external sources to implement the planned objectives. Knowledge and skills to mobilize resources are necessary for the PRIs to achieve the planned objectives of governance and development. The study had following observations to note in this regard.

Successive acts and amendments have given substantial powers to PRIs and especially GP to levy various kinds of taxes, duties and charge fees for different services. However, PRIs hesitate to levy and collect taxes. Elected panchayat leaders are reluctant to impose discretionary local taxation for fear of losing future elections as local taxation is often perceived to be regressive. Instead they prefer to rely more on grants from higher level governments.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Shikha Jha, *Panchayats - Functions, Responsibilities and Resources*, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), 2004

It is necessary for PRIs and particularly GP to explore this source of income more effectively and widely. However, one must understand that tax paying capacity of the people depend on the level of development of the village. Financing village development through local taxation is almost inconceivable in current situation. Levying taxes indiscriminately cannot serve the purpose. Hence, GPs have to develop blend of local and external sources of income with view to enable the development of village and thereby end revenue dependency in the long term.

#### **The Gaps and limitations in mobilizing resources for village development**

Absence of a village development plan, identification of priorities and a list of those in need

Need for awareness regarding potential local resources

Need for awareness regarding the various govt. schemes, their criteria and guidelines

Lack of presentation skills among GP functionaries

Weak negotiation skills among GP functionaries while dealing with upper level officials

Less visibility and publicity of Panchayat achievements to make its claim strong

Inability to hold line departments and upper level PRIs accountable

#### **The Fund Resource Possibilities**

Funds for rural development works for the Panchayats are available with the central and state governments. These are 'tied funds' for specific projects and with specific criteria and guidelines and is time bound. Therefore, if the GP depends on government sources, it cannot plan out the expenditure plan according to its needs. Hence, to work out its development plan, the GP needs to have a list of the various projects / schemes available at the center and state levels and will also need to raise resources from other sources. Currently, *GPs are dependent on the government to plan and fund its development* and progress, and have yet to get the vision, perspective and adequate expertise to mobilize resources and funds from sources other than government.

GPs lack mechanisms to take stock of resources that are available from different sources. When the PRIs have a development plan and a list of priorities before it, funds can be raised from various sources such as, centrally sponsored Schemes (CSSs); externally assisted schemes, state plan funds, bilateral projects and the MP and MLA Local Area Development program, besides others. *None of the sample village under study had prepared such an inventory. An overall picture of resource availability is not available with the village level PRIs.*

- *Central Sponsored Schemes (CSSs)* pertaining to 29 subjects are being implemented by different Ministries and Departments of the Central Government. As per the constitutional mandate with respect to the 29 items of the Eleventh Schedule, the three Fs i.e. Functions;

Functionaries and Funds have to be devolved to the PRIs for planning and implementation of schemes pertaining to the particular sector. In Maharashtra 18 functions and functionaries have been transferred to PRIs since the initiation of Panchayat Raj. Yet the State Government and Central Ministries have not taken concrete steps to integrate PRIs in their strategy for planning and implementation of CSSs under their purview. These schemes continue to be implemented departmentally with the some exceptions. When the GP is informed, it can promptly avail of these schemes according to its plan.

- In the present development scenario, a large number of specific programs and projects are funded through the government with external assistance. These externally funded projects are an important financial source for village development. These specific projects are designed and formulated within the conceptual and structural framework determined by the donors. It is difficult for GP to obtain funds through these donors directly and independently. These projects also lay down elaborate conditions for planning, implementation and monitoring and

### *Examples of generating local funds*

*Zada GP demonstrates an innovative way of utilizing provisions of the Panchayat Raj to mobilize resources locally. It raises an annual income of more than Rupees five hundred thousand through running a Kondwada (animal lock-up) creatively and efficiently. For livestock that are caught straying, the GP gives incentive of Rs. 50 per animal to those who arrest them. It is no wonder that people from far off villages bring livestock trespassing in their areas to Zada. If the owner of the livestock does not contact the GP within 11 days, the GP can auction animals. Most of the animals that are brought to this lock up usually belong to the nomadic tribes from Rajasthan. Obviously, it is difficult for them to know the whereabouts of their arrested animals and contact Zada GP within stipulated period!*

*Again Zada shows an effective way of building micro enterprises through capacited SHGs of both men and women. This has not only increased income of the individual members of these SHGs but also enabled the GP to levy a tax on some of the thriving enterprises.*

*Zada GP has also developed vermiculture, compost plant within its campus to generate a recurring income.*

*Three GPs out of twelve villages under study have constructed and rented shopping complexes.*

BOX  
28

require discipline and adherence set by norms and other parameters from the user agencies. Following such discipline and norms set by externally funded projects would require change in the current work culture of GP, which is largely evolved to meet local administration within meager resources. Further, GP lack proper planning and implementing skills. It will require an enhanced functional efficiency and discipline to avail funds through this source.

- GP lack perspective, lack ideas, and imagination to use their assets for increasing monetary returns. They also lack expertise, tools and mechanisms to undertake livelihood generation and enterprise building programs. Revenue in the form business tax of GP can be increased if it can facilitate micro enterprise development within the GP village/s.
- There is great scope for GPs to use its land more effectively to accrue additional income. Several GPs of the sample face shortage of land to initiate rent generating enterprises like market complexes or market area.

In general the GPs depend on the upper level PRIs to decide on the projects to be implemented. They *lack the perspective and ideas to increase their revenue* externally or from local resources. Their local fund and revenue raising capability needs to be enhanced through capacitating them particularly in following areas.

- Increasing local resource mobilization through taxes, user charges and contributions.
- Innovative means of financing through cess, BOT, Community contribution and borrowings.
- Promoting development by tapping of funds from local philanthropists, NRIs, temples, non-resident villagers, the *corporate sector and NGOs*.

