

Participatory Development and Local Self-Government Reform in Rural India; Case Studies in Rajasthan

Der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie

der Universität Leipzig
eingereichte
DISSERTATION
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

doctor rerum politicarum
Dr. rer. pol.

vorgelegt am 1. April 1997

von

von Diplom-Politologe Berthold Kuhn

geboren am 21. November 1965
in Heidelberg

gewidmet

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List of Abbreviations

ACCORD	Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development
ADM	Additional District Magistrate
AGAK	Apna Gaon Apna Kam (our village our work)
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
AVM	Adivasi Vikas Manch
AWARE	Action for Welfare and Awakening in Rural Environment
BC	Backward Class
BAIF	Bharatiya Agro Industries
BDO	Block Development Officer
BINGO	Big non-governmental Organisation
CAPART	Council of Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology
CASA	Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
CDP	Community Development Programme
CII	Confederation of Indian Industries
CM	Cube Meter
DAC	Development Advisory Committee of the OECD
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DM	Deutsche Mark
DPAP	Drought Prone Area Programme
DPD	Desert Development Programme
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
DWARKA	Development of Children and Women in Rural Areas (Programme)
Dy. S.P.	Deputy Superintendent of Police
EAS	Employment Assurance Scheme
ECU	European Currency Unit
EZE	Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe
FICCI	Federation of Indian Commerce and Industries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GP	Gram Panchayat
GVEPSS	Gramin Vikas Evam Paryawaran Sixan Sansthan
i	Number of Indicators
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
ICICI	Indian Council of International Commerce and Industries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme

JD	Jiwan Dhara
JFM	Joint Forest Management
JRY	Jawahar Rozgna Yojana
km	kilometre
KVK	Kshetra Vikas Karykram
LDC	Lower Division Clerk
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MSY	Mahila Samradhi Yojana
n	Number of Cases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRY	Nirband Rashi Yojana
OBC	Other Backward Class
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P.H.C.	Primary Health Care
PHDCCI	Progress, Harmony and Development Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PHDRDF	Progress, Harmony and Development Rural Development Foundation
PHED	Public Health and Engineering Department
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PS	Panchayat Samiti
r	Number of Ranking Variables
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
Rs.	Rupees
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDM	Sub-Division Magistrate
SJSY	Samudic Jalothan Sinchai Yojana
SRY	Sunishchit Rozgna Yojana
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SV	Sansta Vikas
SWACH	Sanitation, Water and Community Health
T.B.	Tuberculosis
TZTK	Tis Zilla Tis Kam
UDC	Upper Division Clerk
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UVM	Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal
ZOPP	Zielorientierte Projektplanung (Objective Oriented Project Planning)
ZP	Zila Parishad

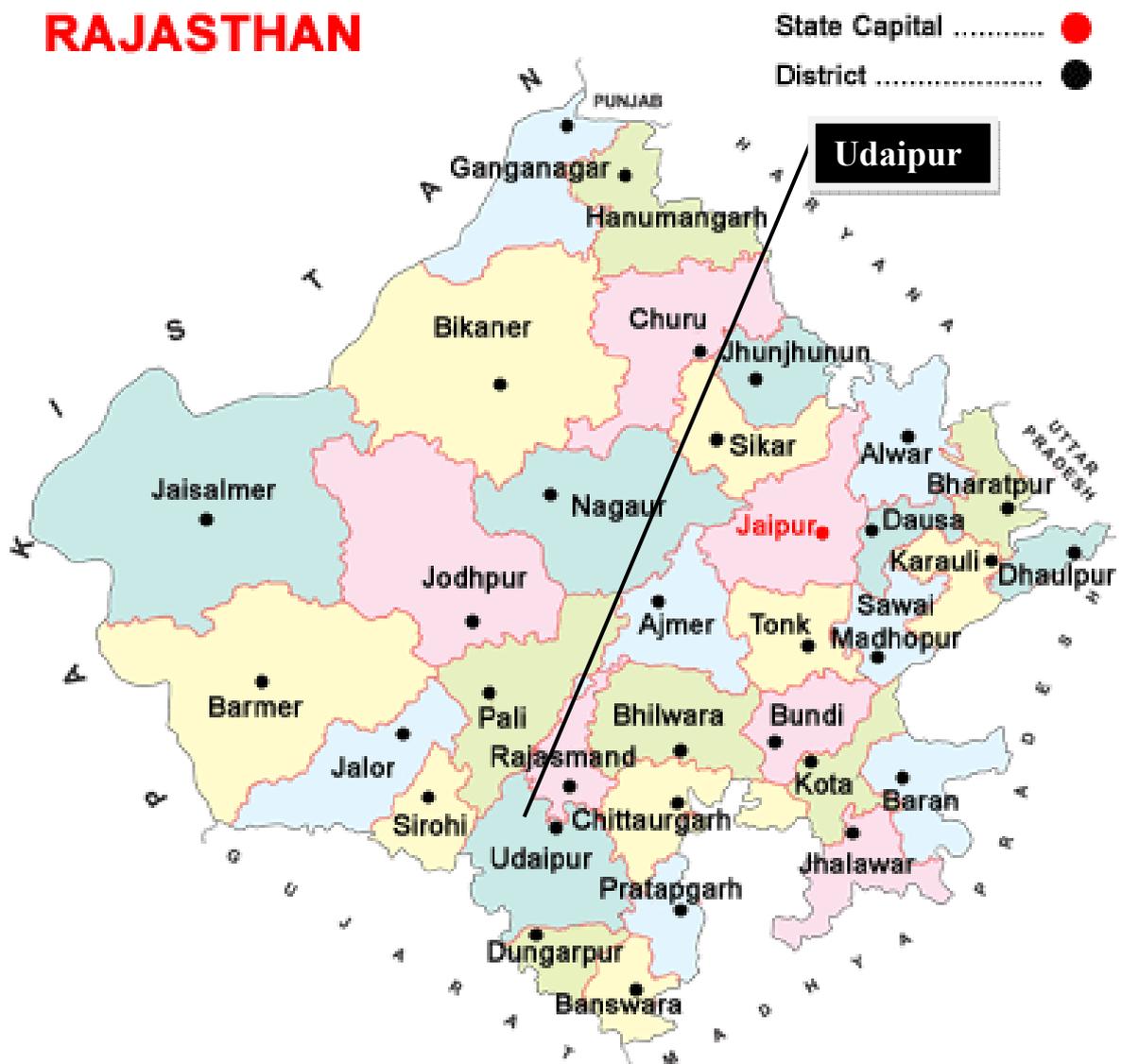
Maps

India

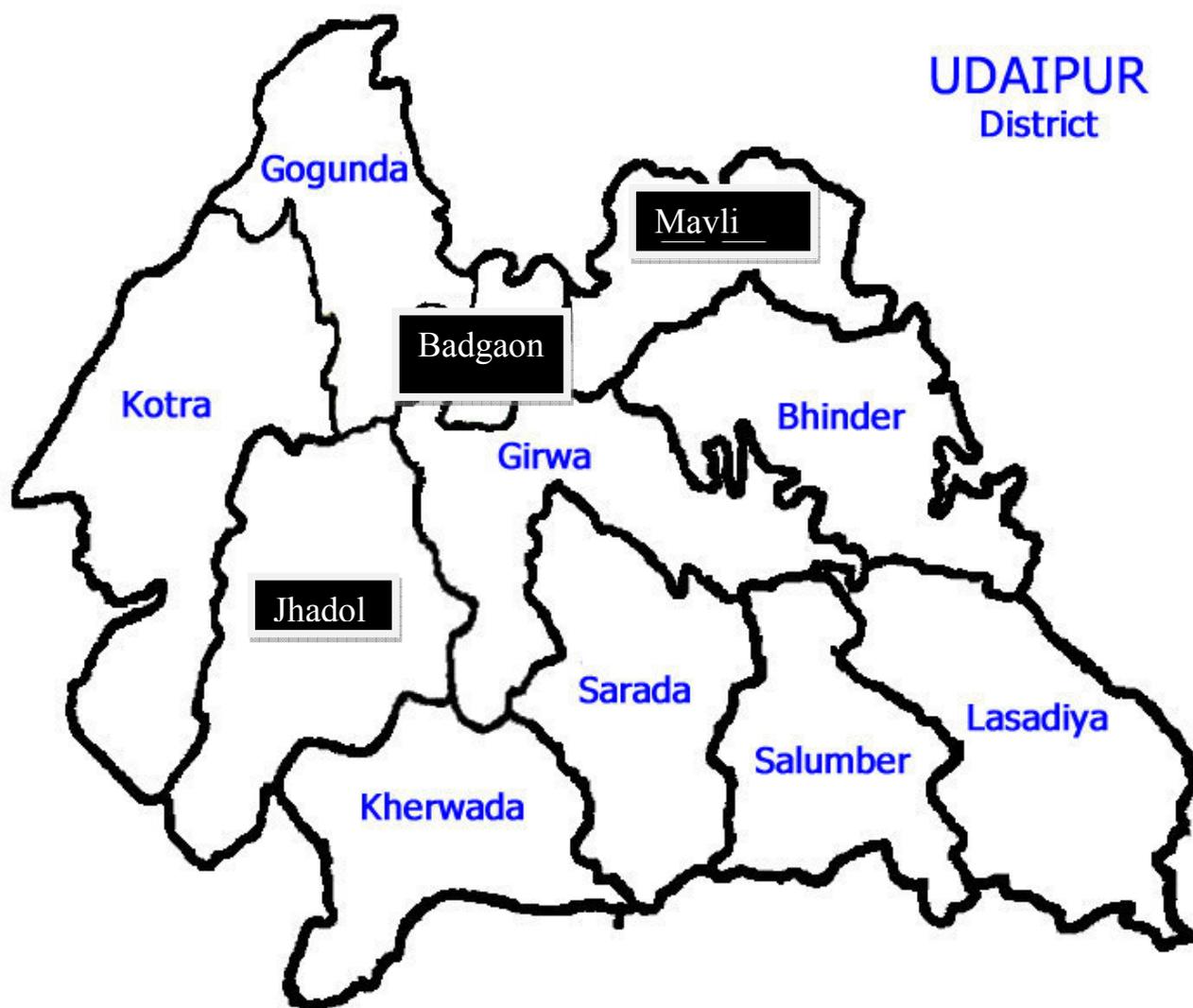
Rajasthan



Rajasthan



Udaipur district of Rajasthan state



Selected blocks (Panchayat Samiti level): Mavli (Mavali), Badgaon and Jhadol

Mavli: Gram Panchayats Nurda and Veerdholia

Badgaon: Gram Panchayats Karia and Dhar

Jhadol: Gram Panchayats Kharkar and Godana

Currency Conversion Rates (October 1996)

1 DM = 23 Indian Rupees

1 ECU (EUR) = 44 Indian Rupees

1 US Dollar = 33, 5 Indian Rupees

Introductory Remarks and Acknowledgements

This study analyses the social and political dynamics of the local self-government reform in rural India on the basis of case studies in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan. I have carried out many interviews with members of local self-government institutions at village, block and district level, with Members of the Legislative Assembly in Rajasthan, with staff of government departments and government development agencies, with representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and with a large number of people in villages in the Udaipur district. This study makes comments on the development commitment and the development activities of local self-government institutions, donor agencies, government agencies and NGOs. However, I do not purport to evaluate the work of institutions, organisations or individuals.

I put particular emphasis on an independent research. Short term assignments as Technical Adviser and savings from a two years assignment with the European Commission in New Delhi made it possible that no attempt had to be made to receive any financial support for any part of the research period. Doing my research, I have tried my very best to cross-check information wherever possible and to balance my views in discussions with competent persons.

I am grateful to my professors, mentors and research colleagues in India and Germany who provided me with the necessary guidance: Prof. Dr. Hartmut Elsenhans from the University of Leipzig, Prof. Dr. Subrata K. Mitra from the Ruprecht-Karls-University of Heidelberg, Prof. Dr. R.B. Jain from the Delhi University, Prof. Dr. Arun Chaturvedi from Mohanlal Sukaria University Udaipur and Prof. Dr. Veedhan Sudhir from Vidhya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur. I wish to express my deepest thanks to Ms. Shamata Seth in particular, and Mr. Mahesh Achariya, who supported my field research in the Udaipur district with great motivation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the work of Dr. George Mathew and his colleagues from the Institute of Social Sciences in New Delhi who monitor and document the Panchayati Raj reform in India and, thus, provide great help to any research on the subject. I am also grateful for the many useful discussions, the moral support and the help I received from Mr. Ranjit Singh, Vidhya Bhavan Society, Udaipur; Mr. Olaf Handloegten, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Manila; Dr. Justus Richter, Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, New Delhi, Dr. Klaus Voll, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, New Delhi; Mr. Manuel Schiffler and Dr. Thomas Kampffmeyer; German Development Institute, Berlin; Ms. Katja Roeken, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Leipzig; Mr. Kenneth Price, Ph.D. candidate at the Austin University in Texas; Mr. Jonathan Dash, Yardley; Mr. John Faulk, Berlin and Ms. Meera Nathwani, Calgary. Mrs. Viola Mittag, Secretary at the Department of Political Science in Leipzig, has always extended her friendly support to me.

Thank you also to Mr. Karkade and Mr. Manohar Singh of Seva Mandir who gave me valuable advise for conducting the empirical studies and to Mrs. and Mr. Rathore of Khudala House in Udaipur with whom I stayed for the period of my field research.

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Introductory Remarks 20 Years Later

India likes to call itself the “world’s largest democracy”, with reference to its population size, universal suffrage at different levels of government and its higher scores in democracy index projects than its rival Asian power, the P.R. China. However, India has a chequered history of local government performance. The ancient system of Panchayati Raj (Hindi: पंचायती राज) system started from the self-sufficient and self-governing village communities that endured the rise and fall of empires in the past. In independent India, the system of local government has been largely defunct in many states and over many years, with the exception of the state of West-Bengal where Panchayati Raj was linked to village level politics of communist rule.

Reasons for the decline of the Panchayats after a short period of ascendancy in the early 1960s varied from state to state, but decentralisation and devolution of powers to elected leaders at the local level did not match well with India’s vision to establish a strong development state ruled by well educated national leaders.

The 73 Constitutional Amendment in 1992 was an opportunity to revive the local government system across in India. The Congress Party under the leadership of Narasimha Rao successfully introduced the New Panchayat legislation after a first failed attempt in 1989 under the Rajiv Gandhi Government. The results of the reform varied across states but have been promising in many places, in particular in terms of empowerment of lower castes. My field studies in Rajasthan confirmed this trend at an early stage. The trend of empowerment of mainly lower castes, however, has probably contributed to the ascension of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP; Hindi भारतीय जनता पार्टी) that today is the ruling party in India.

Many observers of Indian politics would agree that India’s democracy has been revived in the context of the local government reform, but – probably – at the expense of rising nationalism. The Congress reform has perhaps not sufficiently analysed the possible political consequences of the local government reform. However, it is difficult to ascertain to which extent the Panchayati Raj reform has influenced politics at state and national level in the years after the reform process got into full swing.

The motivation to do Ph.D. research on the local government reform in rural India developed in the course of my first assignment in India where I worked as a young expert in the Delegation of the European Commission between November 1993 and November 1995. I had been in charge of monitoring of development projects of Non-Governmental Organisations supported by the European Commission. The triangular relationship between newly elected local government bodies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) receiving support from donor agencies and the rural poor was of special interest for me. Many of the Indian NGOs I came across have been founded by well educated and sometimes quite charismatic persons, mostly of upper caste background. They claimed to work with poor communities in a holistic and participatory way and to understand their needs and constraints better than government agencies.

The local government reform following a constitutional amendment in 1992 was a major topic of debate not only in politics and the media, but also in the community of national as well as international experts on development. The local government reform was considered to be a major opportunity to reinstate the role of the state at local level and to revive grassroots democracy in India.

Expectations on the reform were high and the implementation in the different states was observed with great interest. My Ph.D. research, in particular the case studies, provided me with a wonderful opportunity to better understand politics in India, diverging concepts and approaches to development and the role of elected local leaders, government officials and NGOs at the local level.

My Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. Hartmut Elsenhans, appreciated my analysis of local power relations and the role of different types of institutions. For him, my empirical research was proof that access to political power matters more than access to benevolent private organisations:

“Where the poor succeed within the framework provided by local self-government in having a voice against the local power-brokers, the latter are forced to take their demands into consideration and can do so best by representing their interests in bargains they strike with external organisations. Here, the leverage is higher with parties and state agencies under the latter’s control than with non-governmental organisations.” (Professor Elsenhans in the Preface of my book publications: Kuhn, Berthold 1998, *Participatory Development in Rural India*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, p. xvii).

While my critical analysis of the role of NGOs was a challenge for some NGO leaders – one organisation, Seva Mandir, intervened at the level of my University with a criticism on my findings – I never intended to downplay the important role of non-governmental organisations in rural India. They provide valuable services and have often better access to poor communities than government officials. However, I also found that the rural poor in India were keen on involving themselves in local politics. Their aspirations to become their own masters of development could be felt even though some strategies were motivated more by personal gains than by development visions for the local communities.

A few years later, my post-doctoral research project (“Habilitationsschrift”) on “Development Politics between Market and State. Potentials and Limitations of Civil Society Organisations” (Freie Universität Berlin, 2004) took a closer look at factors of success and failure of NGO involvement in programmes of development assistance. As a political scientist, I firmly believe that institutions matter and ownership is indispensable for achieving sustainable results in development cooperation and assistance. The level of ownership in particular cannot be measured with a technocratic approach that focuses primarily on the collection and analysis of quantitative data. It requires a deep understanding of political dynamics at the local level.

During my field work, I was much concerned with getting access to people and understanding local politics. Given my two-years assignment at the Delegation of the European Commission in New Delhi prior to my field work, I was able to plan my case studies in such a way that I could attend the newly established village level Gram Sabha meetings in all six Panchayats. I had a lot of luck that Prof. Chaturvedi from Mohanlal Sukhaida University of Udiapur connected me with Ms. Shamata Seth who also did her Ph.D. research on issues related to local government issues in rural Rajasthan. We found a way to support and learn from each other in a very practical way and our research proved to be very complementary. In practical terms, I was able to provide transport on my motor bike and she helped me with translations. We had become friends over time and are occasionally still in contact via social media.

Getting access to people and institutions in India – elected bodies, government agencies, NGOs – was not only praised by my supervisors as one of the “success factors” of my Ph.D. research, it was also a very inspiring experience for me. It shaped my life as a researcher and consultant in many ways. I greatly benefited from my good experience during the field work, not only in India but in many other countries. I have subsequently worked and continue to work on development issues in other Asian and African countries, with a recent focus on policies and multi-stakeholder governance for sustainable development in China.

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1. Introduction

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The Issue of Participation

'Participation' and 'participatory development' receive utmost consideration in international development discourse. The 'participation' of the 'local population', 'project partners' and 'target groups' in development activities is regarded as the key to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of development projects. Their participation is also supposed to strengthen self-help capacities, the civil society, and to promote democratisation. Institutions and organisations of different size, nature and character all over the world such as the World Bank, UN Development Organisations, the OECD, the European Commission, national government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and academic institutions have established working groups on the issue of participation. Project documents and studies reflect opportunities, obstacles and different modes of participation as well as participatory methodologies and tools of project management.¹ Donor agency studies usually focus on the motivation of the local target group whose project support is necessary to make optimal use of the provided development funds. Participation, in brief, is often taken as a pre-conceived objective in development studies.

There is a great need for political science to analyse the actual meaning and conceptual significance of participation. This study focuses on 'participation in development activities', but does not consider 'participation in development and 'participation in politics' (or 'democratic participation') as two distinct forms of participation as suggested by earlier attempts of theorisation.² It problematises the concept of participation outside the narrow framework of project implementation strategies.

The ongoing local self-government reform in India offers a tremendous opportunity to understand the issue of participation in a wider perspective, involving administrative, political and structural considerations. Local self-government institutions are supposed to represent people at the grassroot level of democracy. However, they are seldom involved in donor-supported development projects, in particular in South Asia and Africa.³ Many development programmes and projects either establish separate

1 See for example: *OECD; DAC 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Development Co-operation Guidelines Series; Paris; World Bank 1996: The World Bank Participation Sourcebook; Washington D.C.; European Commission 1996: Decentralized Co-operation; A New European Approach at the Service of Participatory Development, Methodological Study; Brussels: (produced by COTA).*

2 Cf. *Verba, S./ Nie, N.H./ Kim, J. 1978: Participation and Political Equality. A Seven Nation Comparison, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 2-3.*

3 In Latin America, however, the GTZ and the German political foundations have launched many programmes to promote the strengthening of local self-government institutions in the context of the

management structures with state governments or development corporations or channel funds through NGOs. In past decades, government agencies have lost much of their credibility as development agents and the reputation of local self-government institutions has even been more negative. Instead, development researchers, most donor agencies, critical public opinion and more recently central and state government development agencies, consider NGOs to be the primary agents in building the interface between people and the development administration.⁴

Purpose and Conceptual Approach of the Study

This study deals with the issue of participatory development in the context of local self-government reform in India. It analyses the performance of local self-government institutions in promoting participatory development in rural areas, especially at village level, and their potential to function as units of local self-government. The most pertinent questions for which the study seeks systematic empirical evidence are as follows:

- (i) which external and internal factors enable or obstruct the functioning of local self-government institutions ?
- (ii) how do underprivileged groups benefit from reservation quotas in local self-government institutions and what is their participation in the development decision-making of local self-government institutions ?
- (iii) what is the relationship between local self-government institutions, NGOs and the state government administration ?
- (iv) what is the impact of party politics on the development performance of the local self-government institutions at different levels.
- (v) what are the development priorities of local self-government institutions ? Do they correspond with the poverty alleviation strategies of donor agencies, governments and NGOs ?

This study first provides definitional and conceptual clarity on the issue of participatory development. The theoretical part of this study was, to some extent, inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's understanding of the task of philosophical research in the "tractatus logico-philosophicus".

decentralisation trend on the continent from the 1980s onwards. For a systematic review of experiences with donor supported decentralisation- and local self-government projects see: *Simon, Klaus / Stockmayer Albrecht / Fuhr, Harald* 1993: Subsidiarität in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Dezentralisierung und Verwaltungsreformen zwischen Strukturanpassung und Selbsthilfe; Baden-Baden: Nomos; for a review of GTZ projects in Latin America see in particular the article of *Stockmayer, Albrecht / Nölke, Andreas*: Erfahrungen mit Dezentralisierung und Gemeindeberatung aus der Sicht der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH; pp. 143-168.

4 The rise of the Indian NGO sector and the ailing local self-government system (the Panchayati Raj system) has already been recognised by international development research in the mid-1980s: "In India today the model is no longer the Panchayat system, which originally brought about grassroots democracy, but has now become ossified in most of the Federal States, but the many and varied self-help promotional organisations which have successfully activated and mobilised poor people so that they now have access to government services and private banks." (*Schneider-Barthold, Wolfgang* 1987: Talking, Acting and Learning with the Poor. Grassroots Development in the Third World and its Promotion; German Development Institute; p. 51).

" Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. Philosophy does not result in "philosophical propositions", but rather in the clarification of propositions. Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct - its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries."⁵

Research should improve knowledge and insight in certain areas. It should concentrate on providing definitional clarity and a structured way of thinking instead of designing a "body of doctrine". Research is methodical and its objective is to formulate an approximation to reality and to stimulate further reflections. It should help to reduce manipulations, misunderstandings and miscommunications.

This study draws on the tradition of both the political science and development studies approach. It departs from a critical review of the definitional and political significance of the concept of participatory development and argues in terms of hypotheses, but also provides for a comprehensive policy analysis of administrative reforms, approaches of major development agents and social and political dynamics at the local level.

The Hypothesis

The initial underlying hypothesis of this study was that politico-administrative reforms require a synergy between various development agents: local self-government institutions, government bureaucracy and NGOs. Development theory attaches particular importance to the contribution of the growing NGO sector for promoting participatory involvement.

"With the increasing involvement of indigenous, private, voluntary organisations and nongovernmental organisations in the development process, there may be greater potential for the actualisation of participatory development."⁶

The underlying assumption of the research was that NGOs in particular could make a significant contribution to the successful implementation of the reform with respect to promulgating the concept of participatory development. NGOs would certainly have the opportunity to influence political decision-making on devolution of powers to the local level by using their privileged access to the poor and their control over them for political leverage.⁷ The question, however, arises, whether NGOs have, apart from their lip-service to grassroots democracy and people's participation, a genuine interest to support and co-operate with local self-government institutions. In the course of the field study it

5 Wittgenstein Ludwig 1922 (1974 reprinted): *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; London: Routledge; p. 49. This publication gives the English and German text of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. For the above mentioned original edition, the German text was reviewed by Wittgenstein and translated into English by F.P. Ramsey. For the 1974 edition, the translation into English was reviewed by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness.

6 Fry, Gerald W. / Martin, Galen R. 1991: *The International Development Dictionary*; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.): ABC-CLIO; p.109.

7 Hartmut Elsenhans elaborated on the logic of gaining political leverage through privileged access to marginalised groups in: *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1995: *Marginality, Rent and Non-Governmental Organisations*; in: *Indian Journal of Public Administration (Delhi)*; Vol XLI, No.2, April-June 1995; pp.139-159; see in particular pp. 157-159.

turned out that NGOs, like other external agents, were mainly preoccupied with their own programmes and problems and were rather ignorant towards local self-government institutions. They readily agreed on the importance to support the revival of local self-government, but they had in fact little knowledge on the subject and were not interested in political dynamics at the village level. The research focus gradually shifted towards internal political and social dynamics in order to analyse what actually makes the difference for the performance of local self-government institutions. Inter-personal relations proved to be of major importance for local political and development dynamics. It was realised that people influence the functioning of institutions to such a degree that the competencies and the performance of institutions can not be understood on the basis of prescribed competencies and financial resources. The level of motivation, commitment and ability of individuals makes the crucial difference for the performance of institutions, i.e. the ability of local self-government institutions to mobilise funds for development activities and to carry out works.

India: the "Largest Democracy" and its Local Self-Government Reform

India which is implementing a local self-government reform since 1993, is for many reasons an ideal country to analyse the development and political performance of local self-government institutions. Political science literature acknowledges that India has a high degree of political participation and a politically aware citizenry with growing expectations.⁸ The political activism and work of all major parties shows continuous intensity and is, unlike the activities of some major political parties in Latin America, not largely limited to pre-election periods. In the context of overall political stability and economic liberalisation, civil society forces play an increasingly important role in India. A large number of NGOs are active in political, social and developmental work; many of them are focusing on poverty alleviation in rural areas.

India is often called the largest functioning democracy in the world.⁹ Executive, legislative and judicial powers and functions are separate and elections to the Federal Parliament and State Assemblies have been regularly held since independence in 1947 with different parties gaining power, particularly at the state level.¹⁰ The national media

8 See: *Frankel, Francine / Rao M.S.A (eds.) 1989: Dominance and State Power in India: Decline of a Social Order: Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras: Oxford University Press* and *Mitra, Subrata K. 1991: Room to Manoeuver in the Middle. Local Elites, Political Action, and the State in India; in: World Politics (Princeton) No. 43; April 1991.*

9 During my two years stay as Project Officer with the Delegation of the European Commission in Delhi, I heard many diplomats but also critical Indian social scientists referring to India as "the world largest functioning democracy"; see e.g. Mathew, George 1995: "Demythologising Partnership - Need for a new Paradigm"; Paper presented at the „India Seminar on Partnership“ at the Evangelische Akademie, Bad Boll (Stuttgart), Germany, September 22nd -24th, 1995; p. 3. Justus Richter discusses the statement of the "world largest democracy". As the statement primarily refers to India's population, he suggests to use the term "the world most populous democracy"; see: *Richter, Justus 1996: Indien nach den Parlamentswahlen 1996: Innenpolitische Entwicklung und regionale außenpolitische Interessenlage; in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte; July 19th, 1996; Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung; p. 30.*

10 This statement, however, should not deny the (traditionally) dominant role of the Congress Party in Indian politics. Since independence, its continuous rule has only been interrupted from 1977-1979 and 1989-1991. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections the Congress Party was again voted out of power.

Yogendra Yadav's recent research work on the State Assembly Elections 1993-1995 provides evidence of a reconfiguration of Indian politics towards a more competitive multi-party system "which can no longer be defined with reference to the Congress" (*Yadav, Yogendra 1996: Reconfiguration of Indian Politics:*

enjoys a significant amount of freedom. Political culture, the functioning of democratic institutions and the level of activism of civil society forces, however, significantly vary across regions, castes, religions and social classes. India has a population of over 900 million people, more than 25 main languages and four world religions.¹¹ The country experiences economic growth and rapid social transformation, but also shows persisting feudal structures, specifically in rural areas.¹²

India has a negative equity¹³ reputation. It has the largest concentration of poverty in the world, and a society still based on a hierarchical caste system. The gap between rich and poor, the strong link between political and economic power and bureaucratic pathology¹⁴ make equitable economic development difficult to achieve. In the light of economic liberalisation and structural adjustment policies introduced by the Narasimha Rao government in 1991, the issues of equity and participation are of foremost relevance for the development of the Indian society. The Narasimha Rao Congress government gained international credit when it eventually passed the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Panchayati Raj Act, on the local self-government reform in April 1993.

'Panchayati Raj', the ancient system of local self-government in India, did not receive much attention in the first years after independence. The local self-government institutions, the so called *Panchayati Raj Institutions* or *Panchayats*¹⁵, were only entrusted with functions of minor importance. After an initial phase of ascendancy in the early 1960s, the process of the decline of the Panchayats started in most states. It was only during the 1980s, that the idea of giving a constitutional status to the Panchayats had spread among politicians, intellectuals, social activists, and also researchers. Earlier attempts of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress government and V.P. Singh's Janata Dal government to pass the reform mainly failed because of opposition from the states fearing to lose powers to a lower level of government.

The Panchayati Raj reform in 1993 eventually gave constitutional status, and distributed more powers, functions and financial resources to the Panchayats, at the district, block and village level. One third of the seats for the elected representatives at all levels, including the chairpersons, are reserved for women. Reservation quotas are

State Assembly Elections 1993-1995; in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay); January 13th-20th, 1996; p. 95.

11 Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.

12 See: *Mitra, Subrata K.* 1996: Politics in India; in: *Almond, Gabriel A. / Powell, G. Bingham (eds.)*; p. 669-728; p. 670. This article provides an excellent introduction into Indian politics: the social structure, the legacy of colonial rule, the anti-colonial movement, political socialisation, political culture, political institutions, the policy process, and the development of the competitive party system.

13 For the concept of equity - based on justice, equal opportunities and fair distribution of resources - see chapter 3.1.

14 Gerald Fry and Galen Martin define bureaucratic pathology as "an organisational climate or structure in which the interests of citizens, employees, and society at large are sub-ordinated to the self-centred and self-aggrandising goals of authoritarian leaders and officials. This milieu of bureaucratic pathology is characterised by the principle that administration is power, not service. Delays and inefficiency are common and often used to facilitate corruption or questionable payments"; (*Fry / Martin* 1991; pp. 176-177.)

15 Referring to institutions of local self-government in India, this study uses in the following the shorter term *Panchayats*.

also allocated to Scheduled Castes¹⁶ and Scheduled Tribes¹⁷ on the basis of their proportional representation in the respective constituency.

India has had previous experiences with local self-government reforms, but the 73rd Constitutional Amendment for the first time gives constitutional status to local self-government institutions and specifies twenty-nine developmental functions to be entrusted to them. The local self-government reform has evoked much interest from national and international development institutions and organisations.

The local self-government reform, though it has many sceptics, has the potential to contribute to the revival and empowerment of the ailing institutions of local self-government at village, block and district level. Many initiatives have been started to closely monitor the ongoing reform. Government rural development institutions such as the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad, academic institutions such as the Institute of Social Sciences and the Centre of Social Research in Delhi, the Institute of Development Management in Madras, and a large number of NGOs and women groups throughout the country have launched projects to document the progress of the reform, to design training manuals for elected representatives of Panchayats and to carry out workshops on legal literacy, in particular targeting newly elected women representatives. International organisations show a keen interest in supporting the reform as well.¹⁸

The reform has been announced with great enthusiasm. Many seminars and workshops have since then been held, educational material has been produced and posters have been distributed. However, given the size, the cultural and social diversity of the country, the implementation of constitutional provisions and legislation has proved to be difficult in India.¹⁹

The previous experiences with local self-government reforms at national and state level suggest that the successful implementation of the present reform will face many obstacles. Centre-state rivalries might undermine efforts of state governments to properly implementing the reform and devolving powers to a third level of governance below the state level. Insufficient financial resources might prevent the Panchayats from properly executing their functions. It seems also unlikely that the powerful bureaucracy without resistance gives away or shares its powers with elected representatives. Local elites might still find opportunities to dominate the Panchayats, directly or indirectly, despite the reservation quotas.

16 The term Scheduled Castes refers to such castes or parts of, or groups within, such castes as are deemed to be Scheduled Castes under the Article 341 of the Constitution of India. Scheduled Caste. The term "Scheduled Caste" has been created in the context of classification of caste and tribes in India in order to allocate reservation for government jobs, university colleges, etc. to economically underprivileged persons. Scheduled Castes are sometimes referred to as "Harijans" as Gandhi called people which were considered to be "untouchables" in Hindu religion. The use of the term "untouchables" is prohibited by Indian law.

17 The term "Scheduled Tribes" refers to such tribal communities or parts of, or groups within, as are deemed to be Scheduled Tribes under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. The term "Scheduled Tribes" has been created in the context of classification of caste and tribes in India in order to allocate reservation for government jobs, university colleges, etc. to economically underprivileged persons.

18 The European Commission directly supported two projects on training of elected Panchayat members which started in 1996 and funded another one through the Netherlands NGO Towns and Development.

19 Child labour, caste discrimination and dowry practises are outstanding examples where legislative provisions have very limited impact on reality of social life.

The Research Context

For many years, politicians and bureaucrats, as well as researchers have paid little attention to a conducive political environment for participatory development. Instead, centralised rule and top-down development planning were considered to promote rapid economic growth and development after the independence of most of the former colonies in the 1950s and 1960s.

Political science research for a long time dealt with ideologically biased development theories on international trade, and the role of the state and its elites for analysing the underdevelopment of societies. Hartmut Elsenhans recognised that universal development theories driven by ideological approaches have only limited value for analysing the economic situation and the development processes of different countries with different political systems. He elaborated on the concept of the state class and its abusive resource allocation of international capital investment as a major obstacle for economic and development progress.²⁰

From the late 1980s onwards increased attention was paid to new political agents, new social movements and private development initiatives. The school of political scientists in France around Jean-François Bayart discovered the "politique par le bas"²¹ and analysed changing state-society relations ("la revenge de la société civile sur l'Etat"²²). The interface between the state, the market and civil society emerged as the major subject of political and social sciences research on development countries.

Concern on sustaining development inputs and facilitating withdrawal of external support increased among development administrators. Strategies were sought to empower local people for the management and maintenance of development programmes. Such evolution has increased the role of political and social sciences in development research, planning and implementation. David C. Korten discusses the emerging role of process-oriented social science work in pursuit of people-centred development and refers to the increased role of political and social sciences not only for development research, but also for management and implementation of activities.²³

The Indian literature on local self-government mainly covers administrative and financial issues of nation-wide relevance²⁴, while little information is published on the implementation of the reform at the district, block and village levels. Studies which analyse the political and development dynamics at the state level mainly cover West-Bengal and Karnataka²⁵ where the Panchayat system has played a more vital role over

20 Elsenhans, Hartmut 1981: *Abhängiger Kapitalismus oder bürokratische Entwicklungsgesellschaft. Versuch über den Staat in der Dritten Welt*; Frankfurt am Main / New York: Campus; English translation in: Elsenhans, Hartmut 1995: *State, Class and Development*, New Delhi: Radiant

21 Bayart, J.-F. / Mbembe, A. / Toulabour C. 1992: *Le Politique Par le Bas en Afrique Noire. Contribution à une Problematique de la Démocratie*, Paris: Karthala.

22 Ibid., p. 70.

23 Korten, David C. 1989: *Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation*; in: *Veneracion*, Cynthia C.; p. 5-20.

24 See for example: Oomen M.A. / Datta, A. 1995: *Panchayat and their Finance*; New Delhi: Concept Publishers; Bhatt, U.K. Shama 1995: *New Panchayati Raj System: A Study of Politico-Administrative Dynamics*; Jaipur; Government of India 1994: *Department of Rural Development: Renewing Local Self Government in Rural India*; Occasional Papers 6; New Delhi (published by the National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad).

25 See for example: Kumar, Girish / Ghosh, Budhadeb 1996: *West-Bengal Panchayat Elections*; New Delhi: Concept Publishers; Subha K. 1995: *The Social Background of Panchayat Members in Karnataka* (Mimeo); New Delhi: Institute of Social Sciences.

the past decade than in most of the other states. Field research studies²⁶ on local self-government often relied on standardised questionnaires.²⁷ They give valuable information on the social background of Panchayat members and their attitudes, but do not provide a comprehensive picture of Panchayati Raj and development dynamics at the local level. This study is based mainly on a large number of intensive visits to six Gram Panchayats (a group of 3-6 villages with a population of 3000-8000 people in Rajasthan), and thus, offers strongly empirical access to understand local self-government in India. The study gives a comprehensive analysis of development management in rural areas of the Udaipur district with particular emphasis on local self-government institutions, but also including government bureaucracy and NGOs. It analyses the powers, functions and resources of the Panchayats, the participation of women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in these institutions, the role of the government bureaucracy and NGOs, and the importance of party politics at the village, block and district level.

Organisation of the Study

The chapter on "the concept of participatory development" develops a definition that distinguishes 'participatory development' from the fashionable catchword 'people's participation' and the more ideologically biased 'popular participation'. It provides the theoretical framework for the study and hopes to add to some conceptual clarity on the elusive concept of participatory development. The chapter named "Development Profile of India" familiarises the reader with the overall features and development dynamics of the country. The chapter titled "Local Self-Government in India" provides for the necessary historical background of Panchayati Raj in India and gives an overview of various aspects related to the implementation of the reform in different states. The case studies form the central part of the research illustrating the functioning of Panchayats at the village, block and district level. Particular emphasis is given to the lowest level body of local self-government at the village level: the *Gram Sabha*. The observations are recorded in a documentary-like style in order to maintain their authenticity.

Selection of the Field Area

The different regions of India represent varying levels of economic development, social and cultural characteristics and administrative traditions. This study adopts a pragmatic approach to the concept of region²⁸ considering it primarily as an administrative entity: the state level is the crucial reference unit to assess the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform. The states retained significant freedom in passing their conformity legislation to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and to decide

26 In this study, the term *field study* refers to empirical research in rural areas on the basis of selected case studies. The author, however, recognises the elusive character of the term. The term *field visit*, for example, is often used by donor agency staff for any visit to project areas. Such a visit to a project area might involve an inspection of the quality of actual field work (e.g. the quality of rice production), it might only consist of a discussion with project beneficiaries in a village community hall, or it might even be limited to meetings with project authorities in project headquarters at the district capital.

27 See for example: *Shivia M. / Shrivastava K.B.* 1990: Factors Affecting Development of the Panchayati Raj System; Hyderabad: National Institute of Rural Development.

28 For a discussion on the concept of region see: *Waller, Peter P.* 1985: Ansätze zu einer grundbedürfnisorientierten ländlichen Regionalplanung in Entwicklungsländern; in: *Scholz, Fred (ed.)*; pp. 392-414.

on the financial and personal resources of the Panchayats. The district level constitutes the highest level of the Panchayati Raj structure and continues to be the "ultimate territorial unit for the implementation of development policy."²⁹

The state of Rajasthan and the district of Udaipur are for many reasons an ideal location for a field research study on participatory development and local self-government reform in India. The state and the district are characterised by a combination of social conservatism and a high level of development interventions by various reform agents. Rajasthan is considered to be one of the most conservative states with still prevalent feudal structures, caste dominance and gender inequality. The outstanding development characteristics of Rajasthan - degraded natural resources and social conservatism - meet with national and international development concerns. The strong representation of tribal communities in Udaipur make the district a major target for government and NGO development activities. The field study focuses on six Gram Panchayats in three blocks in the Udaipur district representing different political, administrative, social and developmental features: different levels of economic development, different ethnic compositions (tribal and non-tribal areas) and different levels of NGO development activities. I had earlier visited the area in connection with monitoring of government and NGO development programmes.

Time Frame and Field Research Approach of the Study

During my two years assignment with the Delegation of the European Commission in New Delhi (November 1993 - November 1995), I have been involved in conceptual debates on local self-government reform in rural India with government officials, NGO representatives, social activists, and researchers. The participation in conferences, seminars and workshops provided me with a basis of knowledge on the political, administrative and developmental dynamics of the ongoing reform and motivated me to carry out empirical and theoretical research on the subject.

On behalf of the European Commission I had visited many villages in different states all over India. Representing a large funding agency, such visits were usually thoroughly planned and were accompanied by senior project staff in vehicles with data readily available and extension workers having waited for us for hours in the villages. Discussions with villagers in whatever language or dialect were translated by the project staff. Some project counterparts showed more, some less transparency and self-criticism, but the overall impression was that I had often been taken to show-piece villages. Staff and even village people were experienced in relating to representatives of funding agencies. In order to achieve a more impartial assessment, I had to cross-check information with other sources not directly related to the implementing agency, usually with great effort. These experiences were valuable lessons for me and influenced my approach as well as the selection of villages for my field study. Thus, I decided to work as independently as possible by limiting village-introduction (if at all) by local administrators, NGOs or private persons to the first visit, and later by contacting different village communities on my own initiative. Being far from fluent in Hindi, and having even more difficulties communicating in the local dialect Mewari, working independently was technically difficult. Nevertheless, I soon found opportunities to jointly organise field trips with Ms. Shamata Seth who conducted research in Public

29 *Mitra, Subrata K.* 1992: *Power, Protest and Participation*; London, New York: Routledge; p. 51.

1. Introduction

Administration at Udaipur University, and received further competent translation assistance from Mr. Mahesh Acharya, a local student in environmental sciences with some experience as a research assistant. Discussions with my field research partners enabled me to exchange views with people of opposite sex and different social and economic backgrounds.

2. The Concept of Participatory Development

2.1 Definition of Participatory Development

Definitional Significance	11
International Development Language	14
Forms of Participation	15
Discovering the Poor as Partaker	16

This chapter problematises the concept of 'participatory development' while distinguishing it from 'people's participation' and 'popular participation'. It attempts to provide definitional significance and elaborates on different aspects and forms of participation.

Definitional Significance

'Participatory development' in a limited developmental notion could be defined as *the partaking of a maximum of concerned social and political actors in identifying, designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development activities including control and decision-making over the allocation of financial resources.* Participation is associated with empowerment, because individuals and social groups require the abilities to assert themselves and to gain negotiating powers, in particular underprivileged groups. In its broader political sense, 'participatory development' relates to a democratisation process in societies with respect to the consolidation of civil society, respect for human rights and good governance. As such, 'participatory development' is not only a concept, but an ideal state-of-affairs, and the means for achieving such a state. It is a *development tool* as well as a *goal of development*.

'Participatory development' should not automatically be associated with a specific class or group of people. In this sense, the author considers it important to distinguish 'participatory development' from the two often synonymously used terms 'people's participation' and 'popular participation'. 'Participatory development' provides for a more abstract and dynamic notion than 'people's participation' and 'popular participation'. 'Participatory development' is more widely used in conceptual discussions. In project implementation language, as observed by the author, it is often replaced by 'people's participation'.³⁰

'**People's participation**' is also a catchphrase in current development language, in particular among NGOs. There is an elusive character to the term 'people'. In the context of 'people's participation', the people referred to are usually the targeted beneficiaries. Definitions of 'people's participation' often suggest that people constitute a homogeneous development group rather than emphasising their role as citizens with social and political rights who have different options to participate in political and

30 Robert Chambers, who has largely contributed to promote the idea of the increased involvement of local people in project management, would probably not endorse such a definitional distinction between 'participatory development' and 'people's participation'. He also frequently uses the term 'participatory development' to mean the empowerment of villagers. It is, however, interesting to notice that NGOs referring to him (for India: Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, MYRADA, Action Aid, Outreach, etc.) usually speak of "people's participation" in an apolitical manner. Chambers, together with Irene Gujit, recognises that "the continuing search for quick fixes has allowed many myths to take hold..." and attempts to rectify them in his article "PRA - Five Years Later. Where Are We Now ?" (Internet: <http://treesandpeople.irdc.slu.se/news/26chambe.htm>; pp. 6-7).

development processes. Prem N. Sharma and Mohan P. Wagley give the following definition:

"People's participation is viewed as a dynamic group process in which all members of a group contribute to the attainment of common objectives, share the benefits accruing from group activities, exchange information and experience of common interest, and follow the rules, regulations and other decisions made by the group. Need for people's participation is articulated in terms of efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness, equity in distribution of benefits, sustainability and empowerment of the people."³¹

People is used as a slightly more general and abstract word than 'beneficiaries', pretending to give a methodology or implementation strategy a wider conceptual notion. Participation then means the involvement of 'our beneficiaries', or 'our people' in the implementation process or, to a much lesser extent, in the decision-making process and monitoring or evaluation of activities. Such attitudes often reflect a patron-client relationship between the development agency (governmental or non-governmental) and the targeted beneficiaries.

In this context, 'people's participation' would not involve considerations on political and administrative structures. In a different political context, the term 'people' suggests romantic political visions and bears ideological associations; e.g. concerning names of states (The People's Republic of China).

'Popular participation' is also synonymously used with participatory development. Many development activists³² use it when referring to decision-making rather than mere involvement of project beneficiaries in the implementation of development programmes. The word 'popular' derives from the Latin word 'populum'. In French language it derives from 'populaire', in German language from 'populär'. The term 'popular', to some extent, is associated with a notion of class by suggesting a unity (of political and economic interests) of the people against the king, the rulers or the leaders. 'Popular participation' does not specifically refer to development and to development of societies. It also does not (as 'participatory development' does) specifically relate to the process character of development and to the transition of societies. Nevertheless, it is also frequently used in development language.

'Popular participation' focuses on the excluded groups. The World Bank, consciously avoiding the political arena, refers to 'popular participation' as

"...participation of the poor and others who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, ethnicity, or gender. It seemed obvious to us to focus on the participation of these poor and disadvantaged groups because, although often the intended beneficiaries, they are usually without voice in the developmental process."³³

31 Sharma, Prem N. / Wagley, Mohan P. 1996: Case Studies of People's Participation in Watershed Management in Asia; Kathmandu: UNDP, FAO, Government of the Netherlands; p. 36.

32 Activists could be described as people combining or aiming to combine development work with political and social struggle.

33 World Bank 1996: The World Bank Participation Sourcebook; Washington, D.C.: The World Bank; heading: "Popular Versus Stakeholder Participation"; p. 6-7; p. 6; available on Internet: <http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/sourcebook/sba104.htm>.

Recognising that the poor are not the only actors in World Bank development projects, the Bank prefers to write and speak about 'stakeholder participation' including 'borrowers' (elected officials, line agency staff, local government officials), 'indirectly affected groups' (NGOs, private sector organisations) and 'the Bank' (their own staff and shareholders).

Matthias Stiefel and Marshall Wolfe, coming from a more activist oriented background, define 'popular participation' as

"...the organised efforts to increase control over resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control."³⁴

Kirsten Westergaard shares this definition, but she specifically stresses "collective efforts" of underprivileged groups "to gain control over institutions".³⁵ Stiefel and Wolfe conclude that

"The central issue of popular participation has to do with power, exercised by some people over the people, and by some classes over other classes."³⁶

'Participatory development' refers to a process character. Gerald W. Fry and Galen R. Martin stress the 'process character' in their definition of development:

"Process leading to a higher quality of life for a given population. Development involves both the determination of goals and the means of achieving those ends."³⁷

The emphasis on the process character implies dynamic structures and transition of society. David C. Korten also stresses that 'development' should be considered as a 'client' and 'process' oriented approach.³⁸ S.N. Mishra points out that 'development' is not a mere economic term as 'growth', but encompasses social and political development. Development refers to qualitative and structural changes.³⁹

The lack of definitional significance is not only typical for the term of 'participatory development' but also for other terms dealt with in connection with this research subject. Different research disciplines have developed different development concepts. The meaning of 'development' has a technical-instrumental as well as a historical-analytical dimension.⁴⁰ This study works with a pragmatic definition of 'development'; it considers 'development' as a process of improving the living standard, referring to economical,

34 Stiefel, Matthias/ Wolfe, Marshall 1985: The Quest for Participation; Geneva: UNRISD; p.12.

35 Westergaard, Kirsten 1986: People's Participation, Local Government and Rural Development; Centre for Development Research (CDR) Report No.8; Copenhagen; p. 25.

36 Stiefel, Matthias/ Wolfe, Marshall 1985; p.12.

37 Fry, Gerald W./ Martin, Galen R. 1991: The International Development Dictionary; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.): ABC-Clio; p. 98.

38 Korten, David C. 1989: Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation; in: *Veneracion, Cynthia (ed.)* pp. 5-20.

39 Mishra, S.N. 1995: Participation: Concepts and Dimensions; in: *Mishra, S.N. : Development Through Participation* (Centre for Rural Development Administration; Indian Institute of Public Administration, Management Development Programme II; Thirteenth Course; December 26th, 1995 - January 5th, 1996, New Delhi.

40 Müller-Mahn, Hans Detlef 1989: Die Aulad 'Ali zwischen Stamm und Staat; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag; p. 10 with reference to *Bronger, D.* 1985: Probleme regionalorientierter Entwicklungsländerforschung: Interdisziplinarität und die Funktion der Geographie; in: *Scholz, Fred (ed.)*; pp. 117-138.

political, ecological, social, cultural and psychological aspects. 'Participation' - as further elaborated in this chapter - also has different meanings and is used in a political, social, administrative and technical context. The term 'people' has the most general connotation: people as human beings, as a group of friends, enemies or project beneficiaries; inhabitants of a village, city or a country; in a political context the term is synonymously used with masses or in connection with nation (People's Republic of China) and democracy (people power).

International Development Language

In international development language, 'participatory development' has become a fashionable catchword, a "plastic word"⁴¹, lacking definitional significance and even a basic common understanding.

"Modern jargon uses stereotype words like children use Lego toy pieces. Like Lego pieces, the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions. They have no content, but do serve a function. As these words are separate from any context, they are ideal for manipulative purposes. Participation belongs to this category of words."⁴²

Given the elusive character of 'participatory development', many development administrators and researchers avoided elaborating on the definition of conceptual framework. Definitions would have limited the scope of interpretation and would have invited for political judgement.

Kirsten Westergaard pointed out such hesitations and reservations of development agencies in pioneering works on participatory development. She referred to studies by the World Employment Programme of the ILO⁴³ and the Cornell Rural Development Committee.

"No definition of participation is provided in either study. In the Cornell study, the authors have consciously avoided definitional efforts."⁴⁴

John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff from the Cornell University Rural Development Committee stated that

"It appears more fruitful and proper to regard participation as a descriptive term denoting the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being, e.g. their income, security or self-esteem."⁴⁵

41 The term "plastic words" has been coined by U. Pörksen (*Pörksen, U. 1988: Plastikwörter: Die Sprache einer Internationalen Diktatur; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta*).

42 *Rahnema, Majid 1993: Participation; in: Wolfgang Sachs (ed.); p.116 (first sentence).*

43 *ILO World Employment Programme 1978: Popular Participation in Decision-making and the Basic Needs Approach to development: Methods, Issues and Experiences; Geneva: ILO.*

44 Cf. *Westergaard, Kirsten 1986; p. 22.*

45 *Cohen, John M. / Uphoff, Norman T. 1977: Rural Development Participation: Concepts and measures for Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation, Report of the Cornell University Rural Development Committee; Cornell: Cornell University.*

Since the late 1980s, participatory development has become increasingly associated with a paradigm change⁴⁶ in development theory: Participatory development favours a bottom-up instead of a top-down approach, acknowledges perceptions of local people instead of following expert opinions, and abandons paternalistic intervention processes.

The paradigm change was also put in a wider political context: bringing about grassroots democracy by empowering local communities through their involvement in decision making processes. New project management strategies and methodologies, such as the 'Participatory Rural Appraisal' were developed.⁴⁷

Given the great amount of enthusiasm, particularly among programme and project designers at the headquarters level, it was often overlooked that the term 'participation' left itself open to political, social and cultural miscommunications. We see some of the miscommunications and misunderstandings between administrators of different countries, institutions and organisations at implementation level, and, last but not least, the concerned local communities. Majid Ramana points out that

"... participation could be either transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous."⁴⁸

Forms of Participation

'Participation' has not only different meanings, but also different forms. Participation may be constructive or obstructive with regard to the achievement of conceived objectives; it may occur 'within the system', 'outside the system' or 'against the system'. A distinction should be made between direct and indirect modes of participation. In the latter case, representatives act on behalf of people. Those representatives may be elected, may be nominated by people, may be selected or appointed by governments or boards of trustees, or may simply represent qua authority.

Forms of participation also vary in respect to differences in cultures, traditions, values and institutional structures. The UNDP Human Development Report 1993, incorporating views of different nations and cultures, makes a general distinction between

- "(i) household participation
- (ii) economic participation
- (iii) social and cultural participation (right to culture)
- (iv) political participation (individually and collectively)"⁴⁹

UNDP pays in its report special reference to groups often excluded from participation: women, minorities, the poorest and mentions the nature of legal systems,

46 Paradigms are defined by Fry and Martin as "General theories or world views of development and their underlying values and assumptions. Development paradigms include both articulation of goals and strategies for achieving those ends. The two major competing paradigms or models of development during then last four decades have been capitalism and Marxism." (*Fry / Martin* 1991; p. 107). For the concept and analysis of development paradigm change see: *Kuhn, Thomas S.* 1978: *Die Entsehung des Neuen. Studien zur Struktur der Wirtschaftsgeschichte*; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

47 For a discussion on Participatory Rural Appraisal see chapter 2.3.

48 *Rahnema, Majid* 1993: Participation; in: *Sachs, Wolfgang (ed.)*; pp. 116-131; p.116.

49 UNDP (HDR) 1993; pp. 22-23.

bureaucratic constraints, social norms, maldistribution of assets as principal obstacles of participation of these groups.⁵⁰

Lars-Erik Birgegard discusses participation in the context of donor-assisted projects. He proposes the following classification of participatory activities in different phases and aspects of project management.⁵¹

- "(i) Ranking of needs/problems;
- (ii) Analysis of problems and design of activities;
- (iii) Implementation;
- (iv) Operation and maintenance;
- (v) Control and management of funds and
- (vi) Resource mobilisation"

In each project phase, the extent and the form of participation may be different. Governments, NGOs and donor agencies may encourage participation in one phase (e.g. implementation), but retain total control in other project aspects or phases (e.g. control and management of funds). Development institutions and organisations also promote participation for different reasons. The participation of the target group may primarily be sought to improve the efficiency of target driven project implementation or it may include joint discussions on project objectives and activities and, thus, leaving scope for the 'target group' to design their own project. Michael Bau pointed out that the meaning of participation is easily reduced to a problem solving strategy and a manipulation tool for elites who aim at improving organisational aspects of implementing specific objectives without leaving the participants the right to question the fixed objectives.⁵²

People may also participate in different manners: with their labour and skills, with their knowledge or with their financial resources. Participation may also vary in duration. It may be a continuous or a sporadic activity. Participation may be actualised in a spontaneous, planned, organised or institutionalised way. Prior to the design of development projects, the partner organisations should reach a common understanding on the nature and extent of participation in different project phases.⁵³

Discovering the Poor as Partaker

Research on participation has for a long time emphasised the link between economic development and participation: a nation's level of political participation co-varies with its level of economic development.⁵⁴ It was also presumed that a traditional

50 UNDP HDR 1993; p. 24-28.

51 Birgegard, Lars-Erik 1990: People's Participation; Issue Paper No.12; Uppsala: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

52 Bau, Michael 1982: Politische Partizipation und Entwicklung; Heidelberg: esprint; pp. 20.

53 Prem N. Sharma and Mohan P. Wagley have attempted to develop some specific participation guidelines for watershed management projects in Nepal, China and India and provide for a documentation of project experiences; see: Sharma, Prem N. / Wagley, Mohan P. 1996: Case Studies of People's Participation in Watershed Management in Asia; Kathmandu: UNDP, FAO, Government of the Netherlands.

54 Nie, Norman H. 1969: "Social Structure and Political Participation; in: *American Political Science Review* (Washington), June 1969; No. 63, p. 369.

society which lacks appropriate institutional structures is non-participant while modern society is.⁵⁵

When development policy makers, administrators and researchers discovered 'participatory development', they pointed out structural constraints of traditional and formal participation of the poorest and developed alternative models to involve them in the implementation of development projects. The ailing system of traditional participation, e.g. the Panchayati Raj system in India, was not regarded as an opportunity to involve people in project management. Development managers focused on non-conventional participation models outside the framework of established institutional structures. So called "user committees" (e.g. water user groups) were formed to ensure the participation of the project participants and to create a direct link to the project management unit. Many "User's Participation Models", however, represent a narrow minded approach to participation. The participation of the poor in local development often starts and ends with the projects. Many projects do neither consider existing local participation patterns nor do they develop a sound withdrawal strategy which would ensure that participation continues after the project has come to an end.

55 Lerner, David 1958: *The Passing of Traditional Society*; Glencoe, Illinois; p. 50.

2.2 Conceptual Evolution and Theoretical Framework

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This chapter outlines the conceptual evolution and theoretical framework of participatory development with reference to the international development discourse. It places participatory development in the context of the related theories of democratic decentralisation, good governance, the civil society debate, the respect for human rights and sustainable development. Participatory development is not another competing theory in the ideological realm of development theories, but it constitutes a crucial element of a wider universal theory of development which evolved from the 1990s onwards.

Evolution of Development Models

The specific historical dimension of industrial growth in Northern America and Europe during the 19th century was hardly taken into account when the many newly independent developing countries designed their development policies in the 1950s and 1960s. 'Development' was defined as 'economic growth and industrialisation'. Large scale capital investment was considered to eventually have a trickle-down effect and contribute to poverty alleviation. Foreign aid mainly targeted infrastructure development or productivity growth in agriculture. Beneficiaries of development programmes were treated as passive aid recipients.

The first generation of development economists considered a strong and effective central planning machinery to be the most appropriate method to achieve development goals. 'Participation' was not considered to be an essential element of political modernisation and to serve political stability. On the contrary, the eminent theorist Samuel P. Huntington pointed out that political participation which gets inspired by social frustration over unrealistic aspirations may lead to political instability and hinder economic development.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, 'participation' and 'participatory development' have already appeared for the first time in the development jargon from the 1950s onwards when failures of development projects designed by outside experts were attributed to the exclusion of the target population in the project management.⁵⁷ 'Participatory development', however, was not discussed in its broader institutional and political dimension until the early 1990s. In the context of the Cold War, development assistance was largely motivated by political or security concerns. Involvement in the political systems of developing countries was regarded as interference in the domestic affairs of other nations.

In the early 1970s, the ideas of social justice gained momentum in the international development discourse and in development strategies. The World Bank, under President Robert McNamara, USAID and the ILO put greater emphasis on the so-called 'soft

56 Huntington, Samuel P. 1968: *Political Order in Changing Societies*; New Haven, London.

57 See: *Rahnema, Majid* 1993: *Participation*; in: *Sachs, Wolfgang* (ed.); p. 117.

sectors' such as health care, sanitation, education and food. The increasing interest in community-based development concepts and participation issues was in practise undermined by the dominant role of the bureaucracy in development management. They monopolised decision-making. The political systems of most development countries were characterised by a lack of political pluralism and a strong link between the dominant ruling party and the bureaucracy.

In the 1980s, the foreign debt of most developing countries was rapidly growing in the context of declining primary commodity prices and high interest rates. In response to the debt crisis, the World Bank instituted Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) in the early 1980s. Proposed measures such as economic liberalisation, cutbacks in subsidies and social spending constituted a major involvement in national policies of developing countries. Such involvement in their internal economic affairs paved the way for more interference in political and administrative structures expressed by demands for democratic decentralisation and good governance.⁵⁸

With the decline of the communist systems in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the premise for strategic aid that existed under the Cold War power structure collapsed. Deprived of the strategic factor and lacking a convincing record in alleviating poverty, in particular in Africa and Latin America, development assistance had to search for new sources of justification to face the increasing aid-fatigue among the western countries. The fear of global ecological crisis and disasters and the political collapse of the former states of the Soviet Union were the major concerns of the international development agenda from the late 1980s onwards. In December 1989, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) released a "Policy Statement on Development Co-operation in the 1990s"⁵⁹ which set the basis for increasing the emphasis on participatory development among most donor agencies. In addition to sustainable development and concern for the environment, the DAC identified participatory development as the key issue for the development agenda of the 1990s. The report stated that stimulating productive energies of people, encouraging broader participation of all people in productive processes, and a more equitable sharing of their benefits, should become central elements in development co-operation.⁶⁰

The World Bank set up a Participatory Development Group in 1990 and, "after a five year learning process", published "The World Bank Participation Sourcebook" in February 1996.⁶¹ This work documents the World Bank's strategy that "project stakeholders" should increasingly "share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them."⁶² The Participation Sourcebook also

58 This was particularly obvious in Africa where development assistance played a more important role than anywhere else in the world, but had largely failed to achieve its objectives."It has now become apparent that a financial, economic or technical approach to these problems only address the consequences of the handicaps besetting the Third World and fails to tackle their true causes. In point of fact, the only real solutions are political ones, and they always bring us back to the same basic question, i.e. the type of government running the country and the nature of the authority" (*Nzouankeu* 1991: The African Attitude to Democracy; in: *International Social Science Journal* (Oxford), May 1991; p. 373.

59 *OECD (DAC)* 1990: "Policy Statement on Development Co-operation in the 1989, Paris: OECD; see also: *OECD (DAC)* 1992: Principles for Effective Aid; Paris: OECD

60 *Ibid.*

61 *World Bank* 1996: Participation Sourcebook; Washington, DC: The World Bank.

62 *Ibid.*; p.1.

contains a section on "Methods and Tools" where it introduces various workshop-based methods including Participatory Rural Appraisal.⁶³

The aid allocation policy of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development also reflects the trend of changing attitudes towards development and participation, and at the same time, seeks for better justification of development assistance. The Ministry introduced political conditionality in its aid allocation from 1992 onwards and formulated five criteria:

- "(i) respect for human rights;
- (ii) popular participation in the political process;
- (iii) guaranteeing certainty in law;
- (iv) a market friendly approach to economic development and
- (v) the orientation of state activity towards improving the welfare of the poor (i.e. reducing military expenditure)."⁶⁴

The New Character of Development Theory

After the second world war, the main development theories evolved in competition to each other. Modernisation theories applied the economic growth model of western capitalist countries to developing countries and considered the integration into the world market as a crucial factor to increase capital investment, technological modernisation and, thus, to achieve development. The dependency theories regarded the imperialistic penetration of developing countries by means of their integration into the world market as decisive factor for underdevelopment. The 'third path development theories' evolved as an alternative to both the capitalist development path of modernisation theories and the socialist development ideology of the dependency theories by emphasising gradual structural change through reform policies according to social and cultural specifics of developing countries.⁶⁵

'Participatory development' in the current development discourse is not regarded as another competing theory in the ideological realm of development theories, but it constitutes a crucial element of a wider universal theory of development which evolved from the 1990s onwards. Barbara Töpper points out that never in history has such programmatic agreement existed on normative goals and strategies of development.⁶⁶ Rainer Tetzlaff agrees with Barbara Töpper and rejects the common opinion of "the

63 Chapter 2.3 of this study deals with methods and tools of participatory development and refers to the World Bank's approach.

64 Repnik, Hans-Peter / Mohs, Ralf-Matthias 1992 (Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, Bonn, Germany); in: *Intereconomics* (Baden-Baden), January/February; pp. 28-33; p. 30.

65 For a brief overview of development theories see: See: Fry, Gerald W./ Martin, Galen R. 1991: *The International Development Dictionary*; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.): ABC-CLIO; Nohlen, Dieter (Hg) 1994: *Lexikon Dritte Welt*; Hamburg: Rowohlt (6. Auflage); For further readings see: Apter, D.E. 1965: *The Politics of Modernization*; Chicago; Cardoso, F.H./ Faletto, E. 1976: *Abhängigkeit und Entwicklung in Lateinamerika*; Senghaas, Dieter (Hg) 1974: *Peripherer Kapitalismus*; Frankfurt; Mansilla, H.C.F. (ed.) 1974: *Probleme des Dritten Weges*; Darmstadt, Neuwied.

66 See: Töpper, Barbara 1990; *Die Frage der Demokratie in der Entwicklungstheorie. Kritisches Resümee von 40 Jahren Theoriegeschichte*; in: *Peripherie* (Berlin) Nr. 39/40; p. 127-160; p. 154.

great disenchantment of international development theory."⁶⁷ He elaborates on the *new character* of international development theory: the development theory of the 1990s is an epochal phenomena more than an everlasting scientific truth. The current epoch, according to Tetzlaff, is characterised by the universalisation of values with the important exception of the Islamic fundamentalism.⁶⁸ Today, in a world increasingly connected through business-, information-, and communication networks, governments have indeed lost room to manoeuvre to pursue nationalistic development models driven by ideological ideas or nationalistic economic programmes. Tetzlaff's statement applies to economic and development policies of governments, but it is controversial on cultural and religious aspects.⁶⁹ Cultural and religious assertiveness are far from dying in many parts of the world, including India.

The idea of a new character of development theory, however, has also been thought by Elmar Altvater, Peter Evans and Atul Kohli.⁷⁰ Elmar Altvater pointed out that the great (new) theory emerges from an eclectic messy centre which comprises various elements of existing theories.⁷¹

The dominant development theory in the 1990s is based on political participation, human rights, free competition of ideas, political programmes, goods and services in a market driven economy, checks and balances of executive, legislative and judicial powers and the acknowledgement of the important role of civil society forces.

The conceptual evolution of participatory development is interlinked with the evolution of related development concepts and strategies: democratic decentralisation,

67 Such opinion, for example, is represented by Ulrich Menzel; see: *Menzel, Ulrich* 1992: *Das Ende der 3. Welt und das Scheitern der großen Theorie*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

68 See: *Tetzlaff, Rainer* 1996: *Demokratische Transition und Marktorientierung; Elemente einer universellen Theorie der "Entwicklung"* in: *Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (E+Z)*; (Frankfurt: DSE Berlin); 37 Jg. 1996 (2); pp. 36-39.

69 An essay entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?", published in 1993 in *Foreign Affairs* by Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard University has stimulated a debate on 'clash or fusion of civilisations' in the post Cold War period. In his article, Huntington considers cultural differences as the major source of potential clashes between civilisations in the future, not excluding a third world war. Future clashes would result from clashes between civilisations centering on different religions or beliefs, instead of ideological or state-to-state economic and political confrontation. (*Huntington, Samuel* 1993: *The Clash of Civilizations ?* in: *Foreign Affairs* (Washington) Summer 1993 Vol. 72; No. 3; pp. 22-49.; Huntington later extended its essay to a book which has now also been published in Germany: *Huntington, Samuel P.* 1996: *Kampf der Kulturen. Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 1. Jhd.*; München: Europa-Verlag). The article and the book have triggered a major debate on Huntington's hypothesis, especially on the INTERNET, with a majority of theorists criticising Huntington for simplifying cultural and religious differences between nations. Ahmad Faiz Abdul Rahman, for example, strongly rejects Huntington's thesis: "There are those who still believe, rather stubbornly, that in the post Cold War period, global politics would be 'reconfigured along cultural lines'...Huntington ignores or even denies the fact that the most important element in his conflict configuration is power itself" (*Rahman, Ahmad Faiz Abdul* 1996: *Clash of Powers, not Civilisations*; available on the Internet: http://www.apec.org/apps/media/fullmedia/960917clash_my.html; 17.9.1996; p. 1). For further contribution to the subject see for example: *Mazarr, Michael J.* 1996: *Culture and International Relations. A Review Essay*; in: *Washington Quarterly* (Washington); Vol. 19; No. 2; Spring 1996 and *Jisi, Wang / Sicheng, Zou* 1996: in: *Civilizations: Clash or Fusion?*; *Beijing Review* (Beijing); Vol.39 Issue No.3 January 15-21, 1996; available on Internet:<http://ida.mytholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ipe/beijrev.htm>

70 See: *Evans, Peter / Kohli, Atul* 1995: *The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics. A symposium*; *World Politics* (Princeton), Vol. 48; No. 1, October 1995.

71 *Altvater, Elmar* 1996: *Von möglichen Wirklichkeiten. Hindernisse auf der Entwicklungsbahn*; in: *Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (E+Z)*; (Frankfurt: DSE Berlin); 37 Jg. 1996 (2); p. 44.

good governance, strengthening of civil society, universal concepts of human rights and sustainable development. The DAC of the OECD recognises the interlinkages between participatory development, good governance, human rights and sustainable development:

"It has become increasingly apparent that there is a vital connection between open, democratic and accountable systems of governance and respect of human rights, and the ability to achieve sustained economic and social development."⁷²

The Report of the Aid Study Committee of the Japan International Co-operation Agency recognises similar conceptual patterns of participatory development:

"Development within a developing society aims, we believe, at building into society the mechanism that will ultimately permit self-reliant growth without foreign assistance, at sustaining stable growth patterns for economic development in harmony with the environment... For this to be possible, the central focus of development, is not necessarily to boost production of material goods: instead it should be to foster and enhance people's capability to have a role in their society's development. To this end, people should be willingly involved in a wide range of development activities, as agents and beneficiaries of development. It is this participation that is important."⁷³

While the comprehensive theoretical background of the concept of participatory development is largely recognised by theorists and donor agencies, there is a lack of insight in the potential incongruencies between the various related development concepts. This is convenient for drafting documents on international conferences, but invites to misunderstandings and disagreements when theory is applied to practise. Different project partners develop different project strategies all referring to the same vague catchphrases. Following is an example of the field study experience in which concepts which development agencies presume to be mutually compatible can prove to be contradictory when applied to practise.

In the Jhadol block in the Udaipur district, wells have become dry. The reduced number of wells has created a water scarcity which has in turn sparked social conflicts in the village. Villagers approached a NGO operating in the area, proposing to deepen the dry wells.

This NGO (which frequently uses the catchphrases of 'sustainable' and 'participatory' development in its publications) was not happy with the proposal. In their view, this was not a very 'sustainable' approach to addressing the drought problem. The NGO saw the source of the problem in rampant deforestation, and accordingly proposed forestry, soil and water conservation activities on community land as relief.

The villagers were not too pleased with the idea, as they wanted to keep the grazing land for their cattle. Furthermore, they did not consider reforestation

72 OECD; DAC 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Paris: OECD

73 Japan International Co-operation Agency 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Report of the Aid Study Committee; in Internet <http://jica.ific.or.jp/E-info-part/MBp011.html>; Summary section on "What is Participatory Development"; p. 2.

to be an appropriate measure to water scarcity, According to the NGO, the villagers were quite adamant in their refusal to participate in the 'ecologically sound' proposal. No agreement between the NGO and the village community was reached.

So in this case, 'sustainable' and 'participatory' development - concepts which should ideally hold a mutual interdependence - proved in fact to be diametrically opposed. What was deemed to be 'sustainable' eliminated the possibility of local participation. It therefore appears useful to examine related development concepts and to problematise congruencies and incongruencies with the concept of participatory development.

Participatory Development and Democratic Decentralisation

'Democratic decentralisation' is one of the related theories to participatory development. It is propagated as the guiding principles of administrative reforms in developing countries.⁷⁴ Harry Blair gives the following definition:

"Democratic decentralisation can be defined as a system in which authority is devolved to local bodies that are accountable and accessible to their citizens, who in turn enjoy full human and legal rights in exercising political liberty."⁷⁵

What are the expected benefits of decentralisation? Decentralisation is expected to increase accountability, access and transparency of governance because it brings administration closer to the people. It bears the potential to stimulate information gathering and decision-making initiative at the local level, to empower local institutions and to increase efficiency through off-loading responsibilities from centralised bodies. Finally, it has an educative value through involving more people in politics and administration. Sceptics of an increased decentralisation refer to the danger of "decentralisation to the wrong people".

Donor agencies like the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) stress the development potential of decentralisation measures. The GTZ refers to increased efficiency in managing public affairs, stimulation of innovation- and decision-making capacities at the local level and increased participation of the population in the implementation of development programme.⁷⁶ In its concept paper on public administration the Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung (DSE) refers to a number of important conditions in order to provide an enabling environment for decentralisation measures: the rule of law, free media, a functioning Administration

74 The report on "Panchayats and Self-Government" by the Janata Dal Party in 1989 was titled "The Basics of Democratic Decentralisation"; *Janata Dal* 1989: The Basics of Democratic Decentralisation; Report on Panchayats and Self-Government of the Committee Appointed by V.P. Singh, President, Janata Dal, July 1989; New Delhi: A Janata Dal Publication.

75 Blair, Harry 1995: Assessing Democratic Decentralisation: A Centre for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) concept paper; First Draft, 14.9.1995; p. iii.

76 See: *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)* 1995: Leistungsangebot der 401; Eschborn; pp. 4.

Court, adequate financial resources of local self-government institutions and training facilities for staff.⁷⁷

The conceptual convergence between decentralisation and participatory development is obvious, but participatory development is the more abstract term. In reality, decentralisation may not necessarily promote participatory development. The impact of decentralisation measures on participatory development would depend on the nature and extent of decentralisation. Barbara Inghan has pointed out that it is important to distinguish between the concepts of decentralisation and participation. With reference to David Slater⁷⁸, she stresses that elites may capture the benefits of decentralisation or, at worst, the state moves its arms from the capital to the villages.⁷⁹

Concerning the nature and extent of decentralisation it should be distinguished between deconcentration, delegation and devolution of powers. The UNDP Human Development Report 1993 which follows the conceptualisations of Dennis A. Rondinelli⁸⁰ outlines different decentralisation models:

Deconcentration is limited to passing down administrative discretion to local offices of central government.

Delegation means passing some authority and decision-making down to local officials but Centre retains the rights to overturn local decisions and taking powers back.

Devolution is the strongest form of decentralisation: granting decision-making powers to local authorities and allowing them to take full responsibility without referring back to the central government. This includes financial powers as well as the authority to design and execute local development projects and programmes.⁸¹

Privatisation, which may also be considered as a form of decentralisation, means the transfer of tasks from the public to the private sector. Privatising public enterprises often reduces market monopolies and increases competition.

How can degrees of participation be measured ? UNDP proposes in its Human Development Report 1993 an expenditure decentralisation ratio comprising the following factors:

United Nations Expenditure Decentralisation Ratio:

- (i) local government expenditure as percentage of total government expenditure:
- (ii) local government expenditure as percentage of total government expenditure less defence expenditure less debt servicing. This represents a

77 *Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung (DSE) 1993: Konzeptpapier der Zentralstelle für Öffentliche Verwaltung; Berlin: DSE*

78 Slater, David 1989: *Territorial Power and the Peripheral State: The Issue of Decentralization; in: Development and Change (London), Vol. 20; pp. 501-531.*

79 Inghan, Barbara 1993: *The Meaning of Development: Interactions Between "New" and "Old" Ideas; in: World Development (Oxford), Vol 21, No.11; p. 1811*

80 Rondinelli, Dennis A. 1987: *Development Administration and Foreign Aid Policy; Boulder: Westview Press.*

81 UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) 1993: *People's Participation; New York: United Nations; chapter 4 on : People and Governance Chapter; p. 65-83*

modified expenditure decentralisation ratio taking into account that some expenditure cannot be decentralised (i.e. military expenditure);

(iii) local government revenue as percentage of total government revenue which signifies the revenue decentralisation ratio and assesses significance of local taxation;

(iv) the local government revenue as percentage of local government expenditure which gives the financial autonomy ratio indicating local government independence from central government funding.⁸²

The following table gives example of the expenditure decentralisation ratio of developed and developing countries. India is not among the selected countries by the UNDP report.

Table 1: Local Government Expenditure and Revenue Ratio in Selected Countries

	Germany	Bangladesh	Denmark	Australia
Local government expenditure	17%	12%	45%	5%
Local government expenditure as percentage of total government expenditure less defence expenditure less debt servicing	18%	- ⁸³	51%	6%
Local government revenue as percentage of total government revenue	14%	8%	31%	5%
The local government revenue as percentage of local government expenditure	73%	39%	58%	83%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1993: People's Participation; chapter on "People and Governance"; pp. 65-83.

The report admits that a comparative collection of data may be difficult. It gives the example of the state of Uttar Pradesh in India where allocation of financial resources to the district level is correlated with the infrastructure development level of the district and the population figure of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.⁸⁴

Participatory Development and Good Governance

Good governance has become a central element in international development discourse and communication from 1990 onwards. Its conceptual convergence with participatory development is the subject of many research and study documents, in particular of donor agencies.⁸⁵ The World Bank, which consciously avoids speaking about 'government', was the main agency to stress 'governance' in the context of

82 Ibid.; p. 69.

83 Figures for Bangladesh are not given in the UNDP 1993 Report.

84 UNDP (HDR) 1993: Chapter 4 on "People and Governance"; p. 76.

85 For example: OECD; DAC 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Paris: OECD; Japan International Co-operation Agency 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance.

structural adjustment policies. David G. Williams pointed out that "it has become apparent to many within the bank that reorienting macroeconomic policies is not enough to ensure rapid development....This is a crucial reason for the rise of the idea of good governance."⁸⁶ In its first official publication on "Governance and Development" in 1992, the World Bank described governance as:

"...the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Good governance, for the World Bank, is synonymous with sound development management."⁸⁷

In the same publication, Lewis T. Preston, the former President of the World Bank, explained the World Bank's interest in good governance as follows:

"Good governance is an essential complement to sound economic policies. Efficient and accountable management by the public sector and a predictable and transparent policy framework are critical to the efficiency of markets and governments, and hence to economic development."⁸⁸

Good governance mainly focuses on public sector management, a sound legislative framework, effective regulatory agencies, an efficient implementation machinery and a transparent decision-making process. Activities to promote 'good governance' would typically consist of

- (i) improving the financial management of public institutions and enterprises
- (ii) providing an enabling legislative framework for promoting private sector activities, e.g. improving laws governing property rights, bankruptcy, trade, and investments;
- (iii) providing support for legal training and judiciary;
- (iv) improving government statistical systems, monitoring and reporting;
- (v) promoting a pluralist institutional structure;
- (vi) providing citizens with adequate access to information.⁸⁹

Paul Streeten elaborates on the importance of good governance for the efficient functioning of people-friendly markets. He argues that *markets* are neutral institutions which can work for good or ill. He favours - opposite to the neo-classical approach of state-minimalism (*laissez-faire*) - a strong state intervention:

"Not only should government provide a legal framework and maintain law and order, including the enforcement of contracts, property rights, etc. and pursue the correct macro-economic policies with respect to exchange rates, interest rates, wage rates and trade policies in order to ensure high levels of employment without inflation and economic growth. It must also encourage competition by anti-monopoly and anti-restrictive practises legislation or by

86 Williams, David G. 1996: Governance and the Discipline of Development; in: *The European Journal of Development Research* (London); pp. 157-177; p. 162.

87 World Bank 1992: Governance and Development; Washington, D.C.; p. 1.

88 Preston, Lewis T. 1992: Foreword in: *World Bank 1992: Governance and Development*; Washington, D.C., p. v.

89 Cf. Williams, David G. 1996; *World Bank 1994: Governance: The World Bank's Experience*; Washington: The World Bank.; *World Bank 1992*.

setting up competitive enterprises in the public sector, or by trade liberalisation or take over natural monopolies."⁹⁰

'Good governance' has become another development catchphrase. In the international development discourse, it is often associated with decentralisation and devolving of powers to lower levels of governance. Writing about the local self-government reform in India, Sindhushree Khullar critically asks the relevant question:

"...whether decentralisation of functions, devolution of powers and delegation of responsibilities per se enhance effectiveness in delivery of services; whether they promote quality, foster a culture of excellence and breed a band of innovative leaders."⁹¹

Definitions of good governance should also encompass the relationship between government at various levels and civil society. In such a wider context, good governance may indeed be considered as an important element in promoting participatory development. The Aid Study Committee of the Japan International Co-operation Agency elaborates on the relationship between participatory development and good governance:

"Participatory development and good governance are related in the following way: participatory development with its central focus on raising the quality of participation by local societies and thus better achieving self-reliant and sustainable development and social justice, in one important form of people-oriented development. Good governance is the foundation of participatory development inasmuch as it provides the government functions needed to promote participation and create the environment in which participatory processes take place."⁹²

Participatory Development and Civil Society

The civil society debate has significantly contributed to the conceptual evolution of participatory development by putting emphasis on diverse modes and forms of participation: considering alternatives to participation within monopolistic state and party institutions and recognising new options and opportunities of people to participate in development activities. The civil society concept is based on the existence of various (competing) power players in society outside the state sector which, together with the state sector, provide for the political and economic stability of (capitalist) countries.⁹³

Hartmut Elsenhans refers to different perceptions in the current civil society debate and distinguishes between two notions of civil society:

90 *Streeten, Paul* 1994: Governance; paper presented at the Third ADB Conference on Development Economics, held at Manila, Philippines from November 23-25, 1994; p. 4.

91 *Khullar, Sindhushree* 1995: Local Government and its Pitfalls; *Times of India* (New Delhi) 17.8.95, p. 10.

92 *Japan International Co-operation Agency* 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Report of the Aid Study Committee.

93 The civil society concept was largely developed by Gramsci's analysis of modern capitalist societies; *Gramsci, Antonio* 1971: Selections from Prison Notebooks; New York: International Publications; *Gramsci, Antonio* 1985: Antonio Gramsci: Selection from Cultural Writings. Translation by William Boelhower, Cambridge; Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

"One can probably distinguish two possible coverings of the term "civil society", a large one which applies to any manifestations of non-state actors outside the market, and a narrow one which I could call a capitalist civil society. The notion of civil society is linked to the emergence of capitalism. These civil societies came into existence because the predominant forces of society did no longer need the state for their support, but only a legal framework which was guaranteed by a law enforcement organisation still called state with reduced tasks, they attempted and ultimately - via the bourgeois revolution - succeeded to control tightly."⁹⁴

Elsenhans criticises the absence of economics in Northern American social sciences and stresses the economic dimension of the civil society concept. He argues that secure political citizenship requires bargaining power which largely depends on economic resources obtained through surplus production above the cost of subsistence. He points out the limits of the marginalised masses in developing countries, even in those with pluralistic political systems, to escape from mechanism of political patronage as long as their level of productivity does not raise above the costs of subsistence.⁹⁵

In international development theory and discourse the role of the civil society has long been neglected in the context of the nation building process and the formation of a post colonial bureaucratic structure. The state sector and the bureaucracy were considered as the driving forces for the development of the young nations. With the emergence of new social movements, social networks and associations, NGOs, consumer groups, an independent press and new political forces in many developing countries from the late 1980s onwards, there is a growing interest in understanding and influencing the reassertion of civil society.

Jean-François Bayart has largely contributed to promote research on civil society forces, in particular in Africa. His studies have focused on the role of the "small ones" and people "without importance". His analysis on new forms of political participation and new social movements has renewed African studies in the French language and has received a big audience, especially in North America.⁹⁶

The civil society debate and its increasing importance in development co-operation has also provoked some scepticism, in particular in developing countries:

"Civil society...has come to mean those organised groups who pursue their demands in the pluralist democratic process. So the objective of the dominant western forces is to promote interest group politics to take part in the bargaining process while the state maintains law and order. The state in the third world has become inefficient, corrupt and bureaucratic, therefore civil society should take over the task of development - that is how the

94 *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1995: Non-governmental Organisations, Marginality and Underdevelopment, and the Political Economy of Civil Society; in: *Foreign Funding in Andhra Pradesh* (Hyderabad: Centre for Environmental Concerns; p. 142-143.

95 *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1991: *Economie Sous-Developpée et Société Civile: Surcharge du Système Politique et Possibilités de Pluralisme Politique*; in: *Cahier du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CERES)*; Série Sociologie No. 19: Pluralisme Social, Pluralisme Politique et Démocratie (Actes du Colloque); Tunis 12- 17 Mars. 1990; Tunis: Université de Tunis; CERES; pp. 23-52; pp. 45-46.

96 *Bayart, Jean Francois / Mbembe, Achille / Toulabour, Comi M.* 1991: *Le Politique par le Bas en Afrique Noire. Contribution à une Problematique de la Démocratie*, Paris, Karthala.

argument runs....Thus, the agenda of globalisation promotes democracy for those who can participate in the bargaining process. The notion of democratisation is one of limited democracy operating at the level of the upper and middle classes..."⁹⁷

In development co-operation, NGOs in the North as well as in the South are considered to play an important role as civil society forces, in particular among donor agencies. NGOs benefit from increased financial support from governments, international and multinational agencies. Mohiuddin Alamgir and Thomas Elhaut from the International Fund of Agriculture and Development (IFAD) stress the important role of NGOs as civil society forces in promoting participatory development and community empowerment:

"In order to enforce such policies there must be institutions that serve the needs of the poor, albeit in a balanced framework with the private and local government sector where possible, and the state sector where necessary. NGOs constitute an effective and sensitive complementary driving force. Their comparative advantage lies in the promotion of participatory action at the field level. It is important that development planning and implementation be based on a devolution of decision-making powers to producer communities."⁹⁸

The way donor agencies see the role of NGOs in the development process, and the character of their support to NGOs is undergoing changes in the context of the civil society debate. For example, the European Commission shifted its emphasis in the budget line "Decentralised Co-operation", which was introduced in 1989, from a micro-level project approach - considering NGOs primarily as agents to deliver goods and services to the poorest - to a more programmatic and sectoral approach aiming at strengthening various power players in society within and outside the state sector.⁹⁹

From the perspective of the Indian NGO sector, David Brown and Rajesh Tandon analyse the impact of the civil society debate on development co-operation in the field of capacity building and institutional development.

"Historically, capacity building interventions with voluntary organisations and NGOs have largely focused at organisational level of analysis, emphasising improvements in performance and processes and structures for the same. Institutional development interventions aimed at strengthening the entire sector of civil society have been much less in practice and even less is known about them conceptually. But it is clear that civil society as an important player in relation to the state and the market will necessitate enhancing the sectoral capacities of civil society actors. Therefore

97 Mohanty, Manoranjan 1995: On the Concept of Empowerment; in: *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay) 17.6.1995; p.1435

98 Alamgir, Mohiuddin / Elhaut, Thomas: Empowering the Rural Poor for Self-help: IFAD's Primary Objective: in: *Agriculture and Rural Development* (Frankfurt a. M.); Vol. 1; No 1/1994, pp. 34-35; p.35

99 Discussion with Katja Schult, European Commission, General Direction VIII, Unit "Decentralised Co-operation" on 6.12.1996; see also: *Co-operation for Development 1995: Roundtable on Decentralized Co-operation* June 1995; Brussels: COTA; p. 8.

institutional development interventions aimed at the sector of civil society have potentially enormous implications in the near future."¹⁰⁰

The civil society debate has contributed to shape the concept of participatory development at the macro-level by stressing the importance of new political and social actors at national or regional level. The relevance of the debate for local level development has so far hardly been conceptualised. In chapter 5, this study gives some field evidence of the performance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which are, nationally and internationally considered to promote 'the Indian civil society'.

Participatory Development and Human Rights

The 1993 Vienna Declaration on human rights stresses the indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁰¹ The universality of human rights, however, primarily refers to the basic human rights such as freedom from torture and slavery, no imprisonment without trial, etc. The civil human rights (access to an independent judiciary) and the political human rights (multi-party system, free elections, etc.) are subject to a wide range of interpretation which make the introduction of human rights conditionality a sensitive subject in development co-operation.

The respect for human rights plays an increasingly important role in development co-operation and influences the evolution of development concepts, in particular participatory development.¹⁰² Human rights and participatory development concerns merge in project support. The human rights concept becomes a developmental dimension and the concept of participatory development incorporates human rights principles by stressing the right of people to partake in political and development processes. This is particularly evident in the case of women's rights. Women issues have been put on the top agenda of development strategies first by NGOs and later by international and national development agencies. The most important international instruments are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994. A Special Rapporteur on Gender Discrimination and Violence Against Women has been appointed to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Since the late 1980s, human rights issues have formed a part of many bilateral development agreements. The case of the European Community represents an outstanding example for the politicisation of development co-operation. Initially, human rights principles were mentioned either not at all or only in passing in the preamble of some agreements between the European Community and third countries. The first reference to the respect of human rights in a contractual document was given in Article 5 of the Fourth Lomé Convention, concluded in December 1989.

"In this way, the European Community and its member States tangibly demonstrated their commitment to human rights in their relations with third countries. In the ensuing three years, this stance was confirmed as such

100 Brown, David / Tandon, Rajesh 1994: Institutional Development for Strengthening Civil Society; in: *Institutional Development Journal* (New Delhi); Vol.1; No.1; 11/1994; p. 3.

101 United Nations 1993: Vienna Declaration on Human Rights; Geneva: United Nations.

102 See: OECD; DAC 1995: Participatory Development and Good Governance; Paris: OECD.

references gradually began to appear in co-operation agreements, defining respect for democratic principles and human rights as one of the foundations of the parties relations."¹⁰³

From the 1990s onwards, but in particular after the Treaty of Maastricht came into force in 1993, the European Community's development co-operation has increasingly incorporated political issues in development co-operation. The Delegations of the European Commission¹⁰⁴ in Africa, Asia and Latin America experience a process of transformation from aid agencies to diplomatic missions.¹⁰⁵

Translating human rights concerns of donor countries into development co-operation practises proved to be difficult as third countries feared interference in internal affairs. Therefore, emphasis of donor countries concentrated on "soft human right issues" which could be regarded as participatory development issues as well: the rights of women, children and indigenous people to partake in the political and development process of the country through increased political representation and greater involvement in development management. In this respect, the ongoing local self-government reform in India is considered to be an opportunity of intervention for a human rights policy, because it is supposed to increase the political and development participation of underprivileged groups in the Indian society. The European Commission, for example, supports a project on training of elected representatives of local self-government institutions in its budget line "Human Rights and Democracy".¹⁰⁶

Participatory Development and Sustainable Development

'Sustainability' means to 'sustain ability': it refers to the ability of the nature to regenerate, but also to the ability of people to retain control over their living conditions. Thus, it means their partaking and involvement in decisions which affect them and in planning and implementation of development programmes. 'Sustainable development' and 'participatory development' are two closely related concepts.

The roots of the sustainable development concept lie in the respect for nature and scientific insight in the negative environmental consequences of growth oriented development paradigms and major development investments, e.g. the construction of large dams. The World Commission on Environment and Development defines 'sustainable development' as:

"...a type of development which meets the needs of the present generation without jeopardising our ability to meet the needs of the future generations."¹⁰⁷

103 *European Commission* 1995: On the Inclusion of Respect for Democratic Principles and Human Rights between the Community and Third Countries; Brussels 23.05.1995: Communication from the Commission (COM (95) 216 Final; p. 7.

104 Offices of the European Commissions in third countries are called "Delegations".

105 In the case of India, for example, the "Head of Delegation" enjoys ambassador status.

106 Original title of the project: "Orientation seminar for Counsellors elected under the new Panchayati Raj Act in Maharashtra/India (B7-5220/in/RED/05/94).

107 *World Commission on Environment and Development* 1987: Our Common Future; New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Different concepts of "sustainable development" are used in the international development discourse. In its most original meaning, sustainable development refers to the ecologically sustainable use of natural resource which allows no trade-off with economic progress.

A widely used approach, in particular in developing countries, is the concept of sustainable economic growth which seeks to reconcile preservation of natural resources with economic progress. Mohiuddin Alamgir and Thomas Elhaut who represent the sustainable growth approach stress the importance of the active participation of the poor for sustainable economic growth:

"....it is difficult to envisage sustainable growth, a major goal of investment for development, without the economic participation of the large numbers of poor producers. Growth policies must be based on those economic agents that possess yet untapped skills and production capacities, i.e. the majority of smallholders in the agricultural sector, and micro-entrepreneurs....The active participation of the poor in this growth process, as producers and just as consumers or recipients of social services, will make growth sustainable and turn it into authentic socio-economic development."¹⁰⁸

A third approach to sustainability is associated with political order. Anil Agarwal elaborates on the relationship between sustainable development, political order and participation:

"The important question, therefore, is which political order will lead to conditions which encourage society to learn first from its mistakes in the use of natural resources? It is obvious that such a society will be one in which decision-making is largely prerogative of those who will last suffer the consequences of the decisions. If decisions are taken by distant national bureaucracy or transnational corporations to use a particular resource, and a local community living next to that resource suffering in the process, it is unlikely that the decision-makers will change their decisions fast (...). Sustainability thus demands the creation of a political order in which, firstly, control of natural resources rests to a maximum extent possible with local communities who are dependent on those resources; and, secondly, decision- making within the community is as participatory, open and democratic as possible."¹⁰⁹

Theorists emphasise the rights of local populations - those who are directly affected by development planning and investments - to participate in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, specifically concerning natural resource management. At the conceptual level, there is indeed a convergence between participatory development and sustainable development, but this might not be the case in development reality at the local level as the field study experiences will demonstrate.

Attitudes towards sustainability issues differ between the industrialised donor countries and developing countries, and between project planners and the local

108 Alamgir, Mohiuddin / Elhaut, Thomas 1994: Empowering the Rural Poor for Self-help: IFAD's Primary Objective: in: *Agriculture and Rural Development* (Frankfurt a.M.), Vol. 1; No 1/1994; p. 34.

109 Agarwal, Anil 1995: What is Sustainable Development ?; in: *Dewan, M.L. (ed) 1995*; p. 20-21.

population. At the level of international conferences, developing countries claim their right to development and their legitimate share in the use of the world's natural resources. Industrialised countries show major concern that developing countries imitate the development path of the West which is based on over-exploitation of natural resources.

As for development projects, local people - those who are most directly affected by the projects and those who should participate - often demonstrate little interest in the scientific insights of negative environmental consequences of development investments in the future. Irrespective of sustainability aspects, their primary concern is often short term relief: water, food and income.

2.3 Promoting Participatory Development in Project Management. Strategies and Methodologies.

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This chapter deals with practical aspects of the concept of participatory development and points out difficulties and inconsistencies which occur when theory is applied to practise. It outlines participatory development strategies and reviews methodologies of participatory project management, in particular Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

From Theory to Practise

Participatory development is not only an approach or a goal but also a tool. Donor agencies, government institutions, NGOs and researchers refer to it as a strategy as well as a methodology. Guy Grant pointed out eight key characteristics of participatory development projects:

- "(i) significant involvement of those affected in project initiation, design , operation and evaluation;
- (ii) inclusion of those affected in project design mechanism for regular participation to guide administrative, productive and distributive elements of the project;
- (iii) larger external linkages of the project that are functional for those at the bottom;
- (iv) cultural feasibility and appropriateness;
- (v) ecological soundness;
- (vi) potential of self-reliance and reduced further dependency;
- (vii) potential for self-sustainment after cessation of project and
- (viii) enhancement of self-directed learning and avoidance of intellectual dependency."¹¹⁰

Regarding 'those affected in project management', the term 'project beneficiaries' is still the most common in development language. The term fits into the charity idea of development assistance. However, it is seldom criticised by "progressive" development professionals who would otherwise reject the charity approach. The terms 'project stakeholders' (the new World Bank jargon) or 'project participants' better reflect a participatory character of project management.

Awareness has risen in development research and management that other "people" than only the primary target group benefit from development investments.¹¹¹ Therefore,

110 *Gran, Guy* 1983: Development by People. Citizen Construction of a Just World; New York: Praeger Publishers.

111 For example, Hans-Dieter Evers, with reference to his 'strategic groups theory', has acknowledged the importance of analysing and recognising the strategic concerns of different groups involved in project management. (*Evers, Hans-Dieter* 1997: Macht und Einfluß in der Entwicklungspolitik: Neue Ansätze zur Theorie strategischer Gruppen; in: *Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (E+Z)*; Jg. 38; 1997 (1); pp. 15-17.

a crucial task consists of distinguishing between primary, secondary, and possibly even tertiary project participants. Primary participants may be defined as the ultimate target group (the farmers, the women in the village etc.); secondary participants may be defined as those involved in the direct implementation of the project (government departments, NGOs) and tertiary participants may include project consultants and the staff of the funding agencies.