### 3. Managing Social Capital

Social capital in any society is an asset that is essential for progress and development. The strength of a development agency is in its people. Hence, a development agency needs to have the perspective, *competence to build, strengthen, utilize and manage its social capital*. It is necessary to institutionalise participation and capacitate the community to sustain benefits and impacts of the development initiative. Therefore, the *social component forms the most crucial aspect of the development process*. When focus is given to the technical and physical aspects and neglect or belittle the social components, sustainability is threatened. Social capital is important as it strengthens democratic decentralization.

PRIs are enriched when CBOs have been formed either by development agencies under various projects or spontaneously generated. The former are generally trained / have their capacities developed for the respective project / activity, and can assist the PRI in the related sector.

The following findings of the study are significant in this regard:

- As mentioned earlier social capital is particularly weak in the sample villages, except in Zada. Various user groups formed during implementation of different schemes / projects are largely defunct. This indicates that the PRIs are particularly weak in social capital. This also indicates that the agencies that develop capacities of the local CBOs need to work out continuity mechanisms, so that these groups sustain the activities initiated.
- Another general finding is that within a village is that there are very few members from the marginalized and very poor households that belong to CBOs. Little or no efforts are made to organize the disadvantaged, the marginalized and the excluded groups / communities. PRIs are not sensitized to develop and strengthen organizational structure below GP and Gram Sabha level.
- There is a *need for perspective building* among both PRIs and CBOs in this regard. And a need for continuous capacity building of the local CBOs and PRI members.

#### 4. Institutional Convergence

Besides the PRIs and their sub-committees, there are various CBOs in the village. These have been formed by agencies during the implementation of various projects as demanded by project guidelines. Often the different agencies / donor projects may not consider the GP as the implementation agency hence look to formation of other CBOs for the same. Some such CBOs are VWC, JFM and FPC exists as a result of watershed development interventions and Joint Forest Management (JFM) programmes. Here, the PRIs are unable to bring about local institutional synergy. One of the main reasons for the CBOs not being linked with the GP is that the GP is considered (and rightly so) a

BOX  
29

#### *By-passing GPs for being 'political'*

*Shendwad Manjari, one of the Gram Panchayats of the sample under study, has one hamlet known as Baripada. The FPC has been formed in the hamlet under JFM and had done outstanding work in the protection and regeneration of forest. However, the FPC has no working relationship with the GP, though it was formed in a Gram Sabha. It has maintained distance from the GP to avoid "politics". Further, its focus and area of activity is not the whole area of the GP but only the area belonging to the hamlet. This GP comes under PESA as it falls within the tribal area, yet PRIs have no functional relationship with the FPC. The forest department also prefers to work with the FPC rather than GP, which is viewed as political body ridden with corruption and strife.*

political body that is ridden with corruption and strife. (Please see the Box-29 - Avoiding GP for being 'political', p. 80)

In a large number of forest areas Joint Forest Management Committees or Forest Protection Committees (FPC) are operational. These committees are formed by the forest department and consist of villagers inhabiting the area adjacent to the forest. The forest guard is also a member of the committee. They are expected to protect and regenerate the forest. The JFMC / FPC are entitled to share the revenues collected from the sale of certain forest produce. However, these JFM committees / FPCs have very little or no linkages with PRIs. It is necessary to develop this linkage so that not only the Panchayats are empowered but that conflicts between PRIs and such committees are avoided. One of the difficulties is that most of the forest areas do not coincide with the Panchayat boundary.

- There is little institutional convergence at the village level. Moreover, the PRIs are unable to facilitate convergence with the CBOs that come into existence through development initiative taken by external agency. In this manner, each agency / CBO works in parallel and diverts energies. Often when these externally formed projects are completed, the CBOs formed are not in a position to continue unless a continuous touch is maintained.
- SHG formation and management is an important managerial capacity for the development agency, especially in rural areas. The formation of SHGs is generally dictated by directives from upper levels and the various village level agencies are required to form women's SHGs. A main purpose for formation of SHGs is availing of loans, subsidies and the different govt. schemes. Consequently these SHGs do not go beyond this and therefore cannot be sustained. Moreover, as each village level agency is expected to form SHGs, there is often a duplication of members between the different groups. There is also a minimum of contact, coordination and cooperation between groups. This defeats the very purpose of empowering women to improve their situation.
- In the sample villages where there is no NGO intervention (except in Saskal and Zada), it was found that there are few SHGs and these are rather weak.
- There is an urgent need to prepare working models on institutional convergence with special reference to Gram Sabhas, functional committees as also SHG formation between PRIs, CBOs and the different development agencies. In this situation it will be ideal for the GP and village to prepare their development plan and contact the service providers (development agencies, line departments and other donors) to contribute towards the village designed development plan.

## 5. Managing NRM and WSD initiative

*Panchayat Raj* initiated a process that involves the GPs in the development of their village and this includes natural resource and watershed management. The Hariyali guidelines further entrusted

the role of implementing agency to *Gram Panchayats* and other PRIs for watershed development. The more recent NREGA too now permits work provided on soil and water conservation measures within the GP jurisdiction. All these are major NRM activities that are placed with the PRIs.

An important *Gram Panchayat* function envisaged in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment relates to the water sector. Several subjects included in the Eleventh Schedule, which are supposed to be transferred to PRIs, are NRM related functions. These include minor irrigation, water management and watershed development (Entry-3), drinking water (Entry-11), fisheries (Entry-5) and maintenance of community assets (Entry-29).