Strategies

Translating principles of participatory development into the practise of project management faces difficulties. The reason for this does not only lie in the lack of definitional significance of the concepts itself but can also be attributed to insufficient care and communication between partners when the project is still in its conceptual infancy. Project partners (donor agencies, government and non governmental organisations, the target group) often have different opinions on matters such as the form and the extent of participation of the target group throughout the projects various stages. Such differences, however, are all too often overlooked. The formulation of overall conceptual project approaches usually reflects the development philosophy and the priorities of the donor agency. The projects mirror international development concerns (deforestation, gender inequality, education, ecological awareness building, etc.). Project partners and those who want to become project partners and receive funds would usually make an effort to incorporate the donor philosophy in the strategy of the project proposal believing this would favour their case and increase their chances to enter into further negotiations. Taking into account the large number of proposals, the time consuming selection process and the political pressure to commit funds according to prior negotiated agreements between governments or donor agencies and recipient institutions, further communication between project partners is cut short. Lack of time and pressure to commit funds according to bilateral agreements between donor and recipient countries are primary concerns in the starting phase of many development projects. For other projects, actual emergency situations like natural and manmade disasters require immediate relief assistance. Such pressure seems to translate into a sense of urgency which means differing opinions between partners receive precious little consideration, are not negotiated, and accordingly remain unsolved. Consultants who act as management and technical advisers as well as communication facilitators are also exposed to such constraints. A hastily drafted project begins to be implemented while the ignored tensions remain latent and become manifest in later stages in the form of frustration over progress, questionable commitment and ultimately project failure.

The nature of the traditional project approach also makes the translation of conceptual considerations into practise difficult. David C. Korten traces the problem back to the roots of the positivistic science approach of Newtonian physics. The believe in knowable laws shapened the technocratic character of the development project model and ignored the process and participation aspect in human development.¹¹² Lars Johannsson with reference to the European Community points out that international

112 Korten, David C. 1989: Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation; in: *Veneracion*, Cynthia C. (ed.); pp. 5-20.

donor institutions tend to regard *projects* as *products* which have to be sold to the target group instead of emphasising the service and sharing character of project co-operation.

"This is evident in the jargon. An European Community publication says straight-forwardly that a development project has come to an end when 'the product' has been made and 'sold' to the benefit of the target group."¹¹³

The framework of the project approach is based on feasibility, accountability and contracts. Given such framework, donor agencies tend to favour one umbrella organisation as a partner agency so that they can easier supervise and monitor the project and communicate with the project authorities.¹¹⁴

Since the early 1990s most large donor agencies have reviewed their existing management approaches with a view to incorporate elements of participatory development management. USAID, for example, outlines its development strategy in a "Statement of Principles on Participatory development" and also acknowledges the importance to review established procedures of project identification, appraisal and evaluation. The Statement stresses the involvement of ordinary people, in particular the poorest, and initiatives of indigenous communities in project management. It mentions that accountability of programmes and projects should be oriented towards the end users or the primary beneficiaries. The USAID strategy intends to seek better involvement of local expertise and local capacity building so that poor people can take further development steps on their own initiative. USAID wants to acknowledge local realities and to develop respectful partnerships with a wide range of organisations, in particular private development organisations, and recognises the need to improve field experience, monitoring and communication skills of its own staff.¹¹⁵

However, given the complex administrative nature and management requirements of large development programmes (accountancy, reporting, monitoring and evaluation) a direct link between the donor agency and the project participants (the 'targeted beneficiaries') at field level seems highly unrealistic. Implementation agencies at regional level play the crucial role of executing or facilitating the implementation of the project. At the stage of project implementation, it is then discovered that views and strategies of implementing agencies, the 'secondary stakeholders', do not match with the abstract ideas of the donor agency. They might also differ from the views of the 'primary stakeholders'.

A. K. C. Wood, with reference to projects supported by the European Commission in Bangladesh and the Philippines, elaborates on the crucial role of the 'secondary stakeholders'. He describes the difficulties of the European Commission in identifying a suitable management option for ensuring sustainability of services and a participatory character of project management:

113 Johansson, Lars 1995: Reforming Donor Driven Projects and State Bureaucracies through PRA; in: *Forest, Trees & People's Newsletter*, Issue 26/27; April 1995; Internet: <http://treesandpeople.irdc.slu.se/news/26chambe.html>.

114 Cf.: *Co-operation for Development* 1995: Roundtable on Decentralised Co-operation; Brussels: Cota; June 1995; p. 6.

115 USAID 1993: Statement of Principles on Participatory Development; by the Honourable J. Brian Atwood, Administrator, USAID; Tuesday, 16 November, 1993; Internet: http://www.info.usaid.gov/agency/part_develop/115.txt.html.

"Sustainability of services and benefits for primary stakeholders often depend on secondary stakeholders, yet at the outset the capability and culture of these secondary stakeholders may not favour participatory approaches...We may be faced with a strategic choice in deciding whether a project should work through secondary stakeholders (and seek to enhance their capability) or may legitimately seek to address primary stakeholders directly. The latter route may raise questions of sustainability and cost-effectiveness."¹¹⁶

Therefore, a sound assessment of the policy environment, the institutional settings, the selection of partners and the human resource development dynamics of the involved agents, government institutions, NGOs or consulting firms, need to be undertaken. This is essential to avoid basic conceptual misunderstandings and to create an overall environment in which participatory project management can take place.

The importance of participation for project success depends, of course, on the character of the project. It seems obvious that participation is essential for projects involving institution building, education, training and awareness, or micro watershed management activities. However, even for large infrastructure construction activities, local participation should be sought in different project phases in order to avoid opposition to the project wherever possible. Project reality has proved that large scale infrastructure programmes have provoked strong opposition among the targeted population, because the construction have most seriously affected lives of people, e.g. through flooding and displacement provisions in dam construction projects. However, one has to realise that participation has not only advantages, but also disadvantages. It has hardly been conceptualised that participatory project management might have to deal with trade-offs related to the institutional approach adopted and to the costs of implementation. Trade-offs may also occur between the project impact and the sustainability of the project.

"There may be a degree of trade-off between an approach that best achieves impact (perhaps using an autonomous project entity that establishes participatory approaches with and among the primary stakeholders from the outset) and one that promotes sustainable provision of services or sustainable promotion of participatory planning through institutions that survive the end of a project."¹¹⁷

Village realities might also disturb the conceptual consistence of development approaches. While Guy Grant mentions 'ecological soundness' as one of the key characteristic of participatory development projects¹¹⁸, village communities often prefer development activities which meet their short term needs (employment generation activities, deepening of wells, supply of handpump) or projects of prestigious nature (e.g. the construction of a temple or a community hall). Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Parliament from Tamil Nadu in southern India, reported that villagers of Mayiladuturai

116 Wood, A. K. C. 1995: Mission Report: „Issues Raised by Experience with Participatory Approaches in the Philippines and in Bangladesh (26 March - 4 April, 1995); Brussels. A. K. C. Wood is the Adviser to the European Commission's Director General for North-South Relations.

117 Ibid.

118 Gran, Guy 1983 (key characteristics mentioned above).

in his constituency in Tamil Nadu mentioned a footpath to the funeral ground and a shelter as their top development priorities.¹¹⁹

Catchwords like 'people's participation' or 'community participation' actually suggest unity of people or communal harmony among the targeted beneficiary group. However, it is often ignored that people of the target group have different development needs and priorities. Conflicts may actually occur among primary project participants, in particular in hierarchically organised and socially heterogeneous rural societies. Robert Chambers proposes to assess the powers and interests of different groups at the village level, how they converge or conflict, and how they will support or impede the achievement of a project's objectives. He distinguishes between acceptability of projects among "rural elites" and "poorer rural people" and distribution of project benefits among them.¹²⁰

Methodologies

Participation was not a major issue in the context of the expert driven blueprint development approach which has for a long time dominated development management and has only gradually been reformed from the late 1970s onwards. Anders Rudquist described the characteristics of the blue print approach as follows:

"According to the blueprint approach all important planning decisions are made at central or regional levels. They are based on quantitative data or estimations and planning (as well as implementation) follow a preconceived, fixed time schedule. The targets of the plan are generally determined from the beginning of the planning process and expressed in numerical terms."¹²¹

The classical type of blueprint development approach imposed a problem analysis on the target group derived mainly from large scale data analysis, quick country-side visits close to urban areas, and brief communication with local male elites by high profile experts and government officials. Specific local realities were largely ignored. This did not encourage the 'targeted beneficiaries' to develop a sense of ownership and commitment for the project and made sustenance of the project difficult, almost impossible, to achieve.

From the late 1970s onwards, a number of different methods and tools were developed and applied by donor agencies, NGOs, trainers and researchers to develop models of participatory project management, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The World Bank Participation Sourcebook provides an overview of ten different methods and tools which are grouped into four categories

- "(i) Collaborative Decisionmaking: Workshop-Based Methods;
- (ii) Collaborative Decisionmaking: Community-Based Methods;
- (iii) Methods of Stakeholder Consultation;

119 *Aiyar, Mani Shankar* 1995: "What do the Poor Want"; *Sunday* (Calcutta); 21-27th May 1995.

120 *Chambers, Robert* 1983: *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*; Harlow: Longman Scientific & Technical; New York: John Wiley & sons; chapter 6: Seeing What to Do; pp.140-167.

121 *Rudquist, Anders* 1990: *Planning, Diagnostic Studies and Popular Participation*; Popular Participation Programme Working Paper No. 7; Development Studies Unit, Department of Anthropology; University of Stockholm; January 1990; p. 3.

(iv) Methods for Social Analysis."¹²²

ZOPP, (Objective-Oriented Project Planning), the prominent German "Zielorientierte Projektplanung", used in particular by the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), is grouped under (ii) Collaborative Decisionmaking: Community-Based Methods. ZOPP is described as "a project planning and management method that encourages participatory development and analysis throughout the project circle with a series of stakeholder workshops.....The main output of a ZOPP session is a project planning matrix, which stakeholders build together..."¹²³

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), promoted by Robert Chambers and the Institute for Development Studies in Sussex, evolved as a prominent method in the late 1970 and 1980s with the objective to enable outsiders to gain information and insights from local people and local conditions. RRA aims "to avoid both the 'quick-and dirty' of incompetent rural development tourism, and the pathological 'long and dirty' of some questionnaire surveys."¹²⁴ The methodology of RRA mainly consists of

- (i) searching for alternative data collection by interactive and exploratory learning from key informants (social anthropologists, social workers, group leaders, university students doing field research)
- (ii) taking measures to offset common biases including road-side bias, male elite bias, dry season bias, and the tendency to communicate only with the educated and the villagers already involved in the project.¹²⁵

In the late 1980s, **Participatory Rural Appraisal** evolved in the search for a methodology that incorporates the basic principles of RRA, but would give more responsibilities to local people in development management. While RRA has been designed for outsiders (donor agencies, consultants, Universities) to improve data-collection and analysis, the purpose of PRA is to launch a process of enabling local people and institutions to conduct their own analysis and to decide on development activities.¹²⁶ RRA considered local people's knowledge as a key resource for designing and implementing development projects while PRA focuses on local people's capabilities, sustainable local action and institution building.

122 *World Bank* 1996: The World Bank Participation Sourcebook; Washington, D.C.: The World Bank; Appendix I "Methods and Tools"; pp. 181-204; pp. 187-188.

123 *Ibid*; p. 187. For further reading on ZOPP see: *GTZ* 1991: Methods and Instruments for Project Planning and Implementation. Eschborn: GTZ; *GTZ* 1988: ZOPP (An Introduction to the Method); Eschborn: GTZ; *GTZ* 1988: ZOPP in Brief; Eschborn: GTZ.

124 *Chambers, Robert* 1983: Rural Development: Putting the Last First; Harlow: Longman; p. 199.

125 *Fry, Gerald W./Martin, Galen R.* 1991: The International Development Dictionary; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.): ABC-CLIO; p. 170; *Chambers, Robert* 1983: Rural Development: Putting the Last First; Harlow: Longman; p.200; *Chambers, Robert* 1995: Basic Principles of RRA and PRA; Box 1; in: Internet:<http://treesandpeopleirdc.sl.u.se/newslo/26chambe.htm>.

126 For a comparative analysis and presentation of Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal in the Indian development context see: *Mukherjee, Amitava* 1995: Participatory Rural Appraisal: Methods and Applications in Rural Planning; New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House; p. 9.

"Participatory Rural Appraisal can be described as a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and act."¹²⁷

For both, RRA and PRA, Robert Chambers and Irene Gujit consider behaviour and attitudes of the outsiders and their ability to learn from local people as most important. For Chambers and Gujit outsiders need to demonstrate the following skills:

"Critical self-awareness and embracing error; sitting down, listening and learning, not lecturing but 'handing over the stick' to villagers who become the main teachers and analysts; having confidence that 'they can do it'; and a relaxed and open-ended inventiveness."¹²⁸

PRA has spread quickly in development management. Donor agencies, government organisations, NGOs, training institutes, consultant groups and Universities are using PRA methods and techniques in almost every domain of development management, in particular: natural resource management, watershed management, soil conservation, drinking water and sanitation projects, health projects, savings and credit programmes, animal husbandry, disaster preparedness, emergency aid, and food security.

A variety of techniques and tools have been developed to carry out PRAs. The World Bank listed some of the most common PRA techniques and tools:

- "(i) Semistructured interviewing;
- (ii) Focus group discussions;
- (iii) Preference ranking;
- (iv) Mapping and modeling;
- (v) Seasonal and historical diagramming."¹²⁹

PRA focuses in particular on visual tools in order to overcome language and communication difficulties between outsiders, facilitators and local people. Resource mapping, matrices, well-being ranking, activity ranking (i.e. tree plantation), causal and linking diagramming are among the most common techniques.

Many PRAs fail to differentiate between diverging interests of local people; poorer and richer people, men and women, and to consider dynamics of group interaction, including political rivalries. Rachel Slocum and Barbara Thomas-Slayter complain that many participatory methodologies "do not address issues of social relations, the exclusion of particular social groups, or gender... . Rarely do these methodologies take into account gender analysis, gender-based differences in labour allocation, and gender differences in access to and control over resources and their benefits."¹³⁰

Regarding tree ranking, it can often be observed that women have different priorities than men in selecting trees for plantation purposes. Men usually prefer fast

127 Chambers, Robert / Gujit Irene 1995: PRA - Five Years Later. Where Are We Now ? in: Internet:<http://trees.andpeopleirdc.slu.se/newslo/26chambe.htm>; p. 1.

128 Ibid.; p.2.

129 World Bank 1995: The World Bank Participation Sourcebook; Washington D.C; p. 191; available in Internet: <http://www.worldbank.org/7html/7edi/7sourcebook/7sba/04.htm>.

130 Slocum, Rachel / Thomas-Slayter, Barbara 1995: Participation, Empowerment and Sustainable Development (chapter 1); in: Slocum, R. et al. (eds.) ; pp. 3-16; p. 5.

growing species with high commercial value (i.e. Eucalyptus), women tend to favour trees with nutritional value (i.e. fruit trees).¹³¹

In India, NGOs with a large number of international contacts played a major role in promulgating PRA¹³² through organising of field workshops and training sessions, among them MYRADA¹³³, AKRSP (India)¹³⁴ and Action Aid India¹³⁵.

AKRSP describes its PRA approach as follows:

"PRA is a methodological approach which helps us to learn from villagers about the status of natural resources, the actual problems faced by communities and their needs.

The target group is collected at one place and the particular topic for discussion is introduced by an AKRSP (I) worker. People start discussing among themselves and come up with a reasonable good analysis of different aspects of the topic. Since the target group participates actively, the information is quite reliable. Complicated village land use and watershed maps are prepared by villagers using these methods, and we have found these maps good and reliable tools in helping us to plan our activities. Our experience shows that people are involved from the beginning of the project, they continue a positive involvement in the ensuing developmental activities. This process creates a feeling of ownership over the activity.

A general PRA gives an overall picture of villages, while Topical PRAs focus on specific programmes. In forestry using a Topical PRA with a Tree Matrix, we can identify species which are desired by both men and women separately for plantation. Men demand more commercial species while women demand species useful for fuel, fodder, medicines and fruits. This has helped us to select species useful for both men and women."¹³⁶

PRAs, however, have also been applied and promoted by government development agencies.¹³⁷ A publication of the Forest Department/State Government of Haryana in India gives the experience of participatory microplanning.

"The guiding principle has been to attune to the needs and expectations of local user groups through a process of participatory rural appraisal (PRA). This requires long meetings and careful discussions with village people

131 Experiences from field visits to the "Community Management of Natural Resource Management Project in Gujarat, India", supported by the European Commission and the Aga Khan Foundation and implemented by the Sadguru Water and Development Foundation and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.

132 Amitava Mukherjee gives a list of Indian NGOs which played a pioneering role in promoting Participatory Rural Appraisal. The list includes in alphabetical order: Action Aid, Bangalore; Activists of Social Alternatives, Trichy; AKRSP, Ahmedabad; Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra, Ranchi; MYRADA, Bangalore; Seva Bharti, Midnapore district; SPEECH, Madurai and Youth for Action, Hyderabad; see *Mukherjee Amitava* 1995; p. 8.

133 The Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency has its headquarters in Bangalore/Karnataka.

134 The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme has its headquarters in Ahmedabad/Gujarat.

135 ActionAid India has its headquarters in Bangalore/Karnataka.

136 *Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India)* 1995: Annual Report; Ahmedabad, p. 1.

137 A. Mukherjee mentioned government organisations that received and promoted training in Participatory Rural Appraisal. His list includes: Drylands Development Board, Karnataka; the District Rural Development Agencies in Andhra Pradesh, and several forest departments; see *Mukherjee, Amitava* 1995; p. 8.

during various stages of microplanning, consensus building, implementation and management.

Example: Initially the village Panchayat¹³⁸ passes a resolution for handing over an area to the project authorities for eco-rehabilitation and development through afforestation, grassland development and soil-conservation. To avoid hardship to livestock owners depending upon common grazing lands, small areas were taken for eco-rehabilitation with the consent of the village Panchayat even though it is often difficult for the project to effectively manage such areas dispersed in small pockets. This approach, has, however, helped the project in winning the confidence of the villagers.

In each of the villages, microplans have been prepared with the active participation of the community. These incorporate a village map, transacts of land suitability, details of Sajra, species preference and a sketch map of the plantation sites. The community decides about the location and area of the common lands to be allotted for planning trees and seeding with grasses and legumes. They also suggest their preference ranking of species for planting."¹³⁹

So called "facilitators" are supposed to play a crucial role in carrying out the PRAs. Their role consists of bridging differences in expectations and communication between project staff, villagers of different social and economic status, men and women. In some NGO projects, so called "extension volunteers" or "para-workers" have been entrusted with the task of facilitating the participation of the village community in development activities.

The recruitment and the commitment of such volunteers is often a major problem in village development work. In a hierarchically stratified society with strong gender inequality, it is particularly difficult for NGOs and government organisations to identifying 'neutral' facilitators who care equally for the interests of the different castes and groups in the villages.

138 In contrast to many NGO projects, the Forest Department involved the local self- government institution at village level.

139 *Srivastava, J.P.L./ Kaul, R.N.* 1994: "Joint Management of Common Lands: The Aravalli Experience": European Commission supported project on Rehabilitation of Common Lands in Aravalli Hills (ALA/89/10; 23.2 Mio. ECU), Forest Department, Government of Haryana; pp. 16-17.

2.4 Some Research Implications

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This chapter advocates extending the notion of politics in the view of emerging social and development initiatives which have influenced patterns of political participation. Traditional issues of political science research - the state, the national elites, political parties and established institutions - are still important, but more emphasis should be attached to new political and development agents and changing patterns of political and development participation.

Extending the Notion of Politics

The participatory development debate has contributed to the expansion of the notion of 'politics' and 'political participation'. The meaning of 'politics' is no longer confined to strategies and actions of major power players in society, but extends to initiatives of people which have grouped together on a voluntary, often spontaneous, basis for pursuing political and development objectives. In contrast to the political ambitions of traditional social forces, the goals of new social and development forces are in many cases of a rather private nature and turn more political only in the negotiation process with other state and civil society agents.

In many developing countries, political participation was for a long time largely characterised by hierarchical leadership and ideological approaches. When the majority of developing countries started to adopt Structural Adjustment Programmes under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the 1980s, mass demonstrations against the rise of prices and cut-off subsidies emerged as another major feature of political participation.

From the late 1980s onwards, the rise of new social movements in the South has given people new outlets for participation in the political and development process of their society.¹⁴⁰ In the context of the participatory development debate and the increasing conceptualisation of the related issues of democratic decentralisation, good governance, universal human rights and sustainable development, a fresh look has to be given to 'political participation'. A redefinition of politics has taken place in the context of changing state-society relations.

Rajni Kothari gives some examples of how the range of politics has widened in India with the emergence of new social movements and the tremendous increase of private development initiatives:

"The environment, the rights and the role of women, health, food and nutrition, education, shelter and housing, the dispensation of justice, communications and the dissemination of information, culture and lifestyle, the achievement of peace and disarmament- none of these were considered to be subject matter for politics, at any rate not for domestic politics, and

140 Since the 1990, several publications have focused on new social movements in the South, e.g. *Wignaraya, Poona (ed.) 1993: New Social Movements in the South*; New Delhi: Vistaar Publications. Berthold Kuhn has carried out an empirical analysis of the political participation of new social forces in Zaire (*Kuhn, Berthold 1992: Mehrparteiensystem und Opposition in Zaire*; Hamburg, Münster: Lit-Verlag).

certainly not for mass politics in which ordinary people were involved. This has now changed."¹⁴¹

New Political Agents

The expansion of the political arena requires a wider perspective of political science and development research. New social and political actors and new agents of development and political participation have emerged and challenged the dominant role of traditional political agents.

In many industrialised and developing countries, political parties and established organisations have lost the ability to mobilise people for political actions and to direct, influence or incorporate emerging social movements. Social movements and private initiatives have even gained importance in policy areas previously considered as the monopoly of states, international and supranational organisations.¹⁴² International organisations and national governments often lack sensitivity to people's concerns and the political flexibility for taking resolute actions. They are no longer the sole and exclusive agents of international and national diplomacy.

The environmental crisis provoked by the announcement of Shell to sink the Brent Spar platform into the north sea in July 1995, has provoked a strong and successful protest reaction of environmental NGOs and action groups (Greenpeace and others) while governments upset many people with their lukewarm response, in particular, in Germany. The same is true for the conducting of nuclear tests in the pacific atoll of Mururoa in the second half of the year 1995, where the protest movement was again led by civil society forces. Governments, except those of the affected region, showed much reluctance in taking action against the conducting of the nuclear tests. The luke-warm reaction of the German government, for example, did not converge with public opinion which strongly condemned the tests.

In India, emerging patterns of a non-state and non-party political process are closely related to the rise of the NGOs sector. NGOs have created local, regional and national networks, in particular on developmental and human rights issues. Social movements have evolved from protest actions against big industrial and commercial projects, specifically dam projects. Those movements mainly targeted the development establishment comprised of central and state governments, bureaucrats, the business community and international organisations. Two outstanding examples are the Chipko movement and the movement against the Narmada Valley project.

The Chipko movement started in the 1970s in the lower regions of the Himalayas as a struggle to save the local forest resources against commercial exploitation by outside contractors. The movement was driven mainly by ordinary hill folk without guidance and control from any centralised apparatus, recognised leadership or full-time cadre.¹⁴³

The movement against the Narmada Valley dam project became the major environmental struggle of rural people in the 1990s. The Narmada development scheme consists of more than 3000 major and minor dams. It aims to give a major boost to power supply and irrigation in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh

141 Kothari, Rajni 1993: Masses, Classes and the State; in: *Wignaraja, Ponna (ed.)*; pp. 59-75; p. 71.

142 Private initiatives, for example, played an important role in the conflict solution and peace settlement in the Israel-Palestinian conflict and in the democratic transition in South Africa as well.

143 Cf. Sethi, Harsh 1993: Survival and Democracy: Ecological Struggles in India; in: *Wignaraja, Ponna (ed.)*; pp. 122-148; p. 127.

and, thus, contribute to overall prosperity in the region. The environmentalists and social action groups working with the affected people - mainly small farmers and tribal communities - fight against the displacement of over one million people and the destruction of flora and fauna in the region. Nearly 350 000 ha of forest land and 200 000 ha of cultivated land will have to be submerged. The movement received strong international support and the implementation of the project is under serious review. The World Bank which initially supported the project has withdrawn its assistance under public pressure from environmentalists all over the world and many international NGOs. The central government has also modified its attitudes towards the implementation of the project. Nevertheless, the project is still strongly supported by the Gujarat state government.

The new social movements are different from the earlier social movements such as the liberation movements against colonialism, the peasant movement for land reform or the trade union movements. The earlier social movements were mainly driven by ideological approaches and were aiming to transform the political system. They were obviously seeking to capture state power through election campaigns or violent revolutions and expressed antagonism with other political forces mainly by class differences.

The new social movements often focus on specific political and social issues ("issue based campaigns") without aiming to transform the entire political system or directly targeting the capture of state power. New social movements have developed their identity from a variety of sources such as regional, gender and ethnic identity instead of focusing mainly on class differences.¹⁴⁴

The new social movements, while reflecting the crisis of the political establishment, do not necessarily offer more legitimate or more democratic options for political participation. They might act as religious, ethnic or social action groups pursuing pure self-interests or even malicious purposes.

Whatever might be the democratic spirit of new social movements, they have undoubtedly challenged historically evolved and established systems of representation and leadership. People today have more opportunities and options to partake in the political and developmental process. Political and development science research have to take this evolution into account.

Analysing New Patterns of Political Motivation and Political Action

So far, research on 'participatory development' has largely failed to elaborate on the political significance of the concept (see chapter 2.1) and to differentiate patterns of participation in development with respect to their value for the democratisation process of society. Motivations, actions and objectives of political participation have changed with the rise of social action groups and private development activities. *Development participation* has become political and *political participation* targets developmental issues. This evolution requires new approaches for political science research.

144 Parajuli, Pramod 1991: Power and Knowledge in Development Discourse: New Social Movements and the State in India; in: *International Social Science Journal* (Oxford) No. 127; pp. 173-190; pp. 175-176 and Wignaraja, Ponna 1993: Rethinking Development and Democracy; in *Wignaraja, Ponna (ed.)*; pp. 4-35; pp. 6-7.

Political science research on political participation in industrialised countries has traditionally distinguished between direct and indirect participation (U. von Alemann¹⁴⁵), between legal and illegal participation (S. Verba, N.H. Nie, J. Kim¹⁴⁶), and between conventional and non-conventional participation (M. Kaase¹⁴⁷, K.R. Allerbeck¹⁴⁸). H.M. Uehlinger further differentiated between (i) participation in fulfilment of citizen's duties; (ii) problem oriented participation; (iii) political party oriented participation; (iv) civil disobedience and; (v) violence.¹⁴⁹ In India, as in many other developing countries, political participation has been primarily discussed in the context of traditional social status and the process of class formation: "caste consciousness and class mobilisation".¹⁵⁰ For the Indian context, Subrata K. Mitra has contributed to extending the meaning of participation by providing empirical evidence that protest is an important element of participation which may contribute to increase the democratic legitimacy of a state.

".....protest and participation...are but two facets of the politics of development in India. Earlier attempts of theorisation have treated them as distinct and contradictory forms of action. In contrast, the view proposed here suggests that under certain conditions, institutional participation and radical protest are perceived as complementary forms of action. Under those circumstances, a state which is linked to society through multiple channels of articulation can expect greater legitimacy compared to others in a similar situation which treat participation and protest as strictly separate and favour 'normal forms' of participation to the exclusion of all manners of radical protest."¹⁵¹

Understanding and analysing the overlap between development and political activities requires an analysis of objectives and motivations of participation as well as of new opportunities of expression. Research should also critically review the motivation of political and development agents to promote participation. Do agents promote participation only for preconceived political and development objectives or do they involve their participants in the process of decision-making ?

It may be helpful to regard the participation of people in development and political activities as a process of involvement driven by a set of motivations and expressed through a set of actions. Given the context of India, participation may have a communalist motivation and may be driven by caste or ethnic solidarity or may be

145 Alemann, Ulrich von (ed.) 1975: Partizipation, Demokratisierung, Mitbestimmung; Opladen: Westfälischer Verlag.

146 Verba, S. / Nie, N.H./ Kim, J. 1978: Participation and Political Equality. A Seven Nation Comparison, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

147 Kaase, Max 1990: Mass Participation; in: Jennings, M.K. / Deth, J. van (ed.); pp. 23-64.

148 Allerbeck, Klaus R. 1981: Partizipation; in: Greifenhagen, M./ Greifenhagen, S./ Prätorius R. (ed.); pp. 292-295.

149 Uehlinger, H.M. 1988: Politische Partizipation in der Bundesrepublik; Opladen: Westfälischer Verlag.

150 See for example: Alexander, K.C. 1989: Caste Mobilisation and Class consciousness: The Emergence of the Agrarian Movements in Kerala and Tamil Nadu; in: Frankel, Francine R./ Rao, M.S.A (eds.); pp. 362-414. Shah, Ghanshyam 1989: Caste Sentiments, Class Formation and Dominance in Gujarat; in: Frankel, Francine R./ Rao; M.S.A (eds.); p. 59-114; Mohanty, Manoranjan 1989: Caste, Class and Dominance in a Backward State: Orissa; in: Frankel, Francine R./ Rao; M.S.A (eds.); pp.321-366.

151 Mitra, Subrata K. 1992: Power, Protest and Participation; London, New York: Routledge; p. 210.

religiously inspired. Participation may also be driven by an ideological commitment or a commitment towards a political programme. Another driving force of participation may be the concern over a specific issue: a social, economic or environmental issue. It seems likely that the importance of specific issue based participation increases in the context of overlapping developmental and political activities promoted by social activists and NGOs. Finally, participation may also serve personal interests and career planning. Given the conceptual enthusiasm of participation, such distinction between different kinds of motivation might provide a useful framework for critically analysing the phenomena of *participation*, in particular the participation of the poorest.

Technological evolutions, mainly in the field of communication - telecommunication, television, radio, computer networking (Internet, Email) - and transport offer people, especially the urban middle class, more and better opportunities to access, share and distribute information, improve networking among organisation and increase their mobility. "We change lives", is a famous advertisement of a computer company in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. India is indeed a striking example of a nation where recent technological evolutions have changed the lives of upper- and middle class people due to offering better communication, transport facilities and consumer goods. However, communication facilities have also significantly improved in rural areas. Almost every large village now has now a public telephone connection.

People have more choices in life and this has created new patterns of political action. Political and development science research on participation should contribute to our understanding of changing patterns in political motivation and our way of analysing new forms of political expressions.

Political and development science research should analyse the impact of changing macro level state-civil society relations on political and development participation in rural areas. This study contributes to this goal by looking behind the conceptual enthusiasm of participatory development at the macro-level through analysing rural development dynamics and the role of different development agents instead at the village, block and district level.

3. The Development Profile of India

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It is extremely difficult to analyse and categorise structural constraints and opportunities of participatory development in such a large, densely populated and diverse country as India. The interrelated issues of poverty and equity, together with an analysis of dominant leadership models in India, provide a useful framework to understand the deep rooted political, economical and psychological constraints of participatory development in the country, particularly in rural areas. This chapter attempts to go beyond the introduction of well known striking development issues in India by also considering issues which are often neglected in political and development literature, e.g. the impact of the Indian film industry on political leadership.

3.1.1 Poverty

The Concept

The term poverty invites to almost arbitrary definitions and utilisation. Majid Rahnema pointed out the relative and manipulative character of poverty concepts while referring to urbanisation and economisation of traditional societies:

"It was only after the expansion of the mercantile economy, the process of urbanisation leading to massive pauperisation and, indeed, the monetisation of society that the poor were defined as lacking what the rich could have in terms of money and possessions... The ensuing economization of society brought about, first, the hegemony of national economics over vernacular activities, then, that of the world economy over all others. These drastic changes affected largely the ways in which the materialities underlying the various perceptions of poverty came to be reinterpreted and reconstructed."¹⁵²

152 Rahnema, Majid 1993: Poverty; in: Sachs, Wolfgang (ed.); p. 158-156; p. 159; p.162.

The debate on poverty in India strongly relates to nutritional requirements. Given the Indian context, Mark A. Robinson with reference to P. Cutler¹⁵³ and A.K. Ghose¹⁵⁴ defines absolute poverty as

"...the failure to achieve minimum energy requirements, which are in turn defined as minimum calorific intakes corresponding to specific *per capita* income levels."¹⁵⁵

In the international development discourse, the concept of poverty has developed into more comprehensive approaches of human resource development indicators centred around the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI).¹⁵⁶ The PQLI includes the nutritional and income factor as well as education and health.

The UNDP Human Resource Development Index 1995 is based on the three indicators (i) longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth; (ii) educational attainment as measured by a combination of adult literacy (2/3 weights) and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio (1/3 weight), and (iii) standard of living, as measured by real GDP per capita (PPP\$).¹⁵⁷ The combination of the life expectancy index, the educational attainment index and the adjusted real GDP per capita (PPP\$) index is the basis for the Human Resource Development ranking.¹⁵⁸

M.H. Suryanarayana emphasises the importance of a comprehensive data base for identifying adequate poverty alleviation strategies. He criticises conventional approaches to poverty identification and measurement which presuppose a stationary economy and recommends a distinction between chronic and transient aspects of poverty.¹⁵⁹

Poverty in India

India still has the largest concentration of poorest people in the world. The progress against poverty in India has been highly uneven over time and space. While the period from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s was characterised by fluctuations in poverty, the reduction of poverty since the early 1970s has been sizeable, e.g. the national headcount index¹⁶⁰ declined from 56 to 41 percent between 1969/70 and 1992.

153 Cutler, P. 1984: The Measurement of Poverty: A Review of Attempts to Quantify the Poor, With Special Reference to India; in: *World Development* (Oxford), Vol.12, No 11/12, pp. 1119-1130.

154 Ghose, A.K. 1989: Rural Poverty and Relative Prices in India; in: *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (Cambridge), Vol.13, pp. 307-331.

155 Robinson, Mark A. 1991: Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation; India Country Study; Overseas Development Institute, London; p.2.

156 For a discussion on human development and poverty see UNDP 1995: Human Development Report: Gender and Human Development; UNDP, New York, 1995 (Oxford Univ. Press); principal co-ordinator: Mahbub ul Haq; published for the UNDP Delhi by Oxford University Press Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras: Chapter 6: The Concept of Human Development; pp.117-124.

157 Ibid.

158 It is calculated by the dividing sum of these three indices by three.

159 Suryanarayana, M.H. 1996: Poverty Estimates and Indicators; Importance of Data Base; in: *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay); Special Number; September 1996; pp. 2487-2497.

160 The headcount index represents the percentage of the population who live in households with a consumption per capita less than the poverty line. The poverty line is defined by the Government of India's Planning Commission. (*Government of India; Planning Commission 1993: Report of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor; New Delhi.*)

However, India's poverty reduction progress has been modest compared to some countries in east Asia.¹⁶¹

India ranks 134 on the UNDP Human Development Index 1995, after Sao Tomé and before Madagascar. Its neighbouring countries rank as follows: Pakistan (128); Sri Lanka (97); Bangladesh (146) and Nepal (151). China ranks 111.¹⁶²

India's life expectancy at birth is 60.4 years; its adult literacy rate 49.9% and its real GDP per capita amounts to 1230 US Dollar. The GNP per capita is 310 US Dollar. 132.7 million people or 15% of the population have no access to health services; 185.7 million people or 21% of the population have no access to safe drinking water and 645.6 million of 73% of the population have no access to sanitation facilities. 271.8 million adults above 15 are illiterate among them are 169.9 illiterate females. 69 345 children are malnourished and 3 102 children die per year before the age of five. The daily calorie supply per capita is 2,395 joule. The number of newspaper copies per hundred people is three and the number of televisions per hundred people is four.¹⁶³

The geographical territory of India consists of approximately 95 % rural areas and more than 70% of its population lives in rural areas.¹⁶⁴ In rural areas, 49% live below the poverty line of Rs. 11 000 income per year. In urban areas 38% live below the poverty line.¹⁶⁵ Two-thirds of households in villages with population below 1000 have a monthly income less than Rs. 750 per months as against 16.1% in the case of cities with a population over 1 million.¹⁶⁶

Poverty Alleviation: Example Child Labour

While awareness on interlinkages between the various poverty factors has risen in India and elsewhere, the task of identifying suitable poverty alleviation and development strategies has not become easier. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognises insecurity, social and economic rights as important poverty indicators and suggests the following key intervention strategies:

161 Ravallion, Martin / Datt, Gaurav 1996: India's Checked History in Fight Against Poverty. Are There Lessons for the Future ? in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay); Special Number; September 1996; pp. 2479-2485. The article provides an overview of results from a research project on the influence on economywide and sectoral factors on evolution of poverty measures for India since the 1950s.

162 UNDP 1995: Tables: Human Development Index; pp. 155-157 (India figures on page 157).

163 UNDP 1995 Tables: Human Development Index, pp. 155-157 (India figures on page 157); Profile of Human Development; pp. 158-159 and Profile of human deprivation; pp. 160-161 (India figures on p. 161). The figures refer to data collected between 1985-1993 for health services and 1988-1993 for safe drinking water and sanitation, all other data is of 1992. The data was collected from surveys of household consumption every five to six years, using a standard sample of 125 000 households. Apart from the five-yearly surveys with a full sample, mini surveys with small samples are conducted almost every year. These tell quite a different story.

164 According to the latest census in 1991, out of the total population of 846 million in that year 74.35 % were living in rural areas.

165 UNDP 1995: Human Development Report: Wealth, Poverty and Social Investment; pp. 178-179 (India figures on p.179); According to UNDP the data are from around 1990.

166 Sachdeva, S.K. (ed.) 1995: India Yearbook 1995, New Delhi: Competition Review; p. 752. Almost one third of households in rural area continue to be the poorest of the poor with a monthly income of less than Rs. 350 and less than 5 % of households in rural India have a monthly income exceeding Rs. 2500 as per near about 20 % in urban areas. Reference is given to surveys from the Operation Research Group, New Delhi.

- "(i) enabling poor households to have access to productive assets and employment opportunities, and to receive adequate prices and wages;
- (ii) increasing the productivity of the labour and assets of poor households through access to capital, education and skills;
- (iii) providing adequate access to a range of basic services, such as agricultural extension services and other types of infrastructure;
- (iv) providing systems of protection against abuse and exploitation of the economically or socially weak;
- (v) providing safety nets for households and individuals who cannot produce enough to survive or escape from absolute poverty;
- (vi) enabling poor households to live in a situation of law and order and be protected against violence."¹⁶⁷

Taking the example of education, universalisation of primary education is a major development objective of India since independence but its achievement seems still unrealistic. Lack of transport infrastructure, low salaries for teachers and a poor supervision and monitoring system provide little incentives for regular teacher attendance and quality education in rural areas. Despite a provision of a free meal for primary school children, many parents prefer to employ their children, in particular girls, in household and agricultural work so that the child contributes to the poor income of the family or send the child for little to almost no remuneration to so called "training on the job" believing that this (rather than a school education) would later improve the child's employment opportunities.

Child labour is probably India's most striking poverty feature and has received widespread national and international attention.¹⁶⁸ Child labour illustrates the character of poverty and the difficulties to identify suitable strategies to address the problem. India has an estimated 17 million (central government estimates) to 50-100 million (UNICEF, ILO and NGO estimates) child labourers under the age of 14 years.¹⁶⁹ Child labour practises occur in hazardous and non-hazardous industries in export (textiles and garments, gems and precious stones, leather goods and handknotted carpets) and non-export sectors (match and fireworks industry, glass industry, lock making industry). Child labour is as much the cause of poverty as its result. It deprives children of basic education and depresses the working capacity and the health standard of future adult workers. The reasons for child labour are rooted in unemployment and

167 *Rodgers, Gerry (ed.) 1995: New Approaches to Poverty Analysis and Policy; Part 1: The Poverty Agenda and the ILO: Issues for Research and Action; Geneva: International Institute of Labour Studies; Chapter 1; pp. 20-21; Chapter 1 is prepared by an ILO Working Group consisting of Gerry Rodgers, Jean-Paul Arlès, Rogger Beattie and others.*

168 Child labour receives particular attention in metropolitan Indian cities where an increasing awareness of the Indian middle class match with high visibility of working street children and high profile NGO awareness campaigns. This sometimes diverts the attention of child labour in rural areas where school attendance is extremely poor, particularly among girl children, and most bonded labour is recruited.

169 Figures vary because of the lack of reliable statistics and different definitions given for child labour. While Government sources mainly consider employed children in industry and agriculture as 'child labourers', some NGOs and UNICEF define all children deprived of education and engaged in any sort of paid or unpaid work as 'child labourers'.

underemployment of adult workers, precarious incomes and non-access to education facilities.

The Government of India in 1994 launched a 8500 million Rs. programme to eliminate child labour in hazardous industries by the year 2000 following a policy statement of former Prime Minister N. Rao on his Independence Day's speech in August 1994. The government programme which was eventually launched in 1995 and many NGO activities, however, focus only on children working in hazardous industries, many of them in the form of bonded labour. Human rights activists working in the field of child labour advocate for compulsory primary education to eliminate child labour not only in hazardous industries but also in agriculture and household.

Compulsory primary education seems less popular among the political establishment and large sections of the society. It is argued that it would impose a burden rather than a relief on the poorest family. This argument might enjoy support from many poor families sending their children to work but it also reflects the vested interest of the middle and upper class: to maintain cheap sources of unorganised labour.

Institutional Aspects of Poverty

Low nutrition standards, low health standards, and a low income level undermine people's self help capacities and reduce their efforts in participating in decision-making procedures and implementation of development programmes.¹⁷⁰ However, these factors are not an excuse if poor people are denied basic civil rights. Basic institutional and organisational structures are primordial conditions for implementing sustainable poverty alleviation policies. For the Asian context, V.N. Mishra pointed out that countries with less organised local institutions have higher levels of rural poverty than countries having better organised local institutions.¹⁷¹ H.R. Chaturvedi considered the absence of a stable and well designed institutional structure as a key factor for the failure of development policies in India:

"A drift or even displacement of the goals of rural development could be traced to its feeble and instable institutional structure starting with Community Development and extending to Area Development and Special Target Groups Programmes".¹⁷²

170 Satya P. Gautam has pointed out this aspect for the Indian context: "A large section of the tribal and rural population of the country lives under conditions of acute poverty. Before they can envisage the democratic possibility of their being able to actively participate in decision-making processes influencing the politico-economic and socio-cultural affairs of the republic, one has to think of their minimal needs, education, health care and so on." (*Gautam, Satya P.* 1994: Cultural and Political Autonomy in Indian Society; in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay) May 14th, 1994; pp.1181-1182; p. 1181).

171 *Misra, V.N* 1990: Local Organisation, Rural Poverty and Quality of Life in Asia; in: *Pant, A.D./ Gupta, Shiva K. (eds.)*; pp. 296-319; p. 301.

172 *Chaturvedi, H.R.* 1990: Rural Development and Some Structural Impediments in: *Pant, A.D./ Gupta, Shiva K. (eds.)*; pp. 206-222; p. 207.

3.1.2 Equity

The Concept

The concept of 'equity' incorporates a comprehensive understanding of justice, equal opportunities and distribution of resources. Gerald W. Frey and Galen R. Martin with reference to Lester Thurow¹⁷³ and David M. Smith¹⁷⁴ emphasised the distinction between 'equity' and 'equality'.

"Equity is the more philosophical and economically complex concept because it is highly normative and focuses on the just distribution of economic resources. Fairness is also an integral part of the equity concept. In contrast, equality is a more straightforward mathematical concept that reflects the extent of differences with respect to the possession of any desired goods, resources, or services. Equality does not necessarily imply equity."¹⁷⁵

Equity in relation to participation refers to the dynamics of political, economic and social inequality and not primarily (as poverty does) to the lack of basic physical means, skills, education or infrastructure.

The lack of equity develops its own dynamics of people's participation in politics and development. Inequality fosters patronage relations. Patronised political participation is still common in India, in particular in rural areas where local elites, mainly landlords, often control votes of landless labourers and indebted persons. Political rallies, in particular if organised by political parties, usually provide for food if not cash payment to participants. The distribution of liquor, food, blankets, etc. are a common feature in election campaigns.

Relevance for India and the Panchayati Raj Reform in Particular

Equity concerns are of foremost importance for analysing the impact of local self-government reform on participatory rural development. The provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act strengthen local level politics. Economic and social disparity between castes and classes as well as gender inequality in public life are vibrant at the local level.

One of the central features of the Panchayati Raj Act is the provision of reservation for women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.¹⁷⁶ The objective of the reservation quotas is to counter the risk of upper caste dominance in local politics. In rural areas, feudal relations between landlords (often Rajputs) and agricultural labourers (mainly Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) are still in existence.

The issue of equity received much political attention in post-independent India. The Constitution of India guarantees to all persons equality before the law and equal

173 *Thurow, Lester C.* 1975: *Generating Inequality: Mechanism of Distribution in the U.S. Economy*; New York: Basic Books.

174 *Smith, David Marshall* 1979: *Where the Grass is Greener. Living in an Unequal World*; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

175 *Fry, Gerald W./ Martin, Galen R.* 1991: *The International Development Dictionary*; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.): ABC-Clio, p.136.

176 For origin and definition of terms and allotment of reservation quotas see chapter 5.1.

protection of law. It prohibits discrimination between citizens on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them (Article 14 to 18). The Constitution specifically refers to the right against exploitation. The right seeks to ban traffic in human beings, beggar or any other form of forced labour. Employment of children below 14 years of age in any factory or mine or other hazardous occupations is also prohibited by law.

The Directive Principles of State Policy which constitute the fourth part of the Constitution mention equal distribution of wealth and material resources among all classes of people as a constitutional commitment. Further reference is given to provisions of adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for similar work for both men and women.

However, neither the egalitarian spirit of the Indian constitution nor more than forty years of government development policies have brought significant alleviation to economic and social inequality in the Indian society. Structural constraints of egalitarian development are deep rooted in the country.

The Indian Caste System

The most outstanding feature of social stratification in India is the caste system. The caste system in India has its origin in the mythology of Hindu religion. It owes its origin to the four hierarchically ranked Varnas derived from the Brahmin, who sprang from the mouth of the deity; the Kshatriya who was created from his arms; the Vaishya, who was formed from his stomach; and the Sudra who was born from his feet.¹⁷⁷ Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas constitute the three "twice born" *varnas* dignified by their respective traditional occupations. Brahmins are the priests and teachers; the Kshatriyas are the warriors who own, rule and defend land. Vaishyas are traders, artisans and agriculturists. Sudras belong to the peasant and serving class. Below the *varnas* are the *avarna* groups, known as 'Ati-Sudras' or 'Harijans', a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi. They are assigned to polluting work and excluded of social interaction with the other *varna* castes. Their touch, and sometimes even their shadow, is considered to be polluting caste Hindus. However, this ideal type of hierarchical caste and class social order probably never existed in its pure form. 'Untouchability' was legally abolished by the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and its practise today constitutes a punishable offence.

Castes, with reference to Max Weber, are often defined as "status groups"¹⁷⁸ reflecting in particular occupation and economic status of communities. M.S.A. Rao pointed out that some misconceptions may evolve from such a definition:

"To say the least, caste is not identical with status group. There are two notions in the concept of status group, namely status and group. Status is not collapsible with caste as status obtains also in class and ethnic groups. Conversely, occupation (i.e. class position) is a part of the caste system. Moreover, caste as a group applies only to the sub-sub-caste level. Caste at higher levels of structural order is a category which admits status differentiation (and conflict) within it. Although it has the potential of group

177 See *Fadia, Babulal* 1984: State Politics in India, Vol. 1; New Delhi: Radian Publishers; p. 438.

178 *Weber, Max* 1959: The religion of India, Glencoe, pp. 39-40.

formation under defined political, religious, social and economic conditions, it cannot be asserted that caste at higher structural levels is always a group..."¹⁷⁹

Given the complex nature of the caste system, in particular its division into thousands of sub-castes and its specific regional and local features, it is difficult to assess its importance in contemporary India and its impact on political and economic development. The following assessment of Subrata K. Mitra briefly describes continuity and change of caste dynamics in India:

" Restrictive social practises based on caste are changing gradually under the combined impact of legislation, politics and market forces. However, it is not unusual to see cases of attempts by the traditional social order to maintain the status quo by force or through the dictates of the traditional council of caste elders."¹⁸⁰

Caste hierarchy certainly does not provide for a conducive environment of individual social upward-mobility. It relates the social status of the individual to a historically established position of a community. However, migration, increased mobility of people and the diversification of professional life have weakened the links between caste, occupation and economic status¹⁸¹ over the past decades. The process of decreasing convergence between caste hierarchy and class is not a recent phenomena, but has already been observed in the early 1970s.