However, mere provisions in the Panchayat Act are not enough. Very few GP members know about their role of Panchayats in developing, managing and sustaining natural resources. It is therefore important to assess capability of village level PRIs to manage and sustain the NRM initiative. The following issues were identified in this regard during this study.

#### Issues that affect the role of PRIs in handling NRM projects

- GP and PRIs are still perceived by their functionaries and village community primarily as administrative bodies. Executing administration and NRM / watershed development functions by the same body is always difficult as each requires a distinct approach, culture and capabilities. Confusion among the functionaries and participating communities about the primary role of this body can lead to application of one approach to the other. *GP functionaries need to have clarity of their twin role, the requirements demanded of each role and its equal importance prior to initiation of any NRM initiative.* As has been found in

BOX 30	<p><i>Greater awareness of GP's role in NRM among IGWDP villages</i></p> <p><i>In the sample villages where WSD projects were implemented the people are more aware of the new role of PRIs in NRM. Consequently, the trend of VWC members taking part in GP elections and getting elected can be seen in such villages. The sarpanch of Kannamwargram, Shirasgaon Ghati and Mandva, where IGWDP projects were implemented in the past, have a VWC background.</i></p> <p><i>The majority of Sarpanch and GP committee members did not have any association with NGO facilitated watershed development projects in the past, hence they have yet to understand the new role entrusted on the GPs with regard to NRM.</i></p>
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some Sihrasgaon Ghati, Mandva and Kannamwargram, VWCs have been established to manage the watershed development and management. Currently these VWCs are independent bodies and are not officially linked with the GP. These would perform better if the VWC functions as an official sub-committee of the GP, which would remove the burden of the GP functioning with a dual strategy.

- GPs since the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment have many duties to perform. Record keeping and accounting tasks have increased enormously. Gram Sevaks are already overloaded with many diverse responsibilities of revenue, development and administration that it is difficult for them to find the time required for a quality and process-intensive program like NRM or watershed development. Unless the GP has sufficient and exclusive staff to carry out its administrative functions efficiently, it would be *difficult for it to shoulder any additional responsibility of implementing development programs.*

### Capability Requirements to Manage NRM Projects

- NRM involves establishing and enforcing regulatory mechanism to utilize natural resources efficiently and judiciously. Such a mechanism can only be sustained if it results in behavioural change of the community. Realizing such behavioural change involves **adoption of various consensus building and conflict resolution strategies**. Village level PRIs, being political bodies have their own ways and methods of arriving at a consensus or resolving conflicts. However, *they will have to unlearn and switch to more appropriate and effective methods and strategies* while implementing NRM and development projects.
- Social mobilization is crucial for sustainable outcomes of any NRM project. PRIs do not have adequate skills and expertise for social mobilization and capacity building of community and being a political body it is difficult to cultivate it. Hence it is helpful to have a sub-committee that has its capacities developed for social mobilization for the implementation and management of NRM
- Sustainability of any NRM initiative depends on its ability to address gender and equity issues. As noted earlier village level **PRIs are not sufficiently capable and sensitized to address gender and equity issues** in development process effectively and will need to develop these capabilities in order to discharge its envisaged role.
- At present village level PRIs lack operative mechanisms and lacks means of ensuring inclusion, transparency and accountability. GP functioning, despite legal provisions and guidelines, is far from being transparent and collective. In most villages cliques of a few powerful individuals have taken over the actual control of the GP. At the same time the *Gram Sabha has not emerged as an effective accountability mechanism* as envisaged in Panchayat Raj. It has also not achieved capacities to make the “decision making process” participatory. *PRIs will need to develop the culture of participation, transparency and accountability* in its functioning for successful implementation of NRM.

- For any PRI led NRM to be successful a complementary and supportive mechanism will however be required in the form of user groups to create stake and ownership at the sub-Gram Panchayat level to maintain pressure on Gram Panchayats to address critical concerns.
- The success of NRM projects lies on proper technical application, for which the skills and expertise are not with the PRI. While technical support can be obtained from experts, (as a TSO or a facilitating agency) it is essential that the latter work together with the community who also know their ground reality. Simultaneously developing local skills will ensure ownership and the sustainability through maintenance by capable locals.
- In order to manage a good and efficient system of record keeping for reporting and accountability, NRM projects require the use of IT software. PRIs are especially deficient in the use of software for managing projects. The success of NRM projects lies on proper technical application, for which the skills and expertise are not with the PRI. While technical support can be obtained from experts, (as a Technical Support Officer [TSO], or a facilitating agency) it is essential that the latter work together with the community who also know their ground reality. Simultaneously developing local skills will ensure ownership and the sustainability through maintenance by capable locals.

## PRIs – Their Capabilities and Constraints and Alternatives

- Development is a complex process. Agencies that facilitate this process require distinct social skills as an organisation. Though PRIs and GPs have been assigned this role by Panchayat Raj act and subsequent guidelines, they lack these set of skills. For any development agency to undertake and implement any major initiative, many tasks have to be performed, each demand a distinct set of skills. For example, different sections within the community have to be classified to make development effort pro-poor and pro-disadvantaged. This involves employing specific tools to identify satisfactorily the different layers of society and their specific issues and concerns. Further, such identified sections have to be organised to initiate social action. The agency has to obtain participation of the concerned target group through awareness generation and capacity building.
- It is difficult for any organization or body that is not exclusively dedicated to act as development agency to imbibe or develop all these skills from within. Basically GPs are local governing bodies and expecting that these become transformed into competent development agencies is a tall order.
- Apart from the difficulty of developing in-house capacity as a development organization that addresses social concerns, there are certain inherent constraints for GPs to act independently. Being an elected body, the GP members are not permanent. Besides, they are primarily accountable to their constituency and not to the target groups of any development project. The GP members representing different wards may have electoral interests that may clash with

objectives of various development initiatives. Further, any agency that facilitates development requires persons with technical skills and social aptitudes. Being a political and elected body, the GP will generally does not have persons with such skills interested in politics.

- Being representative democratic bodies PRIs and GPs are better suited to oversee the local development process. Entrusting these bodies with the primary responsibility of development initiatives such as watershed development, drinking water distribution system and other similar projects, though logical and desirable, is impractical. However, to enable PRIs to perform this role effectively, an appropriate organizational set up would need to evolve at the village level that maintains primary responsibility of oversight of all projects with GP. This model should enable it to initiate and manage long term development initiatives that continue beyond the term of the GP.
- The PRI and GP can play an important role by working in tandem with competent development institutions. Considering its primary administrative focus GP can jointly implement development projects with specific village level team or body selected through Gram Sabha. This team can have persons with greater social and technical skills or have potential for the same. This dedicated body can be adopted as a sub-committee reporting to the GP and accountable to Gram Sabha. Such a committee is empowered when it receives the necessary skills and technology through services from an external agency. PRIs may also undertake and implement development projects by outsourcing components of social mobilization and capacity building of community. Technical skills can be accessed from the various line departments, the Technical Resource Organization identified by the ZP or any other skilled institution, but always when the community is sufficiently mobilized. This model will integrate both concerns, viz. strengthening PRIs and ensuring development. It will provide a mechanism to overcome limitations, constraints and capacity gaps of PRIs in playing prime role in local development. Thus PRIs can effectively facilitate the development process at the village level.

## CHAPTER 8 - SUMMARY

### *Main findings*

- *Managing Data and Information: Relevant data is rarely available at GP for its own use. It is the result of a lack of awareness and perspective about criticality of information collection and use. Besides this, GPs does not have appropriate skills and systems to collect data or compile and integrate existing data. Capacitating GP in information collection especially using participatory and rapid appraisal tools, and its utilization and management is crucial to enable the GP to perform its role as a village development agency.*
- *Undertaking Participatory Village Level Planning: The PRIs lack an overall dream and vision for their GP. Hence are unable to set priorities. Familiarizing them with PRA tools would help make the village plan participatory and which would be acceptable to the majority of inhabitants. They need to be inclusive and equity and gender sensitive so that benefits reach the targeted households.*
- *Resource Mobilization: There is an over dependency on the government to design the plan and provide the resources for the development of the village. Hence there is little initiative in identifying the potential resources within the village. Obtaining their own resources will help the GP be more independent and realize its development vision according to their priorities.*
- *Managing Social Capital: Developing human resources is key to sustainable development. Capabilities of as many of the inhabitants needs to be developed. Special attention to be given to including women and the marginalized groups as as to ensuring making development participatory.*
- *Institutional Convergence: Since the village community is one, sub-dividing the community into different committees by the different agencies that provide services only distracts and diverts the attention the GP to handle the development process of the village.*
- *Managing NRM and watershed development projects: Though Panchayat Raj act and subsequent guidelines have assigned GP pivotal role in NRM, same is not perceived by the functionaries and even community. NRM involves behavioural change and to facilitate such change GP would need distinct skills and capabilities.*
- *Model to overcome capacity constraints: Lack of social and technical skills to mobilise and capacitate community is a major hindrance for PRIs to perform pivotal role in local development. This capacity gap is also result of inherent constraints of PRIs as elected governing body. Facilitating village level body trained with appropriate skills as a sub-committee of GP can provide effective mechanism to overcome critical capacity constraints of GP.*

## Chapter IX : Conclusions and Suggestions

The 73rd amendment set off an important makeover of rural governance and development through the Panchayat Raj process. However, the ground level view of its operation revealed through the findings of this study suggests that this change process is too complex to sustain merely on the basis of constitutional provisions. This final chapter presents an overall view of the study findings regarding the village level PRIs in operation to arrive at main conclusions and exact points of action in furthering process initiated by Panchayat Raj.

### A. Summary of the Main Findings

1. Panchayat Raj provides systems and mechanisms with potential to ensure efficient, transparent, accountable governance and development. While some villages have achieved considerable success within the existing Panchayat Raj structure, many, if not most lag behind. Analysis of the factors and strategies that determine the success show that the inherent potential of Panchayat Raj is realised when a 'development ethos' is evolved within the village.
2. Though PRIs have been assigned pivotal role in undertaking development in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment setting, the study found that the same is not perceived by the GP functionaries as well as the community. As traditionally considered, GPs continue to be seen primarily as administrative bodies. This is the result of a lack of awareness among the involved actors. For GPs to perform the expanded role envisaged, both community and the GP body would first need to be aware of all that the new role entails.
3. The GP is the basic executive mechanism provided with increasing functions and powers under the Panchayat Raj. Issues related to its operation therefore become crucial. The findings suggest that though assigned a greater role, GPs are not adequately capacitated and supported. Unless this basic executive structure is capacitated to function properly, it would be difficult for GP to successfully implement full scale development projects. Galvanizing and activating the whole GP body and its organs to operate in a collective and systematic manner would necessitate efficient basic executive mechanisms for realizing the objectives of Panchayat Raj.
4. 73rd amendment and subsequent acts provide several mechanisms to ensure transparent, responsive and accountable governance at the village level. However, the existing transparency, participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms are not effectively functional, mainly because there is *no mechanism below the GP and Gram Sabha* level to enable a community to exert pressure on village-level PRIs. The village community is not aware nor capacitated enough to make the governing functions more transparent and accountable.
5. As Panchayat Raj envisages the role of a development agency for PRIs, its competency to address effectively the sensitive issues of gender and equity becomes critical. Village-level PRIs lack the perspective, sensitivity, capacity and a practical mechanism to address

gender issues effectively. GPs are not sensitized and capacitated to address equity issues in distribution of services, benefits, accessibility of resources, the especially in the absence of effective accountability mechanisms and pressure from below. PRIs need to go beyond symbolic treatment to gender and equity issues in governance and development. It will require them to develop issue-specific sensitivity and capacity to tackle complexities. However, these issues can get priority and attention only if the voice of marginalised is strong.