"In traditional society, and even fifty years ago, there was much greater consistency between the class system and the caste structure. One can even say, with some risk of oversimplification, that the class system was largely subsumed under the caste structure. This means, in effect, that ownership of land and nonownership of land and relations within the system of production, were to a much greater extent associated with caste than is the case today. The disintegration of village handicrafts and the emergence of caste-free occupations have also contributed towards dissociating class relations from the caste structure."¹⁸²

However, the caste system is still dominant in social, religious and political life in cities as well as in rural areas. The large majority of marriages are arranged along caste lines. Attitudes, social behaviour and communication patterns reflect affiliation to different castes. In many cases, the caste system keeps patterns of vertical ties in society alive and makes the building of horizontal solidarity difficult. Politicians have antagonised between castes for seeking electoral support and engineering of party loyalties. The caste factor plays a major role in political mobilisation, in particular in

179 Rao, M.S.A. 1989: Some Conceptual Issues in the Study of Caste, Class, Ethnicity and Dominance; in: Frankel, Francine R. / Rao; M.S.A 1989 (eds.); Vol.1; pp. 21-45; p.23.

180 Mitra, Subrata K. 1996: Politics in India; in: Almond, Gabriel A. / Powell, G. Bingham (eds.); pp. 669-728; p. 675.

181 See Bêteille, André 1971: Caste, Class and Power. Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village; Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, p. 5.

182 Bêteille, Andrew 1971; p. 191.

rural areas¹⁸³ and is since independence much more important in state politics than in national politics.¹⁸⁴

The Reservation Policy

In India, allocation of reservation quota is the most popular policy to accommodate equity demands. Reservation quota provide for social and economic benefits, in particular, employment opportunities in government services. Castes are considered as vote banks for political parties. The motivation for providing reservation quotas is often to secure electoral support from certain communities. Reservation quota have given people opportunities which had otherwise not been available for them, but they have also significantly contributed to the politicisation of caste. In the public discussion, the dominance of the reservation issue has narrowed the concept of equity to the striving for a slice of state power and alienated it from a comprehensive understanding of empowerment.

The primary beneficiaries of reservation quota are the so called "Scheduled Castes" and "Scheduled Tribes". These terms have now widely replaced the terms of "Harijans", "Ati-Sudras" or "Untouchables" in government language as well as in public discussion.

The terms Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes refer to such castes or parts of, or groups within, such castes as are deemed to be Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution of India. The terms have been created in the context of classification of castes and tribes in India in order to allocate reservation for jobs in the government administration, university colleges and public institutions to economically underprivileged persons.

According to the 1981 Census, the last census on caste basis, 104 million persons or 14,25 % of the 1981 population belong to the Scheduled Castes and 51 million persons or 7 percent of the 1981 population belong to the Scheduled Tribes.

Scheduled Castes are scattered throughout the country, with 84% percent of them living in rural areas. Many of them are landless agricultural labourers, small farmers, scavengers, tanners, weavers and cobblers. The majority, 84% according to the 1991 census, lives in rural areas.

Scheduled Tribes can be divided into frontier tribes and non-frontier tribes. The frontier tribes, representing 11% of the total tribal population, are those that inhabit the north-eastern frontier states. The remaining 11% are distributed over many states, but the majority of them lives in the so called "tribal belt" comprising areas of Southern Rajasthan, Northern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Southern Bihar. There are more than 700 hundred different tribes, some of them comprising several thousand persons, others fewer than one hundred persons. Many of them are small farmers working on nonirrigated land in remotes areas or are working in the forests as labourers

183 "Caste is used more extensively in mobilising support in rural than urban areas"; see: *Fadia, Babulal* 1984; p. 438.

184 See: *Brecher, Michael* 1966: *Succession in India*; London, New York: Oxford University Press; p. 230; *Béteille, André* 1967: "Elites, Status Groups and Caste in Modern India"; in: *Mason, Philip (ed.)*; p. 223.

in various types of occupations such as timber-cutting, charcoal making, and plantation labour.¹⁸⁵

The recommendations of the Mandal Commission which were implemented under the V.P. Singh Government in August 1990, provided for a significant increase in reservation for backward communities and have triggered a heated debate with spectacular protest action like self-burning of higher caste members.

The local self-government reform has introduced reservation of one third of the total seats for women and reservation quota for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to their population strength in the constituencies in April 1993¹⁸⁶.

3.1.3 Leadership

Naming patterns of leadership as a structural constraint of participatory development in a country is, no doubt, a hazardous approach and bears the risk of jumping to conclusions on mentality, culture and mindset of its population.

K. Balagopal drastically describes the role of leaders in the 'Indian electoral democracy' and his assessment is particularly true for the Hindu heartland¹⁸⁷:

"From the village Sarpanch to the MLA, most of the elected representatives today are leaders of gangs armed to the teeth, and the consequent terror is a decisive factor in deciding elections."¹⁸⁸

It is important to analyse the dominant patterns of leadership in India and the mechanisms of their mediation for understanding the local dynamics of the Panchayati Raj reform. The Panchayati Raj reform brings about a major recruitment of leadership at the local level: elected representatives for about 500 district Panchayats, 5000 block level Panchayats and 225 000 Gram Panchayats.

In the past, Panchayati Raj leadership was largely characterised by local leaders with a high caste standing, a good economic position and seniority.¹⁸⁹ The most dominant feature of the Panchayati Raj reform is probably the reservation for women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; and the most common argument against the reform is the lack of leadership qualities among those persons. The argument is particularly popular among the Rajput community. They have a strong historical background of rule and leadership and suffer from provision of reservation for backward communities.

185 *Government of India* 1983: Census of India 191, Series 1, Primary Census Abstract, General Population, Part I+II and *Shah, Ghanshyam* 1991: Grass-Roots Mobilization in Indian Politics; in: *Kohli, Atul* 1991; pp. 262-304; pp. 271-275.

186 For further details on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment see chapter 4.2, and for the case of Rajasthan see chapter 5.2.

187 The Hindu heartland comprises the states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, parts of Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the capital Delhi.

188 *Balagopal, K.* 1994: Seshan in Kurnool; in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay); July 23rd, 1994; pp. 1903-1906; p. 1903.

189 *Chakraborty; Krishna / Bhattacharyya, Swapan Kumar* 1993: Leadership, Factions and Panchayati Raj. A case study of West Bengal; New Delhi, Jaipur; see in particular page 16.

Leadership Patterns: Principles and Constraints

The ideal model of democratic leadership in a pluralistic society is based on accountability and competence in mediating between the interests of different sections of the society. In a democratic set up, leadership is supposed to be controlled by a system of checks and balances. The fact that the guiding principle of leadership and representation in a society does not match with rational models of democratic leadership may be attributed to the human factor resisting to a rational biased idea of a "human being".

Besides the ability to provide a strong, in some cases almost divine, identification basis for masses, it seems that a primary skill of many Indian politicians consists of building and maintaining a system of loyalties within the party and the business community. Moral credibility and consistency in political and economic decision-making seems to be less important.

The lack of education makes it difficult to spread a leadership model based on accountability and competence. Education enables people to develop a basis of understanding and acting outside the narrow framework of the immediate political and social environment. It introduces the concept of learning, applying and reviewing skills and knowledge.

Deprived of education, abstract concepts of leadership are alien to villagers being exposed to fragmented, feudal and hierarchical structures without checks and balances on authoritarian rule. Dynastic rule and personalisation of leadership are more familiar models for people having few opportunities to make a comprehensive assessment of political parties and programmes.

Political Leadership in India

At the time of the independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar¹⁹⁰ personified two different leadership approaches. Mahatma Gandhi's leadership style substituted charisma for ideology. He encouraged the lower castes to place faith in his personal intervention rather than to claim their rights in an assertive manner. The leaders of the national movement carried out political mobilisation from the top down by seeking to cultivate influential leaders of the dominant agricultural castes, the Muslims, the Harijans and the tribals.¹⁹¹

190 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was a well known Indian jurist, statesman, social reformer and Scheduled caste leader. He is after (if not together with) Mahatma Gandhi the most outstanding national leader. Internationally and among higher caste Hindus, B.R. Ambedkar is less popular as his life and work relates in particular to Scheduled Castes. Dr. Ambedkar with the co-operation of others fought for the cause of the economically and socially depressed people. He successfully advocated for including equal citizenship, legal abolition of untouchability for all purposes, and legal safeguards against social boycott and persecution in the Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar and his supporters also achieved, through negotiations, provisions for education, employment, representation for Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the legislature, public services and the cabinet and protection against any discrimination by any legislation or executive order. Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in 1956. The thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar and their relevance for the current political context are still widely discussed in the Indian media; (see for example :Babu, Sekar 1994: *The Hindu* (Madras) 23.8.1994; p.17).

191 Frankel, Francine R. 1989: Conclusion: Decline of a Social Order; in: Frankel, Francine R. / Rao, M.S.A (eds.) 1989; Vol.2; pp. 482-517; p. 493.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar emerged as a leader of the Depressed Classes who advocated for assertiveness and claim of rights. He rejected the purified Brahmanical culture and the idea of reconstructing Indian society after independence on the basis of caste hierarchy.

In post-independence India, political leadership patterns mainly crystallised around national and state level politics. The de facto absence of a third tier of government structure long deprived the local level of producing its autonomous patterns of political leadership.

National leadership during Jawaharlal Nehru's term as Prime Minister (1947-1964) could be characterised by his charismatic mass appeal and his democratic spirit of governance. At the state level, strong leaders with a mass support basis provided sustenance to the national leadership relating to the freedom struggle and the country's nation building process.

Indira Gandhi's strong personality, her authoritarian style and administrative abilities set new patterns of leadership in India. Her years as prime minister were characterised by the authoritarian emergency rule (June 1975 to January 1977) at the national level and the policy of non-alignment and non-commitment at the international level. She significantly weakened the role of the previously powerful Chief Ministers and central government loyalists replaced traditional leaders at the state level. The quality of debate and discussion in the Parliament suffered from the emergency rule. Her policy certainly had an influence on notions of power, rule and decision-making in India. Her rule and dominant patterns of leadership within the Congress Party leadership did not provide for a conducive environment of participatory development and political accountability but led to a decay of democratic leadership patterns across the country.

"Under the broader framework of political institutions in which the party system had operated after Independence, the transformation of the Congress Party and its successor Congress (I) into the personal instrument of the Prime Minister, accelerated tendencies of political decay across the political and public institutions of the Indian state. Many state Chief Ministers and party chiefs who were selected by, and owed allegiance to, the Prime Minister rather than their state parties, became reckless in the use of power without responsibility. They exploited the patronage of political office, so long as they enjoyed it, for personal and political gains, financing their war chests with black money contributed by industrialists, or by criminals to whom they provided protection."¹⁹²

Rajiv Gandhi attempted to strengthen his leadership appeal in rural areas by his policy to develop a mechanism of direct linkages with local level institutions by passing funds directly to Panchayat Institutions and giving them constitutional status (see chapter 4 on local self-government in India).

The dynastic rule of the Nehru-Gandhi family provided for a specific political recruitment pattern in India until 1990, in particular, for the Congress Party. Many family members and close relatives of high ranking politicians were given party tickets, even though these persons often lacked mass appeal and failed in elections.¹⁹³ The

192 Ibid. ; pp.507-508.

193 In Rajasthan, the failure of family members of high ranking politicians became obvious in the state elections in 1994. Mamta Sharma, daughter in law of B.S. Sharma, Rama Pilot, wife of Rajesh Pilot, the

appeal of fresh candidates recruited on account of their mass appeal could be considered as a factor for the rise of the BJP in the 1990s.

Mediation of Leadership

The common man reproduces patterns of leadership in his social and political environment and in local institutions which have evolved at the national level. Little attention has been paid to mediation of leadership patterns from the top political and economical level to the "grassroots". One major factor of leadership mediation has been largely neglected by Indian scholars from a mainly middle or upper class background: the large Indian film industry which mainly appeals to lower castes plays an important role for mediating models of leadership driven by emotions and based on authoritarian rule, pride, selfishness and violence. Vinod Tiwari attributes the mediation of crime and violence based leadership models to Bollywood, the Bombay film industry. From the late 1970s onwards, the rehabilitation of outlaws and their conversion into heroes became a common feature in Bollywood movies.¹⁹⁴ Bollywood is known for its strong linkages with the underworld. The Dubai-based underworld "don" Dawood Ibrahim and his key aide Mohammed Dosa - the principal accused in the Bombay blasts of 1993 - provided large financial support to Bollywood. One of India's most outstanding film actors, Sanjay Dutt, has been sentenced to prison due to his involvement in the Bombay blasts of 1993.

Mahatma Gandhi had recognised the influence of the film industry on village life and indicated its dangers.

"There should be no cinema house (in the Panchayat). People say that the cinema can potent means of education. That might be true some day, but at the moment I see how much harm the cinema is doing. They have their indigenous games. They should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from their midst."¹⁹⁵

Numerous examples of film stars joining politics and occupying high profile positions provide evidence of leadership based on emotionally driven mass appeal rather than on competence, experience and accountability. In Tamil Nadu, large pictures, posters and busts projected the former Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaram until May 1996 as a omnipresent Queen and Goddess of the masses providing not only political but also spiritual and religious leadership. The wedding ceremony of her nephew was a mass spectacle in Tamil Nadu.

For the common man, promotion in politics is associated with both the ability to mobilise masses and to express loyalty to the leadership. Given the rampant poverty in India and the limited scope of social upward mobility in a society stratified along the caste system, a political career offers opportunities of welfare, prestige, status which are

son of Buta Singh , the grand son of Devil Lal, the wife of Abhaer Ahmed and the son of Haridev Joshi all lost in the 1993 state elections in Rajasthan.

194 Discussion on mediation of leadership models by the Indian film industry with Vinod Tiwari, Journalist, (ex) Samajwadi Party activist, and business man on 15.10.1995 in New Delhi.

195 *Gandhi, Mahatma K.* 1962: Village Swaraj, Ahmedabad; (compiled by H.M. Vyas) the Navajivan Publishing House; p. 73.

otherwise not available for a large section of the society. Moral values have little freedom to survive in such a context.

Indian politics are strongly affected by the nexus between politicians and the underworld which has been revealed at several occasions, in particular in connection with the Bombay blasts in 1993 and the activities of Dawood Ibrahim.¹⁹⁶ Another case is Omprakash "Baboo" Shrivastava, accused for a series of murders committed in the 1970s and 1980s and sentenced in 1994. Known as a criminal, he nevertheless became an office bearer in the Uttar Pradesh Congress Party's labour cell in 1988, introduced by former Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Balram Singh Yadav.¹⁹⁷ Youth Congress leader Sushil Sharma allegedly murdered Mrs. Naina Sahni. When her body was found in a Tandoori stove at a restaurant in central Delhi in September 1995, her case provoked widespread dismay in the country.

The case of "Godman" Chandraswami, personal astrologer of former Prime Minister Rao, showed in October 1995 that criminals enjoy political protection at all levels. Criminalisation of politics and corruption is a permanent feature in India. Politicians and high placed government officials, and their families, routinely become quite wealthy during their terms in office.

Of course, politics are experiencing strong dynamics and fast changes. Those examples should not lead to a static understanding of the political culture and leadership in India, but they do illustrate trends in Indian politics.

Recent Evolutions

Between 1990 and 1995, two major events and political evolutions suggested a change of top level leadership patterns. The appointment of Naramsinha Rao as Prime Minister (1991) and the political decline of Arjun Singh, former Human Resource Development Minister and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Rao was the first Congress Prime Minister outside the Nehru/Gandhi dynasty. His style of governance, in particular together with the Finance Minister Manmohar Singh, was more policy oriented: mediating the countries economic reform policy. His personality played a less distinguished role in projecting the party's national image and became only a major election issue in the context with corruption charges. Arjun Singh's political career was marked by his strong affiliation with the Gandhi family, patronage, corruption and engineering of party loyalties for personal ambitions. The long-time chief rival of former Prime Minister Rao was expelled from the Congress Party in January 1995. Together with N.D. Tiwari he then failed to establish his new party Congress (Indira) despite its historical affiliation with Indira Gandhi's break away in 1969.

Two other outstanding political events and evolutions in India actually provide some evidence of increased judicial assertiveness, anti-corruption awareness and increased demand for accountability by a growing number of Indians. The rise in popularity of Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan and his struggle against

196 In February 1996, the Central Bureau of Investigation released a chargesheet against former Union Minister Kalpnath Rai and the BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sanghan Singh providing evidence that the politicians had provided shelter to members of Dawood Ibrahim's gang. (Sanjay Kaw 1991: Politician-Underworld Nexus Revealed, in: *Times of India* (Delhi) 9.2.1996; p. 4.

197 See *Frontline* (Madras) 20.10.1995: Criminal Links, p. 10-11 and *The Hindu* (Madras) 29.10.1995, p. 6.

corruptive and manipulative election practises suggests an increased awareness on the importance of "monitoring democracy". Judicial assertiveness has risen with the increasing importance of Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The first PIL cases after the emergency period were largely confined to human rights and environment issues, but with increasing awareness of legal redress and the growth of activist groups, the PIL has started targeting corruption in high place.¹⁹⁸ PIL have eventually culminated in the "Hawala case"¹⁹⁹ in January/February 1996", filed by two journalists and two lawyers in October 1993.

"The Supreme Court's role in the Hawala charge-sheets highlights the recent trend of judicial assertiveness in cases involving corruption in high places. In this process, it has put the screws on political parties long accustomed to little accountability."²⁰⁰

The Hawala case²⁰¹ has forced several Union Ministers and opposition leaders to resign from their posts for having received illegal funds from the Jain brothers for personal and party purposes.

When field studies were carried out in Udaipur district from January to March 1996, a successful Public Interest Litigation by an NGO had dominated the local news. The Supreme Court had ordered the closure of five chemical plants of Hindustan Agro-Chemicals and sister companies in Bichri, 15 km away from Udaipur city for violation of environmental laws and regulations in February 1996.²⁰² The verdict included compensation for villagers for the environmental damage. The Indian Council for Enviro-Legal action, a Delhi based NGO, had filed a public interest litigation against the company in 1989.²⁰³

Such cases might, in the long run, contribute to increase the faith of the common man in political participation and democracy and affect attitudes towards leadership.

198 Mitta, Manoy 1996: Supreme Court: Setting the Agenda, in: *India Today* (Delhi) 15.2.1996: pp. 162-165; p. 162.

199 Hawala trade is a system of bypassing the official foreign exchange channel. Operators in the trade take payment in Indian Rupees from people in the country and supply them dollars against it abroad. The trade runs through a network of agents under the Hawala operator's control. The reverse can also be happen, payments made in dollars abroad can be transferred to India and the beneficiary can be paid in Rupees. Thus in short, Hawala transactions provide a method to launder money. Dollars can be purchased at slightly lower rates through Hawala than the official rate of exchange. The limits on drawing foreign exchange can also be bypassed. Hawala rates often differ from place to place within India. The Hawala trade operators in other ways as well which are resorted to by some exporters and importers. (see: *Times of India* (Delhi) 17.1.1996, p. 1).

200 *India Today* (Delhi) 15.2.1996: Setting the Agenda; pp. 162-165; p. 1 (abstract).

201 Title of *India Today* (Delhi) 15.2.1996

202 The acts of omission were as follows: (i) Hindustan Agro Chemicals started producing oleum without clearance form the Rajasthan Pollution Control Board (RPCB); (ii) Silver Chemicals started making 'H'acid - with a highly acidic effluent - without an industrial license or a Non-Objection Certificate form the RPCB; (iii) The polluting industries tried to conceal the sludge by mixing it with soil in many places (iv) The industries pretended before the Court that production had stopped when it had not.

203 *India Today* (Delhi) 15.3.1996: Rajasthan: Slamming Polluters: A landmark Ruling by the Supreme Court Directs Violators to Pay up (by N.K. Singh, Udaipur), p. 72-73.

3.2 Government Development Policies and the Role of the Bureaucracy

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The design and implementation of development programmes in India is characterised by the predominant role of the bureaucracy.²⁰⁴ Indian governments used the so called "centrally-sponsored schemes", designed and co-financed at central government level, as election propaganda. This chapter points out some problems with the centralised development administration and the implementation of major rural development schemes. It also remarks upon recent changes in attitudes of government institutions towards participatory development and management of development activities.

The Evolution of the Bureaucratic State Administered by Urban Elites

Mahatma Gandhi's development philosophy based on mobilising traditional skills and local resources had little impact on the development policy of Indian governments after independence. Economic growth and food self-sufficiency became the major goals of India's development efforts after independence. In the context of building the nation's image as a powerful self-sufficient economy, priority was given to industrial and capital intensive economic programmes. A low priority was attached to a comprehensive development of rural areas.

"For most Indian leaders, rural development has been less important than national defence, the growth of heavy industry, maintenance of stable consumer food price, and the provision of a variety of essential urban services."²⁰⁵

The increase of agricultural production and the development of infrastructure facilities, like the construction of roads, bridges and public utilities, have become the priorities of development efforts in rural areas. In post-independence India, as in many other developing countries, planning and implementation of development is characterised by a target-driven, top-down approach and a predominant role of the bureaucracy. Nirmal Mukarji elaborates on the constitutional status and the predominant role of bureaucracy in India:

"India is the only major federal democracy in the world that gives constitutional recognition to its bureaucracy. That classic instance of federalism, the United States of America, does not. Nor do Canada and Australia. Nor does the Federal Republic of Germany. The Indian exception

204 The term 'bureaucracy' shall be used in its most common meaning as synonym for public administration, but underlining the "class" character of bureaucracy. As bureaucracy enjoys status and prestige in India, the Indian political science literature often applies the term "bureaucrat" with a distinctive notion of class. It is, however, recognised that the term bureaucracy is by definition not limited to "public administration" but would also apply to Non-Governmental organisation, Corporations, etc.

205 *Franda, Marcus* 1979: *India's Rural Development: An Assessment of Alternative*; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979; p. 1.

is clearly a legacy of colonial rule. Sooner or later, serious thought will have to be given to deleting all references to public services in the Constitution. So long as these continue, bureaucratic structures will remain rigid, defying reform. And public servants, noble exceptions apart, will continue to take advantage of their security to become more inefficient, corrupt and uncaring for the public they are supposed to serve."²⁰⁶

After independence, a hierarchically organised administrative structure was considered to be the most suitable instrument to realise the enormous tasks of achieving economic growth and development in the country. The educational elite of the country supported the idea of allocating major responsibilities to well educated and centrally recruited civil servants for various interests. However, the views of the Indian élite were supported by scholars in Europe and the USA²⁰⁷ who believed in Max Weber's concepts of public administration²⁰⁸ based on a system of rules, hierarchy of authority, impersonality and specialisation for designing a new culture of administration.

The Indian administrative culture barely reflects the importance of specific skills for planning and management of development for the rural poor; the generalist prevails over the specialist. The key role in administration is given to the centrally recruited administrative élite usually from an urban if not metropolitan background and used to decide cases according to prescribed rules and regulations rather than to motivate people, communicating programmes to them and eliciting their support.²⁰⁹

The establishment of All India Services, in particular the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), followed the British colonial patterns of the ICS and IPS.²¹⁰ A few more All-India services were later added in the technical fields (Indian Forest Service, Indian Medical Service, Indian Engineering Service etc.)²¹¹ reflecting an increased acknowledgement of specialisation from the late 1970s

206 Mukarji, Nirmal 1994: Self government and its Instrumentalities, in: *Government of India; Department of Rural Development 1994 (2)*; pp. 153-164; pp. 158-159.

207 "Under the influence of American scholarship, 'development administration' has been flaunted as the key to social change in third world countries. In other words, the message is: create a new management cadre who will 'technicize' administration to produce tangible results ..." (*Bhattacharya, Mohit* 1990: State Bureaucracy and Development Management in: *Pant, A.D./ Gupta, S. K. (ed.s)*; pp. 81-93; p. 91).

208 *Weber, Max* 1947: *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons; Glencoe. The Free Press. See in particular the outline of the legal-rational model appears on pp. 333-334.

209 *Dubhashi, P.R.* 1990: Role of Bureaucracy in Development; in: *Pant, A.D /Gupta, S.K. (eds.)*; pp. 132-151; p. 135.

210 Francine Frankel stressed the influence on the British Raj on the establishment of the All-India Services: "The All India services of the Indian state were the major institutional legacy of the British Raj. These public institutions laid the foundations for the successor bureaucratic and managerial state, whose functions, powers and personnel grew exponentially once India embarked upon its strategy of planned economic development" (*Frankel, Francine R.* 1989: *Conclusion: Decline of a Social Order*; ; in: *Frankel, Francine R. / Rao; M.S.A (eds.)*; Vol. 2; pp. 482-517; p. 498.

211 In pursuance of Clause (1) of Article 312 of the Constitution, parliament passed the All-India Services Act, 1951 which provided for the establishment of two services, viz the Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service. The Act was amended in 1963 to provide for the constitution of three more All-India Services; viz. Indian Service of Engineers (irrigation, power, buildings and roads), Indian Forest Service and Indian Medical and Health Service. It has, however, been decided not to constitute the Indian Medical and Health Service and the Indian Engineering Service for the present.

onwards.²¹²The Indian Administrative Service is controlled by the Department of Personnel and Training while the Indian Police Service is controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The other two major categories of public administration are the Central and the State Services. The Central Services are concerned with the administration of Union subjects (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Income Tax etc.) and the State Services administer the subjects within the jurisdiction of the States (Agriculture, Forest, Education, Health Land revenue).²¹³

Recruitment to the Indian Administrative Service is made on the basis of Annual Civil Service Examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Persons appointed to IAS are allocated to different state cadres. Members of the IAS serve as Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries in the Ministries of the central government: as Secretaries, Development or Agricultural Production Commissioner at the state capital level; as Division Commissioner at the division level and as District Collector at the district level.

The development policies of the central government and the state governments were mainly administered through the district and block bureaucracy. Panchayat representatives, with the exception of a few active chairpersons, had not been given a major role in development management; Panchayats were not considered institutions of local self government (see chapter 4.1) and NGOs became involved in government development programmes only from the 1980s onwards (see chapter 3.3).

Senior politicians and administrators were not the only defenders of the centralised bureaucracy structure and the powerful IAS. Foreign researchers considered the insufficient educational and training qualifications of local staff and their alleged vulnerability to pressures from politicians as a major obstacle for a decentralised administrative structure. Gilbert Etienne emphasised the importance of the IAS for managing development: "The more direct involvement of IAS officers helps to improve the system and its operations."²¹⁴

The Important Role of the District Administration

The strong role of the bureaucracy in development is particularly evident at the district level. M. G. Krishnan points out the reasons:

"Administrative and technical personnel are easily available at the district level for planning, supervising and co-ordinating the development programmes in the districts.....The District as a unit of administration has a historical legacy accompanied with efficiency and convenience."²¹⁵

212 For further discussion on generalist and specialist administrative culture in India see: *Arora, Ramesh K.* 1994: Administrative Reforms in India: Concerns and Projections; in: *Kaushik, Asha (ed.)*; pp. 227-241; p. 229.

213 For further information on National and State level Administrative Services in India see: *Bhagwan, Vishnoo / Bhushan, Vidya* 1993: Public Administration, New Delhi, in particular chapter V "Personnel Administration, pp. 317-508.

214 *Etienne, Gilbert* 1982; *India's Changing Rural Scene 1963-1979*; Delhi, Bombay Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press; p. 155.

215 *Krishnan, M. G.* 1992: *Panchayati Raj in India*, New Delhi; p. 37.

L.C. Jain explains that, historically, district administration in India was designed to keep local political and social forces under subjugation, to realise land revenue, and to enforce law and order.

The district collector retains his name from the British Raj when revenue collection was the major task of the district authorities.²¹⁶ The District Collector has wide ranging responsibilities including law and order, development administration and revenue collection. As the "working king" of the district, he enjoys high prestige and status as R. Arora pathetically describes in "The Collectors recollect", a popular book among government officials in Rajasthan.

"The post of the District Collector is a "dream post" for young officers.... His dormant energies are transformed into an awakened and vibrant consciousness and his inner potentialities find a myriad of opportunities to express themselves to the full."²¹⁷

Despite a large number of expert reports on changes in the administrative structure²¹⁸, only the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat opted for some transfer of powers and financial resources from the district bureaucracy to district Panchayats. This was accomplished by splitting the state budget into a "state sector" and "district sector". L.C. Jain, however, points out that planning guidelines from the central and the state governments limited the freedom of district administration in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Moreover, decentralisation was confined to the district level, ignoring planning and implementation authority of Panchayats below the district level.²¹⁹

Characteristics of Government Development Policy, Programmes and Projects

Development planning and programming in India is characterised by programmes, projects and schemes which are formulated and designed at the central and state government level and implemented by the district and block level bureaucracy. There is little supervision by elected bodies (Panchayat Raj Institutions) or other political and social forces.

The first major effort for development was initiated by the government with the launching of the Community Development Programme (CDP) in 1952. The CDP received strong support from the Ford Foundation and the United Nations. The CDP stressed decentralisation and was conceived as a self-help programme to bring development and social change to villages. Priorities, however, soon shifted to increase agricultural production through the introduction of improved farming practises and infrastructure development.

H.R. Chaturvedi criticises the dominant role of the bureaucracy in the CDP and the target driven approach ignoring the initial idea of combining economic, social and institutional development.

216 Jain, L. C. (with Krishnamurthy, B. V. and Tripathi, P.M.)1985: Grass Without Roots: New Delhi: Sage Publications India; (p.61).

217 Mukerji, Mohan / Arora, Ramesh K. 1987: The Collectors Recollect, Jaipur; p. xi.

218 Jain, L. C. (with Krishnamurthy, B. V. and Tripathi, P.M.) 1985; p. 63.

219 Ibid; p. 74-76.

"People's participation for realising the goals of development was substituted by bureaucratic mobilisation for fulfilment of target, set by a centralised planning process."²²⁰

The Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) introduced in 1961, concentrated on bio-chemical soil and crop treatment. It showed significant success in improving agricultural productivity, but disparity between rich and poor farmers increased. Subrata K. Mitra regards the introduction of the IADP as a shift in the Indian development policy and points out its negative effect for achieving an equitable rural development.

"This set the precedent for the introduction of centrally coordinated, sectoral programmes for rural development. The provisions of subsidised inputs, distributed by officials keen on spectacular results in agricultural productivity strongly favoured the better-off sections of the rural population."²²¹

From the Fourth National Five Year Plan (1969-1974) onwards, the government policies laid increased emphasis on improving the conditions of the weaker sections of the society, particularly in rural areas. Realising that the Green Revolution²²² had mainly benefited medium and large farmers, the Fourth and the Fifth Year plans targeted small and marginal farmers²²³ and landless labourers.

A large number of rural development schemes for the poorest rural families were introduced in the late 1970s. The nature of the schemes, the criteria of eligibility and the procedures were defined by central or state government authorities. The design of the programmes was based on standardised assessments of development needs and in some cases did not adequately reflected local priorities. For example, the Ministry of Rural Development provided guidelines for design of houses in rural areas. According to the national rural housing scheme, the Indira Awas Yojana, houses should be grouped in clusters. Such design does not match with the housing patterns of tribal communities generally preferring individual houses scattered over a larger area. The schemes, financed partly by the central government and the state governments, were often introduced at special occasion, such as Independence Day on August 15th, and the timing usually reflected electoral considerations. The central government, in particular, wanted to gain profile in rural areas through increased funding of the "centrally-sponsored schemes". The Indian Union budgets show a continuous and significant

220 Chaturvedi, H.R. 1990: Rural development and some structural constraints; in: Pant, A.D./ Gupta, S.K (eds.); pp. 206-222; p. 209.

221 Mitra, Subrata K. 1992: Power, Protest and Participation; London, New York: Routledge; p. 24.

222 Defined as "dramatic increase in grain production, primarily of wheat, rice, and corn, resulting from the utilization of high yielding varieties of seeds and related new technologies" see: Fry, Gerald W./Martin, Galen R. 1991: The International Development Dictionary; Santa Barbara (US), Denver (US), Oxford (U.K.);ABC-CLIO; p. 165.

223 A cultivator with a land holding of five acres or below is a small farmer. In case of class I irrigated land as defined by the State land ceiling legislation, a farmer with 2.5 acres or less is also considered as a small farmer. When the land is irrigated but not of class I variety, a suitable conversion ration may be adopted by the State Government with a ceiling of five acres. A person with a land holding of 2.5 acres or below is a marginal famer. In case of class I irrigated land, the ceiling is one acre.

increase in outlays for rural development. The Central Plan annual allocation for rural development in 1995/96 increased by 16.02 percent to Rs. 65.4 billion.²²⁴

The different current development schemes cover a wide range of activities. Employment generation - wage employment and credit linked self-employment - is one of the major objectives of the various development schemes. This has been particularly evident from the 1990s. The Ministry of Rural Development was renamed into Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment in March 1993 and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was commenced in October 1993. The major rural development programmes in India are the Integrated Rural Development Programme popularly known as IRDP and the Jawahar Rozgna Yojana employment programmes. The comprehensive IRDP programme was conceived in March 1976 and launched in 1978/1979 in 2300 block of the country. By October 1980, it had been extended to all 511 blocks of the country. IRDP introduced loans for income generating assets (buffaloes, small shops etc.) and credit facilities to poor families. From 1982 onwards, a special IRDP component for women, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), was launched. It aimed at organising rural women for productive activities on a group basis. The "Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), introduced at Independence day (August, the 15th) in 1979 is another part of IRDP and aims at equipping rural youth with necessary skills and technical knowledge with a view to enable them to seek self-employment. The objectives of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was to provide employment to at least one member of each poor rural family for 50-100 days a year at a workplace near his or her residence. The scheme has a 30% job reservation for women. Two other major schemes, officially sub-schemes of JRY, are the Jiwan Dhara (a million wells) programme and the Indira Awas Yojana scheme. The Drought Prone Areas Programme, implemented in 13 states, promotes pasture development, soil management and water conservation. The Massive Programme for Small and Marginal farmers provides subsidies tied with loans to eligible farmers. In the case of Rajasthan, the programme is partially funded by the by the central and the state government both providing for 50% of the funds. Further development schemes have been introduced by state governments representing different physical, economic and social features and different development priorities of the states. District authorities have also added a few development schemes.²²⁵

For the purpose of allocating and implementing projects under IRDP and other central and state government schemes, the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) was created in 1982. The DRDA was established as a registered body under the Societies Registration Act with the District Collector as chairman and the heads of various functional government departments as members.²²⁶ The District Collector is a junior IAS officer with usually 5-8 years experience in service. The idea to concentrate district development management in the DRDA with the District Collector as chairman, reflected the concern of better co-ordination between the various departments, but was also a clear sign of faith in the bureaucracy. The DRDA delegates responsibilities for the implementation of the schemes at village level to the block authorities: the Block

224 *Oxfam (India) Trust 3/1995*: Indian Union Budget Highlights 1995-1996, New Delhi; p. 3.

225 For the case of Udaipur, a comprehensive overview of all development schemes operating in the district is given in chapter 5.3.

226 Maharashtra and Gujarat where District Panchayats were well established, the DRDA was placed under the authority of the District Panchayat with an IAS officer as Secretary.

Development Officer (BDO), Extension Officers and Gram Secretaries (previously called Gram Sevaks). The responsibility of the latter is to assist the village community in identification, planning and implementation of development. One Gram Secretary usually covers two Gram Panchayats comprising each 3-8 villages. The situation differs from state to state.²²⁷ S.G. Deogaonkar has pointed out disincentives for Gram Sevaks to properly fulfil their tasks: (i) the recruitment policy of the government for Gram Sevaks has not been imaginative and aggressive (ii) the promotion policy was "passive or sluggish" and (iii) the political interference killed individual initiative and pulled down the morale of the service working at the village level.²²⁸

Under the major IRDP programme, the block authorities faced the problem of fulfilling the targets set by the district authorities while at the same time they were forced to respect time consuming administrative procedures for the approval of individual loans. Villagers usually have to spend a lot of time (loss of wages), energy (poor transport facilities) and money (travel expenses, bribes) in getting the required certificates and signatures from the block office. Block level authorities often show disregard for backward communities, demand bribes from the villagers, or they are simply not accessible for the villagers. Irregular attendance and lack of motivation are common among the employees due to poor promotion opportunities and little payment.

The target group, members of the poorest families, are often illiterate and not properly informed about procedures by the block level extension officers or by Panchayati Raj authorities. J. Madhiat gives the example of a villager who waited over four months for a cattle loan worth Rs. 1000 and spent 48 days obtaining certificates. By the time, the "procurement committee" selected and purchased the buffalo with him, the price had risen by another Rs. 500.²²⁹

A major deficiency of all government schemes, in particular IRDP and Indira Awas Yojana, consists in the identification of the beneficiaries. S. Parashar gives the range of 15-20 % for wrong identification of families.²³⁰

J. Dreze who carried out a detailed village survey on IRDP performance in Uttar Pradesh concluded that IRDP had not given priority to the poorest people due to lack of proper village surveys, absence of up-to-date land records and bribes to the local administration.²³¹ Other problems of proper implementation of government schemes are related to

- (i) low repayment levels by beneficiaries;
- (ii) difficulties of asset retention (i.e. early death or sickness of animals);
- (iii) inadequate bank services delaying loan applications;
- (iv) non-availability of production material for income generating activities;
- (v) lack of training infrastructure;
- (vi) compartmentalised approaches and rivalry between different government departments;

227 For the case of Rajasthan, an overview of administrative structures is given in chapter 5.2

228 *Deogaonkar, S.G.* 1980: Administration for Rural Development in India; New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; p.187.

229 *Madhiat, Joe* 1985: Wie Siro Malik ein Paar Büffel kaufen wollte..., in: *Hoering, U. et al.(ed.)* 1985; pp. 15-23.

230 *Parashar, Sharat* 1995: Rural Development Administration; Jaipur, p. 128.

231 *Dreze, J.* 1990: Poverty in India and the IRDP delusion; in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay); Vol. 25; No. 39, September 29th, pp. 95-104.

- (vii) lack of well defined personal responsibilities of government authorities at village, block and district level, and
- (viii) frequent transfer of government staff.²³²

Trends of Government Programme Implementation Policy from the Mid-1980s Onwards

The central government development policy experienced a shift in the mid-1980s when it began recognising development agents other than the predominant bureaucracy. The Government of India's Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) acknowledged and encouraged the work of NGOs and mentioned specific areas in which NGOs "can be of great help for better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes."²³³ NGOs became increasingly involved in formulating and implementation of development programmes.

The Council of Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), the nodal agency for support to NGOs in rural development, was formed by the central government in 1986. It provides funding particularly for projects "aiming at income generation for small and marginal farmers, rural women, landless agricultural labourers, village artisans, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, freed bonded labourers".²³⁴ The National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB) was created in 1985 and also provided with a mandate to support proposals of NGOs.

In 1988 the government formulated a new forest policy with emphasis on conservation of forest by local communities. In pursuance of the new policy the government issued guidelines in June 1990 instructing all states to introduce the concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM). JFM means co-operation between the Forest Department and local communities in conservation and management of forests and giving people rights of collection of dead wood and non-wood forest products and share in timber at the time of final felling.²³⁵

In the case of Rajasthan, the state government had adopted the JFM concept in 1991 and issued guidelines for people's participation in protection, regulation and management of degraded forests through village level Forest Protection Committees. Implementation reality, however, proved that the traditional patterns of relationships between forest guards and village communities are difficult to overcome. Tribals and other forest communities often consider the Forest Department as Forest Police persecuting and punishing wood cutters. In some government projects, NGOs were requested to act as "social organisers" of village communities to facilitate partnership with the Forest Department and to implement Forestry projects. In the case of Rajasthan,

232 Cf. (i) *Wishwarkarma, R.K.* 1990: Bureaucracy Performance and Development Constraints in DWCRA Programme with Special Reference to Madhya Pradesh; in: *Pant, A.D; Gupta, S.K. (eds.) 1990*; p. 320-335; pp. 327-328; (ii) *Robinson, Mark A.* 1991: Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation: India Country Study; Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Working Paper 49, October; London; p. 22 and (iii) *Parashar, Sharat* 1995: Rural Development Administration; Jaipur, pp. 128-129; p. 128.

233 *Government of India; Planning Commission* 1985 Vol.2; New Delhi; p. 66.

234 *CAPART* 1986: Capart and Voluntary Organisations, Guidelines. New Delhi, n.p.

235 For a discussion and critical review on the implementation of Joint Forest Management see: *Menon, Ajit* 1995: Constructing the 'Local': Decentralising Forest Management; in: *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay); August 26th, 1995; pp. 2110-2111.

the implementation of Joint Forest Management suffered from confusing revenue share regulations for trees between government (Forest Department) and village community and classification of forest products (e.g. Bamboo as timber or minor forest product).

Government policies in the field of watershed development and education also opened up opportunities for NGOs to assist the government development administration in implementing projects.

In the case of education, central and state government policies since 1978 adopted a campaign approach involving civil society institutions such as NGOs, co-operatives and educational societies. In Rajasthan, the most recent education programme is the *Lok Jumbish* project under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister and financed by SIDA, the central and the state government. The objective is to promote primary and adult education through establishing of local literacy centres. The campaign approach is based on the idea of providing a strong infrastructure and motivational input to education for all. The project is mainly operationalised through a block level management committee including government officers as well as NGOs. Village communities can directly address the block level management committee which has full powers to sanction new schools and expenditure to them. This is also an example for decentralising the decision making process from the traditional powerful district level administration to the block level.

Recognising the difficulties of the DRDA and the compartmentalised development bureaucracy at the district level to implement development projects of an integrated nature, separate project management units became popular from the 1980s onwards, particular for projects involving foreign funding.

In Rajasthan, the UNICEF²³⁶ and SIDA²³⁷ supported Sanitation Water and Community Health Project²³⁸ (1986-1995) under the authority of the Tribal Area Development Department was operationalised under a separate project management unit equipped with government staff on deputation from various departments. After completion of the project in 1995, SWACH was converted into a Society under the Society Registration Act. SWACH staff introduces itself as an NGO working with government staff.

Development Corporations also played an increasingly important role in carrying out projects. Corporations are allowed more flexibility in managing budgets, recruiting staff and collaboration with banks. For example, the Uttar Pradesh Land Development Corporation Ltd. (UPLDC) implements large integrated land reclamation programmes of the World Bank and the European Commission in 13 districts in Uttar Pradesh. Staff is deputed to UPLDC by different government departments, but additional private consultants and field staff is hired for specific activities. The Managing Director expressed satisfaction with staff on short term contracts enabling the organisation to adjust staff requirements to periods of different work loads. He further mentioned difficulties to motivate regular government staff to work according to precise terms of references in a given time frame.²³⁹ UPLDC has also placed major importance on

236 United Nations' Children Fund

237 Swedish International Development Agency

238 The project was aiming at the eradication of guineaworm, provision of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

239 Discussions with D.K. Mittal, Managing Director UPLDC, during several project visits from August 1994 to November 1995.

"participatory management". The project documents prescribe strategies to realise "implementation through beneficiaries"; e.g. boring works, procurement and maintenance of pumpsets by water user groups; levelling and bunding being done by beneficiaries at their own cost; formation of self-help groups for creating alternative credit structure, etc.²⁴⁰

Government development agencies have, for various reasons, discovered 'participation' as a new development strategy. Chandra B.P. Singh has elaborated on the motivation of the government to promote 'participation' in development management.

- "(i) the concept is no longer perceived as a threat by governments as participation can be manipulated to their own advantage. Participation strengthens the state by permitting the government to be present everywhere;
- (ii) participation has become a politically attractive slogan generating illusory promises in the mind of people;
- (iii) participation has become, economically, an appealing proposition because it allows the bankrupt government to pass on the costs of their economic burden to the poor in the name of self-help;
- (iv) participation is now perceived as an instrument for greater effectiveness as well as a new source of inspiration as it provides the government with (a) a close knowledge of the field reality, (b) network of relation, (c) the amount of co-operation on the local scene;
- (v) participation is becoming a good fund raising devise...;
- (vi) an expanded concept of participation can help the private sector to be directly involved in the development business."²⁴¹

Central and state government policies challenged by an assertive NGO sector increasingly realise the need for more flexibility in managing development and involving the private sector, NGOs and consultants to assist the bureaucracy. Development campaigns (literacy, anti-child labour, health etc.) under specially created authorities might help to improve accountability and monitoring of development activities, but the major challenge to sustain development can only be achieved if people have been motivated and enabled to continue the activities after special programmes and projects have come to an end. Awareness and concepts of incorporating withdrawal strategies into project management are still poorly developed in government administration which considers itself to be a permanent delivery system.

240 *Government of Uttar Pradesh* 1995: Uttar Pradesh Land Development Corporation: Project document on "Alkaline Land Reclamation Programme"; prepared for the visit of Mr. Appelbaum; Mr. Kuhn; Mr. Ferruzzi and Dr. Bhan in November 1995; Lucknow; in particular section on "Participatory Management".

241 *Singh, Chandra B.P.* 1995: Panchayati Raj: Power to People; in: *Third Concept*, March 1995; pp.37-42; pp. 39-40.

3.3. Private Development Initiatives

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This chapter briefly classifies private development initiatives in India and summarises their evolution. Today the sector encompasses voluntary oriented organisations, professional Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and development branches of the corporate sector. This chapter describes the role and variety of private development initiatives and points out some deficiencies of NGO activities which relate, in particular, to their inward-looking approach and the lack of co-ordination with government departments and institutions of local self-government.

The term "private development initiatives" refers to the activities of traditional voluntary organisations, increasingly professional Non-Governmental Organisations and the development activities of corporate houses representing the business community. Given the diverse character and increasing variety of development initiatives outside the state sector, the use of the term "private development initiatives" appears to be the most appropriate. This does not mean that such private development initiatives act according to the principles of the market economy. Economically speaking, development investments are investments in high risk areas which are seldom based on rigid cost-benefit analyses, in particular not financial cost-benefit analyses.²⁴² The capability of the targeted clients/beneficiaries to participate in the market economy would rather be a goal of the development investment than a precondition of it. The beneficiaries of NGO development activities (as well as of government development activities) are at the receiving end of services. They are not in a position to select their partners and have no bargaining powers to decide on the kind and quality of services supplied to them. They rely on subsidised aid programmes.²⁴³

Private development initiatives receive great attention as potential support agents for enabling, facilitating and sustaining participatory development processes. The World Bank Participation Sourcebook elaborates on the role of NGOs as intermediaries for promoting participatory development. It identifies, with reference to Thomas Carroll, Mary Schmidt and Tony Bebbington²⁴⁴, the following indicators of participatory effectiveness in intermediary NGOs.

242 The term "economic cost-benefit analysis" is usually based on an evaluation of costs and benefits which occur for the national economy. The term "financial cost-benefit analysis" usually applies to a project internal cost benefit analysis.

243 For further discussion on the role of NGOs as part of the non-market economy and their similarities with the State regarding their politico-economic foundations in society see: *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1995: Marginality, Rent and Non-Governmental Organisations; in: *Indian Journal of Public Administration*; Vol XLI, No.2, April-June 1995; pp.139-159; see in particular pp. 150-152.

244 *Carroll, Thomas / Schmidt, Mary / Bebbington, Tony* (forthcoming): Intermediary NGOs and Participation. Participation Series, Environment Department Paper; Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

- "(i) a flat management structure with decentralized authority;
- (ii) organisational structures at the community level to which funding and/or other decisions are delegated;
- (iii) use of iterative planning, involving consultation with local communities;
- (iv) contributions of cash, labour, raw materials, or local facilities by community members and organisations, making them clients rather than beneficiaries of the NGO;
- (v) staff recruitment criteria, incentives, and training that supports participation;
- (vi) strong field presence outside metropolitan areas with a high proportion of staff of local origin;
- (vii) community leaders and members have a positive perception of the NGO;
- (iv) turnover of client groups as they "graduate" over time and intensive field attention is transferred to new groups."²⁴⁵

Private development initiatives in India are increasing in number²⁴⁶ and variety of action.²⁴⁷ Having its roots in charity-oriented voluntary action, development work since the 1980s is taken up by a large and ever growing number of voluntary and professional oriented NGOs and corporate houses representing the business community.

The following is an attempt to categorise private development initiatives, usually referred to as NGOs or less appropriately as voluntary organisations, in terms of their (i) size (ii) roots, (iii) motivation, (iv) activities, (v) style of functioning and (vi) approaches or methodologies:

Classification of Private Development Initiatives / NGOs

Size

Private development initiatives differ largely in their scale of operations. Some private development initiatives are one-man or family activities, others have large programmes in several states in India and receive substantial international funding.

245 *World Bank* 1996: Participation Sourcebook; Washington, DC: The World Bank; pp. 4-5 on Internet version; chapter iv on "Practise Pointers in Enabling the Poor to Participate"; <http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/sourcebook/sbhome.html>.

246 It would be impossible to give a precise number of NGOs operating in India. Estimates range from 10 000 to several 100 000 depending of the type of classification that is used .(i.e. *Robinson, Mark A.* 1991: Evaluating the impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation; India Country Study; Overseas Development Institute, London ; *Staples, Eugene* 1992: Forty years: A Learning Curve: The Ford Foundations Programs in India 1952-1992, New Delhi. The Indira Gandhi Conservation Monitoring Centre and World Wide Fund for Nature, India published a directory on Environmental NGOs containing more than 1000 NGOs with addresses and fields of action. (Indira Gandhi Conservation Monitoring Centre and World Wide Fund for Nature, India 1994: Environmental NGOs in India, A Directory , New Delhi. The volume contains 638 pages with 2-3 NGOs per page.

247 Among the more recent activities of Indian NGOs (since the late 1980s/early 1990s are programmes on Aids awareness and prevention and campaigns against drug abuse.

Mark A. Robinson groups NGOs in India into six categories according to their size and nature of operation:

- "(i) large national NGOs working in several states in different parts of the country;
- (ii) large national NGOs working in most districts of the state;
- (iii) medium-sized national NGOs working in a large number of villages in one or two districts of one state;
- (iv) small national NGOs working in a group of villages in one locality;
- (v) large international NGOs with in-country representation providing funding and support to national NGOs (vi) small international NGOs working directly in one or two localities."²⁴⁸

Jan Negggers, Frits Wils and Nico Beets use the term *BINGOs* (big NGOs) in their evaluation of three major NGOs in South Asia, among them the South Indian NGO Action for Welfare and Awakening in Rural Environment (AWARE).²⁴⁹

Among the biggest Indian private development initiatives in terms of budget, staff members and area of operation are Action for Welfare and Awakening in Rural Environment (AWARE) with headquarters in Andhra Pradesh; Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development (ACCORD) with headquarters in Tamil Nadu; Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF) with headquarters in Pune; Seva Mandir with headquarters in Rajasthan, and the Ramakrishna Mission with headquarters in West-Bengal, the Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA) with headquarters in Karnataka, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Sadguru Water and Development Foundation (SWDF) with headquarters in Gujarat.²⁵⁰

Many international NGOs such as Action Aid, the Aga Khan Foundation, CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, and Terre des Hommes operate in India through their registered national branches.

Roots

Most NGOs in India have their roots in the educated middle-class. Many NGO leaders come either from the philanthropic business community, social sciences departments of universities or institutes, or are retired bureaucrats having worked in the area of development for many years. It is, however, difficult to generalise about the background of social activists. Two major social activists working in the area of child

248 Robinson, Mark A. 1991; p. 26.

249 Negggers, Jan / Wils, Frits / Beets, Nico 1988: Big and still beautiful: Enquiry in the Efficiency and Effectiveness of three big NGOs (Bingo's) in South Asia; The Hague: DGIS / NOVIB co-financed programme.

250 The list of NGOs is given in alphabetical order. Budget of NGOs often significantly vary from year to year depending upon the extent of government or donor agencies support. SWDF, for example, received Rs. 104. 85 million (approx. 4.6 million German Mark) in 1996) for the financial year April 1995 to March 1996 (including the balance of the last year). SWDF utilised Rs. 71.94 million. The remaining balance was Rs. 32.91 million. 37% of the expenditure came from government sources, 53% from foreign sources and 10% from other sources (private donations, beneficiary contributions, etc.). (source: Sadguru Water and Development Foundation 1996: Annual Report for the Year Ending 31st March 1996; Dahod; p. 57.)

labourer rehabilitation, Kiran Bedi and Amod K. Kanth, are senior Police officers in Delhi.

Despite claims of their grassroots genesis and orientation, rather few organisations actually evolved from village level or poor urban communities. The creation and establishment of an organisation and acquisition of funds usually require a certain financial experience, educational skills and contacts in politics and administration at the national or international level.

Motivation

Differences in motivation usually refer to the religious, charitable or ideological background of individuals and the organisation. For the Chambers of Commerce and Industries, both tax concessions and genuine social obligation might be the reasons for investing in social development initiatives.²⁵¹ Philanthropic business leaders have initiated many private development activities in India. Some people, families as well as individuals, certainly also use the NGO label for self-projection or money making.

Activities

NGOs in India cover a wide range of activities. If one had to generalise, poverty alleviation is probably the single most outstanding overall objective of NGO development activities in India. Many activities such as physical development works (watershed and wasteland development, forestry), education and awareness campaigns (health, family planning, group formation, legal literacy) and human rights (child labour and bonded labour eradication; women's rights etc.) could partly be subsumed under poverty alleviation and partly be seen as complementary activities.

Style of Functioning

One can distinguish between founder or leader oriented NGOs functioning almost or entirely as "one man shows" and others which have introduced decentralised management units and team work. Many NGOs in India are started by a small group of committed individuals.

Approaches

Approaches of NGOs can be differentiated in terms of non-agitational methods and agitational methods. Non-agitational-oriented NGOs seek to avoid political involvement while agitational NGOs, also called activist oriented organisations, call for demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, voter campaigns and other forms of political action.

It is of course difficult to draw a line between the different categories and classifications. Organisations have changed their activities and work styles, recruited new staff and adopted new methodologies. Some evolved from founder oriented "one man shows" or "family shows" to team work-oriented management units while others combine their original physical development orientation with awareness building

251 The Progress, Harmony and Development Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) describes its motivation for having established a Rural Development and Family Welfare Foundation as follows: "As part of our social obligation towards the community, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry firmly believes that industry should be involved in the Rural Development and Family Welfare programmes." (PHDCCI / PHDRDF / PHDFWF 1995: In Social Concern, Support and Action; Special Issue; October - November 1995; p.1).

activities and sometimes political agitation. Anil Bhatt summarises changing patterns of voluntary action in India:

"Conventional voluntarism was primarily aimed at charity and relief or at best social welfare and social reform. It sprang out of religiosity, generosity and altruism, It was inspired by idealism rather than ideology... Modern voluntarism, while incorporating some of the elements of conventional voluntarism, is based on ideology rather than mere idealism. It aims at achieving development and social justice rather than relief and welfare. Therefore the tools, techniques, approaches and objectives of modern voluntarism differ from that of the conventional."²⁵²

Evolution of the NGO Sector

During British colonial rule, Christian missionary organisations were active in education and social work, in particular in South India. Social work initiatives increased in the context of the independence movement from the 1920s onwards. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and commitment to freedom from foreign rule, communal harmony and poverty alleviation was of major importance for the evolution of the voluntary sector in India. While volunteerism inspired by Gandhian values continued after independence, new patterns of private development initiatives and social work emerged in the 1960s. Sensitised students and young party workers started politically motivated voluntary relief, rehabilitation and political awareness work in villages and urban slums. The enthusiastic commitment of many youths was driven by socialist- oriented political visions and frustrations over the current government development policies and delivery systems. Poverty, inequality and injustice were the targeted social evils.

The NGO sector experienced a major growth in the 1970s. 'Women's rights' and 'promoting self-help capacities' emerged as major issues in the national and international development discourse. NGOs were considered to be particularly capable in addressing these issues. Project and programme oriented development work in the field of community health, water and sanitation and non-formal education became popular. Increased opportunities of international partnerships and availability of funding set a conducive environment for NGO activities in India. Moreover, the business community showed increased commitment to social work and initiated a number of rural development initiatives.²⁵³

Tensions between an increasingly assertive and activist-oriented NGO sector and the Indian government rose when an amendment to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) during the emergency period made receiving of foreign funds more difficult for NGOs. The tensions further increased when Indira Gandhi appointed the Kudal Commission in 1982 to scrutinise NGO work in respect to financial irregularities, operation in border areas, internal management and foreign support. The Commission

252 Bhatt, Anil 1995: Voluntary Action in India: Role, Trends and Challenges, in *Economical and Political Weekly* (Bombay) Vol. XXX, No. 16 April 22nd 1995; pp. 870-873: p. 870.

253 The Bombay based industrial conglomerates TATA, Bajaj, Mafatlal increasingly supported rural development activities from the 1970s onwards. For example, the Sadguru Water and Development Foundation (SWDF) started its rural development work (watershed management; wasteland development) in 1976 in northern Gujarat with support from the Mafatlal Group. It is today one of the bigger NGOs in India receiving international funding from the European Commission, NORAD, Aga Khan Foundation etc. and an annual budget of around 2.3 million dollar (SWDF 1995: Annual Report; Dahod).

targeted in particular Gandhian oriented NGOs which had allegedly supported the Janata Party.

During the 1980s, the Indian NGO sector experienced a period of tremendous growth, in particular in financial terms. This evolution could be attributed to two main factors. First, the international donor community, including official government institutions, the World Bank, UN organisations, the European Commission and large international NGOs, discovered local NGOs as partners for implementing large scale development projects and provided significant funds to Indian NGOs. Second, the NGO policy of the Government of India was marked by a shift towards co-operation from the mid-1980s onwards and NGOs were given various opportunities to participate in implementation of government development programmes.

In the 1990s Corporate Houses such as CII, FICCI, ICICI, and PHD²⁵⁴, representing the business community, launched or revived their development foundations following a multi-purpose strategy of income tax alleviation, gaining of social prestige and building entrepreneurial spirit. The idea of using the management skills of the corporate sector for poverty oriented development investments has gained much interest among international funding agencies. The ILO has entered into a partnership with FICCI while the European Commission in 1994/1995 held several negotiations with ICICI and FICCI for large scale development programmes and agreed in November 1995 to fund a project of PHD rural development foundation on "Training of elected women Panchs in Haryana".

Assessment of Today's NGO Sector

A large number of NGOs, most of them politically independent, make valuable contributions to improve the living standards of the poor mainly through community-centred development activities, especially in the education-, health- and natural resource management sector. India is today endowed with a large and dynamic NGO sector receiving increasing foreign assistance. Since the mid-1980s, the relationship between the government and NGOs is characterised by growing similarities in development attitudes and approaches as well as increased co-operation. At the national level, only very few human rights oriented NGOs seek modest political confrontation with government authorities. A growing number of NGOs develop into professional facilitators and management consultants for attracting foreign funding.

"Several outfits who are doing little more than consultancies, training and workshops on contract basis are set up with the legal and organisational forms of voluntary agencies. This enables them to receive foreign funds rather than survive in a market-place as private consultancy firms have to do."²⁵⁵

Increased professionalism of NGOs made them more attractive for foreign donors, but probably less attractive for the poorest people. The primary concern of some of the professional NGOs is geared towards their own development. Qualified staff demands attractive salaries and promotion opportunities. NGOs need to develop good management and communication skills and seek for continuous financial support to retain

254 Confederation of Indian Industries; Federation of Indian Commerce and Industries; Indian Council of International Commerce and Industries; Punjab Haryana Delhi Chamber of Commerce

255 *Bhatt, Anil* 1995; pp. 870-873; p. 872.

their staff and maintain their level of activities. All this requires personal energy and resources of the staff and may easily contribute to shift the attention of the NGO away from the poorest people.

Most of the NGOs have their roots more in the middle class than within poor communities which they claim to represent. Some NGOs have better skills in fashionable talking on "grassroots orientation", "people's empowerment", "sustainable development" and "participation", than in actually motivating people to carry out quantifiable physical work or to build powerful village institutions.

Some of the bigger NGOs, the *BINGOS*, have entered into a professional and social environment requiring presentation and reporting skills rather than solid field-level experience and frequent interaction with the poorest. The "private bonus" and good communication skills often impress foreign donors. Hartmut Elsenhans with reference to Syed M. Hashemi²⁵⁶, K.D. Gangrade and R. Sooryamoorthy has critically analysed the common donor agency arguments on superiority of NGO performance:

"The argument that small organisations can be better controlled by committed charismatic leaders is difficult to refute. There are two problems with this argument: Organisations which do not merely perform niche functions will not remain small. Superiority of NGOs based on their smallness vanishes if they are called to handle important amounts of development assistance. Also, organisations which perform well due to the leadership of a charismatic individual can survive only as long as this leader lives. The staff of such organisations is, however, always interested in survival of these organisations as long as there are no comparable alternatives for employment. Such institutions will not escape institutionalism."²⁵⁷

While the growth of the NGO sector offers interesting job opportunities for graduates of agricultural and social sciences, human resource development has become a major issue for them. However justifiable from the organisations point of view, some NGOs have developed into bureaucracies themselves and focus more on self-sustenance than on development of the poorest. Many of them are driven by an inward looking approach, lacking co-ordination with government departments and other NGOs and ignoring or even competing with Panchayats. In some areas, territorial conflicts have emerged between various NGOs seeking government and foreign donor assistance. Concerns are oriented towards maintenance of a high profile presence of the organisation at the regional and local level as well as attendance in national and international seminars, conferences and workshops.

Donor agencies, while allocating more resources to NGOs in India, have also attached increasing importance to the evaluation of NGO activities. On behalf of the Overseas Development Institute, Mark A. Robinson has carried out four detailed

256 Hashemi, Syed M. 1990: NGOs in Bangladesh: Development Alternative or Alternative Rhetoric; Manchester: University of Manchester; pp. 70-79; Gangrade, K.D. / Sooryamoorthy, R. 1995: NGOs: Retrospect and Prospect; in: Jain, Randhir B. (ed.): NGOs in Development Perspective; New Delhi: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; p. 43.

257 Elsenhans, Hartmut 1995: Marginality, Rent and Non-Governmental Organisations; Reprinted from the *Indian Journal of Public Administration* (Delhi); Vol XLI, No.2, April-June 1995; pp.139-159; Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration; p. 15.

evaluations of NGO projects with international funding²⁵⁸ and summarises the role and impact of NGOs in rural poverty alleviation as follows:

"...NGOs play a catalytic role in terms of enabling communities to define their own development priorities and innovative in regard to their willingness to experiment with new ideas but that their activities remain supplementary to those of the government, and in some case they duplicate existing services and programmes. Their record in alleviating poverty is uneven, although the evidence suggests that their performance is better than that of the government. On the negative side, NGOs lack continuity, they often work in isolation from, and sometimes in opposition to one another which fragments their efforts, and many depend heavily on external resources from foreign funding agencies. Managerial competence and technical expertise is often weak or poorly developed which reduces their potential impact, but the evidence suggests that NGOs continue to make an important contribution to rural poverty alleviation in India."²⁵⁹

Given the large number and variety of NGO development work in India it is impossible to make any general assessment. It is, however, important to understand that private initiatives in the field of social work and development play a major role in India. Such initiatives also receive increasing publicity. The important national magazine *India Today* dedicated the front page title of its 15 January 1996 edition to "Helping Hands: Profiles of relatively unknown men and women across the country who have ushered in an extraordinary change in our lives". The below mentioned names of the "angels of change" and their activities give an idea of the variety of private development initiative all over the country. The following examples are given:

- (i) the leprosy work of Eliazar Rose in Maniguda;
- (ii) the private garbage removal initiative by M.B. Nirmal in Madras;
- (iii) the establishment of village self-defence groups by Badri Narain Pandey in West Champaran;
- (iv) the fight against prostitution by Sadhana Mukherjee in Calcutta
- (v) the ecological hill development programme through fighting limestone quarrying by Kinkri Devi in Sirmaur;
- (vi) the street children rehabilitation programmes in New Delhi initiated by Amod K. Kanth;
- (vii) the collection of donations for widows and orphan charity by Ram Lal Bhalla in Amritsar;
- (viii) the development of an innovative tribal banking systems by Hirasingh Markam in Bilaspur;
- (ix) the employment generation through development of small scale industries

258 The study covers projects of the Rural Development Trust (RDT) in Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh with funding from Action Aid; the Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) in Guntur and Krishna districts in Andhra Pradesh with financial support from Christian Aid; the Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sangams Federation (KDFSF) in south-west Tamil Nadu financially supported by Oxfam and the Arthik Samata Mandal (ASM) in the Krishna delta region of coastal Andhra Pradesh with funding from Save the Children Fund.

259 *Robinson, Mark A.* 1991; p. 118.

- initiated by Rajan Paul in Ernakulam;
- (x) the reviving of ancient folk art by Madadevi Narayana in Nizamabad;
- (xi) the watershed and wasteland development programmes of Sadguru Water and Development Foundation headed by "the rainmaker" Harnath Jagawat in Panchmahal district/Gujarat;
- (xii) the promotion of alternative technology for rural areas (biogas etc.) by Amulya K.N. Reddy in Pura;
- (xiii) the promotion and revival of traditional healing systems and herbal medicine by Bhanwardra Bai in Udaipur;
- (xiv) the fight against drug addiction by Sanu Vamuzo in Kohima.²⁶⁰

The Panchayati Raj reform has two major consequences for the Indian NGO sector. First, the reform provides NGOs with opportunities to take up training projects for the newly elected representatives, in particular, women. As Manohar Golpelwar observed, NGOs indeed show a keen interest in contributing to the successful, implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform.

"The NGOs involved in rural development work, training institutions, the community based-groups and other grassroots organisations are also engaged in a serious dialogue with the concerned authorities in respect of the role of NGOs in strengthening the system of Panchayati Raj in the country."²⁶¹

Second, the strengthening of local level politics might challenge the role of NGOs in village development. Senior elected members of Panchayats might behave in an assertive manner and challenge the client-patron relationship which many NGOs have established with their beneficiary community over the years.²⁶²

The Panchayati Raj reform has stimulated the discussion whether NGOs should play a more active role in politics or remain apolitical, as the large majority of NGOs have been in the past.²⁶³

260 *India Today* (Delhi) 15.1.1996; feature on page 78-115 by Raj Chengappa.

261 *Golpelwar, Manohar* 1995: Role of NGOs in Panchayati Raj; in S.P.Jain/Thomas W. Hochgesang; pp. 203-207; p. 203.

262 The case study experiences in the Gram Panchayat Karia in Badgaon block underscore this observation. See chapter 5.5.3.

263 For a discussion on the role of the NGOs in the 1990s see in particular: *Bhatt, Anil* 1995.

4. Local Self-Government in India

4.1 Historical Evolution

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This chapter provides a brief overview on the historical evolution of the Panchayati Raj system from ancient India until the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1993. The system of Panchayati Raj developed from assemblies of senior village persons or caste representatives to councils with police and judicial powers. The national freedom movement attached great importance to the Panchayats. However, in the first years after independence the Panchayats were only entrusted with functions of minor importance. After an initial phase of ascendancy in the early 1960s, the process of the decline of Panchayati Raj Institutions started in most states. In the course of the 1980s, the idea of giving a constitutional status to the Panchayats has spread among politicians, intellectuals and researchers.

Ancient and Medieval India

Panchayati Raj literally means 'an assembly of five'. The first reference made to administration of village level affairs is given in the Rig-Vedas²⁶⁴, the oldest Hindu writings from approx. 1200 BC. George Mathew draws similarities between Panchayati Raj or "Grama Swaraj" (village self-government) and the Russian "mir", the German "mark" and the medieval "manor" of England.²⁶⁵

In northern India, different types of Panchayats were in existence. Caste Panchayats looked after social and religious conduct. In some places, village Panchayats had law and order functions as well as basic administrative and developmental functions (building roads, drilling wells). Panchayat meetings were also convened to discuss disputes within communities or between farmers and their labourers.²⁶⁶

In the south, village Panchayats usually comprised a wider section of the society and consisted of representatives of different castes.²⁶⁷ Landless and "untouchables", however, were not allowed to form a part of the *Gram Sabha*²⁶⁸, the village assembly.²⁶⁹ While Panchayats mainly discussed local affairs, higher authorities often relied on a single powerful village person, the headman, or other contacts to leaders in politics and

264 Village administration based on agrarian economies is mentioned in the Rig Veda, which dates from approximately 1200 BC; see also *Mathew, George (ed.) 1995 (a): Status of Panchayati Raj in the States of India 1994*; Institute of Social Sciences; New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; p.1.

265 See: *Mathew, George 1994: From Legislation to Movement*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; chapter 1: The Historical Background, pp. 3-44; p. 3.

266 See also: *Retzlaff, Ralph 1962: Village Government in India*, London, p.16.

267 For detailed studies of the historical background of Panchayats see: *Malaviya, H.D. 1956: Village Panchayats in India*, Economic and Political Research Department; All India Congress Committee, New Delhi and *Jathar, R.V. 1964: Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India*; Dharwar: Institute of Economic Research.

268 Electorate of the Gram Panchayat, but in colloquial language usually translated as "village assembly".

269 *Mukherji, Radhna Kumud 1958: Local Government in Ancient India*, Delhi; pp. 164.

administration.²⁷⁰ Clemens van de Sand found that the concept of village level administration was more developed in the south. Later it was less influenced by Moghul and the early British rule.²⁷¹ Few attempts, however, have been made to trace regional characteristics of local government in ancient India.²⁷²

B.S. Bhargava criticises the prevailing romantic vision of Panchayats as "little village republics" and points out the deficiencies of the ancient system of village administration in India.

"These ancient bodies were not elected. They were not for a limited tenure. The powerful sanction of religion and caste made their authority supreme.... One might say that these bodies were a wonderful admixture of feudalism and democracy - sometimes more feudal than democratic."²⁷³

The village community as such can not be considered as the dominant social unit in rural India. The evolution of village administration is closely related to the levy of taxes which dates back to the first Hindu kingdoms around 500 BC.²⁷⁴

Village administration and maintenance of law and order under the Ashokan, Mauryan and Mughal imperial rule relied upon the most outstanding local authority. These were usually big and powerful farmers of dominant castes. Mohammedan Shah Sher Shuri (1529 to 1545) and Akbar, the great Moghul emperor (1555 to 1605), introduced tax reforms to increase the financial resources of the empire, but its administration was not systematically applied all over the country.

British Rule

The British rule formally constituted units of municipal and village administration.²⁷⁵ The term 'local self-government', therefore, still revives the British model of local self-government and some Indian scholars are reluctant to use the term. During the colonial rule the resolution of May 18th, 1882 under the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon promoted institutions of „local self-government“ in order to 'facilitate' the administration of the country.

The principles of local self-government were further elaborated in a report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation which was released in 1909. The Indian Congress adopted a resolution in the same year "to make all local bodies from village panchayats upwards elective with elected non-official chairmen" and to "support them with adequate financial aid".²⁷⁶

270 Sand, Clemens van de 1976: Foundations and Problems of Local Government in Rural India; Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation; Mainz: von Haase & Köhler Verlag; pp. 5-6.

271 Ibid; p.19.

272 For the case of Rajasthan see: Sharma, R. 1974: Village Panchayats in Rajasthan; Jaipur; in particular chapter 1: "Evolution of Panchayats in Rajasthan": pp.1-9.

273 Bhargava, B.S. 1979: Panchayati Raj System and Political Parties; New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House; pp. 16-17.

274 See: Sand, Clemens van de 1976.

275 Mathew, George (ed.) 1995 (a); p. 2.

276 Malaviya, H.D. 1956; pp. 215-216.

In the context of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 which brought local self-government under the provincial authority of Indian provinces and native states of British India, different Panchayati Acts and laws were passed.

The first Acts were the Bengal Self-government Act (1919) and the Cochin Panchayati Regulations Act (1919). The 1935 Government of India Act and its introduction of provincial autonomy led to further legislation that devolved powers to village level institutions.

National Movement/Gandhi

The promotion of local self-government formed an essential element of the philosophy of the national freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi considered the establishment of local government institutions as a crucial factor for strengthening democracy and development of the Indian society.

"My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity..."²⁷⁷

In his book "Village Swaraj", Mahatma Gandhi further specified the role and the functions which should be assumed by the Panchayats:

"Every Panchayat will be expected to attend to a.) the education of boys and girls in its village b.) its sanitation c.) its medical needs d.) the upkeep and cleanliness of village wells or ponds e.) the uplift of and the daily wants of the so-called untouchables."²⁷⁸

Mahatma Gandhi also referred to the role of Panchayats in solving disputes:

It is the function of the Panchayats to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they have to settle them. That would ensure speedy justice without any expenditure. They would need neither the police nor the military.²⁷⁹

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Dalit²⁸⁰ leader who was a leading member of the Constituent Assembly and the committee which drafted the Indian constitution, did not have a favourable opinion of the Panchayat system.

277 Gandhi, M.K 1942: Village Swaraj; in: *Harijan*; 26.7.1942.

278 Gandhi, M.K 1962.: Village Swaraj, Ahmedabad; (compiled by H.M. Vyas) the Navajivan Publishing House; pp. 69-73; p.68 on Panchayats.

279 Ibid, p. 72.

280 The term "Dalit" provides an identity for economically backward people and is particularly used by members of the Scheduled Caste communities rejecting the terms "Untouchables" for "Harijans".

The process of evolving communal identity of Scheduled Castes is strongly linked with the emergence of the term Dalit in the context of the formation of the Dalit Panthers, a distinct political party, in the 1970s in Maharashtra. Later the Dalit Sahitya movement emerged and the label was legitimised and reinforced. The content of Dalit identity is mainly political and hence its orientation is militant and rebellious. Dalits seek to capture political power as an instrument of social transformation. Dalit can act as a collective actor ignoring political differences. However, internal factionalising of Dalits has started with the emergence of a Dalit elite (Dalit bourgeoisie) which is prone to capture and monopolise the advantages of protective discrimination.

"What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit."²⁸¹

Mahatma Gandhi and Madhava Rau of Mysore countered Ambedkar's arguments and advocated for introducing a provision for Panchayati Raj in the Constitution. Article 40 of the Constitution of India states:

"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-government."

After Independence

In the first years after independence, centralised planning overlooked the potential of Panchayati Raj Institutions for carrying out development activities. In the context of a hierarchic and centralised bureaucratic set-up, the Panchayats were not given major responsibilities, funds and staff. The Panchayats were only entrusted with functions of minor importance - settling of minor disputes, the restraining of wasteful litigation in the city courts, looking after sanitation, maintaining drinking water wells and repairs of community work. The Community Development Programmes (CDP) could not rely on a functioning institutional set-up for the implementation of the programme and the participation of the beneficiaries.

The Balwantrai Mehta committee, set up in 1957 to improve the implementation of development programmes, especially the CDP, recommended giving development responsibilities to statutory Panchayati Raj Institutions at village, block and district level. The Planning commission and the National Council discussed the report and approved it in 1958. The report was the basis of the introduction of Panchayati Raj Act in the states. In most states, the Panchayat legislation followed the broad patterns of the B. Mehta report with the exceptions of Maharashtra and Gujarat, where district Panchayats already worked on the basis of strong administrative powers. The new Panchayat Raj Acts of the different states represented few uniform patterns in terms of specific powers and functions at village, block and district levels, financial resources, recruitment of staff and involvement of political parties. It also remained open whether Panchayats should function as organs for the national development programmes and agencies or as units of self-government. H.R. Chaturvedi criticises the B. Mehta report for not providing a solid base for state legislation on Panchayati Raj.

„With such a confusion in its goals and the basic organisational structure, panchayati Raj could not provide stable institutional base for rural development and transformation.“²⁸²

India's then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the first Panchayat of independent India on October 2nd, 1959 at Nagaur in the state of Rajasthan. After an initial phase of ascendancy in the early 1960s, the process of decline of Panchayati Raj

281 Remark of Dr. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly on 4 November 1948; see: *Malaviya, H.D.* 1956, p. 258

282 *Ibid*, p. 213.

Institutions started in almost all states with the exception of West-Bengal where Panchayati Raj was strongly linked with village level politics of the Communist party.

Reasons for the decline of the Panchayats varied from state to state, but the political and economic environment at the national level was also not conducive to promoting decentralisation and devolution of powers to local self-government institutions. In brief, the main reasons for the decline of the Panchayats were:

(i) development priorities shifted towards urban industrial development in the context of economic growth policies and undermined the overall importance of promoting decentralisation and devolution of powers to rural areas;

(ii) the phasing out of the intensive stage of the Community Development Projects reduced the role of Panchayats in development administration.

(iii) an increasing number of co-operatives grew into parallel and competing institutions handling larger economic resources than Panchayats

Panchayats in India, as local self-government institutions in many developing countries, had also never a functioning lobbying body which represented them towards executive and legislative bodies at national and state level. The All India Panchayat Parishad is an unknown and dysfunctional body. Moreover, Panchayats were never given adequate financial resources to fulfil the prescribed functions mentioned in the State Panchayati Raj Acts. They received no significant grant-in-aid support from central or state government sources and the provisions for Panchayats to levy taxes and fees were either non-existent or not implemented.

The Asoka Mehta Committee, appointed to evaluate the functioning of the ailing Panchayati Raj system and its role in community development, recommended in its report in 1978 a two-tier Panchayati Raj system with district Panchayats (Zila Parishads) and a Mandal Panchayat covering a population of 15 000 - 20 000. It also recommended a shift of emphasis from developmental to governmental functions²⁸³. The report, for the first time, introduced the idea of a constitutional basis for Panchayat Institutions.

The state of West-Bengal revised its Panchayat system along the lines set up by the of the Asoka Mehta committee. It strengthened the role of Panchayats as units of local self-government institutions. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, also either amended their Acts or passed new Acts following the recommendations of the report. The problem in most states, however, was the reluctance of the state governments to share powers and authority with a third level of governance, the Panchayats. The relatively successful experiences in West-Bengal and later in Karnataka under the Janata Dal government of Ramakrishna Hedge stimulated the discussions on a constitutional amendment to strengthen the role of Panchayats on a nation wide basis. The West-Bengal Panchayati Raj policy of the CPI (M) government had a party politics motivation. Panchayats served the state governments to further establish its dominance in rural areas. The Left Front government was holding a two-third majority in the State Assembly. Its strong link with land reform, however, brought some significant changes in rural power structures to the benefit of former landless labourers and backward communities. Karnataka has a less monolithic type of political structure. Its experience in decentralising

283 For a critical review of the Asoka Mehta report see: *Hooja, R. 1987: Administrative Interventions in Rural Development*; Jaipur; p. 10. Hooja argued that the abolition of the Gram Panchayat would impersonalize and further remove the Panchayat system from the village level.

powers to Panchayat Raj Institutions was less obviously driven by strategic concerns. The most important and powerful body under the new Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act was the strong district Panchayat.²⁸⁴ Another striking feature of the Act was the well defined role of the *Gram Sabha*. Specific provisions were made for regular half-yearly meetings of the *Gram Sabha* in order to strengthen the lowest level of village administration²⁸⁵.

Towards the Constitutional Amendment

In the 1980s, the idea of giving constitutional status to the Panchayats spread among politicians, intellectuals, social activists and researchers²⁸⁶, and a sub-committee of parliament under the chairmanship of P.K. Thungon officially recommended constitutional status for Panchayats.

The Rajiv Gandhi Congress Government presented the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in Parliament in May 1989 providing for a constitutional status of elected local bodies at village, intermediate and district levels. The Bill passed the *Lok Sabha*²⁸⁷, but failed to secure a two-thirds majority in the *Rajya Sabha*²⁸⁸ by two votes in October 1989. Opposition was raised on account of the predominant role of the centre in dealing with the Panchayats. Concern was expressed about the little flexibility of state governments to design a system of Panchayati Raj according to the specific present and historical situation of the different states.

The combined opposition under the National Front then appointed a committee under the chairmanship of S.R. Bommai to prepare a report on "The basics of democratic decentralisation: Panchayats and self-government", which elaborated on an alternative Panchayati Raj legislation.²⁸⁹ The report recommended that the Panchayati Raj reform should be accompanied with meaningful centre-state decentralisation, including new provisions for sharing of financial resources. It mentioned devolution of 50 percent of the state's aggregate revenue resources to the Panchayat Institutions.²⁹⁰ The report criticised the 64th Bill as an attempt of the central Congress government to foster direct centre - sub-state relations and to bypass the states.²⁹¹ The 74th Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced during the short tenure of the National Front Panchayats (1989-1991), but was never discussed in the *Lok Sabha*.

284 *Krishnan, M.G* 1992; Panchayati Raj in India, New Delhi; p.54

285 For details see: Karnataka Zila Parishads, Taluk Panchayati Samitis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act, 1983 (Nyaya Panchayats not implemented); Bangalore

286 Abdul Nazir Sab, the Minister for Panchayati Raj in Karnataka under the Janata government, recommended a constitutional guarantee for a "four pillar state government structure: village, district, state, centre" in 1985 (*Mathew 1995* (a); p.10). N. Mukarji further developed and spread the concept of district government. (*Mukarji, Nirmal* 1986: "The Alternative District Government; in: *Dantwala, M.L. et al. (eds.)* 1986).

287 National Legislative Assembly; Lower House of Parliament or House of the People.

288 National Legislative Assembly; Upper house of Parliament or Council of States.

289 *Janata Dal* 1989: The Basics of Democratic decentralisation; Report on Panchayats and Self-Government of the Committee Appointed by V.P. Sing, President, Janata Dal, July 1989; New Delhi: A Janata Dal Publication.

290 *Ibid*; Part II, Art. 238 C (2); page 17.

291 *Ibid*; see pp. 7-8.

4.1 The Historical Evolution

The Congress Panchayats under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao eventually managed to pass the new Panchayati legislation through the *Lok Sabha* and the *Rajya Sabha* in December 1992.

4.2 73rd Constitutional Amendment

4.2.1 The Panchayati Raj Act, 1992 89

4.2.2 Assessment 92

This chapter presents and explains the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act, 1992 in a concise manner (and in a more colloquial English language than the judicial language of the ten page original document). It gives a brief assessment of the provisions of the Act. The Act does not apply the principle of subsidiarity in listing specific development functions to be entrusted to Panchayats. The implementation of the provisions according to letter and spirit of the Act will depend on the political dynamics in India, in particular party politics and centre-state relations.

4.2.1 The Panchayati Raj Act, 1992

Following the assent of the President, the Panchayati Raj Act was brought into force by a government notification on April 24th, 1993 as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment which is inserted after Part VIII of the Constitution of India. Simultaneously the Nagarpalika Act on urban local government bodies was brought into force as the 74th constitutional amendment.

As a consequence of the Panchayati Raj Act, the number of local self-government institutions with directly elected representatives rose to around 500 bodies at district level, 5000 at block level and 225 000 at village level.²⁹²

A district level Panchayat covers a population of approximately 1-2 million, an intermediate level Panchayat a population of approximately 80-200 000 and a Gram Panchayat comprising a village or a group of villages, a population of approximately 1500-8000, varying from state to state.

The Panchayati Raj Act, 1992 specifies:

(i) the constitution and composition of institutions of local self governance at the village, intermediate and district level.

The Act provides for a mandatory three tier system of local self-government institutions for states with a population above 20 million. Small states are given the option not to have an intermediate level Panchayat. The Act provides for direct elections of Panchayat members at all levels. The chairpersons of Panchayats at intermediate and district level are to be indirectly elected by, and from amongst, the elected members thereof.

292 The number of Panchayati Raj Institutions at different levels changes with the creation of new constituencies and changes in the delimitation of constituencies, e.g. in Jhadol block, in Udaipur district in Rajasthan (an area covered by the field study), the State Election Commission increased the number of Gram Panchayats from 26 to 45 in the context of the Panchayati Raj Elections, 1995. The different figures given in newspapers, magazines and books are rather confusing. An official publication of the Ministry of Rural Development in 1994: see: *Meenakshisundaram, S.S. 1994: The Politico-legal Implications of the 73rd Constitution Act, 1992*; in: *Government of India; Ministry of Rural Development 1994: Renewing Local Self-Government in rural India, Occasional Papers 6*; New Delhi; (published by the National Institute of Rural Development Hyderabad) pp.87-96; p.94.

(ii) the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.

The Act provides for reservation of one-third of the total number of seats for women including chairpersons. It provides for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to their proportion of the respective population of the area. The reservation of seats should be allotted on rotational basis to different Panchayat constituencies. Reservation of seats for backward classes may be allocated according to provisions of State Panchayat Acts.

(iii) the duration of Panchayats.

The Act provides for a five year electoral term. The Act states that a Panchayat shall have a uniform five year term unless the Panchayat is dissolved under any applicable law. It gives a constitutional provision that no Panchayat will remain defunct for more than six months.

(iv) disqualification of membership

The Act refers to state legislation for defining criteria of disqualification of membership. The Act itself only specifies that no person should be disqualified on the ground of age if the person has attained 21 years.

(v) the powers, authorities and responsibilities of Panchayats

The Act refers to state legislation to endow Panchayats with adequate powers and authority "as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of local self-government". It mentions the preparation of plans for economic development and the implementation of development schemes including the matters listed in the 11th Schedule.

(vi) the powers to imposes taxes by, and funds of, the Panchayats

The Act mentions that the legislature of the states should pass legislation to authorise Panchayats to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

(vii) the constitution of a Finance Commission at state level

The Act provides for a mandatory period of one year for the states to constitute a Finance Commission and make recommendations to the Governor. The Finance Commission should determine the financial resources of Panchayats (taxes, duties, tolls, fees, grants-in aid from the Consolidated Fund of the State)

(viii) the audit of accounts of Panchayats

The Act leaves the matter entirely to the Legislature of the states

(ix) the elections to the Panchayats

Every state should have a State Election Commission for superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and for conducting elections. The Commission should consist of a State Election Commissioner appointed by the Governor.

(x) its applications to certain territories, states and areas

The Act specifies that its provisions shall apply to the Union territories subject to exceptions and modifications by the President of India.

The Act does not apply to the scheduled area referred to in clause (1) of Art. 244 of the constitution and to the tribal areas referred to in clause (2) of Article 244. It does not apply to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. It does not apply to the hill areas in the State of Manipur for which District Councils exist under any law for the time being in force. The Act shall not affect any functions of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and the provisions related to Panchayats at district level do not apply to the hill areas of the district of Darjeeling in the state of West-Bengal, for which the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists under any law for the time being in force. States may (by a two third majority in the Legislative Assembly) pass laws to further restrict the application of the Act to certain areas.

The Parliament may, by law, extend the application of the Act to the Scheduled Areas and the tribal areas subject that no such law shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution or the purpose of Article 368.

(xi) continuance of existing laws and Panchayats

The Act provides for a mandatory one year period for the States to amend their Panchayati Raj legislation according to the provision of the Act. Existing Panchayats in the states may be continue to function until the expiration of their duration unless sooner dissolved by the legislative authorities of the states.

(xii) the non-interference in electoral matters by courts

delimitation of constituencies and allotment of seats made by the State Election Commissioner as per Article 253 K shall not be questioned by any court. Elections to any Panchayat shall not be called in questions except by an election petition presented according to the procedures given by the Legislature of a state.

(xiii) the introduction of an amendment of Art. 280 of the Constitution related to State Finances.

The Finance Commission of a state should recommend measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of the State in order to supplement the resources of the Panchayats.

(xiv) 29 development areas as specific responsibilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions including

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry
5. Fisheries
6. Social forestry and farm forestry
7. Minor forest produce
8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries

10. Rural housing
11. Drinking water
12. Fuel and fodder
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity
15. Non-conventional energy sources
16. Poverty alleviation programme
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools
18. Technical training and vocational education
19. Adult and non-formal education
20. Libraries
21. Cultural Activities
22. Markets and fairs
23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries
24. Family welfare
25. Women and child development
26. Social welfare including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded
27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
28. Public Distribution system
29. Maintenance of community assets

4.2.2 *Assessment*

The constitution of India is one of the most voluminous constitutions in the world. Notwithstanding the lack of political will, the implementation of constitutional provisions is not an easy task in such a large, densely populated, culturally and religiously diverse country like India with a federal political system. Child labour, discrimination of castes, child marriages and dowry are only a few outstanding issues where constitutional provisions have largely failed to make an impact on social and cultural practises. Nirmal Mukarji expressed doubts that the Constitutional Amendment would have a serious impact on the functioning of the Panchayats:

- "(1) Can a constitutional provision by itself be an adequate substitute for political will ?
- (2) Given the harsh realities of the states, would these statutes be implemented in letter and spirit or would they remain laws on paper only ?
- (3) Is implementing decentralisation below the state level through the most centralising of all conceivable instruments - a constitutional amendment - desirable ?"²⁹³

George Mathew recognised the limits of constitutional provisions and advocates for translating Panchayat legislation into a social movement with lobby power.²⁹⁴ The

293 The doubts of Nirmal Mukarji are quoted in: *Mathew, George (ed.)* 1995: Status of Panchayati Raj in the States of India 1994; Institute of Social Sciences; New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; p.12.

Institute of Social Sciences in New Delhi stimulated a debate centred around the status of Panchayats as institutions of local self-government. The Director of the Institute, George Mathew, criticises the inconsistent approach of the Act in this matter.

"The bill had rightly defined panchayats as an institution of self-government but later, in defining the functions of this institutions, had narrowed them down to developmental functions, as in Article 243 G (a) and (b). Without policing (law and order) as a function at each level, no institution of self-government is worth the name."²⁹⁵

P.C. Mathur criticises the qualified language of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment:

"...the text of Article 263-G uses the term "may" and not the mandatory "shall" and, thus, leaves open the responsibility that a (or any) state Legislature may not endow any "powers and authority" upon the Constitutional Panchayat Institutions (CPI) all under the provision of the Constitution."²⁹⁶

S. Guhan also criticises the "heavily qualified language" of the Act and points out that the devolution of development functions listed under the 11th Schedule of the Act is not a mandatory requirement for the state and that the *Gram Sabha* has not been given specific responsibilities and no judicial powers to pass laws.²⁹⁷

The Act does not apply the principle of subsidiarity in listing specific development functions to be entrusted to Panchayats at different levels. The list of twenty-nine developmental functions to be entrusted to the Panchayat does not distinguish between specific duties of Panchayats at different levels.

The Act does not specifically elaborate on the role of the Panchayats as institutions of local self-government. Two factors are important for understanding the reluctance of the legislators to specify the role of the Panchayats, in particular their role as political bodies.

(i) there is a deep rooted scepticism among Indian politicians and bureaucrats to devolve powers to lower levels; many believe in the superiority of urban educated elites;

(ii) most state governments object to the idea of a third level of fully fledged governance at sub-state level, because they do not want to share powers and authority with Panchayats.

U.K. Shama Bhatt criticises the states in this regard:

"It is really interesting to note that the states quite often cry for more autonomy, in relation to the centre, but the same states, if similar demand is

294 Mathew, George 1994: From Legislation to Movement, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

295 Mathew, George (ed.) 1995 (a); p.13.

296 Matur, P.C 1995: The Constitutional Panchayats of India: Some Emerging Jurico-philosophical Issues; in: Jain, S.P./ Hochgesang, Thomas W.: Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj in India; Hyderabad; pp.5-22; (published proceedings of the National Conference on "Emerging trends in Rural Local Government in India; 29 November - 1 December 1994, organised by National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, New Delhi.

297 Guhan, S. 1995: Lecture at the Seminar on "Indian Federalism - Need for a new dialogue"; September 1st to 2nd, 1995, India International Centre, New Delhi.

raised for local self government institutions, how invariably these states show indifference, reluctance and resistance to such demand."²⁹⁸

Local politicians complain that the Act does not further specify the competencies, responsibilities and development functions of the Panchayats.²⁹⁹ In their view, the Act leaves too much scope for the state government bureaucracy to undermine the devolution of powers to the Panchayats. For local leaders, decision powers in development are most important. Development decision-making powers mean control over substantial financial resources.

The implementation reality will have to prove the value of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment as guiding principle for amendment of state Panchayat legislation and functioning of Panchayats at local level.³⁰⁰ The success of the reform will largely depend on the responsiveness of political parties to demands from local leaders and their ability to influence state level politics. Centre-state rivalries constitute a critical factor in promoting the successful implementation of the reform.

298 *Bhatt, U.K. Shama* 1995: *New Panchayati Raj system: A Study of Politico-Administrative Dynamics*, Jaipur; pp. 5-6.

299 Source: field study experiences; *The Hindu* (Madras) 11.10.1995: PM Defends Direct Central Funding to Panchayats.

300 These aspects are discussed in detail in chapter 5 (case studies).

4.3 The Implementation of the Panchayati Raj Act

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This chapter deals with the most important issues of the implementation of the local self-government reform throughout India after the legal enforcement of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The initial zeal of the central governments information-, communication-, and co-operation policy has shown some decline since April 1995. Some state governments fear that the reform would undermine their authority and strengthen the Congress Party which traditionally has a stronghold in rural areas. The announcement of the central government's provision of financial resources to the Panchayats received an ambiguous response from some state governments.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment does not apply to the mainly tribal areas mentioned in the Fifth and Sixths Schedule of the Constitution of India. Conflicts between assertive tribal movements and central government rule in India, in particular in the north-eastern region, have made the central government cautious in implementing uniform policies and administrative structures in tribal areas.

4.3.1 The Central Government's Information-, Communication- and Co-operation Policy

The information and communication policy of the Ministry of Rural Development³⁰¹, under the Secretary B.N. Yugandhar was particularly active during the first two years after the passing of the Panchayati Raj legislation. Information material (posters, booklets) was distributed, seminars and workshops were organised and guidelines on distribution of responsibilities between the Panchayats at different levels were published. While the information policy received widespread attention, the guidelines for the concrete implementation of the reform were of rather poor quality. As the below mentioned table shows, formulations were vague and a clear cut division of responsibility between the Panchayats at the district, the block and the village level was not recognisable.

301 Renamed in Ministry of Rural Area Development and Employment in March 1995.

Table 2: Division of Responsibilities Among Panchayats for Rural Housing According to an Official Publication of the Ministry of Rural Development³⁰²

District level Zila Panchayat (ZP)	Block level Panchayat Samiti (PS)	Village level Gram Panchayat (GP)
1. to plan, supervise and implement all programmes relating to these schemes under overall guidance of the central government	1. to plan, supervise and implement all programmes in the block area under ZP's guidance and control	1. to supervise the implementation of programmes/schemes under overall guidance of PS
2. to supervise the functions of the GP/PS	2. to send reports, periodicals as prescribed	2. to select spot/site and beneficiaries monitoring the release of assistance under development programmes, administering the programme to P.S.
3. to send progress reports to Government departments	3. to supervise GP's functioning	3. to demonstrate, to implementation and to disseminate information
4. to co-ordinate, to supervise and to monitor programme implementation including receiving reports from sub-district establishments	4. to select site/beneficiaries for input distribution as recommended by GP	4. to send reports/returns as prescribed
		5. to review progress, and to co-ordinate with other departments

B. K. Thapliyal, Director of the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad, has offered a better model of distribution of responsibilities between Panchayats at different levels.³⁰³ For the case of rural housing, these are as follows.

302 Mitra, Sanjay / Dubey, A.K. 1994: Powers, Authorities and Responsibilities of Panchayats at Different Levels; in: *Government of India; Department of Rural Development (I)*; p. 42-132; p. 88 (Zila Panchayat); p. 111 (Panchayat Samiti); p. 128 (Gram Panchayat).

303 Thapliyal, B.K. 1995: Decentralised Planning in the Panchayati Raj Frame; in: Jain, S.P./Hochgesang, Thomas W (eds.): *Emerging Trends in Panchayati Raj in India*; Hyderabad; p.71-102 (published proceedings of the National Conference on "Emerging Trends in Rural Local Government in India; 29 November - 1 December 1994, organised by National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, New Delhi.

Table 3: Division of Panchayat Responsibilities at Different Levels for Rural Housing According to B.K. Thapliyal, Director of the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad

District Level	Block Level	Village Level
Sanctioning of money for rural housing projects under Indira Awas Yojana	Construction of the houses for the beneficiaries under IAY and other programmes	Identification of families without house/house site for housing
Acquisition of land for distribution of house sites		Organising beneficiaries for construction and supervision of the housing projects
		Acquisition/allocation of land for house sites

The initial political commitment and zeal to promote the Panchayati Raj reform has shown some decline since April 1995. This may be attributed to two main reasons:

(i) the major concern of the Congress Party apparently shifted towards the forthcoming *Lok Sabha* elections in May 1996 and considerations on potential coalition partners in the states. The Panchayati Raj subject did not serve the purpose of building political alliance with potential coalition partners in the states as it was an issue of centre-state rivalry.

(ii) The results of the Panchayat elections in the states did not meet the initial expectations of the Congress Party that the revival of the Panchayati Raj system would strengthen its rural support basis and weaken the state governments.

Panchayati Raj was not a major issue in the election campaign for the Lok Sabha elections in May 1996. There were no striking differences in the attitudes of the competing political parties towards the Panchayati Raj reform.