6. A facilitating agency requires certain management capacities for initiating, implementing and sustaining any development initiative. *PRIs* lack skills and mechanisms in specific areas such data collection and use, planning, resource mobilisation, management of social capital. The capacity and skill-building in these key management areas is essential prior to entrusting PRIs the role of a development agency. However, there are some inherent constraints for GPs to act as full fledged development agencies. Cutting across all the capacity areas, GPs are mainly weak in social and technical skills to analyse, mobilise and capacitate community for planned development. Hence, there is a need to evolve a working mechanism from within to facilitate local development.

## **B. Specific Challenges and Suggested Responses**

Overall perusal of the findings of the study suggests specific challenges before village-level Panchayat Raj process. They are the result of certain issues in the operation of PRIs. The objectives of Panchayat Raj will not be realised unless the issues that negatively impact the overall performance of PRIs are addressed. These challenges warrant adoption of a specific set of strategy and actions. The table lists these challenges, issues involved and suggested response. (Ref. Table No. 2, P. 89)

## **C. A twin-track capacity building strategy to enable Panchayat Raj operation**

Glancing through above mentioned challenges and issues, it is obvious that all these factors were anticipated by the Panchayat Raj and provisions were made to address them. The core issue and challenge before us is how to make the systems that are excellent on paper operative on the ground. Basically, the systems and mechanisms are either not working or not put into practice at all, as the involved key actors and the community involved in the process are not adequately capacitated.

**Table 2: Issues, Challenges and Suggested Action**

Sr. No.	Issues	Challenges	Key	Strategy	Suggested Action
I	Functionaries as well as villagers perceive role of GP limited to administration	Changing the mind-set of both GP functionaries as well as the villagers to accept development of their village as their responsibility.	Understanding their role and opportunity (GP & Gram Sabha) for designing the development of their village besides handling general administration.	Motivation of both GP functionaries and villagers and create awareness regarding the new possibilities of village development.	Training & exposure for GP members, CBO officials and hidden decision makers (both men and women) in the community  Using IEC material for mass awareness
II	Inactive members & non-functioning committees. The Dominating Few	Spark interest of GP & committee members in common priority issues	Develop capabilities to address priority issues that benefit the majority of the local households	Form subject specific committees from GP representatives and others selected from Gram Sabha according to area of interest and their strengths.  Rally all HHs of the GP around common priority interests and concerns and create awareness regarding the responsibility of the GP for the same.	Provide training & exposure to members of GP committees & skills to prioritize and implement developmental activities.  Provide subject specific knowledge & skills to committee members  Facilitate formation of supportive informal subject committees comprising trained local persons  Activate and train the Social Audit Committee to perform its function.

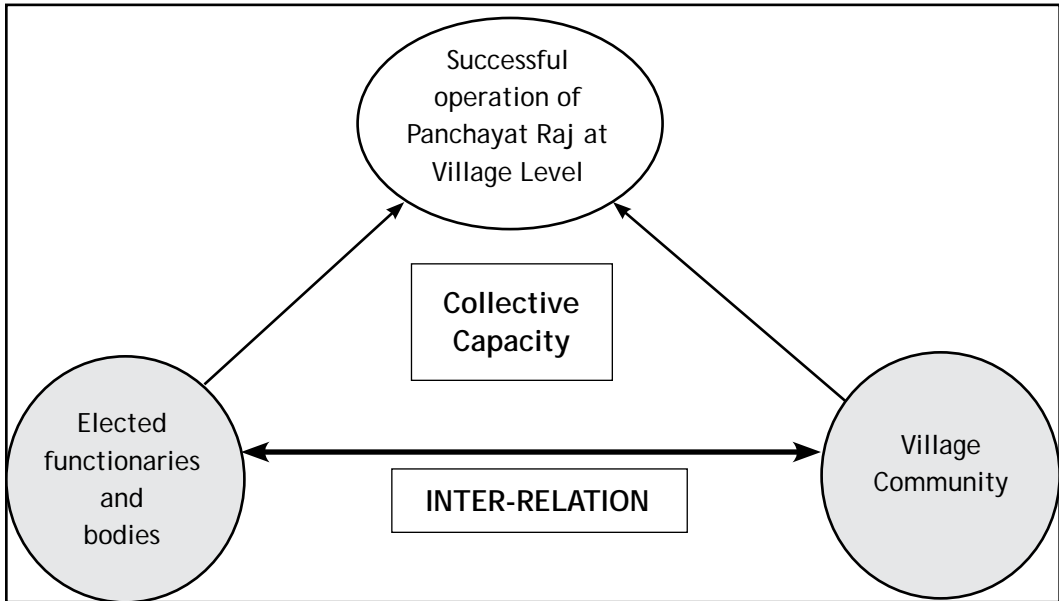
Sr. No.	Issues	Challenges	Key	Strategy	Suggested Action
III	Projects are implemented with very little or no information available with the Gram Sabha and village/s	Transparency and accountability to the Gram Sabha and GP villages (of the Group GP)	Village/s of GP to be aware of their right to be informed and of mechanisms for transparency & accountability that should be followed.	Information of all projects to be provided to all GP villagers.  Social Audit Committee to be established	Displaying 'Citizen's Charter' & similar provisions in attractive, simple, legible (and possibly in pictorial) form.  Social Audit Committee to be trained to obtain information from all sections of the village.  Agenda for conducting Gram Sabhas to include general reporting of details of project implemented; selection of beneficiaries etc. (rather than follow the agenda prescribed from upper level GP).
IV	Gender and equity issues not considered a concern, hence do not feature on the GPs concerns.	Mainstream sensitivity to gender and equity in all GP workings.	Village / GP is considered progressive when all sectors of the village (including women and the marginalized poor) are actively engaged in the development process.	Building capacity of women & the marginalised poor to effectively participate in their & the village progress.  Tools and mechanisms for inclusiveness are used in the GP functioning and project implementation.	Training of GP members for gender & equity sensitisation  Develop tools (for project preparation, selection, etc as well as for assessment of GP functioning) that are gender and equity inclusive.  Organise and develop capacities of women and marginalized poor for their active involvement in the development process.