The **Congress Party** mentioned the achievements of the Panchayati Raj reform in its election manifest. The **Janata Dal** proposed to amend the constitution in order to define the powers of the Panchayats with more precision and elaborates on the relationship between Panchayats and the state governments. The **BJP** also suggested improvement of the Panchayat legislation to further strengthen the Panchayats and to make them financially self-sufficient. The **Communist Party of India** focused on the autonomy of tribal majority areas and more financial resources for Panchayats. The **Communist Party of India (Marxist)** referred to the promoting of grassroots democracy and the proper devolution of powers. The election manifest of the **Samata Party** elaborated on financial aspects of the reform, proposing a minimum of 50% of the centre's aggregate revenue resources for devolution to the states and a devolution of 50% of the resources of the states to the Panchayats. The **All-India Congress (Tiwari)** referred to "meaningful and genuine transfer of power to the people", Gandhian philosophy and Nehruvian thinking for the functioning of Panchayats.³⁰⁴

304 See Institute of Social Sciences; *Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) April 1996; p.6.

The decline of enthusiasm was not only apparent in the information- and communication policy of the national Congress government, but even more in the co-operation policy of the Ministry of Rural Development. In the course of the year 1994, the Ministry of Rural Development had held negotiations with large donor agencies (in particular UNDP and the European Commission) for jointly funded Panchayati Raj projects. The Ministry had expressed interest in training projects for elected Panchayat members and development of community assets with involvement of NGOs.³⁰⁵

The co-operation policy of the Government of India also experienced a shift in May/June 1995 when B.N. Yugandhar was transferred from the Ministry of Rural Development to the office of the Prime Minister and R. K. Nayak³⁰⁶ took over as secretary in charge of Panchayati Raj. Parliamentarians, with support from the Prime Minister, had expressed concerns that foreign assistance could play a too important role in Panchayati Raj affairs and could finally alienate the character of the local self-government reform "made in India". By December 1995, a 5 million dollar UNDP Panchayati programme³⁰⁷ conceived in 1993/94 and designed over a 3.5 years period had still not materialised. Preliminary negotiations between the European Commission and the Ministry of Rural Development on a major Panchayati Raj project in 1994 were not continued in 1995.

Donor agencies such as the European Commission, the Ford Foundation, NORAD, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, however, supported the Panchayati Raj reform through (i) the organisation of seminars and workshops on the new Act and (ii) training and legal literacy projects for newly elected members of Panchayats, in particular women members.

4.3.2 *The Central Government's Allocation of Financial Resources to Panchayats*

The 10th Finance Commission of the Government of India allocated Rs. 43 billion to Panchayats for the period 1995-2000. The financial allocations were made in order to augment the resources of Panchayats in addition to matching funds to be provided by the central governments. The annual allocation is Rs. 10.9523 billion from the financial year 1996/97 to 1998/99 and Rs. 10.9524 billion for the year 1999/2000.

The 10th Finance Commission recommended that the grants be given to the states for distribution among the Panchayats above and beyond their (potential) financial resources of assigned taxes, duties, tolls, fees, transferred activity related budgets and other grants. The grant is not intended for expenditure on salaries and wages.

The share of individual states has been worked out on the basis of population figures of the 1971 census³⁰⁸, providing Rs. 100 per capita. The countries total rural population was estimated in this census at 438 093 million. The total allocation is to be made available in four equal annual instalments starting from 1996. The Ministry of

305 Meeting with B.N. Yugandhar on 15.12.1994 in the Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi.

306 R.K. Nayak is also the honorary Director of an Orissa based NGO (NISWASS).

307 The programme design consisted of training and rural development management by Panchayats in two selected districts of six states.

308 The reason for taking the 1971 census and not the 1991 census is that the family planning activities of the states over the past years should be rewarded.

Rural Development stated that states should provide 15% of their total resources to Panchayats. This will amount to Rs. 75 billion over the period 1995-2000.

Table 4: The Central Government Allocation of Financial Resources to Panchayats

States	financial years (figures in million Rs.)				
	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	'99-2000	'95-2000
Andhra Pradesh	877.50	877.50	877.50	877.50	3510.0
Arunachal Pradesh	11.30	11.30	11.30	11.20	45.10
Assam	333.40	333.400	333.40	333.40	1333.60
Bihar	1268.00	1268.00	1267.90	1268.00	5071.00
Goa	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.70	59.10
Gujarat	48.00	48.00	48.00	48.01	1920.10
Haryana	206.60	206.60	206.60	206.60	826.40
Himachal Pradesh	80.05	80.05	80.04	80.04	321.80
Jammu & Kashmir	94.00	94.00	94.00	94.39	375.90
Karnataka	554.40	554.40	554.40	554.50	2217.70
Kerala	447.00	447.00	447.00	447.10	1788.10
Madhya Pradesh	871.70	871.70	871.70	871.80	3486.90
Maharashtra	867.50	867.50	867.50	867.60	3470.01
Manipur	23.30	23.30	23.30	23.20	93.10
Meghalaya	21.60	21.60	21.70	21.60	86.50
Mizoram	7.40	7.40	7.30	7.30	29.40
Nagaland	11.60	11.60	11.60	11.70	46.50
Orissa	502.50	502.50	502.50	502.40	2009.90
Punjab	258.40	258.40	258.40	258.30	1033.50
Rajasthan	530.50	530.50	530.60	530.60	2122.20
Sikkim	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	19.00
Tamil Nadu	718.30	718.30	718.40	718.40	2873.40
Tripura	34.80	34.80	34.90	34.90	139.40
Uttar Pradesh	1898.80	1898.80	1898.80	1898.80	7595.20
West-Bengal	833.60	833.60	833.60	833.70	3334.50
Grand total	10952.30	10952.30	10952.30	10952.40	43809.30

Source: Government of India 1995; Report of the 10th Finance Commission, Delhi

Some states, in particular the states which were not ruled by the Congress Party, voiced their opposition to the direct funding of the central government to the Panchayats although the funds will be routed through the state governments if no changes occur in the current practise of financial transfers. Those state governments already complain about the centrally-sponsored development schemes and consider the central government funds to Panchayats as another variety of "patronage resources". L.C. Jain has coined the term "patronage resources". He points out the concerns regarding direct allocation of resources from the central government to the sub-state level:

"The Centrally- sponsored schemes (CSS) are a patronage resource in their hands and schemes named after Jawahar Lal, Nehru, Indira have vote value."³⁰⁹

4.3.3 State Level Implementation

Centre/State Rivalries

The Panchayati Raj reform is a controversial subject between the central and the state governments in India. The first initiative of a constitutional amendment for Panchayat legislation by the Rajiv Gandhi government created scepticism among the states, in particular among the states not ruled by the Congress Party. S. Guhan refers to the initiative of the Rajiv Gandhi government as an attempt to bypass the states through government development schemes and to create central government sponsored "live support systems" for the Panchayats.³¹⁰

It has been a difficult process for the legislators to present a Panchayat Act which would gain the assent of a two third majority in the *Lok Sabha*. The main opposition came from MPs of regional political parties. They were either not in favour of giving constitutional status to institutions at sub-state level at all or rejected certain provisions of the Act, e.g. the fixed number of tiers irrespective of the states existing Panchayat structure and tradition. Besides providing for a mandatory three tier system, one third reservation for women and further reservation for Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Panchayati Raj Act leaves significant scope for the states to modify their existing Panchayat legislation. State governments, however, still fear that the Act could be instrumental in undermining their authority. Ruling parties of the states feared that the Panchayati reform would enlarge the network of the Congress Party and undermine the state government's authority. The Congress Party's electoral stronghold is traditionally in rural areas while the BJPs and most of the regional party's basis are concentrated in urban areas.

Moreover, the states are concerned that they have to bear a major share in providing adequate financial resources to the Panchayats. Before the Panchayati Raj reform, West-Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra allocated a significant part of their assigned taxes to Panchayats³¹¹, but most other states allocated very little resources to Panchayats if they were at all functioning.

The most important factors for the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform at state level are:

- (i) amendments of State Panchayati Raj legislation
- (ii) holding of Panchayati Raj elections in the states

309 Jain, L.C. 1995: No Resource Crunch for Panchayats; *Financial Express* (Bombay), 23.4.1995.

310 Guhan, S.; Institute of Development Studies, Madras; lecture on a seminar on "Indian Federation - Need for a New Dialogue", organised by the Indian Institute of Social Science in New Delhi on 1-2.9.1995.

311 Their share accounted to 87% of the total provision of state governments to Panchayats until the year 1995/1996; see: *Business Standard* (Calcutta) 27.3.1995: States to Get 4381 Crore More for Panchayati Raj Agencies.

(iii) the recommendations of the State Finance Commission

Amendments of State Panchayati Raj Legislation

All states of the Indian Union to which the 73rd Constitutional Amendment applies completed the process of bringing state legislation in line with the Panchayati Raj Act by July 1994. Only Tamil Nadu (24.4.1994) and Goa (9.7.94) had exceeded the mandatory one year period. The main areas of divergence between the new State Panchayati Acts are as follows:

- (i) the powers of the state government to supersede Panchayats
- (ii) categories and percentage of reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBC);
- (iii) the role of the Gram Sabha;
- (iv) the formation of Standing Committees of Panchayats and their composition;
- (v) the party basis or non party basis of electoral contests.

Representatives of Panchayats from all over the country concluded at a conference, held in New Delhi from October 8th to 10th, 1995 that crucial elements of empowering Panchayats were missing in the Panchayati Raj Acts of the states:

- (i) the transfer of the DRDA under the Zila Parishad;
- (ii) the enlargement of the resource basis;
- (iii) the strengthening of the Gram Sabha and
- (iv) the involvement of Panchayat representatives in the preparation of district plans.³¹²

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment mentions the "preparation of plans for economic development and social justice."³¹³ District Planning Committees are usually entrusted with the preparation of such plans. In most states, the chairperson of the Zila Parishad has also been made the chairperson of the District Planning Committee.³¹⁴ West-Bengal and Madhya Pradesh have passed separate legislation to constitute District Planning Committees according to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. However, the District Planning Committees had not been made functional in any state by March 1996.

Holding of Panchayati Raj Elections in the States

Holding of Panchayat elections was particularly problematic and subject to major controversies between the central government and state governments. In February 1995, Ministry of Rural Area Development and Employment stated that it would evolve measures to stop the major Jawahar Rozghar Yojana (JRY) payments and other rural development funds to states not conducting Panchayat elections.³¹⁵

Jaganath Mishra, when he was appointed Minister for Rural Area Development and Employment, repeated on his first day in charge (June 11th, 1995) that the release of

312 See: *The Hindu* (Madras) 11.10.1995: PM Defends Direct Central Funding to Panchayats.

313 *Government of India; Ministry of Rural Development* 1993: The Constitution 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 on The Panchayats; New Delhi; Article 243G (a).

314 Manipur is an exception where the Deputy Commissioner presides over the District Planning Committee.

315 *Parsai, Gargi* 1995: No Polls, no Funds; in: *The Hindu* (Madras) 26.2.1995; p. 9.

development funds to the states should be linked with the implementation of the new Panchayat legislation. He specified that that transfer of funds would be stopped to the states which would fail to complete Panchayat elections until November 30th, 1995.

In February 1996, elections had still not been held in Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Orissa. Around 200 million people were hence outside of the Panchayati Raj system. In the case of Punjab (January 1993) and Himachal Pradesh (December 1992) elections were held just before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, and so the provisions of the new Panchayati Raj Act were not taken into consideration. In West-Bengal, elections were held in May 1993. In a hurry, the existing Panchayati Raj Act was amended so as to comply with the provision of reservation as stipulated in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Other provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment were ignored.

In February 1996, it was reported that the central government decided to issue a directive under Art. 256 of the Constitution to Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Bihar in order to complete Panchayati elections soon.³¹⁶

George Mathew criticises the lack of political will of the Centre to pursue the proper implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform, in particular regarding holding of Panchayat elections:

"Even the ultimate threat that the Parliament will censure those States which do not hold elections or that the Centre would evoke President's rule for flouting the Constitution has not worked. Is it that the States know that the Centre does not mean what it says ?.....With a visit to the Prime Ministers Office by the Chief Minister, a telephone call here, a telephone call there and announcement of election dates without meaning it, the temporarily withheld funds were released."³¹⁷

The table below given demonstrates the significant differences which occur in holding of Panchayat elections in the different states in India. This makes it difficult to give an overall assessment of the implementation process of the Panchayati Raj reform.

Table 5: Election Schedule for Panchayats in the States (as of February 1996)

	Gram Panchayat elections held	Gram Panchayat elections due	Panchayat Samiti elections held	Panchayat Samiti elections due	Zila Parishad elections held	Zila Parishad elections due
States						
Andhra Pradesh	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Arunachal Pradesh	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Assam	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Bihar	1978	overdue	1979	overdue	1980	overdue
Goa	1991	1996	-	-	Due	Due
Gujarat	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000

316 *Times of India* (New Delhi) 28.2.1996.

317 *Mathew, George* 1995 (b): Good Intentions, Painful Realities, *The Hindu* (Madras); 5.12.1995.

Haryana	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999
Himachal Pradesh	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Jammu & Kashmir	Not ratified under Article 370 of the Constitution					
Karnataka	1993	1998	1995	2000	1995	2000
Kerala	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Madhya Pradesh	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999
Maharashtra	-	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Manipur	1991	1996	-	-	Due for ZP	
Meghalaya	Part 9 of the Constitution not applicable					
Mizoram	Part 9 of the Constitution not applicable					
Nagaland	Part 9 of the Constitution not applicable					
Orissa	Dissolved in August 1995 - mandatory elections are overdue					
Punjab	1993	1998	1994	1999	1994	1999
Rajasthan	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Sikkim	1993	1998	-	-	1993	1998
Tamil Nadu	1986	overdue	1986	overdue	1986	overdue
Tripura	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999
Uttar Pradesh	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
West Bengal	1993	1998	1993	1998	1993	1998

(courtesy: Ford Foundation, New Delhi)

Table 6: Election Schedule for Panchayats in Union Territories (as of February 1996)

	Gram Panchayat elections held	Gram Panchayat elections due	Panchayat Samiti elections held	Panchayat Samiti elections due	Zila Parishad elections held	Zila Parishad elections due
Union Territories						
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Chandigarh	1983	overdue	-	-	due for Zila Parishad	
Dadrar & Nagar Haveli	1995	2000	-	-	1995	2000
Delhi	-	-	-	-	-	-

Daman & Diu	1995	2000	-	-	1995	2000
Lakshadweep	due for Gram Panchayats	-	-	-	due for Zila Parishad	-
Pondi-cherry	due for Gram Panchayats	-	-	-	due for Zila Parishad	-

(courtesy: Ford Foundation, New Delhi)

The Recommendations of the State Finance Commissions

All state governments, except Orissa, appointed Finance Commissions by March 1996. The State Finance Commissions of Punjab, West-Bengal and Rajasthan submitted their final reports and the State Finance Commissions in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala submitted their interim reports until March 1996. The implementation of the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions was still ongoing by March 1996. For the case of Rajasthan, the subject is discussed in chapter 5.2.3.

Examples of State Level Implementation (Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana)

It is difficult to summarise the conformity Panchayat legislation and the holding of elections in the different states. Most State Panchayati Raj Acts are voluminous documents of around 100 pages and are not easily accessible.³¹⁸ State governments have made various announcements of holding elections which were than again postponed or cancelled.

Three states (Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana) have been selected to very briefly outline the different scenarios of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform at state level. All three states represent different political and development characteristics. Madhya Pradesh is a large and poor state in central India governed by the Congress Party. It has a large network of nearly 1200 registered NGOs. Tamil Nadu is a southern state which is traditionally in strong opposition to the central government. The state was governed by the charismatic Chief Minister and former film star Ms. Jayalalitha Jayaram from the AIDMK during the three year core period of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform (4/1993 - 4/1996). She was put in custody after she lost elections in May 1996. Haryana is a small and well developed state near the national capital Delhi and is often called the "darling of the central government". It was governed by the Congress Party during the three year core period of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform (4/1993 - 4/1996). Since July 1996 it is governed by the Haryana Vikas Party, a political ally of the BJP. Few NGOs are working in Haryana.

318 It may be mentioned that English versions of the State Panchayati Acts are not easily available and access is usually restricted to people working in Research and Public Administration Institutions.

Madhya Pradesh

The state of Madhya Pradesh is the geographical heartland of India with a significant tribal population living in the eastern and south-western part of the state. Madhya Pradesh was the first state to amend its Panchayati legislation³¹⁹ (January 1994) according to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and to hold election under the new Act. The Congress Chief Minister Digvijay Singh wanted to gain national profile in presenting the state as a model for implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform.

"Where people have become the solution: A silent revolution is at work.
Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh."³²⁰

This is the title of one of the numerous press advertisements of the Madhya Pradesh state government in the various national newspapers. Photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Chief Minister Digvijay Singh and Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao illustrate the advertisement.

According to Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, however, the state government retains significant control over Panchayats. It can issue directions to Panchayats, dissolve Panchayats, conduct inquiries into affairs of Panchayats and delegate powers from time to time to a Panchayat officer. A separate audit organisation under the control of the state government audits the accounts of Panchayats. The Act entitles Panchayats to frame certain bye-laws (regulations related to discharge of water, disposal of carcasses of dead animals, sale of meat, liquor, etc.) subject to approval by prescribed authorities. The Act specifies the formation of five Standing Committees at block level (Janpad Panchayat) and district level (Zila Panchayat): (i) General Administration Committee (ii) Agriculture Committee (iii) Education Committee (iv) Communication and Works Committee (v) Co-operatives and Industry Committee.

The Zila Panchayats is mainly an advisory body while the Janpad Panchayat is given the main executive functions, but like the Gram Panchayat it is supposed to act mainly as an agent to implement programmes of the state government. The quorum for the Gram Sabha meetings to be held twice a year is 10%. There is no provision for forming district planning committees with involvement of Panchayats. Gram Panchayats can levy taxes on property, light tax, market fees and others subject to prior approval by the Janpad Panchayat. The Janpad Panchayats can levy taxes on theatre, public performances, entertainment. They may also levy a development tax on agricultural land.

The state government was eager to be the first state holding Panchayat under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Elections were held in rush to all three tiers in May/June 1994 and were characterised by a lack of basic infrastructure facilities (buildings, vehicles, etc.). Members took oath of office in August 1994. Political parties, in particular the Congress Party, claimed their success (in particular for chairperson of Janpad and Zila Panchayats), though elections were officially held on a non-party basis. Regarding the early holding of the elections under the new Act and the Panchayat policy of the state government in general, Susheela Kaushik concludes:

319 See: *Government of Madhya Pradesh 1994: Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994*, Bhopal: secondary source: Pal, Mahi 1994: *Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Adhiniyan 1994*; in Institute of Social Sciences; *Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) September 1994, New Delhi; , p. 5-7.

320 *Times of India* (New Delhi); 11.9.1995; p.1.

"Without funds or staff the Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh started with a great flourish, but with nothing else."³²¹

The Madhya Pradesh Government has announced changes in the State Panchayati Raj Act in May 1996. The Panchayati Raj Minister Harbansh Singh stated that the powers of the district magistrates would be curtailed. He further said that the Panchayats will be given the control over eight departments: rural development, school education, agriculture, health, public health engineering, fisheries, social welfare and women and child development. The Panchayats would be given the powers to appoint and transfer all officers of these departments. The old-age pension and mid-day meal schemes would also be given to the Panchayats.³²²

The Government appointed 45 Chief Executive Officers, all from the Indian Administrative Service, to head the Panchayat administration at district level and has foreseen to recruit another 450 class two officers for the posts of executive officers of Janpad Panchayats.³²³ The state government has constituted a six-member committee of Congress MLAs to recommend measures for improvement of the Panchayati Raj System in June 1996. A "brief report on Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh", produced by the IAS officer Sundeep Banerjee at the initiative of UNICEF, points out that the political commitments and zeal of the state government to empower the Panchayats has led to tense relationship between the elected representatives and the government functionaries. The report also refers to the scarcity of financial resources and the lack of communication-, training- and monitoring activities as inhibiting factors for the proper implementation of the reform.³²⁴

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is the home of Dravidan art and culture and has preserved a strong regional identity. The Aryans never really exerted a strong cultural influence in the most southerly area of the Indian subcontinent. The state has experienced agricultural progress and industrialisation over the past years.

In Tamil Nadu, the main Dravidan parties, the ruling AIDMK and the DMK, had raised strong opposition against the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment. The Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act³²⁵ came into force on April 24th, 1994 exceeding the mandatory one year period by a single but symbolic day. The Act provides for at least three Gram Sabha meetings each year. The Gram Sabha approves the village development plan and the annual budget and reviews the work of the Gram Panchayat. The Act entrusts only regulatory municipal functions, mainly maintenance and repair of roads, bridges, dams to Village Panchayats (VP). VPs have no role in primary

321 Kaushik, Susheela 1994: One year of Panchayati Raj: Challenges to Women's role; p. 14 (paper presented on a seminar under the above mentioned title held in New Delhi from December 12th-13th, 1994.

322 See: *Institute of Social Sciences: Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) May 1996; pp. 3-4.

323 Ibid.

324 Banerjee, Sudeep 1996: Brief Report on Panchayati Raj; New Delhi: UNICEF; secondary source: *Institute of Social Sciences: Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) June 1996; p. 5.

325 See: *Government of Tamil Nadu* 1994: Panchayati Raj Act 1994; Madras; secondary source: Kumar, Girish 1995: Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act in: *Institute of Social Sciences; Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) April 1995; p.6-7.

education, health and public distribution system. The Panchayat at the block level is named the Panchayat Union Council (PUC).

The Act specifies construction works, repairs, opening and maintenance of transport facilities and employment and training of vaccinators as specific functions of the PUC. Moreover PUC are supposed to establish and maintain dispensaries, maternity and child welfare centres, houses for poor and orphanages and elementary schools. The role of the District Panchayat (DP) is to advise the state government on all matters relating to the services of VP and PUC. The specific allocation of responsibilities for various development function (e.g. rural housing, cottage industries) is rather vague.

The Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act testifies the reluctance of the Tamil Nadu state government to comply with the spirit of the 73rd amendment and to devolve powers to Panchayats. The specific feature of the Act is the powerful position of the district collector and the chairpersons. The District Collector is not only a member of all the Standing Committees of the District Panchayats, but he also substitutes the chairpersons of District Panchayats in their absence. He is also entitled to refer to state government authorities for the purpose of suspension of Panchayat resolutions.

The Collector can vest all powers in the chairperson of the Panchayat for a maximum of 6 months if members do not fulfil their duty. The chairpersons may be more easily coopted by the state government than an autonomous team of Panchayat members. Art. 214, 215, 216 of the Act provide the state government with wide ranging powers to dissolve Panchayat institutions.

The Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 has no provisions for backward communities reservation, but the state government promulgated an ordinance of 50% reservation for backward classes for Panchayati Raj posts. M.A. Oomen et al. argue that the state government deliberately launched the initiative to create a major confusion in order to postpone Panchayati Raj elections.

"... the Census (1991) does not give caste-wise figures and enumeration (except for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) and the ordinance did not provide any rational guidelines for selection and allotment of seats for backward communities. That such glaring loopholes in the legislation would invite litigation was obvious enough. That was exactly what has happened. As many as 65 cases are reported to be pending before the Madras High Court and the elections cannot be held before they are decided."³²⁶

In Tamil Nadu, Panchayat elections all three tiers have not been held since 1986 and are overdue. The Finance Commission was constituted in September 1994.

326 *Institute of Social Sciences* 1996: Panchayati Raj Development Report 1995 (prepared by M.A.Oommen; assisted by S.V. Sharan, Buddhadeb Gosh and R. Anandaraj); New Delhi; p.12-13.

Haryana

The state of Haryana is considered to be one of the better developed states in the country. However, there are large disparities in the state and a significant number of people in remote rural areas are living below the poverty line. Panchayats in Haryana have usually more financial resources and better community assets than in many other states of the country.

Haryana amended its Panchayati Raj Act on April 22nd, 1994 and Panchayat elections to all bodies were held in December 1994. The Chief Minister had announced an award of 10 Mill. Rs. if villagers present a single consensus candidate as Sarpanch. The State Election Commission allotted party symbols for PS and ZP candidates who applied for it. Elections of Wardpanchs and Sarpanchs were not contested on party basis.

Many Panchayats which are located near the vicinity of the national capital Delhi enjoy a high political profile. Land prices have tremendously increased over the years and Panchayats benefit from land sale and compensations for land acquirement by the government.

Panchayats have lost a significant source of income through the enforcement of prohibition in Haryana from July 1st, 1996 after the Haryana Vikas Party has taken over the government rule from the Congress Party. Panchayats used to get an income of 1 Rs. on the sale of each bottle of alcohol from the State Government. The large majority of women, however, highly appreciates the prohibition law and its enforcement.

The Haryana Panchayati Raj Act³²⁷ gives a high profile to the Gram Sabha. The Sarpanch shall automatically cease to hold office if he fails to hold Gram Sabha meetings on the due dates. The Gram Sabha attendance of Panchayat Samiti officers is compulsory.

The Gram Sabha is given a number of powers and functions to participate in, scrutiny and review the work of the Gram Panchayat (Art.12 of the Act). Gram Sabhas are usually of a much smaller population size than the national average of 3000 - 6000. On the average only around 1700 people form a Gram Sabha in Haryana. However, there are also some bigger Panchayats in areas near the capital Delhi which experience an urbanisation process (i.e. Faridabad district).

The Gram Panchayat meetings are to be held once every two months, open to the public. The judicial functions enjoyed by the Gram Panchayat so far (role as Nyaya Panchayat), have been removed from the list of responsibilities of the Gram Panchayats..

A specific provision of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994 entails the inclusion of one fifth of the Sarpanchs within the jurisdiction of the Panchayat Samiti as (ex-officio) members of the Panchayat Samiti. This provisions, however, has not been implemented by September 1996. MLAs are also members of the Panchayat Samiti of their constituency. The Zila Parishad is supposed to meet once in two months. The chairpersons of the Panchayat Samiti are ex-officio members of the Zila Parishad.

The Act also provides for constitution of committees and two types of tax levy: one with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad and one without. The Act further specifies the provision of reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled

327 *Government of Haryana* 1994: Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994; Gurgaon; secondary source: *Pal, Mahi* 1994: Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994; in: *Institute of Social Sciences; Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) December 1994; p.5-8

Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The Act also mentions the constitution of a State Finance Commission (Art. 212 of the Act); a State Election Commission (Art. 213 of the Act) and a District Planning Committee (Art. 214 of the Act).

The Finance Commission of the State which is supposed to give recommendations on financial allocations to Panchayat bodies has been constituted. The work of the Commission came to a standstill when its chairman R.S. Bisla quit the post in order to contest the State Assembly elections. Another member, M.S. Rathee has also resigned. No interim report had been presented until June 1996.³²⁸

Control over administrative staff of the Panchayats and powers to implement disciplinary actions against staff are fully retained by the state government. The Panchayat Samiti has no real control over its executive officer. There is no organic link (decision-making, reporting, channelling of funds) between the three tiers of governance.³²⁹

The District Planning Committee (the final authority at district level to decide the size and content of the district development plan) is mentioned in the Act but its chairmanship is not specified. The DRDA still retains a separate identity (section 133 (4)). It remains a body parallel to the Zila Parishad

4.3.4 The Implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in Areas with Special Constitutional Status (the Scheduled Areas)

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment does not apply to the mainly tribal areas mentioned in the Fifth and Sixths Schedule of the Constitution of India. Schedules are an integral part of the Indian Constitution. The Constitutional Amendment on Panchayati Raj does also not apply to the hill area of the Darjeeling district and other predominant tribal areas.³³⁰ Conflicts between assertive tribal movements and central government rule in India, in particular in the north-eastern region, have made the central government cautious in implementing uniform policies and administrative structures in tribal areas.

As in Latin-America and African countries, international and national attention towards the preservation of the specific social and cultural traditions of tribals have risen in India, too. C. Rammanohar Reddy, with reference to M.D. Sharma, former Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes affairs, outlines the concerns and problems in applying the Panchayati Raj structure to tribal areas which enjoy special status under the constitution.

"Many tribal communities..... have their own systems of decision making which have evolved over centuries. Superimposing the three-tier Panchayati Raj structure on this system will not only destroy the existing bodies but also make for ineffective local decision making. Thus, for example, the Gram Panchayat - the lowest level of 73rd Amendment's three tier Panchayati Raj, is based on the village as the administrative and not as the social . Gram Panchayats can do cover more than one village. In contrast, decision-making in tribal communities takes place within each village,

328 *Institute of Social Science; Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) June 1996; p. 3.

329 Cf. *Pal, Mahi* 1994.

330 Article 243-M of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment

which is the basic organism of the community.....The problem here is of preventing further alienation of land, protecting what remains of tradition and preventing the exercise of dominance by non-tribals."³³¹

For the tribal areas in Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, the state legislatures are given the authority to extend the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment except in the scheduled areas of their jurisdiction.

The Fifth Schedule provides for the administration and control of mainly tribal areas. The central government exercises control over these areas but it should be advised by a Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) at the state level. Three quarters of the members of the TAC should be tribal MLAs. The Fifth Schedule does not stipulate any devolution of powers to local level institutions.

"Paternalistic surveillance by the Centre, rather than self-management by the people is the main trust of the fifth schedule."³³²

The Sixth Schedule provides for Autonomous Districts, Autonomous Regions and corresponding level Autonomous Councils of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The Councils at district level have some minor law-making powers and judicial powers subject to the assent of the Governor. Moreover they have decision-making and executive powers in managing primary schools, dispensaries, fisheries, transport and construction of roads. Other development functions have not been specified for the district councils but can be assigned to them by the states. The establishment of village and town councils at sub-district level and further devolution of powers to such bodies is not mandatory for these areas.

In short, devolution of development functions in the tribal areas mentioned in the Sixth Schedule is very limited and confined to the district level. Both Schedules can be amended by a simple majority of the Parliament.

The central government constituted a Committee of Members of Parliament and experts in July 1994 to harmonise the Fifth, Sixth and Eleventh Schedules of the Constitution and to make recommendation on how to apply the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to the scheduled areas. The Committee (named after its chairman Dileep Singh Bhuria) submitted its report to the central government in December 1994.

The report covers a wide range of issues and includes a large number of recommendations related to the administration of the Scheduled Areas, i.e. reorganisation of administrative boundaries based on ethnic, demographic and geographic considerations. The listing of the following recommendations does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview on the report.³³³ It only explains some basic recommendations of the Committee. The Committee recommended:

- (i) to establish a four tier Panchayati Raj structure. Such structure should consist of (a) a Gram Sabha with an executive council. The Gram Sabha

331 Reddy, C. Rammanohar 1995: Panchayati Raj and Tribals ; in: *The Hindu* (Madras) 7.10.1995; p.8.

332 Burman, B.K. Roy 1994: Tribal Areas and Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act; in: *Institute of Social Sciences: Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) August 1994; New Delhi p.6-7; p. 7.

333 For a comprehensive review of the report see: Burman, B.K. Roy 1995: Bhuria Committee Report - A Critiques I + II +III; in: *Institute of Social Sciences: Panchayati Raj Update* (New Delhi) April, May, June 1995.

representing scattered hamlets or habitats or a small village may have a traditional village council and exercise its customary role; (b) a Gram Panchayat representing a group of hamlets; (c) a Panchayat Samiti at intermediate (sub-district) level and Autonomous District Councils at district level. Powers and functions of the Panchayat institutions are mentioned in four appendices.

(ii) that tribal representatives should constitute the majority in Panchayats in the scheduled areas even if they have numerically become a minority.

(iii) to give the same powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions to be formed in the areas of the Fifth Schedule as entrusted to the Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule.

(iv) to create tribal sub-district councils in districts where tribals are not in the majority

(v) to revive and strengthen the role of the Tribal Advisory Council³³⁴

The *Lok Sabha* adopted the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Bill, 1996, which has been framed in accordance with the recommendation of the report. At the end of December 1996, the legislation still awaited the President's assent.³³⁵

334 *Government of India* 1994: Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament and Experts Constituted to Make Recommendation on Law Concerning Extension of Provisions of the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, 1992 to Scheduled Areas; New Delhi.

335 This information was collected just before the completion of this study. For further information on the implementation of the report consult the *Panchayati Raj Updates* of the Institute of Social Sciences; New Delhi.

5. Case Studies: Panchayati Raj Reform and Participatory Development in the Udaipur District of Rajasthan

5.1 Methodology of the Case Studies

Research Period, Selection Criteria for the Case Studies and Methodology	112
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This chapter outlines the methodology of the four month case study which was divided into three research periods. The methodology³³⁶ of the case study consisted of problem and process oriented research.³³⁷ Information was gradually gathered through open, semi-structured, and problem oriented interviews on the basis of interview guidelines. During the field research, emphasis was put upon an independent approach. Introductions to village communities were possible without much involvement of government officers or NGO representatives. Observations were found to be as important as communications.

Research Period, Selection Criteria for the Case Studies and Methodology

The case study research was conducted during November 1995 and April 1996 and consisted of (i) a preparatory phase of two weeks in November/December in Udaipur, (ii) a three month field study in six Gram Panchayats of three different blocks in the Udaipur district from January to March and (iii) a two week evaluation period in Jaipur and Delhi in April 1996.

The selected case studies cover the most critical research variables concerning Panchayati Raj. The key variables which were taken into consideration for selecting the Panchayats are: (i) the economic and development status (selecting poor and more well-off villages), (ii) the social and ethnic composition (non-tribal and tribal villages) and (iii) the presence of NGOs (villages with non-existent or sporadic NGO support and villages with strong and continuous NGO support). A Gram Panchayat is usually comprised of a group of 3-8 villages with a total population not exceeding 5000 in Rajasthan

Interviews were carried out with different village communities, elected members of Panchayats at village, block and district level, with government officials, with NGO representatives and with political activists. During the course of the field study, it

336 This study limits reflections on the "methodology" to the practical aspects of the case study research in Udaipur district in Rajasthan state. For a comprehensive theoretical elaboration on methodological approaches in social sciences see: *Fijalkowski Jürgen 1967: Methodische Grundorientierungen Soziologischer Forschung; Enzyklopädie der Geisteswissenschaftlichen Arbeitsmethoden; Methoden der Sozialwissenschaften; München, Wien; R. Oldenbourg Verlag; pp. 131-162.*

337 In problem- and process-oriented research, it is essential to continually review the methodology and gradually adjust the approach according to the dynamics of the field study situation. Beatrice and Sidney Webb in their important reference work on social study methods pointed out the necessity to critically and continuously review the questions in the course of the field research: "Almost always we find when we look back upon it (*the question*) after further experience, that the very terms in which the question was couched implied an answer of a particular kind or at least excluded answers of some other kinds about which we had not been thinking." (*Webb, Beatrice / Webb Sidney 1975: Methods for Social Study; London; London School of Economics and Political Science: Cambridge University Press (original edition 1932); p 35.* For an introduction in qualitative empirical research see also: *Mayring, Philip 1993: Einführung in die Qualitative Sozialforschung; chapter 4 on: "Verfahren Qualitativer Analyse; Weinheim: Beltz; p. 46.*

became apparent that the role of individuals and inter-personal relations were of crucial importance to understanding political and development dynamics in the selected case study areas. The case studies, therefore, stress upon the social background, the educational level, the attitudes and the development commitment of individual Panchayat members and key government officials serving the Panchayats.³³⁸ The case studies attach particular importance to observations. Observing people's reactions in their natural environment (e.g. during a *Gram Sabha*) is in many way a more authentic experience than collecting information through interviews.³³⁹ The documentary-like style attempts to preserve the authentic character of the observations.

The period from early January to the end of March was probably the most productive period to carry out the core part of the field study. Meetings of the Gram Sabha, popularly known as 'village assembly', were held during this period and the climatic conditions were ideal for field work. However, without the competent and motivated support of my field research partners, Ms. Shamata Seth and Mr. Mahesh Achariya, it would not have been possible to complete the field studies in three months. The preparatory phase and the different phases of field studies, though overlapping each other, could broadly be characterised as follows:

During the preparatory phase the working area was identified and government officials, NGO representatives and competent individuals were contacted for the purpose of introduction, overall information on Udaipur and advise for conducting the field study.

The first phase of the field study consisted of paying frequent visits to the six selected Gram Panchayats. A large number of data was collected on the basis of semi-structured interviews. Information was gathered on the development profile, the community assets, the composition of the Gram Panchayat, the Gram Panchayat elections, the Gram Panchayat budget and past and ongoing development works. The working sessions in the villages, however, had a rather informal character. Social and courtesy visits to villages to attend religious functions or weddings were part of the interaction with villagers.

During the second phase, the village level data was cross-checked with available information from the district and block authorities and local NGOs and vice-versa. Further data and information were collected at Panchayat Samiti (block level) and Zila Parishad (district) level.

338 The author agrees with Subrata K. Mitra who rightly observed that important empirical research works on institutional aspects of rural development focused almost exclusively on formal bodies while neglecting the important role of local elites "...the focus of formal bodies shifts attention away from the local elites, who are the real actors behind local organisations." See: *Mitra Subrata K. 1991: Room to Manoeuvre in the Middle. Local Elites, Political Action, and the State in India*; in: *World Politics* (Princeton); No. 43; April 1991; pp. 390-413; p. 395.

339 Klaus Roghmann, in the major reference work "Methoden der Sozialwissenschaften" pointed out that interviews, compared to observations, contain an additional source of error because interviewees react according to a number of 'stimuli' provided by the interviewer. Different interviewers provide different 'stimuli'. Moreover, 'stimuli' in form of questions or remarks often imply the opinion of the interviewer, provoke reactions and, thus, influence the answers of the interviewees; see: *Roghmann, Klaus 1967: Methoden der empirischen Soziologie*; in: *Enzyklopädie der geisteswissenschaftlichen Arbeitsmethoden; Methoden der Sozialwissenschaften*; München, Wien; R. Oldenbourg Verlag; pp. 163-225; pp. 190-193 (Befragungstechniken).

The third phase was characterised by observation, assessment, problem-orientated research and attendance of the Gram Sabha meetings, held from the end of February to the end of March 1996. Lectures followed by discussions were organised in Udaipur, Jaipur and Delhi during the evaluation period. Preliminary findings were debated with university professors, representatives of political parties, the government administration, NGOs and competent individuals. Further state level and national level information was also collected in Jaipur and Delhi.

Approach and Presentation

While I was finding frankness and support in most cases, some general observations could be made regarding attitudes of government, university and NGO representatives towards research, in particular when it is carried out by a foreign national. Being a foreigner I had the advantage that people often took special interest in my research. I also enjoyed the freedom not being directly affiliated with any national or local institution or organisation. However, some government officials and academics were initially concerned that western foreigners might have a bias towards the NGO sector. My discussions with NGOs were indeed characterised by some initial conceptual enthusiasm regarding my research subject and the importance of the local self-government reform. However, the findings of the case studies soon presented a different picture. The attitudes and development activities of two major NGOs which operated in the case study area did not match with their supposedly high-flying (academic) interest in the subject.

Getting reliable information, in particular statistics, is not an easy task in rural Rajasthan. Usually the most recent available data was collected at the time of the 1991 Census. Most but not all of the data had been published until April 1996; some data were entered into computer based data bases but spellings sometimes differed between the common spellings, spellings in books and data bases.

Moreover, the situation has changed in many villages after 1991. The Rajasthan government placed a major emphasis on improving education and many new schools were established in villages. In some cases, more recent data was collected at *tehsil*³⁴⁰ or *block*³⁴¹ level in connection with development programmes. These data sometimes contradicted census data in details such as geographical area or population of single villages.

Panchayat members, government officials and NGO representatives at village and block level and to some extent at district level were initially giving formal replies. Many of them, in particular in Badgaon and Jhadol, had some experience with surveys related to government, NGO or research work. First, they often tried to give an answer which would, in their view, match with the "official line" or please me or my research partners. One example is the number of Panchayat meetings held. If aware of the provisions of the Act, *Sarpanchs* (head of the Gram Panchayats), *Wardpanchs* (Gram Panchayat member) or *Gram Secretaries* (government extension officer) usually replied in accordance to the number of meetings prescribed in the Act. This might have had two

340 Administrative unit at sub-district level comprising around 200-250 villages.

341 Local Government constituency and development administration unit covering about the size of a *tehsil* and often geographically identical with the *tehsil*.

reasons. Either they had some little fear that somebody might think that they did not properly executed their task if meetings were not held regularly and as per the legislative provisions, or they did not understand or did not want to understand the research purpose and wanted to show off with their knowledge of the Act and educate the researcher on the existing legislative provisions. It is, of course, also easier to give a brief formal answer than to explain the sometimes complicated reality of holding and organising regular meetings. Keeping this in mind, several attempts have been made to cross-check information and to approach people frequently at different occasions. Efforts were made to fit answers and observations in the different Panchayat Samitis, Gram Panchayats and villages in the same framework in order to facilitate comparison. This has, however, not been possible for all details.

The quality of the received information largely depended on the skills and motivations of key persons at block and village level: the *Pradhan* (head of the block level Panchayat), the *Up-Pradhan* (deputy head of the block level Panchayat), and the *Block Development Officer* (BDO) at block level; the *Sarpanch*, the *Up-Sarpanch* (deputy head of the Gram Panchayat), the local *Panchayat Samiti* member and the *Gram Secretary* at village level.

People were not always easily available, in particular in places close to Udaipur city. For example, I had made more than six attempts before managing to have a longer discussion with the busy Sarpanch of Karia in Badgaon block. Working in six Gram Panchayats required a lot of co-ordination between the various events and meetings at different places and, of course, with my research partners. Both my research partners were still teaching or taking classes at the University or College during the period of the field study.

At some occasions, people were only free or motivated to answer questions for a limited period. Making appointments was, of course, impossible in the villages, and often a frustrating experience at block and district level, in particular with elected representatives or NGO representatives. The most appropriate approach therefore consisted of paying a maximum number of visits to the six Gram Panchayats, the three blocks and ringing and visiting people in Udaipur as often as possible.

The programme of the daily field trips consisted of a set of priority events and meetings which had to be attended to get similar information in all villages. However, the programme also had to leave scope for spontaneous visits to meet people who were otherwise not available. On this basis, it was decided to attach high priority to the Gram Sabha meetings in all six Gram Panchayats while a decision was made that Gram Panchayat meetings could only be attended on an exceptional basis. Gram Sabha meetings are only held (maximum) twice a year and reflect Panchayat and development dynamics in the villages better than any other event or meeting. Gram Panchayat meetings are supposed to be organised twice a month but are often cancelled or postponed at short notice. Most of the meetings were scheduled for morning hours when my research partners had to be at the University or College.

After an average of ten visits to each Gram Panchayat and participation in social and religious events, I have made many good contacts in the villages. A few people have taken the trouble to see me in Udaipur when they travelled to the city for a day or two. All I could do at the end of the field study period was to leave people in the villages with photographs of my time in their village and to give a small farewell party with my research partners.

The documentation of the case study research starts with a large number of statistical data, descriptions of rural development schemes and explanations of the administrative structures of the state of Rajasthan and the district of Udaipur. Such information is lacking in most publications on Panchayati Raj and rural development in India, which makes it difficult for the reader to place the field data and analysis in a comparative context. Readers in Germany might also find it useful to have a brief introduction in rural development administration in Rajasthan. It should be, I believe, in the nature of serious and independent research to collect a large number and variety of information and impressions before coming to conclusions or making recommendations.

The presentation of the Panchayat case studies, the Zila Parishad Udaipur, the Panchayat Samitis Jhadol, Badgaon, Mavli and the Gram Panchayats Kharkar, Godana, Karia, Dhar, Nurda, and Veerdholia first provides an overview on the economic and social development situation in the area (welfare status, community assets, education, development assistance) before analysing the Panchayat situation. The empirical research puts special emphasis on the lowest Panchayat level, the Gram Panchayats and provides the most detailed information at this level. The presentation of the Panchayat situation in the six Gram Panchayats includes the brief history and the composition of the present Panchayat, Panchayat elections, personal profiles of Panchayat members and government extension officers, training for Panchayat members, Panchayat meetings, Panchayat finances and works and the external relations of the Gram Panchayat.

At the end of each case studies at Panchayat Samiti and at Gram Panchayat level a table provides for an assessment of development indicators on the basis of a simple classification (low, medium, high). This should not be regarded as a sophisticated statistical methodology to develop conclusions, but it makes it easier for the reader to quickly compare the situation in the three Panchayat Samitis and the six Gram Panchayats.

Nine development indicators have been identified for the Panchayat Samiti level. An additional development indicator has been included for assessing the six Gram Panchayats. I selected indicators which potentially make a difference for drawing comparative conclusions on the participatory development process in the three blocks and the six Gram Panchayats. The indicator "financial situation of the Panchayats", for example, is not covered by the analysis, because there is no significant difference between the three Panchayat Samitis or the six Gram Panchayats with respect to their financial situation. Panchayats in Rajasthan have, unlike the Panchayats in economically more advanced states (e.g. Haryana), no major source of "own income" which they may get through the levy of taxes, fees or compensation on sale or lease of Panchayat land.

The following development indicators were considered for the 'assessment exercise':

- (i) Overall Welfare Status;
- (ii) Social and Political Harmony;
- (iii) Educational Level of Panchayat Members;
- (iv) Political Awareness and Participation;
- (v) Participation of Women;
- (vi) Development Commitment and Development Activities of the Panchayat;
- (vii) Level of Government Development Assistance;
- (viii) Level of NGO Development Assistance;
- (ix) Co-operation with Government Officers;

(x) Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting.

The 10th development indicator is only applicable for the Gram Panchayat level.

The first indicator "Overall Welfare Status" refers in first priority to community assets, but also considers the welfare standard of individuals. There is economic disparity at the block and the village level and the assessment only gives a general idea of the development standard. Contradictions may appear between the level of community assets and the level of individual assets, in particular, at the Gram Panchayat level. In the Gram Panchayat Nurda, for example, the level of community assets is rather low although many farmers, in particular from upper castes, have large land holdings and good agricultural facilities (tractors, sprinklers, etc.). In this case, the overall welfare status was considered to be "medium".

The second indicator "Social and Political Harmony" assesses to what extent the Gram Panchayat or the Panchayat Samiti act as harmonious entities of village or block level representatives. This indicator includes consideration on inter-caste harmony.

The "Educational Level of Panchayat Members" has been selected as the third indicator. The assessment is made on the basis of an overall impression of the knowledge of Panchayat members on the legislative provisions. Moreover, it was taken into consideration how much educational skills were enabling the Panchayat and its members (not each individual, but the Panchayat as an entity) to understand and execute their duties. Of course, different Panchayat members have different levels of education and the assessment has to remain highly general. The high ranking of educational skills at the Panchayat Samiti level might surprise many readers. Indeed, the field study experiences provided evidence that the knowledge of the legislative provisions and educational standard of Panchayat Samiti members was much higher than expected.³⁴² This is correlated with the level of "politicisation" at the block level.

The indicator "Political Awareness and Participation" refers to the political involvement and the political awareness of Panchayat members and the electorate of the village community (*Gram Sabha*). It should be taken into consideration that political participation in a hierarchically stratified society often depends more upon opportunities made available by higher level politicians than on the individual commitment or the skills of the Panchayat members.

The "Participation of Women" is difficult to assess, because the involvement of women in decision-making procedures largely depends on the kind of the reserved seats in the Panchayats (chairperson seats or ordinary seats). If provided with opportunities women may or may not participate, but without adequate opportunities women do not struggle for participation. This was the general observation in the field study area. Assessing the participation level of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in a comparative manner would not be possible, because the Panchayats have a different population of Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes and also a different number of reserved Panchayat seats for these communities.

The indicator "Development Commitment and Development Activities of the Panchayat" refers to the willingness and the ability of the Panchayat members, in

³⁴² Government officials and NGOs often present even Panchayat Samiti members as "backward people" who need guidance and training on their rights and responsibilities.

particular the chairpersons, to promote development in the village by submitting development proposals to the DRDA, approaching government departments and NGOs.

The "Level of Government Development Assistance" primarily refers to such government activities which do not require an initiative of the Panchayat but which depend largely on the government departments own initiative. The assessment includes major government supported programmes, e.g. the Lok Jumbish education programme in Jhadol block.

The "Level of NGO Development Assistance" considers current and previous development activities of NGOs. More value is attached to the current activities, but the successful previous NGO works in the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia by the Bajaj Foundation have been taken into consideration by giving a "medium" mark.

The "Level of Co-operation with Government Officers" assesses the relations between the Panchayat Samiti members and the block level administration" for the three Panchayat Samitis. It refers to the interaction between the elected Panchayat members and the administrative staff of the Panchayat Samiti, in particular, the Block Development Officer. At Gram Panchayat level, the indicator mainly refers to the "level of co-operation with the Gram Secretary" as the Gram Secretary plays the crucial role of assisting the Gram Panchayat in planning and submitting development proposals. The focus on the Gram Secretary pays reference to the importance of the personal factor in promoting or hindering development in the Gram Panchayats.

For the six Gram Panchayats, the "Quality of the Gram Sabha Meetings" has been identified as another development indicator. The biannual Gram Sabha meetings where the whole village community is supposed to gather provide for more significant information than the fortnightly Gram Panchayat or the monthly Panchayat Samiti meetings which only include the Panchayat members. Gram Sabha meetings were attended in all six Gram Panchayats. The Gram Sabha factor is of particular importance, because the assessment refers to the development participation at the lowest level of governance in India and includes the whole electorate of the village. The chapter 5.7 eventually gives a comparative overview of the case studies and highlights the most important issues of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform.

5.2 Rajasthan Profile

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This chapter presents the main characteristics of the state of Rajasthan. It gives an overview on the evolution of Panchayati Raj in the state before and after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Rajasthan amended its state Panchayati legislation in April 1994. Panchayati Raj elections were conducted in January/February 1995 and the report of the Finance Commission was approved in March 1996. The state government of Rajasthan retains a strong control over the Panchayats. The BJP government which was in power during the period of the case studies was only semi-committed towards the empowerment of the Panchayats. Opposition to the devolution of powers to Panchayats was raised by Members of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who feared losing their status and powers in comparison with the heads of the Panchayats, in particular, at the district level. The further evolution of Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan depends on the political dynamics in the state: centre-state relations and election strategies of political parties.

5.2.1 State History, Administrative and Development Profile

Brief History

Rajasthan state, in its present form, was constituted on November 1st, 1956 under the State Reorganisation Act, 1956. Rajasthan was previously known as Rajputana - the land of Rajputs having a tradition of chivalry and heroism.³⁴³ The formation of the state with Jaipur as capital started in 1948 when the States Reorganisation Commission reconstituted the various provinces. Udaipur state joined the federation, renamed as Union of Rajasthan, on April 18th, 1948. Rajasthan earlier consisted of nineteen princely states, the centrally administered province of Ajmer-Merwara and three principalities in the times of the British rule.

Area/Population

Rajasthan is situated in the north-western part of the Indian Union. The state is divided in half by the Aravallis, one of the oldest mountain systems in the world. Areas to the south and east of the Aravallis are generally more fertile and more densely populated. Areas to the north and west of the Aravallis are considerably drier and less densely populated. The Thar desert extends from the easternmost ridge of the Aravallis to the Pakistan border. The state covers around 10 percent of India's territory, around 5 percent of the total population of India, but has only around 1 percent of India's water resources. It has the second largest territory of any state in India after Madhya Pradesh with 342 239 square km.³⁴⁴ The total population of Rajasthan is 43 880 664.³⁴⁵ Around 75 percent of the population (33.94 million) in Rajasthan live in rural areas³⁴⁶, around 25 percent lives in urban areas.³⁴⁷ Rajasthan is one of the major states with a high concentration of tribal³⁴⁸ population. The dominating tribals are *Mina*, *Bhil*, *Sahariya* and *Damor*, all classified under the term "Scheduled Tribes". The southern region of the state, characterised by the now deforested southern Aravalli mountain range, has been the primary home of tribals. This region where Udaipur is located has a high

343 *Government of Rajasthan; Dep. of Science and Technology* 1994: Resource Atlas of Rajasthan; p. 2.

344 Rajasthan area is equivalent to Poland (312 600 square) or Italy (301200 square km).

345 Rajasthan in terms of population ranks 9th among the Indian states with a population representing exactly s 5.2% of India's total population.

346 Rural areas are defined as areas of administration with population less than 8000.

347 Population source: *Nadani, P.N.* 1993: Apna (our) Rajasthan; Census data 1991; Jaipur, Pink City Publisher; p. A-18.

348 The terms of "tribe" and "tribal" are widely used without giving specific definitions. Tribals in India are now more commonly referred to as Adivasis. Concerning the term "tribe" and "tribal". T.B. Naik has proposed criteria by which a tribe in India can be recognised. Among them are (i) customary laws, (ii) a common dialect, (iii) primitive means of exploiting natural resources (iv) social and geographic isolation from the mainstream society (see: *Naik, T.B.* 1964: What is a tribe ? Conflicting Definitions; *Bulletin of the Tribal Research and Training Institute Chindwara*; IV (1): pp. 1-13; pp. 1-2). For further definition and concepts of the terms "tribe", "tribal" and tribal society" see: *Fried, Morton* 1966: On the Concept of "Tribe" and "Tribal Society". Transaction of the New York Academy of Sciences Series. II; Vol.29 No. 4: pp. 527 - 540.

concentration of tribals in comparison with the western region. The total Scheduled Tribe population of Rajasthan is 5 474 881.³⁴⁹

Development Characteristics

Rajasthan has experienced progress in several areas like agricultural production, harnessing of mineral resources, tourism, transport and communication. Principal crops cultivated in the state are rice, barley, gram, wheat, oilseeds, pulses, cotton, and tobacco. Other crops are red chillies, mustard, cumin seeds, fenugreek seeds and asafoetida. Zinc and copper are the important minerals found in the state. The total cultivable area in the state is 27,465 thousand hectares, and the sown area 20,167 thousand hectares. Industrial undertakings include textiles and woollens, cement, sugar, glass, vegetable dyes, zinc, fertilisers, synthetic yarn and railway wagons. The tourist industry benefits from the many festivals and fairs in the state. However, Rajasthan it is still one of the less developed states in India in terms of income level, employment, education and health facilities. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of Rajasthan is 961 US Dollars per year while India's real GDP per capita amounts to 1230 US Dollar³⁵⁰.

Rajasthan is considered one of the socially most conservative states in terms of caste stratified society, religion and gender equality. This could be attributed to the still prevalent ethos of traditional Rajputs rule.

Rajasthan has the second lowest literacy rate in India (38.81 percent) and the lowest female literacy rate (20.84 percent) in the country³⁵¹. It has the second highest rate for girls not attending school between the age of six and fourteen³⁵² and the third highest rate for children suffering from diarrhoeal disease and not getting proper treatment³⁵³. The life expectancy in Rajasthan is 57.6 years.³⁵⁴

Administration

Rajasthan has 25 *Lok Sabha* constituencies out of 545 in all over India. Four seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste and three for Scheduled Tribe persons. 18 seats are open.

The Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, called *Vidhan Sabha*, is an unicameral legislative chamber which, at present, consists of 200 members elected from 200 constituencies, on the basis of adult franchise (since 1989: 18 years). 33 seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste and 24 for Scheduled Tribes. The Rajasthan Legislative Assembly has a 5 year term.

349 *Government of Rajasthan* 1991: Census of India, Rajasthan, Final Population Figures, Director of Census Operation, Jaipur pp.12-14.

350 Calculated on the basis of the state's per capita domestic product as per *Government of India* 1995: Economic Survey 1994-1995 and the population of the state as per the Census 1991.

351 *Bose, Aashish* 1991: Democratic Diversity of India 1991 Census: State and District Level Data; A Reference Book; New Delhi: D.K. Publishers; p. 62.

352 *UNICEF* 1995: The Progress of Indian State with reference to National Family Health Survey 1992-1993, p.46, New Delhi.

353 *Ibid.*; p.10.

354 *Government of India* 1992: Registrar General and Census Commissioner; New Delhi.

The *Chief Minister*, the leader of the house, is elected by the members of the majority party. He forms a council of Ministers to regulate and supervise the functioning of the administration.

The *Vidhan Sabha* assembly approves the annual budget of the states. It formulates and approves the bills pertaining to economic development and social welfare programmes.

The *Governor* who is appointed by the *President* of India, is the Constitutional Head of the State, and all affairs of state are governed and administered under his authority.

The state is administered by six *divisions* (Ajmer, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur,, Kota, Udaipur), each being headed by a *Divisional Commissioner* looking after overall administrative matters and implementation of government policies. The Division Commissioner is a centrally recruited Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.

The state is further divided in 31 districts which are the most important administrative units at sub-state level, in particular for development activities. The district as administrative unit corresponds with the highest level of elected local self-government, the *Zila Parishad*.

The *Collector (or District Magistrate)* is the executive head of the *district* administration. He or she is responsible for the collect of land revenue, maintenance of law and order and co-ordination of different development programmes.

The District Collector is supported by *Additional District Magistrates* (also called *Additional Collectors*), *Tehsildars*, *Revenue Inspectors* and *Patwaris*. For development activities, the District Collector is supported by the *Additional District Magistrate (Development)* called, at district level and *Block Development Officers (BDOs)*³⁵⁵ at block level.

The Collectors are the chairpersons of the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA). DRDAs are in charge of overall implementation of central- and state government development schemes at district level. The DRDAs have a significant budget. It is usually higher than the plan allocation for non-scheme specific rural development activities for the respective area.

At the state level, DRDAs function under the authority of the Department for Special Scheme and Integrated Rural Development Programmes (also called Special Scheme Organisation; SSO) which is the link department to the Ministry of Rural Development of the central government. The SSO in the state capital Jaipur is headed by a *State Minister* as the political head. The *Principal Secretary* (or Secretary) and the *Special Secretary* are the administrative heads of the state government looking after special schemes and IRDP. Both are officers from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).

Panchayat Raj functions under the administrative authority of the Department for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. The political head of the department is a state minister. The administrative heads in the state government for Panchayati Raj affairs are the Principal Secretary (or Secretary) cum Development Commissioner and the Director and Special Secretary, Panchayat Raj. Both are IAS officers.

At urban level, Rajasthan state has 198 local bodies, including Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Municipal Boards, dealing with public facilities,

355 The Hindi word is *Vikas Adhikari*.

primary education, public health and sanitation, security, etc. In addition, a number of Corporations, Boards, Authorities and Agencies also fulfil developmental and regulatory functions.

The *tehsil* is the administrative unit at sub-district level mainly in charge of collecting land revenues and maintaining law and order. The *tehsil* is headed by a *Tehsildar*.

The *block* (or *development block*) covers a territory at the sub-district level of the size of a *tehsil* or slightly smaller. The block is the main administrative unit for implementing development programmes under the supervision of the DRDA. The *block* administration is headed by the *Vikas Adhikari* or Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO assumes a crucial role in implementing development programmes sponsored by the central or state government.

The role of the BDO is all the more important because (i) the district development authorities are not able to adequately monitor the implementation of the various government development schemes. The District Collector, in particular, is usually a very busy person with a large portfolio of responsibilities; (ii) Panchayats at the block level (Panchayat Samitis) have not been very effective in balancing the powers of the administration in the past. The BDOs therefore enjoyed a lot of freedom and decision-making powers without much supervision or control. The BDO can take financial decisions until Rs. 20 000. For higher amounts the co-signature of the *Pradhan* (chairman of the *Panchayat Samiti*) is required.

Around 80 percent of BDOs are recruited from the departmental services of the state government like the education service; around 20 percent are junior officers from the Rajasthan Administrative Service (RS). The pay scale of the BDO is between Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3500 plus 136 percent Dearness Allowance (DA).

The newly named *Gram Secretary* (earlier *Gram Sevak*) since 1976 is in charge of all development work at Gram Panchayat level. Most Gram Secretaries have an agricultural background. Gram Secretaries usually cover two Gram Panchayats. They draw their salaries from the Panchayat Samiti. The pay scale ranges from Rs. 950 to Rs. 2050 + 136 percent Dearness Allowance.

When the Panchayats were dissolved between 1991-1994, Gram Secretaries together with the Patwari and the headmaster of the school were appointed 'care takers' of Gram Panchayats. The Gram Secretary still plays a crucial role in village administration since he is directly related to the Gram Panchayat. His place of duty is the village and, unlike the BDO, he can hardly avoid regular contacts with villagers. His specific duties are as follows:

- (i) to arrange a meeting every 15 days at Gram Panchayat level as per directions and agreement with the Sarpanch;
- (ii) to attend Gram Sabha meetings;
- (iii) to assist in the preparation of the meeting, the agenda and the minutes of the meeting
- (iv) to work as a secretary of the Gram Panchayat and to maintain all the files, and statistics at Gram Panchayat level;
- (v) to collect the data of birth, death, and
- (vi) to assist in the implementation and auditing of government schemes such

as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and the rural housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) with full co-operation of the villagers in each programme.³⁵⁶

The Patwari looks after revenue and land matters in the village. He reports to the Tehsildars at tehsil level and not to the block level unit. His pay scale ranges from Rs. 950 to Rs. 2050 plus 136 percent Dearness Allowance. The Patwari was together with the Gram Secretary and the headmaster of the Panchayat Samiti schools (primary schools) a member of the 'care taker' or 'advisory committee' when the Panchayats were dissolved between 1991-1994.

Table 7: Organigram of Administration and Government in Rajasthan³⁵⁷

<u>Government</u>	<u>Administration (law & order & revenue)</u>	<u>Rural Development Administration</u>
State Government	Concerned State Department	Concerned State Departments
	Division administration (Office of the Division Commissioner)	³⁵⁸
Zila Parishad (head: Pramuk)	District administration ("Collectorate"; office of the District Collector)	District Rural Development Agency (head: District Collector)
-	Sub-Division (office of the Sub-Division Magistrate)	-
	Tehsil	
Panchayat Samiti (head: Pradhan)		Block (head: Block Development Officer)
		Gram Secretary working area
Gram Panchayat		
Gram Sabha		
	Revenue Village	

356 Cf. *Government of Rajasthan, Secretariat of Gramin Vikas (village development) and Panchayati Raj Department* 1994: New Structures of Panchayati Raj, Jaipur; p. 16.

357 This organigram is simplified, e.g. the area covered by the Tehsil and the Block is often but not always identical. Udaipur district, for example, has 10 Tehsils and 11 Blocks. The area covered by a Gram Secretary comprises 1-2 Gram Panchayats. A Gram Panchayat comprised usually 3-6 revenue villages.

358 The Division has a very limited involvement in rural development affairs.

Politics

The low density of population in Rajasthan makes it more difficult for political parties to built an infrastructure in remoter rural areas. Francine Frankel concluded in 1989 that "political awareness is low in Rajasthan"³⁵⁹, but the rise of the BJP, which started in urban areas, has led to more intense political rivalry. The Panchayati Raj reform is considered as an important opportunity for political parties to extend their basis in rural areas.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress (I) Party are the two major political parties in Rajasthan, both of about equal strength since the 1990s. During the period of the field study, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was the ruling party in the state. The Chief Minister was Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. He belongs to the Rajput community. In the 1993 *Vidhan Sabha* elections, the BJP had won 95 seats out of 199 seats for which elections were held and had formed a coalition government with the support of some of the Janata Dal and independent candidates. The next *Vidhan Sabha* elections are due in 1997. In the *Lok Sabha* elections in May 1996, which were held one month after the completion of the field study, the BJP won 12 out of 25 seats, the Congress (I) 12 seats and the Congress (Tiwari) 1 seat. The results were considered to be a disappointment for the ruling BJP.

5.2.2 Evolution of Panchayati Raj

5.2.2.1 Rajasthan and Panchayati Raj: Evolution of Local Self-Government

Before independence, Rajasthan was less influenced by foreign rule during the medieval period and the early years of British rule than other parts of India. Mughal emperors visited Rajasthan only occasionally in order to obtain money and military assistance from the Rajput rulers. Generally they left the administration to the local leadership.³⁶⁰ Attestates from state archives in Rajasthan show that caste Panchayats as well as Panchayats of the whole village were in existence. The functions of these Panchayats included settlement of disputes, organising of religious festivals, education and sanitation.³⁶¹ The influence of the British rule on the administrative structures of the princely states of Rajasthan became significant only in the later part of the nineteenth century under the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon. The further evolution on local self-government under the British rule reached the Princely States of Rajasthan rather late. In 1928 Bikaner State passed the first Panchayat Act. Other States followed with some delay in the late 1930s, and early 1940s (Jaipur 1937³⁶², Karauli 1939, Mewar and Udaipur in 1940, Marwar 1945, Bharatpur 1945) but the Panchayats had limited resources largely depending on government grants, levy of minor taxes and fees.

359 *Frankel, Francine R.* 1989: Conclusion: Decline of a Social Order; in: *Frankel, Francine R.; Rao; M.S.A. (eds.)* 1989; pp. 482-517; p. 508.

360 *Sharma, R.* 1974: Village Panchayats in Rajasthan, Jaipur; chapter 1: "Evolution of Panchayats in Rajasthan "; pp. 1-9; p. 3.

361 *Ibid.*

362 Before the enforcement of the first Jaipur Act, another Act on Village Panchayats, based on the Constitutional Reforms Committee was passed in 1944.

In the context of the state building process and the introduction of the *Community Development Programme (CDP)*, the state of Rajasthan passed its first Panchayati Raj Act in 1953. The Act provided for the existence of Panchayats at the village level and the *tehsil* level. The Panchayati Raj system in Rajasthan, however, gained only a significant profile when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1959 inaugurated the country's first Panchayat under the new three tier system in Nagaur. Hence Rajasthan together with Andhra Pradesh was the first state to implement the recommendations of the B. Mehta Committee Report (1959).

The "Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959" set the framework for the local self-government system from 1959 onwards until the enforcement of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.

5.2.2.2 "Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959"

The main provisions of the "Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959"³⁶³ were as follows:

Constitution and Composition of Panchayats and their Relationship to the State Government

The "Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959" provided for the establishment of Panchayats at district and block level. Gram Panchayats continued to be governed by the provisions of the earlier Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1953 which were subsequently harmonised with the new Act.

Representatives of the Zila Parishads and the Panchayat Samitis were indirectly elected. Direct election only concerned Wardpanchs (members of the Gram Panchayats) and Sarpanchs (head of the Gram Panchayat).

Zila Parishads were constituted at the district level originally having a 5 year term. Zila Parishads comprise all Panchayat Samitis, Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas of the district.

The Zila Parishad comprised ex-officio, co-opted and associate members.³⁶⁴ Ex-officio members were (i) the Pradhans of all Panchayat Samitis in the district; (ii) the members of the Rajya Sabha (council of states) residing in the district; (iii) the members of the *Lok Sabha* elected from a constituency which is included in or forms part of the district; (iv) the members of the state legislative Assembly; (v) the District Development Officer (Collector) who had no right to vote. Co-opted members were (i) two women if no women was otherwise a member; (ii) one women if only 1 women was such member; (iii) one person from a SC community if no SC person is otherwise a member and (iv) one person from a ST community if no ST is otherwise a member and if the ST population of the area exceeded 5 percent. The Collector was given the right to convene and preside over the meeting for co-option of members.³⁶⁵ Associate members were (i)

363 Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959, Raj. Act No. 37 of 1959; published in Gupta, Shivlal 1981: The Rajasthan Panchayat Manual, Jodhpur.

364 Ibid., Article 42 on "Constitution, Incorporation and Composition of Zila Parishads".

365 Ibid., Article 44 on "Special Meeting for Co-option of Members".

the President of the central co-operative bank of the district or serving the district and (ii) the chairman of the district co-operative union if any such institutions existed in the district. The head (chairperson) of the Zila Parishad, the Pramuk, was to be elected by its voting members. He exercises administrative control over the state government Zila Parishad secretary and the staff of the Zila Parishad.

Panchayat Samitis were constituted at the block level comprising a cluster of Gram Panchayats and the respective Gram Sabhas. Panchayat Samitis have a three year term. Panchayat Samitis were composed of ex-officio, co-opted members and associate members.³⁶⁶ Ex-officio members were (i) the Sarpanchs of each Gram Panchayat; (ii) the members of the state legislative assembly; (iii) the Sub-Divisional Officers without voting rights. Co-opted members were (i) two women if no women Sarpanch was elected; (ii) two persons of the SC community; (iii) one person from ST community if such tribe exceeds 5 percent of the population of the block. The Collector was given the right to convene and preside over a special meeting for co-option of members to complete the Panchayat Samiti membership.³⁶⁷ Associate members were (i) one representative of the service co-operative society in the block area, and (ii) the chairman of the marketing co-operative society of the area. The chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti, the Pradhan, was to be elected by its voting members.

Gram Panchayats represented a group of villages extending to approximately 8 square km with a population coverage between 3000-8000 subject to changes by the state government. The electorate of the Gram Panchayat directly elected usually 8-11 members of the Gram Panchayat (Wardpanchs) representing different villages or *hamlets* (sub-unit of village). The head or chairperson of the Gram Panchayat, the Sarpanch, was also directly elected.

For the **Gram Sabha** (electorate of Gram Panchayat) no specific reference was in the Act. given. B.S. Bhargava analysing the above mentioned Act states that "the specific term Gram Sabha is not used in the Act but it is generally used in practise". He explains that

"Gram Sabhais the technical name given to the 'general meeting of adult residents' which according to the Act has to be called by every Panchayat twice a year. The GS is generally viewed as an open forum for general review and scrutiny of the work done by the Panchayat. Its views or discussions are, however, not binding on the Panchayat."³⁶⁸

It may be mentioned that the provisions of the Act, as outlined above, were neither systematically implemented nor are the provisions and language of the Act clear itself, i.e. Article 8 mentions that Presidents of Gram Sabhas could be elected Panchayat Samiti members. No further explanation, however, is given regarding the term and the constitution of Gram Sabha.

The state government did not only hold the powers to allocate staff and financial resources to enable Panchayat institutions to function but also retains substantial powers to control and supersede Panchayat Raj Institutions. Article 67 (1) of the Act reads as follows:

366 Ibid., Article 8 on "Composition of Panchayat Samitis".

367 Ibid. Article 11 on "Special Meeting for Co-option of Members".

368 *Bhargava, B.S.* 1978: *Politico-Administrative Dynamics in Panchayati Raj System*, New Delhi; p. 70.

"If at any time it appears to the State Government that a Panchayat Samiti or a Zila Parishad has failed to exercise its powers or to perform functions or has exceeded or abused any of the powers conferred upon it by or under this Act or any other law for the time being in force, the state government may direct the Panchayat Samiti, or, as the case may be, the Zila Parishad to remedy such failure, excess or abuse or to give a satisfactory explanation therefore and if, the Panchayat Samiti or the Zila Parishad fails to comply with such direction, the State Government may supersede the Panchayat Samiti or the Zila Parishad, as the case may be, for a period not exceeding one year from a specific date or dissolve it with effect from a specific date and reconstitute it either immediately or with effect from another specific date and cause any or all powers and functions of the Panchayat Samiti or Zila Parishad to be exercised or performed by such person or authority as the State Government may appoint in that behalf..."³⁶⁹

Functions and Duties of Panchayats

The Act specified development functions to be entrusted to the Panchayat. Some of them are similar to those now included in the XIth Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

The Zila Parishad at district level was made the co-ordinating, supervisory and advisory body. The Act allocated the main functions and executive powers to the Panchayat Samiti at block level. Gram Panchayats were to play the role of executive agents of the Panchayat Samiti at village level. Article 23 of the Act on "Powers and functions of a Panchayat Samiti" reads as follows:

"(1) Every Panchayat Samiti shall exercise all the functions entrusted to it by or under this Act and such powers and functions as may be conferred on and delegated or entrusted to it by the state government or carrying out the purposes of this Act;

(2) In particular the Panchayat Samiti shall perform the functions specified in the Schedule."³⁷⁰

The respective Schedule in Section 23 (2) on "Functions of Panchayat Samiti" reads as follows:

1. Community Development
2. Agriculture
3. Animal Husbandry
4. Health and Rural Sanitation
5. Education: Primary Schools
6. Social Education
7. Communications: Construction and Maintenance of Inter-Panchayat Roads and Culverts on such Roads
8. Co-operation

369 Article 67 (1) of the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959, Raj. Act No. 37 of 1959; published in *Gupta, Shivlal* 1981.

370 *Ibid.*; Article 23.

9. Cottage Industries
10. Work Amongst Backward Classes
11. Emergency Relief
12. Collecting of Statistics
13. Trusts
14. Forests :(i) Village Forests, (ii) Rotational Grazing
15. Rural Housing
16. Publicity
17. Miscellaneous:Regulation of Offensive, Dangerous or Obnoxious Trade, Regulation of Market Affairs, Promoting of Folk Art and Culture.³⁷¹

The legislative provisions, however, are not further specified and have no mandatory character with clearly defined responsibilities. The list of wide ranging development functions did also not match with allocation of financial resources. Panchayat institutions were entirely dependent on government grants with the exception of very limited fees and charges (i.e. for applications of teachers) and sometimes minor taxes. No financial memorandum and no statutory right for allocation of financial resources were provided by the 1959 Act. The list of functions may be interpreted in the way that the state government at the time considered a number of functions to be suitable for some kind of involvement of Panchayat institutions without having any specific ideas of devolution of powers to a third level of governance.

The still existing provision is that the Panchayat staff is recruited from the Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Services Selection Commission except senior staff of Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, e.g. the Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad or the Block Development Officer of the Panchayat Samiti.

5.2.2.3 Evolution of Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan from 1959 until the 73rd Constitutional Amendment

It soon turned out that the implementation reality did not match with the letter and the spirit of the Act. George Mathew followed the history of Nagaur Panchayat, the first Panchayat Samiti in India under the three tier system, and pointed out its "sage of failures":

"The Panchayat Samiti inaugurated by the first Prime Minister did not make any impact. After 35 years it is a saga of failures.... All the reasons one hears for the failure of the system elsewhere are repeated by senior leaders: limited powers, illiteracy, lack of education, severe financial constraints, irregular elections, unsympathetic bureaucracy, an all powerful Sarpanch who had control over finance and rampant corruption. MLAs never wanted to give powers to the panchayats although Mohanlal Sukhadia gave prominence to pradhans. The MLAs were terribly afraid of becoming powerless and sabotaged it."³⁷²

371 Ibid.; Section 23 (2).

372 Mathew, George 1995 (b): A tale of two Panchayats, *The Hindu* (Madras); 6.7/7.7.1995

The Panchayati Raj System degenerated after the phasing out of the Community Development Programme (CDP) in the late 1960. As a consequence, the budget of the Zila Parishads also decreased in Rajasthan from approximately Rs. 30 million in the 1960s to Rs. 10 million in the 1970s. The budget consisted almost exclusively of government grants.

No serious attempts have been made to revive the Panchayat system in Rajasthan. Study committees appointed by the state government, the Sadiq Ali study team in 1963 and the Girdhari Lal Vyas Committee in 1973, have pointed out deficits of the Panchayat system in the state, but suggestions to improve the functioning of the Panchayat system were not implemented. B.S. Bhargava referred to a criticism of the Sadiq Ali Committee on the provisions of the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959 which he considered to be important: the co-option of non-elected members into Panchayat institutions, in particular, at the Panchayat Samiti level.

"...it is being used to strengthen the position of Pradhan and his group inside the council. It is widely believed that co-opted persons are yes-men of the Pradhan and act as source of strength for him."³⁷³

P.C. Mathur, a prominent researcher on Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan, pointed out a 'democratic deficit' of Panchayati Raj reality. He conducted a survey of caste backgrounds of re-elected Sarpanchs in 1960 and observed that upper caste male Sarpanchs played a predominant role in the Panchayats.

"Sarpanchship in Rajasthan has been monopolised by the upper castes like Rajputs, Mahajans and Brahmins with only the Jats amongst the numerous middle-order castes in Rajasthan capturing a significant percentage."³⁷⁴

He also pointed out that Sarpanchs serving as ex-officio members of the Panchayat Samiti or even the Zila Parishad (as indirectly elected Pradhans) lacked a wider political perspective to take adequate decision at the block or district level. Voters were deprived of selecting appropriate candidates representing them at higher levels.³⁷⁵

Regarding Nyaya Panchayats dealing with judicial affairs, the Government of Rajasthan decided to officially scrap Nyaya Panchayats from the present three tier set up of Panchayati Raj according to a cabinet decision in 1973 stating that their functions would be vested in the Gram Panchayat.³⁷⁶

Holding of Panchayat elections was irregular. The Act provided for a three year term for Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis. However, elections to the Gram Panchayat were only held in 1960, 1965, 1978 and 1982. Panchayat Samiti elections were held in 1961, 1965 and 1982.

In 1991 Panchayats at all levels were dissolved in view of the constitutional amendment and no elections were held to reconstitute these institutions.

The state government promulgated an ordinance for providing powers to government officials for taking over the affairs of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads.

373 *Bhargava, B.S.* 1978; p. 4.

374 *Mathur, P.C.* 1991: Political Dynamics of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi, p. 211

375 *Ibid.*; p.76.

376 *Bhargava, B.S.* 1978; p.71

The development functions of the Panchayats at different levels (identification of beneficiaries, implementing and monitoring of programmes) were passed on to the staff of the Collectorate at the district level, the BDO, government extension officers at the block level and Gram Secretaries, Patwaris and headmaster of schools at the village level.

5.2.3 The Implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in Rajasthan: Characteristics and State Reform Policy

The Rajasthan State Assembly passed the new Rajasthan Act on April 10th, 1994 respecting the mandatory one year period for amendment of Panchayati state legislation following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The Act received the assent of the Governor and came into force on April 23rd, 1994.

5.2.3.1 The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994

Constitution, Composition and Duration of Panchayat Institutions

As per the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment the Zila Parishads at district level, and the Panchayat Samitis at block level consist of directly elected members and ex-officio members. Gram Panchayats representing a cluster of villages only consist of directly elected members. The territorial constituencies for elected members are determined by the state government.

The Rajasthan Act gives the figure of 17 members for a Zila Parishad area having a population not exceeding 400 000 and an additional two per 100 000 inhabitants or part thereof. The Act gives the figure of 15 members for a Panchayat Samiti having a population not exceeding 100 000 and an additional two members per 15 000 inhabitants or part thereof. The Act gives the figure of nine members for a Gram Panchayat having a population not exceeding 3000 and an additional two members per 1000 or part thereof more. The Up-Sarpanch is elected by the members of the Gram Panchayat.³⁷⁷ On an average, a Zila Parishad covers an area with a population of 1 094 800; a Panchayat Samiti an area with a population of 143 200³⁷⁸ and a Gram Panchayat an area with a population of 3700.³⁷⁹

The members of the *Lok Sabha*, the *Rajya Sabha* and the State Legislative Assembly representing constituencies which comprise wholly or partly the area of a Zila Parishad are made ex-officio members of the Zila Parishad. The members of the State Legislative assembly of the area are also ex-officio members of the Panchayat Samiti.

377 Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959, Raj. Act No. 37 of 1959; Chapter III; Article 12; Article 27 (for election of Up-Sarpanch); published in: *Gupta, Shivrulal* 1981.

378 In January 1996, the Government of Rajasthan proposed to reorganise Panchayat Samitis having more than 60 Gram Panchayats in their area. Some Panchayat Samitis, e.g. Hanumangarh and Anupgarh comprise more than 80 Gram Panchayats (source of information: *Institute of Social Sciences (ISS)* 1996; Panchayati Raj Update January 1996; p. 3).

379 Source: *Institute of Social Sciences (ISS)* 1996: Panchayati Raj Development Report 1995; New Delhi; Data Base and Information System ISS; Appendix 2b; p. 18.

As per the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the chairpersons of the Zila Parishad (the Pramuk) and the Panchayat Samiti (the Pradhan) are elected by its directly elected members. The procedure is also applicable for the vice-chairpersons, the Up-Pramuks and the Up-Pradhans.³⁸⁰ As per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Gram Sabha comprises one or more villages and consists of the persons registered in the electoral rolls in the Gram Panchayat area.³⁸¹ A Gram Sabha would usually comprise 1500-2500 adult villagers.

According to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Act provides for direct elections for Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad members. The Rajasthan Act also provides for direct elections of the Sarpanch. The state government amended the Act in December 1994 to allow holding of elections on party basis for Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad members. Elections of Wardpanchs and Sarpanchs could be held on non-party basis.

Reservation quotas for all Panchayats are as per the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (one third reservation for women including chairpersons and reservation for persons from SC and ST community according to their proportional representation in the area). The Rajasthan Act specifies that allocation of reserved seats should be on a rotational basis and should also include persons of backward caste communities. As per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment all Panchayats have a 5 year term. Article 19 of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act has a specific provision for restricting membership of Panchayats in the context of family planning efforts in the state. Persons having more than two children are not eligible as candidates except if the second delivery gives birth to more than one child. Moreover, persons having more than two children shall not be deemed to be disqualified for so long as the number of children at the date of commencement of the Act does not increase. A government rule further specified that Sarpanch having a third child after the 27th November, 1995 will be disqualified. The first case of disqualification of a Sarpanch in the Udaipur district occurred in the Gram Panchayat Baggar in Bhinder Block where the Sarpanch was disqualified after the birth of his third child. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad disqualified him.³⁸² Wardpanchs in Bhilwara district, the Up-Pradhan and a Panchayat Samiti member of Dungarpur district were also disqualified after the rule came into force.³⁸³

Meetings of Panchayat Institutions

Zila Parishad meetings are to be held at least once in every three months, Panchayat Samiti meetings at least once a month and Gram Panchayat meetings at least once a fortnight. The chairpersons convene and preside over the meetings. In their absence vice-chairpersons perform the duties. The first meetings of Zila Parishads and Panchayat

380 Rajasthan Panchayat Raj Act 1994. The exact title of the official document I worked on is: *Government of Rajasthan Law (Legislative Drafting) Department (Group II) Notification; Jaipur, April 23, 1994; No. F (2) (2) Vidhi/2/94; Act. No 13 of 1994.* The English version of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act is not (yet) easily available at all.

381 Ibid.; chapter II; Article 3 (1).

382 *Rajasthan Pathika* (Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur) Udaipur edition, March, 24th, 1996; p.3.

383 *Institute of Social Sciences: Panchayati Raj Update* June 1996; p. 6.

Samitis (before chairpersons are elected) are convened and presided over by state government officers. The quorum for the meetings of all Panchayat is one-third of the total of the members (Article 45/46/47), otherwise the meeting should be adjourned. There is no mandatory quorum for the then following meeting. The Act provides for two mandatory Gram Sabha meetings per financial year, one in the first quarter and the other in the last quarter. The meeting should be convened and presided over by the Sarpanch or, in his absence, by the Up-Sarpanch. The meeting has to be attended by one-tenth of the persons registered in the electoral rolls. If the quorum is not fulfilled, it has to be adjourned. There is no mandatory quorum for the then following meeting. The Block Development Officer or a block level Extension Officer nominated by him, should attend the meeting. He holds the responsibility for the correct recording of the minutes by the Secretary of the Panchayat (Gram Secretary).

Functions of Panchayats

The Rajasthan Act provides for powers and functions of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Article 50, 51 and 52 and activities are listed in the First Second and Third Schedule. Functions of the Zila Parishad are listed under 19 heads:

- (i) General Functions
- (ii) Agriculture
- (iii) Minor Irrigation, Ground Water Resources and Watershed Development
- (iv) Horticulture
- (v) Statistics
- (vi) Rural Electrification
- (vii) Soil Conservation
- (viii) Social Forestry
- (ix) Animal husbandry and Dairying
- (x) Fisheries
- (xi) Household and Cottage Industries
- (xii) Rural Roads and Buildings
- (xiii) Health and Hygiene
- (xiv) Rural Housing
- (xv) Education
- (xvi) Social Welfare and Welfare of Weaker Sections
- (xvii) Poverty alleviation programmes
- (xviii) Social reform activities
- (xix) General Powers of the Zila Parishad

The specific duties formulated under the above mentioned 19 heads are mainly of a general and therefore rather vague nature. Heading (vii) soil conservation reads "(i) soil conservation works and (ii) land development works". "Land improvement and soil conservation" is also covered under item (iv) of heading (ii) agriculture. Heading (xvii) poverty alleviation programmes reads "planning , supervision, monitoring and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes". Some duties appear to be highly ambitious in the given rural context. Item (xi) under heading (xviii) social reform activities reads "to identify, free and rehabilitate bonded labour". Others might be more

appropriate for a lower level body given the fact that a Zila Parishad might cover more than 2000 villages. Item (i) of heading (xiv) rural housing reads "identification of houseless families". Duties for construction and maintenance activities, in particular for (xii) rural roads and buildings are better specified. The Act entitles the Zila Parishad to frame certain bye-laws (Article 103 of the Act) but only "when required by the state government". Discharge of water, disposal of carcasses of dead animals, sale of meat, liquor etc. are a few areas where possible bye-laws could be framed.

Functions of the Panchayat Samiti are listed under 30 heads.

- (i) General Functions
- (ii) Agriculture, including Agriculture Extension
- (iii) Land Improvement and Soil Conservation
- (iv) Minor Irrigation, Water Management and Watershed Development
- (v) Poverty Alleviation Programmes
- (vi) Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Poultry
- (vii) Fisheries
- (viii) Khadi, Village and Cottage Industries
- (ix) Rural Housing
- (x) Drinking Water
- (xi) Social and Farm Forestry, Fuel and Fodder
- (xii) Roads, Buildings, Bridges, Ferries, Waterways and Other Means of Communication
- (xiii) Non-Conventional Energy Sources
- (xiv) Education Including Primary Schools
- (xv) Technical Training and Vocational Education
- (xvi) Adult and Non-formal Education
- (xvii) Cultural Activities
- (xviii) Markets and Fairs
- (xix) Health and Family Welfare
- (xx) Women and Child Development
- (xxi) Social Welfare Including Welfare of the Handicapped and Mentally Retarded
- (xxii) Welfare of the Weaker Sections and in particular of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes
- (xxiii) Maintenance of Community Assets
- (xxiv) Statistics
- (xxv) Cooperation
- (xxvi) Libraries
- (xxvii) Supervision of and Guidance to the Panchayats in all their Activities and Formulation of Village and Panchayat Plans
- (xxix) Miscellaneous
- (xxx) General Powers of the Panchayat Samitis

Some functions are again of very general nature and a mere repetition of the general provisions of the XI Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

No precise division of responsibilities between Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis has been specified in the Act. Heading "(vii) fisheries" reads simply "promotion of fisheries development" and "heading (xxvii) libraries" reads simply "promotion of libraries". Functions under heading "(v) poverty alleviation" list at least the names of the

most important centrally and state sponsored development programmes and schemes but without specifying the exact scope of work for the Panchayat Samiti ("planning and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes...."). "Heading (ix) rural housing" mentions "implementation of housing schemes and recovery of housing loan instalments" as specific duty of the Panchayat Samiti.

Functions of the Gram Panchayat are listed under 33 heads.

- (i) General Functions
- (ii) In the Sphere of Administration
- (iii) Agriculture including Agricultural Extension
- (iv) Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Poultry
- (v) Fisheries
- (vi) Social and Farm Forestry, Minor Forest Produce, Fuel and Fodder
- (vii) Minor Irrigation
- (viii) Khadi, Village and Cottage Industries
- (ix) Rural Housing
- (x) Drinking Water
- (xi) Roads, Buildings, Culverts, Bridges, Ferries, Water-Ways and other Means of Communication
- (xii) Rural Electrification including Providing for and Maintenance of Lighting of Public Streets and other Places
- (xiii) Non-Conventional Energy Sources
- (xiv) Poverty Alleviation Programmes
- (xv) Education (Primary)
- (xvi) Adult and Non-Formal Education
- (xvii) Libraries
- (xviii) Cultural Activities
- (xix) Markets and Fairs
- (xx) Rural Sanitation
- (xxi) Public Health and Family Welfare
- (xxii) Women and Child Development
- (xxiii) Social Welfare Including Welfare of the handicapped and Mentally Retarded
- (xxiv) Welfare of the Weaker Sections and in Particular the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- (xxv) Public Distribution System
- (xxvi) Maintenance of Community Assets
- (xxvii) Construction and Maintenance of Dharamshalas and other Similar Institutions
- (xxviii) Construction and Maintenance of Cattle Sheds, Ponds and Cart Stands
- (xxix) Construction and Maintenance of Slaughter Houses
- (xxx) Maintenance of Public Parks and Playgrounds
- (xxxi) Regulation of Manure Pits in Public Places
- (xxxii) Regulation of Liquor Shops
- (xxxiii) General Powers of the Panchayats

Some provisions are of a very unspecified nature and do not give the specific responsibility of the Gram Panchayat. As between Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis,

no precise division of responsibilities has been specified between Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats.

Heading "(v) fisheries" again reads simply "promotion of fisheries development" and "heading (xvii) libraries" reads "village libraries and reading rooms". Functions under heading (xiv) poverty alleviation programmes mention "(i) promotion of public awareness and participation in poverty alleviation programmes..." and "(ii) selection of beneficiaries under various programmes through Gram Sabhas" and (iii) participation in effective implementation and monitoring of the aforesaid".

Concerning "Rural Housing" Gram Panchayats are responsible for "(i) allotment of free house sites within its jurisdiction and "(ii) maintenance of records relating to the houses, sites and other private and public properties"

Maintenance of primary and upper primary schools, located in large number in villages and maintenance of sub-health centres are not mentioned as duties of the Gram Panchayat. Girish Kumar states that "these facts have simply been overlooked in the Act"³⁸⁴.

The Rajasthan Act provides for the following financial resources of Panchayats:³⁸⁵

Table 8: Financial Provisions of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994

	Zila Parishad	Panchayat Samiti	Gram Panchayat
(i) Assignment of Taxes and Fees:	a fee for license for a fair or mela	tax on rent payable for the use or occupation of agricultural land at the rate of 50 paise in a rupee of such rent	tax on buildings
	up to 5% on stamp duty on sale of property		octroi on animals or goods brought within the Panchayat circle
	a water rate where arrangements for the supply of drinking and irrigation water is made by the respective Zila Parishad	Subject to provision of article 276 of the Constitution of India and to any general or special orders of the state government, the Panchayat Samiti	vehicle tax except on those vehicle which are used for the purpose of cultivation
	up to ½ % on the market fees referred to in section 17 of the Rajasthan Agriculture Produce Markets Act, 1961 (Rajasthan Act. No	may impose taxes on trades, callings, professions and industries	pilgrim tax
		primary education cess	tax for arranging the supply of drinking water within the Panchayat circle
			tax on commercial crops

384 Kumar, Girish 1994 Rajasthan Panchayat Act 1994; in: *Institute of Social Sciences 1994: Panchayat Raj Update 11/1994*; p. 6-8.

385 Article 67, 68, 69 of the Rajasthan Panchayat Raj Act, 1994.

	38 of 1961)	a tax in respect of Panchayat Samiti fairs held within the limits of its jurisdiction	any tax or fee as per the rules and orders of the state government
(ii) Tax Sharing	as per the approved State Finance Commission report	as per the approved State Finance Commission report	as per the approved State Finance Commission report
(iii) Grants	grants from the State and central government as per the respective provisions and regulations	grants from the state and central government as per the respective provisions and regulations	grants from the state and central government as per the respective provisions and regulations

The Role of the State Government

The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act gives ample scope to the state government to control Panchayats. The Articles 92 to 107 of the Act deal with the powers of the state government vis-à-vis Panchayat Institutions. Article 92 of the Act makes the state government the "Chief Superintending and Controlling Authority in respect of all matters relating to the administration of Panchayat Raj Institutions". Article 94 of the Act gives the state government the right to dissolve Panchayat Raj Institutions if the respective body is not competent to perform according to the provisions of the Act, exceeds or abuses its powers. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad, an officer of the Indian Administrative Service or the Rajasthan Administrative Service, has the powers not to implement any decision of the Zila Parishad which "in his opinion is inconsistent with the provisions of the Act or any other law." In such case, he has to seek directions from the state government.³⁸⁶ The same is true for the Block Development Officer vis-à-vis the Panchayat Samiti. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad has the right to inspect any Panchayat office within the Zila Parishad area as well as any institution under the control of any Panchayat of the area (schools, hospitals, etc.). Emergency powers in case of fire, flood or epidemic are given to the Chief Executive Officer and the Block Development Officer if the Pramuk or the Pradhan respectively is absent from the headquarters office.

5.2.3.2 Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Elections 1995

The BJP state government announced in March 1994 that it would organise Panchayat elections in September 1994. A mass awareness programme titled "Jan Jagaran Abhiyan"(JJA) was launched to educate the rural population about the

³⁸⁶ Article 84 (3) of the Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1994. In pursuance of Clause (3) of Article 348 of the Constitution of India, the Governor is pleased to authorise the publication in the Rajasthan Gazette of the following translation of Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Adhiniyam, 1994.

enactment of the Panchayati Raj Act. According to government information, JJA camps were organised at 6695 places, from May 15th, 1994 to June 30th, 1994 and 725 000 persons participated.³⁸⁷

The Institute of Social Sciences, however, criticised the organisation of the camps.

"On the whole, the camps were a dismal failure due to the apathy of the officials in charge of organising them and lack of proper publicity."³⁸⁸

In July 1994, the Government of Rajasthan constituted a committee to finalise election rules. The main issue of controversy was the percentage of reserved seats for Other Backward Classes (OBC). Proposals were varying between 10 percent and 15 percent of the total number of seats. In September 1994 elections were postponed and the term of administrators which had expired by September 15th, 1994 was extended by six months. Susheela Kaushik states that the BJP wanted more time to strengthen its support base in rural areas and also to await the outcome of the civic polls in order to design an electoral strategy for the Panchayat Raj elections.³⁸⁹ The BJP was able to register a major success in the election to the municipal bodies in November 1994 while the Congress Party had withdrawn its symbol due to internal factionalism and party chaos. Congress affiliated candidates contested as independents.

After the successful civic polls, the BJP state government planned to hold elections first in December 1994. However, rosters were not ready and elections were postponed until the end of January. On the basis of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Election) Rules, the elections were eventually held from January 20th, 1995 to February 7th, 1995.

Zila Parishad elections and Panchayat Samiti elections were mainly held on January 20th, 1996. Incidents of booth capturing, snatching of ballot papers and manhandling of polling personnel were reported from various districts. In the districts of Jodhpur and Sikar some people boycotted elections in protest against "improper delimitation of constituencies."³⁹⁰ Sarpanch and Wardpanch elections were conducted peacefully. Approximately 70 percent of the electorate participated in the elections.³⁹¹ Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat elections were officially not contested on a party basis. Although most Sarpanchs and some Wardpanch candidates might have a party affiliation, no official information is available on any kind of party-wise distribution of seats. The elections of the various standing committees of Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis were also held. By elections to fulfil vacant seats have been conducted on August 31st, 1995.

The party wise distribution of seats for 30 Zila Parishads and 237 Panchayat Samitis is as per the following table. The table does not include the results of the by-elections.

387 Government of Rajasthan 1995: Department of Development & Panchayati Raj Agenda wise Progress Report presented by Nathu Singh Gurjar, Minister of State for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan; p. 5.

388 *Institute of Social Sciences* 1994: Panchayati Raj Update July 1994; p. 3.

389 *Kaushik, Susheela* 1994: One Year of Panchayati Raj: Challenges to Women's role. paper presented at a seminar with the identical title in New Delhi, 12-13 December 1994; p. 20-21.

390 *Institute of Social Sciences* 1995: Panchayati Raj Update January 1995; p. 4.

391 *Institute of Social Sciences* 1995: Panchayati Raj Update February 1995; p.3.

Table 9: Elected Panchayati Raj Representatives in Rajasthan: Party Wise Distribution of Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Majorities and Seats

	Zila Parishads		Panchayat Samitis	
	Number of Majority ZP	Number of Seats	Number of Majority PS	Number of Seats
Congress (I)	14	477	66	2013
BJP	11	413	61	1986
Janata Dal	-	16	4	93
CPI (M)	-	4	-	1
Samajwadi Party	-	-	-	2
Independents	5	84	-	1088

Source: Institute of Social Sciences, Panchayati Raj Update, January 1995, p.4.

The BJP was particularly successful in the election of chairpersons of Zila Parishads which were conducted in two rounds in January/February 1995. The party captured 16 seats of chairpersons, including four seats where it did not have a majority. One example is Udaipur district.³⁹² The Congress captured only 14 Zila Parishad seats. This reflects the major importance the BJP state government attaches to the chairmanship at district Panchayat level.³⁹³

392 For details see chapter 5.3.4.1.

393 Source: *Institute of Social Sciences* 1995; Panchayati Raj Update February 1995; p.3.

Table 10: Elected Panchayati Raj Representatives in Rajasthan: Caste- and Sex wise Composition (Panchayats at all Levels)

Caste/Class Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	65 634	44 771	20 863
Other Backward Classes	14 981	9 987	4 994
Scheduled Castes	20 712	13 808	6 904
Scheduled Tribes	18 092	12 062	6 030
Grand total:	103 712	80 628	37 791

Table 11: Elected Panchayati Raj Representatives in Rajasthan: Caste and Sex Wise Composition at Zila Parishad Level

	Zila Pramuk	Zila Parishad Members
Grand total of posts	31	997
total male	21	666
total female	10	331
Category General	15	547
male	11	366
female	4	181
Category Other Backward Classes	5	119
male	3	79
female	2	40
Category Scheduled Castes	6	177
male	4	118
female	2	59
Category Scheduled Tribes	5	154
male	3	103
female	2	51

Table 12: Elected Panchayati Raj Representatives in Rajasthan: Caste and Sex Wise Composition at Panchayat Samiti (Block) Level

	Pradhan	Panchayat Samiti Members
Grand total	237	5257
total male	157	3517
total female	80	1740
Category General	125	2885
male	83	1935
female	42	950
Category Other Backward Classes	35	625
male	23	417
female	12	208
Category Scheduled Castes	41	943
male	27	629
female	14	314
Category Scheduled Tribes	36	804
male	24	536
female	12	267

Table 13: Elected Panchayati Raj Representatives in Rajasthan: Caste and Sex Wise Composition at the Gram Panchayat Level

	Sarpanchs	Wardpanchs
Grand total	9185	103 712
total male	6121	70 146
total female	3064	33 566
Category General	5005	57 057
male	3334	39 042
female	1671	18 015
Category Other Backward Classes	1060	13 137
male	707	8758
female	353	4379
Category Scheduled Castes	1643	17 902
male	1095	11 935
female	548	5967
Category Scheduled Tribes	1477	15 616

male	985	10 411
female	492	5205

Source: Government of Rajasthan 1995: Department of Development and Panchayati Raj Agenda wise Progress Report presented by Nathu Singh Gurjar, Minister of State for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan.