Sr. No.	Issues	Challenges	Key	Strategy	Suggested Action
V	Development and progress of the GP village/s is considered the responsibility of the government/ higher level PRIs/ other development agencies.	The community begins to realize that the responsibility for progress is sustained only when it begins within (the person, households, village/GP) and that they can realize their growing dreams.	The GP & village understand their situation and potential (needs and priorities, the resources -latent human capital, financial possibilities, natural resource base, their ability to attract funds...) and the willingness to materialize their vision/ dream.	Building critical capacities and skills of PRI functionaries and bodies in the key management areas  Engage the community (through organization into CBOs) for active involvement through motivation and use of tools.  Community / GP can develop their village according to their priorities and pace.  GPs have a team with social skills & technical know-how to approach as required (within or outside the GP).	Identify capacity gaps among GP members & sub-committees and CBOs.  Prepare a village level developmental plan.  Facilitate organisation of village level bodies responsible for planning & development (Comprising of both elected & non-elected capacitated persons with the aptitude and interest) through Gram Sabha, and impart to them the required skills.  Have the required tools and mechanisms in place for planning, implementation and monitoring of developmental activities / process.

Two main factors seem to determine the operational success of the Panchayat Raj system on the ground.

- a. Competency<sup>4</sup> of elected functionaries and bodies
- b. Capability<sup>5</sup> of village community

Fig. 4: Determinants of operational success



4. Here 'competency' includes awareness, willingness, individual and collective skills, capacities and mechanisms.

5. Capability' includes awareness, willingness, organisational capacities and mechanisms.

## Need of twin track strategy

The GP functionaries and the community are two main entities at the village level *Panchayat Raj* operation. Translating various empowering provisions of the act into reality require certain capabilities among these two prime entities. Their capacities are interdependent, mutually facilitating and catalytic. Where the GP does not deliver the expected deliverables on the ground, the result is weakness / lacunae in either one of them or both together. However excellent any system provided under Panchayat Raj may be, it cannot become operational if either functionary or the community lacks capability.

As of now, the focus of the government led capacity building strategy is on elected functionaries alone and little effort is being made to capacitate the village community as a whole. Further, even this capacity building effort is limited to providing one time training to the Sarpanch, Deputy Sarpanch and elected members. Just one training of the elected functionaries (and generally just a few of them attend), cannot equip them to initiate and sustain the complex change process involved in the genuine operation of Panchayat Raj system.

Therefore any strategy aimed at activating and making the system operative at village level will necessarily have to focus equally and simultaneously on both entities, for one cannot underestimate the mutually supportive relationship of the two in the process of making Panchayat Raj systems work at the village level. (See the Figure no.-4- Determinants of operational success)

## Process of making Panchayat Raj operational

The process enabling successful operation of Panchayat Raj requires the simultaneous capacitating of elected functionaries and the bodies (subject committees, GP committee, other CBOs) and the village community (Gram Sabha) is crucial in this process, as shown in Fig.5 below.

Apart from individual skills and capacities, increasing collective capacity of various bodies is important. The functionaries and bodies need to be motivated, committed, sensitized to equity and gender, have role clarity and perspective and realize the importance of working together for their development. Any capacity building initiative should focus on these. Lack of performance related to operational efficiency of these bodies and functionaries are result of lack of awareness, motivation, and sensitivity. Besides, these bodies and functionaries should have the support of a group with specialized mobilization and technical skills so as to execute different administrative and management functions effectively.

Such capacity building can achieve two objectives. It will develop skills of GP and other PRI bodies to effectively execute functions assigned to them as also to increase the capacity to obtain people's participation in both governance and the development process. The resultant outcome is an effective and caring GP whose village is well on the way to progress and development.

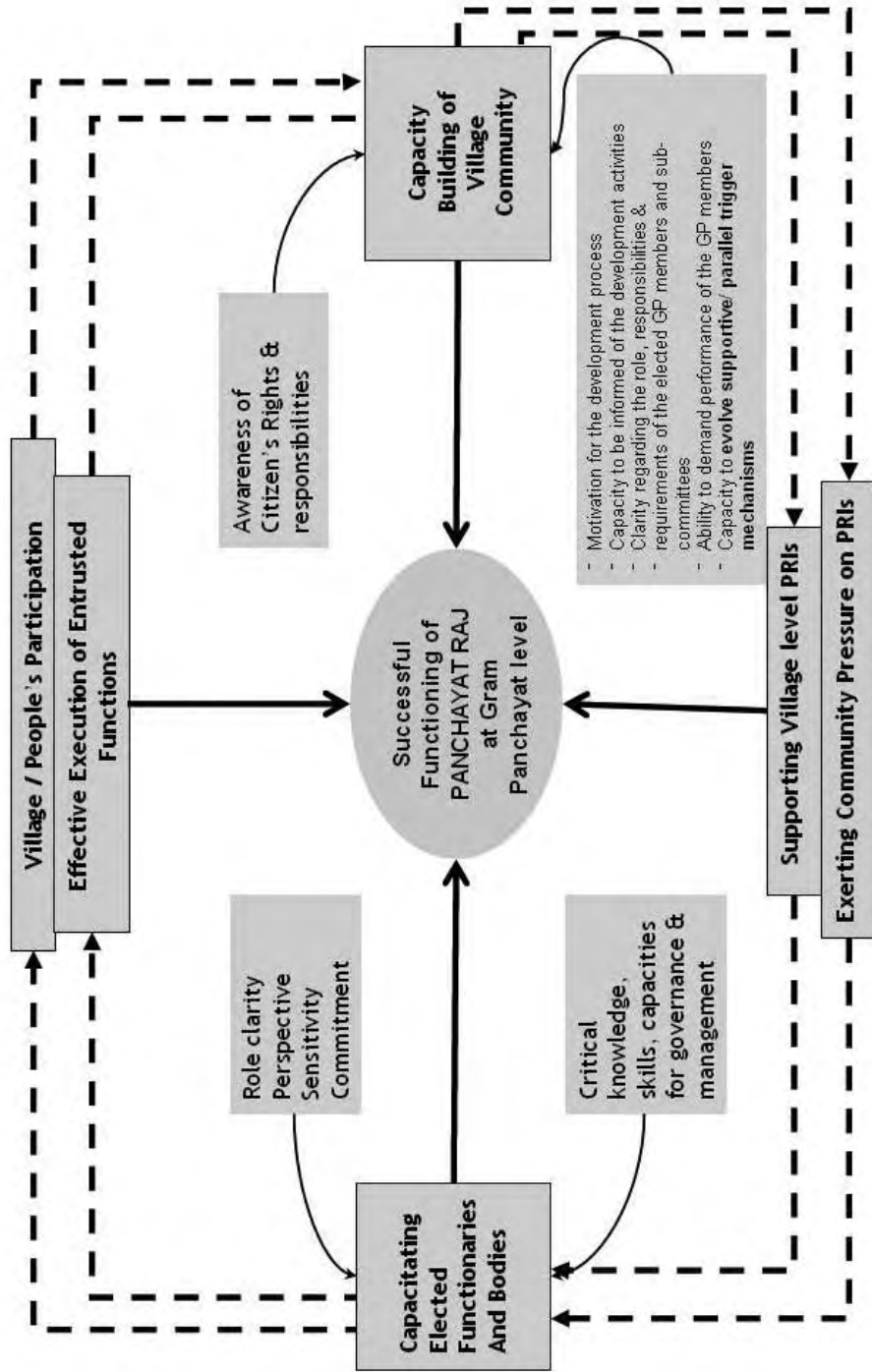


Fig. 5: Enabling Successful Operation of Panchayat Raj

## Awareness

Capacity of the village community needs to be built up along the two aspects: first, for collective awareness of rights and responsibilities as citizens in the community. Second, the community should be strongly motivated for their development. They simultaneously they need to understand the role and responsibilities of the GP and sub-committees. They need to realize the power of the existing mechanisms such as the Gram Sabha and evolve supportive/ parallel trigger mechanisms (such as people's subject committees, ward sabha etc for advancing the development of every section of the village. Making community aware and capable along these two aspects would enable it to assist the elected village level PRIs as well exert pressure on them from below.

To conclude, Panchayat Raj has envisaged an elaborate change process in the realms of local governance and rural development. It has also introduced excellent decentralized systems and mechanisms to enable this change. Some villages have benefited and have achieved enormous success through the broadened role and powers given to village level PRIs. These successful villages are few and far between. Despite the successes, there are several critical issues that urgently need attention at ground level operation of Panchayat Raj. PRIs are unable to grasp the great opportunity and widened role envisaged for it as a development agency due to critical capacity gaps. The core challenge before Panchayat Raj is to make systems work in actuality. Proper functioning of all the existing mechanisms can enable participatory local governance and development under PRIs possible. However, systems and mechanisms are run by humans. Continuous capacitating of the involved human actors will slowly see the positive changes envisaged.

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## Section III : Annexure

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### Annexure I: Profile of Sample Villages

### Annexure II: Accounting & Administrative Information of Select Two GPs

### Annexure I : Profile of Sampled Villages

<i>Region</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>Features</i>
Western Maharashtra	Saskal	Sizable SC and heterogeneous population
	Nibhore	Majority SC population (Lone case in W. Maharashtra)
	Dhawalewadi	Woman Sarpanch and newly constituted Gram Panchayat
Vidarbha	Mandva	Recipient of national awards, NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programme
	Zada	Recipient of many national and state level awards, woman Sarpanch, GP led model of development without any NGO support
	Kannamwar Gram	NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programme, Group Gram Panchayat
Marathwada	Karmad	Bigger village with heterogeneous population
	Aundha Nagnath	Woman Sarpanch, Bigger village with heterogeneous population
	Shirasgaon Gathi	NT Sarpanch, NGO intervention and implementation of major NRM programme, Group Gram Panchayat
North Maharashtra	Chakle	Majority ST population, ST Sarpanch
	Phulsare	Majority ST population, ST woman Sarpanch
	Baripada (Manjari)	Majority ST population, ST Sarpanch, JFM programme

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## Annexure II: Accounting & Administrative Information of Select Two GPs

(Budget, Annual Balance Sheet, Tax Collection, Dates of Gram Sabha)

### I: Chakale (North Maharashtra Region)

#### BUDGET 1/04/2006-31/03/2007

Income		Expenditure	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
Opening Balance	4850	Salaries	10000
House Tax	12000	Bonus	800
Sanitary Tax	5000	Stationary	4000
Street Light Tax	5000	Uniform	600
Gen Water Tax	14500	Honorarium (Sarpanch)	2400
Spl Water Tax	4000	Members Allowance	900
Connection Charges	3500	Water Supply Repairing	11900
Honorarium (Sarpanch)	2400	Water Supply Electricity Charges	10000
Members Allowance	900	Road Repairing	2100
Minimum Wage Subsidy	4800	Sanitation	4000
Samikaran Grant	1500	Street Light Material	4000
Land Tax	3500	Gp Building Repairing	1000
Gaun Khanij Tax	4000	TCL	3500
Stamp Duty	3500	Dead Stock	7000
Donations	2000	Refund Of Deposits	5000
Miscellaneous	1000	SC/ST Provision	4000
Deposits	5000	Dvd Contribution	400
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>72600</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>71600</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>77450</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>5850</b>

#### GRAMSABHA (Chakale)

Date	Attendance
01/05/2006	77
01/08/2006	80
09/08/2006	84
15/08/2006	78
02/10/2006	88
18/11/2006	85
26/01/2007	70
01/05/2007	78

### Chakale (2006-07)

CFC 12th Commission	25203	Purpose of Utilisation
Actual Utilisation	25000	Water Supply Repairing

### Chakale (2006-07)

Credits		Debits	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
Water Fund			
Opening balance	1074	Stationary	1315
Deposit	4700	Maintenance & repairing	11312
Bank Interest	38	T.C.L. (BP)	2538
Special Water Tax	4820	Deposit repayment	4700
General Water Tax	8605	Transfer of funds to VF	2250
Connection Fee	4000	Closing balance	1122

Credits		Debits	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
<b>Village Fund</b>			
Opening balance	2041.78	Salaries	8800
House tax	6845	Members Allowance	840
Sanitary tax	2395	Stationary	1660
Street light tax	2395	Sarpanch Honorarium	2400
Receipts from WF	2250	Handpump repairing	1167
Sarpanch Honorarium	2400	Road repairing	500
Members Allowance	840	Drainage cleaning	3600
Land tax subsidy	969	Street light material	3605
Samikaran subsidy	241	TCL	43
Tribal subsidy	355	SC/ST provision (22.50%)	4800
Donations	1500	Dead stock (tools & plant)	6931
Minimum wages subsidy	3600	District VDF contribution	130
Deposits	10850	Closing balance	2205.78

**Chakale (2006-07)**  
**Tax 2006-07**

Heads		Repayment
House Tax		
Current	7950	
Previous Balance	1000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8950</b>	<b>6845</b>
Sanitary Tax		
Current	2810	
Previous Balance	470	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3280</b>	<b>2395</b>
Street Light Tax		
Current	2780	
Previous Balance	430	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3210</b>	<b>2395</b>
Special Water Tax	4820	4820
General Water Tax	15345	8605
<b>Total</b>	<b>19590</b>	<b>13425</b>

**Phulsare (North Maharashtra)**  
**Budget 1/04/2006-31/03/2007**

Income		Expenditure	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
Opening Balance	8990	Salaries	15000
House Tax	12500	Bonus	1000
Sanitary Tax	7000	Stationary	2000
Street Light Tax	7000	Uniform	0
Gen Water Tax	14000	Honorarium & Allowance (Sarpanch)	5000
Spl Water Tax	4000	Members Allowance	1000
Connection Charges	0	Water Supply Repairing	20000
Honorarium (Sarpanch)	2000	Water Supply (Electricity Charges)	0
Members Allowance	1000	Road Repairing	2000
Minimum Wage Subsidy	7000	Sanitation	5000
Samikaran Grant	2000	Street Light Material	9375
Land Tax	2000	Gp Building Repairing	0
Gaun Khanij Tax	4000	TCL	5000
Stamp Duty	2000	Dead Stock	0
Donations	5000	Refund Of Deposits	5000
Miscellaneous	15500	Sc/ St Provision (22.50%)	25625
Deposits	20000	Dvd Contribution	1000
Auction	2000	Miscellaneous	0
Depreciation (Scrap Sale)	2000		
Other Subsidy	4000		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>104900</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>97000</b>
		Closing Balance	16890
<b>Total</b>	<b>113890</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>113890</b>

## Phulsare (North Maharashtra)

Credits		Debits	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
Water Fund			
Opening Balance	1000	Stationary	0
Deposit	0	Maintenance & Repairing	11595
Bank Interest	0	T.C.L. (BP)	1800
Special Water Tax	4000	Deposit Repayment	0
General Water Tax	11620	Transfer of Funds To VF	0
Connection Fee	0	Closing Balance	3225

### Village Fund

Credits		Debits	
Heads	Amount	Heads	Amount
Opening Balance	1980.64	Salaries	14400
House Tax	9565	Members Allowance	750
Sanitary Tax	3550	Stationary	15565
Street Light Tax	3550	Sarpanch Honorarium	2400
Receipts From Wf	0	Handpump Repairing	1650
Sarpanch Honorarium	2400	Road Repairing	0
Members Allowance	840	Drainage Cleaning	0
Land Tax Subsidy	375	Street Light Material	8950
Samikaran Subsidy	0	TCL	0
Tribal Subsidy	430	Sc/St Provision (22.50%)	0
Donations	0	Dead Stock (Tools & Plant)	0
Minimum Wages Subsidy	7200	District Vdf Contribution	650
Deposits	0		
Gaun Khanij	1500		
Misc.	1000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30410</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30365</b>
		Closing Balance	2025
<b>Total</b>	<b>32390</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>32390</b>