5.2.3.3 Training of Elected Members of Panchayats

The Government of Rajasthan has foreseen Rs. 10 million for training of elected Panchayat representatives at all levels.³⁹⁴ For 35 Panchayati Raj training sessions Rs. 4,78 million were allocated in 1995/1996.³⁹⁵ The main training institutions were:

- (i) Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Institute, Jaipur;
- (ii) HCM Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration, Udaipur;
- (iii) Village Level Worker Training Centre, Jodhpur;
- (iv) Panchayati Raj Training Institute, Dungarpur.

Additional funds of Rs 225 066 Rupees were allocated for training of Chief Executive Officers of Zila Parishads. The main training sessions were as follows:³⁹⁶

- (i) a four-day training programme for all Zila Pramuks at Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sansthan (IGPRS) in Jaipur. Copies of the Act were handed over to the participants and information was given on details of various development schemes. Lectures were held by state government officials;
- (ii) two four-day training sessions for all 237 Pradhans were organised.
- (iii) a five-day training programme for all the 9185 Sarpanchs was organised at the respective district headquarters in May/June 1995; Sarpanchs were given exposure to the new Panchayati Raj Act and were informed on details of rural development schemes;
- (iv) a four-day training programme for Zila Parishad members was organised at Harish Chander Matur Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration (HCMRIPA), Udaipur, at Gram Sevak Training Centre, Mandore and at Gram Sevak Training Centre, Dungarpur;
- (v) special training programmes for Up-Pramuks and Up-Pradhans were organised at HCMRIPA, Udaipur and state institutes of rural development

394 *Government of Rajasthan; Department of Development & Panchayati Raj* 1995: Agenda wise Progress Report presented by Nathu Singh Gurjar, Minister of State for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan; p. 5.

395 Source: Government of Rajasthan office order 29.4.1995.

396 Information available on training are not always organised in a systematic manner. Even in documents only available for high ranking government staff, details on dates, location and training agenda are sometimes missing. The main source of written information is: *Government of Rajasthan; Department of Development and Panchayati Raj* 1995. Further information were collected from Harish Chander Matur Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration Udaipur (RIPA Udaipur) and discussions with Mr. R.K. Choubisa of RIPA Udaipur during the preparatory phase of the case studies on November 30th, 1995 and on January 31st, 1996.

- (vi) training for Wardpanchs was organised at block level in February 1996. Participants were informed on the provisions of the Act and government development schemes. The training was conducted mainly by Panchayat Samiti staff (Block Development Officer, Education Officer, etc.);
- (vii) training sessions for chairmen of all existing Standing Committees were also conducted;
- (viii) Block Development Officers received Training from the Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Training Institute in Jaipur. The participation was rather poor.³⁹⁷ Figures and further details were not available.

The training session laid emphasis on how to conduct meetings and how to make proposals under the various government development schemes. Participation at the various training sessions was around 40-70 percent of the invitees. Around 60 percent of the trainees were newcomers and 40 percent had previous experiences in Panchayats. Husbands of elected women representatives were also allowed to join the training sessions. Staff of government institutions³⁹⁸ involved in the training mentioned that this would make it more easier for women to get permission to attend the sessions. It was also stated that the participation of their husbands would make the women feel more confident. Trainers mentioned that many elected representatives felt quite self-confident and important and expected to be treated as dignitaries.

Provision for a follow up monitoring or evaluation of the training sessions has not been foreseen. It might, however, be possible that universities encourage PHD students to take up such topic.³⁹⁹ In addition to training sessions financed and organised by the government, a large number of NGOs conduct training sessions, mainly for elected representatives at Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti level.

5.2.3.4 The State Government Policy on Financial Resources of Panchayats

Rajasthan was among the first states to produce the mandatory State Finance Commission report. As per the requirement of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Governor of Rajasthan issued orders to the state government of Rajasthan to constitute a State Finance Commission which should make recommendations on allocation of financial resources for Panchayats at all levels. The Government of Rajasthan via order No. F 10 (18) FD/94 dated 23rd April 1994 then established a State Finance Commission under the Chairmanship of KK. Goyal, who was a former Minister of State (Finance), Gov. of India and former Minister in charge of Industries, Gov. of Rajasthan. Other members were:

- (i) Shri Chandan Mal Vaidya, former Finance Minister, Gov. of Rajasthan
- (ii) Shri Devender Singh Shaktavat, IAS, previously Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
- (iii) Shri T. Shrinivasan, IAS, member Secretary

The Commission conducted field visits and interviews with officials based on questionnaires. The report was submitted on December 31st, 1995 (originally foreseen

397 Information from discussions with staff of government institutions involved in the training. They preferred to remain anonymous.

398 Concerned staff preferred to remain anonymous.

399 Discussions with Mr. R.K. Choubisa of RIPA Udaipur on 30.11.1995 and 31.1.1996.

for September 30th, 1995). The Governor placed the report before the State Legislative Assembly with the comments of the BJP state government. It was approved by the State Assembly on March 19th, 1996 and funds were transferred to Panchayats on March 29th, 1996.

The Finance Commission recommended that:

- (i) allocation of financial resources to Panchayats should be made in proportion to the overall state revenue⁴⁰⁰ (one budget head) and not as a given share of different budget heads. The report recommended the devolution of 2.18% of the net proceeds of the taxes raised by the state government to the Panchayats and urban local bodies in the state. The 2.18 % of the tax proceeds, recommended by the State Finance Commission, is to be divided between the Panchayats and the urban local bodies in the ratio of 3:1.
- (ii) the government aid-in-grant to Panchayats should be raised from Rs. 5 per head to Rs. 11 per head in 1995/1996.
- (iii) there should be a special regulation of a higher allocation for tribal areas
- (iv) the maintenance of buildings, roads, and other community assets should be entrusted to the Panchayats and paid out of their increased funds. There should then be a similar pattern of maintenance functions for urban and rural bodies. Civic amenities (street lightening, handpumps) should be entrusted to Panchayats and should be financed out of the increased financial allocation.
- (v) an award for the best performance of Panchayats should be established and endowed with a substantial reward.
- (vi) a system of matching grants should be established. If any Panchayat raises additional funds, the state government should provide 50% matching funds.
- (vii) if Panchayats fail to execute mandatory duties under the new Act, funds of the coming year will be reduced in respect to non-executed duties. The total funding of Panchayats will be raised from Rs 339.24 million in the financial year 1995/96 (only allocation of central government) to Rs. 1030 million from 1996/97 onwards until the year 2000 (50% from the state government and 50% from the central government).
- (viii) a Finance Corporation should be set up in rural and urban areas in order to facilitate investments for the Panchayats and urban bodies.⁴⁰¹

The Director of the Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Jaipur further mentioned that the Department has made provisions for additional funds to be given to Panchayats to meet material costs under the drought relief programme presently operating on a 60 percent labour 40 percent material basis. Moreover, each Gram

400 The main sources of Rajasthan state revenue are: 1. Sales Tax 2. Excise duties 3. Transport 4. stamp and registration 5. land revenue.

401 The report had not been published until April 1996. Information could only be gained from a very brief look into the report during discussions with the Director of the Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Jaipur and discussions with one member of the State Finance Commission in Udaipur on March 9th, 1996.

Panchayat should be given 5000 Rs. for cleaning purposes. An amount of Rs. 5000 Rs. should be given to 3000 primary schools in the state (one tenth of the states primary schools) for the purpose of maintenance works. He mentioned that "previously no such provision existed and schools faced major maintenance problems such as leaking roofs."⁴⁰²

Until end of December 1996, there were no firm indication that the recommendations of the report were implemented.⁴⁰³

5.2.3.5 Implementation Reality of Devolution of Powers to Panchayats

The Article 243 (G) of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Rajasthan Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 only provide for a general framework for the devolution of powers to Panchayats. The state government retains control over the decentralisation process, because the Act itself does not spell out the actual responsibilities of the Panchayats by differentiating them from the specific responsibilities of the state government administration in the different development areas. The nature and language of the legislative provisions of both the Acts lack clarity⁴⁰⁴ and leave ample scope for the state government in power to interpret the legislation. For example, the crucial issue of financial authority and decision-making powers over the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) schemes is not dealt with. There is no mention of a transfer of the DRDA from bureaucratic to popular control. The District Rural Development Agency remains under the chairmanship of the District Collector.

The BJP Chief Minister Bheru (Bhairon) Singh Shekawat is known to be open for the transferring of the DRDA under the chairmanship of the Zila Pramuk as head of the Zila Parishad, but most MLAs and some Pradhans strongly oppose such a transfer. Status and powers in Indian politics is in first priority related to control and sanctioning powers over financial resources and only in second priority to legislative powers. As poor and illiterate people still form a significant part of the electorate in rural Rajasthan, knowledge of the impact of legislation is very limited and direct benefits are the major concern. MLAs argue that their position would be significantly weakened if the Pramuk had the decision powers to allocate DRDA funds.⁴⁰⁵ Decision powers for the Zila Parishad members on DRDA funds would indeed make the Rs. 100 000 allowance of the MLAs fairly insignificant. Some Pradhans, as head of the traditionally powerful Panchayat Samitis, also expressed concerns that increased powers of Zila Parishads would reduce the importance of the traditionally powerful Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan. The issue is likely to be discussed in the State Legislative Assembly in 1996 but the probability of transfer of the DRDA under the Zila Parishads seems to be rather low since the state government executive consists of MLAs. A compromise might result in the formation of a Governing Council assuming nominal duties, monitoring and supervision of rural development activities, including DRDA schemes, and an

402 Discussions with the Director of the Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Jaipur on April 9th, 1996.

403 Personal letters from Satya Narain of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi and Shamata Seth, Mohanlal Sukaria University, Udaipur.

404 Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994; see in particular chapter 5.1.3.1: (iii) functions of Panchayats.

405 Discussion with MLA Prakam Singh from Benare/Bhilwara district on March 10th, 1996 at Raj Niwas, Khudala House, Udaipur.

executive council functioning as implementing authority. The Governing Council would be headed by the Zila Pramuk and the Executive Council by the District Collector.⁴⁰⁶ The complexion of the state government and prevailing political dynamics are the decisive factors for devolution of powers to Panchayats. The ruling BJP in Rajasthan has a stronghold in urban areas and might therefore be less favourable to the devolution of resources and powers to rural bodies than the Congress Party which holds a stronghold in rural areas. The BJP, however, has made major efforts to extend its basis in rural areas and the party's attitude might change if its rural support basis increases.

Moreover, the implementation of clearly formulated provisions of the Act have been delayed and might be further delayed, e.g. the formation of the District Planning Committee as stipulated under Article 121 of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.⁴⁰⁷

The state government had also formed a committee comprised of MLAs in order to look into possibilities for devolution of powers to Panchayats according to the provisions of the Article 243 (G) of the XIth Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. No report was produced until April 1996.

5.2.3.6 The State Government Policy on Staffing of Panchayats

Sufficient and competent staff working under appropriate rules and regulations are a crucial condition for the proper functioning of Panchayats. The Government of Rajasthan, Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj recognised the necessity to recruit additional staff for Gram Panchayats and advertised for 4000 new Gram Secretaries in addition to the existing 5000 in order to allocate a Gram Secretary to almost all 9185 Gram Panchayats in the state. The Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj wants to recruit its own staff since the present staff, mainly on deputation from the Department of Agriculture, was found more loyal to the home department than to the line department.

Problems with recruitment occurred as the existing temporary staff (Assistant Gram Secretaries) of the department demanded to be recruited for the new posts on priority basis and questioned the qualification requirements of the department. By April 1996, the case had not been decided by the Rajasthan High Court but the department was planning to further proceed with recruitment while considering to find a compromise with the temporary staff.

The Government of Rajasthan, Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has also issued orders for recruitment of a second Junior Engineer for each Panchayat Samiti. Moreover, one additional Lower Division Clerk post will be allocated to all 237 Panchayat Samitis.

406 Discussions with the Director of the Department for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Jaipur in his office on April 9th, 1996.

407 The formation of the District Planning Committee (DPC) had been foreseen for September 1995 "Provisions have been made under section 121 of the Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 for the formation of. Formation of DPCs is under active consideration of State Government and orders are likely to be issued end of September 1995"; (*Government of Rajasthan; Department of Development & Panchayati Raj*; 1995; p. 2. However, the formation of the Committees did not take place in September 1995. By the end of the case study period in March 1996 the DPC's were still not formed.

The confidential reports are an important issue for government officers and an important reason for their reluctance to accept the Panchayat representatives as their superiors. If the confidential reports of government officers are to be written by Panchayat representatives, the elected representatives would have significant control over their administrative staff recruited by the state government administrative services. Confidential reports are important for transfer and promotion of government officers. Currently the annual confidential report of Gram Secretaries are written by the BDO, the confidential reports of the BDOs are written by the CEO and the confidential reports of the CEO are written by the respective state government authorities in Jaipur. The elected representatives argue that the confidential reports should be written by the political head of the respective Panchayats (Pramuk in case of the CEO and Pradhan in case of the BDO) to encourage loyal behaviour of government officers towards their elected political heads. Such a proposal is unlikely to be approved by the state government as mistrust towards the 'uneducated and ruthless' Panchayat members is still prevalent.

5.2.3.7 Other Panchayati Raj Policy Matters

Three other Panchayati Raj policy matters were discussed during the meetings with government and Panchayat authorities at the time of the empirical research:

(i) As many Sarpanchs have expressed frustrations over their limited scope of action after the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the proposal to include Sarpanchs on a rotational basis (considering each time one fourth of the chairpersons) into Panchayat Samitis, and similarly Pradhans into Zila Parishads, was under active consideration of government authorities during the period of the case studies. Sarpanchs used to be ex-officio members of the Panchayat Samiti and chairpersons of the Gram Panchayats, but have now been confined to just the latter. No decision had been made by state government authorities until April 1996.

(ii) the Government of Rajasthan, Department Rural Development and Panchayati Raj issued orders to display Panchayati works sanctioned in the last 5 years and to provide access to information on committed and disbursed funds to the public.⁴⁰⁸

(iii) the use of vehicles is another issue of importance, in particular at block level. The frequent use of vehicles is necessary to reach villages in rural areas but it is also a status symbol. Currently, the single vehicle at block level is meant for the BDO on a priority basis. This prevents the Pradhan from frequently visiting remote areas of his or her constituency. During state and general election campaigns, elected representatives are not allowed to use the vehicle at all. At best, a slight increase might be proposed in the number of days the vehicle is allocated to elected representatives.

408 Ibid.

5.3 Udaipur District Profile

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This chapter presents the profile of Udaipur district and outlines the activities of the government, major Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the district Panchayat body. It is mainly of descriptive nature as it provides the basis for understanding the overall development context of the Udaipur district.

The District Collector, and not the Zila Pramuk, still retains control over the implementation of the various development programmes administered by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). NGOs are increasingly involved in government development activities. The district Panchayat body, the Zila Parishad, plays only a marginal development role. The Zila Parishads main importance lies in its future political potential. Currently it is involved in the management of petty administrative affairs such as recruitment and transfer of government officers, in particular, primary school teachers.

5.3.1 Characteristics

Brief History

The district is named after the principal city Udaipur which was founded by Rana Udai Singh in about 1559 AD. It remained the seat of the government of the erstwhile state of Mewar for centuries.

Area/Population

Udaipur district is located in south central Rajasthan. It is located between the latitudes 23'46 to 25'05 North and longitudes 73'09 to 74'35 East. It shares its boundaries with six other districts of Rajasthan. It is bounded on the north by Rajsamand district, on the south by Dungarpur and Banswara district, on the east by Chittaurgarh district and on the west by Pali and Sirohi district.

The 1991 Census recorded a total population of 2 086 255 with 1 690 422 living in rural and 365 079 living in urban areas. Udaipur district has the second highest population figure in Rajasthan.⁴⁰⁹Udaipur has a high concentration of tribal population. Tribals, mainly Bhil *Adivasis*, account for 46.19 percent of the total population of the district.

Brief Development Characteristics

Udaipur district is among the less developed districts in Rajasthan. It ranks 294 out of 372 districts covered by the District-wise Human Development Index of India

409 Estimates of the Division Commissioner's office from 1995 give a population figure of 2 885 039.

published by the Institute of Social Sciences in 1996.⁴¹⁰ The Census 1991 recorded a 33.35 literacy rate for Udaipur district (43.81 for male and 21.56 for women).⁴¹¹

The rural areas in Udaipur district manifest many characteristics of underdevelopment: a low literacy level, high unemployment, degraded natural resources, drought-proneness⁴¹² and subsistent agriculture. Uncontrolled exploitation of the forest by commercial interests, fuel wood pressure and timber requirements by growing village communities led to severe deforestation.⁴¹³ Outmigration and seasonal migration to urban centres in Rajasthan and Gujarat is common.

Udaipur district experienced a poor monsoon in 1995 and suffered during the time of the field study from a severe drought. The most affected block was Girwa where villagers did not get water every day in March 1996. Various drought relief programmes were announced following the official declaration of a drought year.

Udaipur, "the city of lakes" is a major tourist place in Rajasthan. The city, surrounded by a beautiful hilly scenery, is famous for its palaces, lakes, Jain temples and tribal art. Together with the marble industry, tourism is the biggest industry of the city.

Administration and Statistics

Udaipur district was last delimited on the 11th April 1991. It is now composed of 10 *tehsils*. Before it had 17 *tehsils*, but seven are now belonging to the newly created district Rajsamand. Udaipur district comprises 11 *blocks*. Most of them are identical with the *tehsils*.

In the Udaipur district, there is one case of "village self administration" referring to Mahatma Gandhi's version of 'little village republics'. The village Seed near Kanod in the Bhinder block (78 km from Udaipur) enjoys separate status with some special law and order provisions. It is treated as a separate block with self-administration functioning directly under the District Collectorate.⁴¹⁴

Table 14: Statistical Chart Udaipur (1991 Census)

1. Area	12,596	23. Average Rainfall (C.M.)	65.25
2. Population	20,86,255	24. Electrified villages	2035
Rural	16,90,422	Wells	11725

410 The District-wise Human Development Index of India is published by the Institute of Social Sciences uses the criteria of the UNDP Human Development Index 1995 (longevity, educational attainment and standard of living. Data on Rural Literacy, Rural Female Literacy and Life Expectancy are taken from the 1981 Census; see: *Institute of Social Sciences* 1996: Panchayati Raj Development Report 1995; Appendix 5; pp. 44-57.

411 Source: *Bose, Aashish* 1991: Democratic Diversity of India; 1991 Census Data: State and District Level Data. A Reference Book; New Delhi: D.K. Publishers; pp. 321-322.

412 The average rainfall in Udaipur district is at 624 mm/annum. Moreover the rainfall is erratic and unpredictable.

413 When other massive interests began mass exploitation of these forests this healthy attitude (of preserving the forest) eroded and the villagers began to cut the remaining trees to get their share of the pie. The stake the villagers one had in sustaining these forests, has now been virtually destroyed. Rather than seeing the forest as a dynamic life supporting entity in itself many village farmers have learned to materialise it."; *Seva Mandir* 1994: Comprehensive Plan II-April 1994-March 1999; Udaipur; p. 35.

414 This information was received from Mr. Deen Dayal Dasholtar (discussion on 14.2.1996 at his residence in Udaipur) and Mr. Karkade from Seva Mandir (discussion on 22.3.1996 at Seva Mandir office).The village is not covered by the field study.

Urban	3,65,079	25. Road classification (kms)	3037
Census towns	30 684	National Highway No 8	108
3. Population (percentage)	6.61	State Highways	433
Scheduled Castes	6.61	District roads	1131
Scheduled Tribes	46.19	Rural roads	1365
4. Female Ratio (per thousand males)	956	26. Metalled roads (per 1000 sq. km)	204.98
5. Density of population	179	27. Educational institutions	
Urban	3836	Primary schools	1744
Rural	147	Upper Primary schools (Middle)	396
6. Villages (1991 Census)	2248	Secondary / Hr. Secondary schools	195
7. Census towns (Salumber, Fatehnagar, Kanore, Bhinder)	4	Colleges (General)	8
8. Urban area	5	28. Literacy	34.80
9. Lok Sabha constituencies	2	male	48.65
10. Vidhan Sabha constituencies	10	female	20.30
11. Sub-divisions (Jhadol, Vallabnagar, Salumber, Girwa)	4	rural	24.70
12. Tehsils	10	urban	76.01
13. Sub-Tehsils	6	29. Medical & Health	
14. L.R. Circle	43	Hospitals (Allopathy)	16
15. Patwar Mandals	389	Dispensaries	10
16. Panchayat Samiti	11	P.H.C.	79
17. Gram Panchayats	498	Sub-Centres	475
18. Police Administration		T.B. Clinic	1
Dy. S.P. Circle	7	Ayurvedic	175
Police stations	37	Homoeopathic	6
Police out posts	43	Unani	2
19. Area under cultivation ('000 hect.)	357.03	30. Animal Husbandry	
20. Land holding (Avg.)	1.68	Hospitals	42
21. Percentage of area sown to total area	24.40	Dispensaries	17
22. Percentage of net irrigated area to	41.56	Other Centres	93
		31. Cattle (Total)	2,536,504
		32. Poultry (total)	350,694
		33. Credit Institutions	168
		Commercial	168
		Co-operative	17
		RRB	40

area sown

(Source: District Rural Development Agency 22.8.1995)

5.3.2 **Government Development Activities**

The core part of government rural development activities consists of development schemes (IRDP, Indira Awas Yojana, etc.) designed and financed at central or state government level. These schemes are administered by the DRDA under the chairmanship of the District Collector. In Udaipur district, as in other districts in Rajasthan, the Panchayats are involved in the identification of beneficiaries for the various DRDA schemes. However, their involvement is often limited and their decisions may be superseded by administrative authorities. The below mentioned list of DRDA development schemes provides an idea of the nature of government sponsored development works in the district of Udaipur and makes it easier for the reader to follow the presentation of the case studies at block and Gram Panchayat level.

Besides the DRDA schemes, various State Government Departments (Department of Agriculture, Department of Education etc.) are represented with a branch in Udaipur district and are also involved in rural development.

In Udaipur district, the Tribal Area Development Department under the authority of the Division Commissioner co-ordinates and monitors development activities related to tribal welfare and development. The programmes are implemented by government agencies and increasingly Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The Tribal Area Development Department also recommends new programmes for tribal development, but does not implement works. Udaipur has one of 14 Tribal Research Institutes in India. The Institute is under the authority of the Tribal Welfare Department.

DRDA Schemes in Udaipur⁴¹⁵

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

IRDP is one of the major rural development schemes. It was first introduced in 1976-1977 and was extended to all blocks in the country in October 1980. IRDP is partially funded (50 percent) by the state government and partially (50 percent) by the central government. The Rajasthan IRDP financial target for the financial year 1995/1996⁴¹⁶ was Rs. 620 million, for Udaipur district the target was Rs. 20.4 million. The IRDP consists of giving loans and subsidies for productive assets to people under the poverty line (income less than 11 000 per year), i.e. for cattle, diesel pump sets and small business development (shops, stitching machines, carpentry tools). In 1995/1996 a new insurance scheme for productive assets has been introduced by the central and state government to improve the repayment ratio. For example, people get Rs. 5000 if an IRDP cattle dies a natural death, and 10 000 Rs if it dies by an accident. The number of

415 Reference: *DRDA Udaipur Rajasthan 1995/1996* (Zilla Udaipur Gramin Vikas Bahumukhi); no table is presented for the physical and financial targets and achievements of the various schemes because the physical targets are expressed in different units (e.g. number of created human work days, number of constructed wells) and information on targets and achievements were not available for all schemes.

416 The financial year 1995/1996 lasts from April 1st, 1995 to March 31st, 1996.

targeted beneficiaries was 104 000 for Rajasthan in 1995/96, 5000 for Udaipur district and 500 for Mavli block (one block covered by the field study) in 1995/96.

TRYSEM

TRYSEM is a training programme to promote self employment for people between 18 and 35 years of age. It is administered as part of the IRDP. People get funds for training, so called "stay funds" of Rs. 350-500.

Jawahar Rozgna Yojana (JRY)

JRY (or JRY I) is a major nation-wide employment generation programme funded partially (80 percent) by the central government and partially (20 percent) by the state governments. It targets people below the poverty line. People are employed in construction activities for schools, Panchayat Bhavans, roads and other community assets, 30 percent of labour days are reserved for women. Jawahar Rozgna Yojana II has similar objectives, but the scheme is administered by a different administrative unit at state government level. The financial target of JRY I for the year 1995/1996 was Rs. 130, 47 million, the expenditure until January 1996 amounted to Rs. 76, 27 million until January 1996. The financial target of JRY II for the year 1995/1996 was 19, 24 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 18, 99 million until January 1996.

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)

IAY is a rural housing programme that targets people below the poverty line. Primary beneficiaries are people without land and accommodation. Rs. 10 800 are paid for the construction of houses and Rs. 5000 for other facilities in the houses. Funds are disbursed in two instalments (60 percent first instalment; 40 percent second instalment). The physical target of the popular IAY scheme for Udaipur district in 1995/1996 was 3692 houses, the achievement only 2118. The financial target for 1995/96 was Rs. 51,182 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 30, 77 million until January 1996.

Jiwan Dhara (JD)

JD, the "million wells scheme" targets people under the poverty line, in particular small farmers (up to 2.5 ha land) and marginal farmers (up to 1 ha land) without irrigation facilities. Primary beneficiaries are marginal farmers with less than 1 ha land living in an area where there is no other functioning well within 100 m radius. The amount has been increased from Rs. 28 000 to Rs. 32 000 in 1995/96 and is disbursed in three instalments (30%; 40%; 30%). The physical target of the scheme for Udaipur district was 595 wells, the financial target was Rs. 17,31 million for 1995/1996. The physical achievement until January 1996 was only 93 wells, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 3,59 million.

Massive Programme for Small and Marginal Farmers

The programme targets small farmers with up to 2 ha land and marginal farmers with up to 1 ha land.⁴¹⁷ It includes subsidies, loans and grants for deepening of wells, construction of new wells, pumpsets and other irrigation facilities. The subsidy rate is

417 Definition of small and marginal farmers might differ from one scheme to the other, in particular between central government schemes and state government schemes.

25 percent for small farmers, 33.3 percent for marginal farmers and 50 percent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The rest amount is supposed to be made available by rural banks. The physical target for the construction of new wells was 30 in the year 1995/96, the financial target Rs. 3 million. Seven wells were constructed until January 1996, and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 1,50 million. The physical target for deepening of wells was 40, but only four wells were constructed until January 1996. The target for the distribution of diesel or electric pump sets was 500 for the year 1995/1996, but only 235 sets were distributed until January 1996. The target for the construction of drains was 50, but no information were available on the achievement for the year 1995/1996.

Sunishchit Rozgar Yojana (SRY)

SRY, the "certain employment programme" targets only registered unemployed people (the maximum is two people per family between 16 and 60 years). The financial target for 1995/1996 amounted to Rs. 107, 44 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 59,59 million until January 1996.

Nirband Rashi Yojana (NRY)

The overall objective of NRY is to remove local and regional imbalances of development. NRY promotes development of community assets. Funds are provided by Members of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (MLAs) for mainly construction & employment activities (roads, schools, small dams, dispensaries, drinking water etc.) The financial target for the year 1995/1996 amounted to Rs. 10,4 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 9, 47 million until January 1996.

Tis Zilar Tis Kam (TZTK)

TZTK is a Rajasthan state government scheme. TZTK literally means "thirty district thirty works" and the specific requirements of the different districts are supposed to be taken into consideration. In Udaipur, activities such as construction of school rooms and wells, digging of wells and setting up drinking water facilities have been funded under TZTK. The financial target for the year 1995/1996 was Rs. 15,59 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 12,17 million.

Apna Gao Apna Kam (AGAK)

AGAK literally means "Our village, our work". The Rajasthan State government scheme provides matching funds for village development activities. The division ration is 70 percent (state government) to 30 percent (village community) or 80 percent to 20 percent for tribal areas. After deposit of the funds raised by the village community at the Panchayat Samiti office, proposals are sanctioned by DRDA. The scheme is primarily meant for constructing community assets according to the specific priorities of the village community. The financial target for the year 1995/1996 was Rs. 8,38 million, the expenditure until January 1996 was Rs. 6,71 million.

Biogas Programme

The biogas programme is 100 percent funded by the central government. It gives subsidies for the construction of biogas plants. The physical target for the construction

of biogas units was 400 for the year 1995/1996, the financial target was Rs. 1,2 million.; until January 1996 340 units were constructed and the expenditure amounted only to Rs. 600 000.

Sansta Vikas (SV)

SV is mainly funded by the local Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members which receive Rs. 10 million each for funding development activities in their constituencies (e.g. constructing and equipping schools, sinking tubewells, constructing roads). The financial target for the year 1995/1996 was Rs. 30, 25 million, the expenditure amounted to Rs. 12, 23 million.

Gramin Dastkaro Ke Lie Unnat (Equipment Supply Scheme)

Gramin Dastkaro Ke Lie Unnat supplies new equipment to people (e.g. sewing machine on a 90 percent subsidy; 10 percent own contribution basis). Information on financial and physical targets and achievements were not available at the DRDA Udaipur.

Samudic Jalothan Sinchai Yoyana (SJSY)

SJSY is a watershed programme giving 80 percent subsidies to water user groups if 20 percent are contributed by the farmers. Proposals are to be sent to the Panchayat Samiti. The Panchayat Samiti forwards it to the DRDA. The DRDA carries out an inspection and produces a report for the state government. If the proposal is approved, the state government releases the funds through the DRDA. The water user groups are in charge of maintenance work for the tubewells or pumpsets. Nine proposals out of the indicative target of ten proposals were sanctioned until January 1996.

Kshetra Vikas Karykram (Area Development Programme)

The Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) are meant for soil and water conservation, forestry activities and developing of grazing land. In reality, however, mainly simple construction activities (boundary walls) are carried out with KVK funds.

DPAP is funded on a 50 percent to 50 percent basis by the central and the state government. DDP is funded on a 75 percent to 25 percent basis by the central and the state government. The financial target for the year 1995/1996 was Rs. 5,33 million, which was exceeded by the expenditure of Rs. 5,78 million until January 1996.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWAKRA)

DWAKRA promotes stitching activities and small handicraft works for women. Women groups of 15-20 members can receive up to Rs. 15 200 per year.

Mahila Samradhi Yojana (MSY)

MSY literally means " Women Prosperity Scheme". It started in September 1993 to support saving and credit activities of rural women and to increase their confidence and financial independence. The government is supposed to pay a yearly interest rate of 25 percent for individual accounts registered in the post office (the minimum amount is Rs. 4, the maximum amount Rs. 300). The money should be given to the women by the local Gram Panchayat authorities.

For the development of Udaipur city, the following three development programmes have been designed.

(i) The City Development Programme supports construction of hostels, toilets, hospitals, schools, libraries, parks and drinking water pipelines.

(ii) The Pichola Lake Development funds activities to clean and protect the lake Pichola.

(iii) The Ayar river development programme funds activities to clean the river.

The Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Programme is funded on a 50 percent to 50 percent by the central and the state government and should also be relevant for Udaipur district but no information could be ascertained at the DRDA, Udaipur.

5.3.3 *NGO Development Activities*

Udaipur is a centre of NGO activities in Rajasthan and even in India. Many of them receive international development assistance. The development characteristics of Udaipur (strong representation of tribal communities, low level of education, gender inequality) together with the natural beauty of the city attract international and national development assistance.

The largest NGO is Seva Mandir which is a mother-organisation of many other (more recently created) NGOs. A list of NGOs from the DRDA mentions 79 NGOs operating in Udaipur district. However, authorities give estimates of around 400 NGO including many small NGOs functioning as one or two men show.⁴¹⁸

Auditing and monitoring was very poor among the NGOs in the case study area, in particular Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal. Monitoring was geared primarily towards generating information for the preparation of reports to be presented to higher authorities (board of trustees) and people outside the organisation (government, donor agencies). No NGO had a meaningful monitoring system which would have facilitated structured project planning, implementation and evaluation. There is a great probability that the reports of some of the NGOs did not reflect the actual activities of the organisations.

Prakash Chandra Mehta, who carried out a study of three major NGOs (Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad; Seva Mandir; Rajasthan Mahila Parishad) operating in Udaipur, concluded that:

"... it was observed from their detailed accounts that the Voluntary Organisations were not spending their resources for which the grants/donations were given. They use their resources according to their own accord. This type of misutilisation of funds should be stopped and they should try to generate their own resources."⁴¹⁹

The NGOs Seva Mandir, Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal were the two main NGOs working in the Gram Panchayats covered by the case study. The large NGO CASA with

418 When I was hitchhiking in my first days, an elderly men, Mr. Praful Mehta, stopped with his scooter. He introduced himself respectively his family as an NGO working in Girwa block. He explained me enthusiastically about his environmental work and later gave me a Season's Greetings Card showing two pictures (one of environmental degradation and one aforested land) introducing his work: It reads: "Our chairman Shri Hukamraj Mehta an advocate and a veteran freedom fighter has single handedly transformed this land with water & soil conservation, tree plantation & cattle improvement, setting up a practical example for the local tribals, for their own upliftment. Happy new Year."

419 Mehta, Prakash Chandra 1994: Voluntary Organisations and Tribal Development; Udaipur, p. 190.

headquarters in Udaipur had carried out a few works in the Gram Panchayat Kharkar a few years back. The local NGO Astha was not working in villages of the case study area. The following presentation includes Astha because its activities focus on tribal empowerment and strengthening of Panchayats.

Seva Mandir

Historical Background

Seva Mandir⁴²⁰ was founded by Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta in the late 1960s. Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta was the Education Minister of the preindependent state of Mewar and served as an ambassador to a number of countries after independence. He started the scouting movement and founded the Vidya Bhawan school, a private educational institution in Udaipur, in the 1920s.

Seva Mandir was formally registered in 1966. The organisation was initially run by a number of individuals who had returned from western countries and felt the need to work for the poorest in their country, in particular tribal communities; among them Kishore Saint, Gini and Om Shrivastava, Kamala Bhasin and Rajesh Tandon.

Seva Mandir's further evolution is closely related to the Mehta family. The family started to resume greater influence on the organisation in the mid eighties when Jagat S. Mehta, the son of Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, retired as foreign secretary and ambassador. He returned to Udaipur and was appointed Chief Executive. Soon after, his son Ajay Mehta, the grandson of Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, took over from him as Chief Executive and Jagath Mehta became more active in the Vidhya Bhawan Rural Development Society. This was the time when Kishore Saint, Om and Gini Shrivastava left the organisation. They were unhappy with the way the Mehta's had taken over the leadership and started their own organisations with a different development profile and approach (Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal, Astha).

Seva Mandir benefited from increased international support from the mid-1980s onwards and developed into one of the biggest NGOs in Rajasthan and even in entire India.

Foreigners and government officials who visit Seva Mandir in the beautiful city of Udaipur are usually impressed with the organisation. The Mehta family has excellent communication skills and owns a spacious charming house with tribal paintings in the city. Ajay Mehta is a soft spoken self-critical intellectual who represents the Rajasthan NGO sector at national and international level. His wife is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service. She has now become the Division Commissioner of the neighbouring division of Ajmer. Both have spent some time at Harvard University in the United States and have many international contacts.

The reputation of the organisation in Udaipur itself is less positive. The more information about the organisation was collected, the more it became obvious that the organisational culture of Seva Mandir and the quality of the activities did not match with the high flying moral image of the Mehta family and the organisation. Different people criticised the gap between theory and practise within the organisation. A government official who wanted to remain anonymous pointed out that no development has taken place in the Gram Panchayat Kaya in Girwa block where Seva Mandir's main

420 *Seva Mandir* literally means "the temple of service".

training centre is located. He told that Chandanai village has no road, 1200 illiterates, rampant tuberculosis and that the village school remains in a pathetic condition. Moreover, it was even very difficult to recruit volunteers for a government literacy programme among all these "aware people".

Others apparently felt angry because they thought that Seva Mandir did not deserve to be the "the darling of the donor agencies".⁴²¹ Caste rivalries against the "Jain" community to which the Mehtas belong might also play a role in the critics. Many Jains live or pretend to live a religiously inspired moral life but the Jains in Udaipur have also a reputation of being busy involved in money lending and high profit commercial activities.

Approach/Activities

Seva Mandir started its development activities, mainly inspired by Gandhian ideals of voluntarism, with a literacy programme for tribal communities in 1969 and extended its scope of work to forestry, water resource development and health services and also included women and child development, environmental awareness and community development in its activities.

Seva Mandir works in around 450 villages in Udaipur district mainly in the blocks Jhadol, Badgaon, Girwa, Kherwara and partly in Kotra and Gogunda. Its activities reach out to around 20 000 families.

Regarding the area of the field study, Seva Mandir has a long involvement in literacy work and water resource development in Gram Panchayat Karia (Badgaon) and to a lesser extent in forestry work in Gram Panchayat Dhar (Badgaon). Seva Mandir has a long development involvement in Jhadol block. However, it has no specific ongoing activities in the two Gram Panchayats selected for the field study.

Budget/Staff

Seva Mandir is now one of the largest NGOs in Rajasthan and even in India with an annual budget of almost 30 million Rupees⁴²², around 200 full time staff and around 800 para-workers at village level recruited from the beneficiary community. Around one fourth of the staff are women. In 1994/1995 Seva Mandir received foreign contribution of more than Rs. 20 million and central and state government funds of around Rs. 2.5 million. The international contacts of the Mahta family are very helpful in getting foreign funds. Seva Mandir manages to get substantial funding from donor agencies in the US, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands but also enjoys financial support from governmental sources. The Mehta's enjoy good relations with high ranking bureaucrats, mainly because of the position of Ajay Mehta's wife. Seva Mandir started in the 1990s to recruit a large number of young graduates from Social Sciences and Rural Development Institutes of the country.

421 Discussion with P.C. Mehta on his study on three NGOs in Udaipur on 20.3.1996, see: *Mehta, Prakash Chandra* 1994. Mr. P.C. Mehta, however, was not the most outstanding critic against the organisation. For reason of discretion, other names are not mentioned. For further critics on the organisation see "Chapter 6 "Conclusions".

422 The total expenditure in the financial year 1994/1995 (April to March) was Rs 27492 192.64 million including the balance of the previous year; for further details see: *Seva Mandir* 1995: Annual Report 1994/1995; Udaipur, Audit Report pp. 52-63.

Attitudes Towards Participatory Development and Panchayati Raj

Seva Mandir is in continuous development discourse with international and national development agencies. The organisation operates with all development catchphrases, in particular 'people's participation' and 'sustainable development'. It has set up a "People's Management School in 1991" with the objective to

"...more systematically address issues of people owning and managing their development and to create facilities for villagers whereby they could gain the capabilities and skills for handling rural development".⁴²³

However, in practice the conceptual issues developed by the People's Management School (i.e. building capabilities at village level, trying to improve organisational systems and structures, information dissemination in villages) have been translated into only very few activities such as workshops, participatory rural appraisal sessions⁴²⁴ and training sessions for elected representatives of Panchayats.

Some well written documents on people's participation suggest that Seva Mandir might have a comprehensive idea and strategy of promoting people's participation in development.

"By the late 70s, the involvement and initiative of people in the development programmes of Seva Mandir was such that we felt the people were ready to play a more active role in the management of public institutions responsible for village development and village governance. People associated with our programmes had become popular and well respected within their communities. Some of them successfully contested for elected offices in the village councils."⁴²⁵

The writings, however, do not match with the field activities of the organisation. Seva Mandir in practice avoids involvement in political issues. Panchayat affairs are considered as political issues. Seva Mandir has a rather critical attitude towards the Panchayat Raj system which the organisation considers to induce or promote manipulation and corruption.

Such assessment, however, is difficult to get from the consciously written documents of the organisation which are mainly meant for international and national donor agencies. Only few paragraphs might give an idea of Seva Mandir's critical attitude towards the empowerment of people by means of the local self-government reform.

"...while the political system benefits people in many different ways, it does not help people come together to remove the structural barriers to poverty alleviation and people's empowerment. In this situation, where democratic politics by itself have not alleviated mass poverty, the need for other institutions to help people gain their fair share of entitlements is imperative. On their own, the poor are unable to create the conditions through which they can expand the scope of their entitlements in society. The role of NGOs

423 *Seva Mandir* 1995: Annual Report 1994/95, Udaipur; People's Management School; pp. 41-48; p.41.

424 In the context of the Total Literacy Programme and the Joint Forest Management Programme

425 *Seva Mandir* 1994: Comprehensive Plan II-April 1994-March 1999; Udaipur; p.12.

lies in providing countervailing support to the poor such as to counteract the debilitating aspects of their dependency on the power structure, and to help them articulate and promote an agenda of development that is consistent with their long term self-interests."⁴²⁶

Seva Mandir, however, is a large organisation and different people in the organisation have different attitudes.

Seva Mandir's training sessions for elected representatives are of rather general nature. The sessions focus on general development issues and moral values such as honesty, self respect and educational aspiration, rather than on the actual provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act.

Astha

Historical Background

Astha⁴²⁷ was founded in 1986 by seven founder members among them Om Shrivastava and Gini Shrivastava who had been with Seva Mandir for more than a decade. Gini Shrivastava was asked to leave Seva Mandir and Om Shrivastava joined her after disputes with the Mehta family over leadership and development approaches.

Astha and Seva Mandir today have no major disputes, but relations are not good between the organisations.

Approach/Activities

Astha's approach focuses on training and advocacy work for tribals living in the least developed areas with particular emphasis on women. The approach of the organisation is clearly different from the Seva Mandir approach. Astha actively supports and organises political campaigns such as protest rallies and sit-ins.⁴²⁸ Under the guidance of Astha, tribals started to set up issue based committees related to the economic exploitation of tribals by means of dumping production prices.⁴²⁹ These committees later resulted in the Adivasi Vikas Manch (AVM), a tribal Development Forum. Astha's involvement in local politics and its advocacy work makes the organisation unpopular among government officials.

426 Ibid; pp. 11-12.

427 Astha is a Hindi word meaning "deep faith and conviction. The full name is Astha Sansthan. Sansthan means organisation.

428 Astha organised a rally and sit-in for tribal forest rights at the Division Commissioner's office from 6.-8th February 1996 ("Jungle Zameen Janwar Movement") demanding participation for the tribals in identification of land encroachment, inspection of physical conditions of land and requested a time frame for all Government action related to forestry affairs.

Negotiations were held with the Division Commissioner and tribal representatives simultaneously approached state government authorities in Jaipur. The Government agreed in principle but action had not followed until April 1996.

429 The following tribal committees were formed under the guidance of Astha.

(i) tendu leaves⁴²⁹ struggle committee; (ii) tendu leave co-operative society; (iii) lime stone⁴²⁹ struggle committee; (iv) Mining labour union; (v) forest protection and tribal rights samiti.

Budget/Financial Resources

Astha increased its budget from approximately Rs. 2 million in 1990 to Rs. 7 in 1995. For its large "Tribal development and Resource Centre" in Bedla, Badgaon near Udaipur, Astha received support from HIVOS, a Netherlands Human Rights NGO and the European Commission.

Attitude Towards Participatory Development and Panchayati Raj

Village committee and institution building is an integral element of Astha's development strategy and empowering Panchayats is part thereof. Astha's objective is that Panchayat institutions should have better access to funds available from various development schemes and departmental funds. It advocated for direct channelling of funds from the DRDA to Gram Panchayat Institutions which has been refused by the DRDA.

Astha accordingly AVM supported election campaigns of six Sarpanchs (four female, two male candidates): four Panchayat Samiti members and two Zila Parishad members in Kotra block. While all six Sarpanchs were successful, all four 4 AVM supported candidates lost Panchayat Samiti elections and the AVM supported Zila Parishad candidates were also not successful. Astha gives the reason that its influence is limited in the bigger Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad electorates and that party politics there have been more dominant.

Bhanwan Singh Chadana, a senior member of Astha, proved to have a sound knowledge of Panchayat legislation and extensive field experiences.⁴³⁰ An unannounced and unassisted day long visit to the Gram Panchayat Kyari in the least developed tribal block of Kotra, 85 km from Udaipur, showed that Astha seems to have significantly contributed to the strengthening of the Gram Panchayat. The Sarpanch, a young and assertive Astha volunteer, showed awareness and dynamism.⁴³¹

Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal

Historical Background

Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal, named after the local Shiva temple Ubeshwar Mahadev in Dhar, Badgaon block, was "conceived" in 1983 and registered in 1986.

Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal is headed by Kishore Saint, who had worked as a teacher in the United States and as Chief Executive of Seva Mandir until 1983. Kishore Saint, who changed his name from Sant⁴³², presents himself as a religious person of wisdom and experienced dedication to the poorest people.

Approach/Activities

UVM focuses on community development of Bhil tribals with emphasis on water resource management (micro watershed regeneration) and wasteland development (soil conservation, forestry) through appropriate technologies. UVM also carries out environmental and community development awareness campaigns.

430 Interview with Mr. Bhanwan Singh Chadana in Astha's field office in Bedla on 11.3.1996.

431 Such a visit, however, is not enough for a reliable assessment of the Gram Panchayat.

432 Sant also means saint or holy.

Regarding the area of the field study, the Gram Panchayat Dhar in Badgaon is one of the main areas of operations of UVM. UVM co-headquarters are also located in Dhar.

Budget/Financial Resources

UVM has kept no readily available records on budget for several years. Its last available audit report dates back to 1989. The Annual Report 1988-1989 mentions a total expenditure of Rs. 54 274 (between January 1988 and March 1989) and approximately Rs. 3 million as total amount received until March 1989.

UVM received DRDA funds for social forestry in 1985, funds from the Tata Trust, the National Wastelands Development Board, the Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development and the Netherlands NGO ICCO.

Attitude Towards Participatory Development and Panchayati Raj

UVM claims to promote capacity building and people's participation through decision-making through debate, consultation and awareness campaigns. It has carried out a voters awareness campaign on Panchayati legislation before the election in 1995. Kishore Saint, however, proved to have very limited knowledge on the Panchayati Raj reform believing that direct election to all three Panchayats were initiated by the BJP state local self-government.⁴³³

CASA

Historical Background

The Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) is an NGO of Indian origin, formed after independence on Indian territory when J. Nehru requested bishops to engage in social work. CASA has its Rajasthan headquarters in Udaipur. The headquarters have been located in a big building in Badgaon area near Udaipur since 1995.

Approach/Activities

CASA is an implementing and monitoring agency with preference to work in least developed and remote areas. It mainly works through local partners⁴³⁴ and attempts to co-ordinate with other NGOs for identification of local partners and sharing of information.

CASA launched a major drought relief programme (installing handpumps and tubewells, training programme for maintenance of handpumps) during the period of severe drought and rural migration in 1986/1987. In this context, drought relief work was also carried out in Gram Panchayat Kharkar in Jhadol, covered by the field study.⁴³⁵

CASA is operating in most states in India and receives funds from DANIDA⁴³⁶ and EZE⁴³⁷. Budget details for Udaipur district or Rajasthan were not readily available.

433 Discussion with Kishore Saint on 25.1.1996 and 11.3.1996 at UVM office, Udaipur.

434 In Jhadol, CASA works with Manwar Vikas Sansthan and Ankur Sansthan.

435 Discussion with Mr. Prabhat Failbus; Director CASA Rajasthan in the CASA headquarters in Udaipur on 8.3.1996.

436 Danish International Development Agency.

437 Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe. (Protestant Church Development Agency).

5.3.4 Panchayati Raj at Udaipur District Level: The Zila Parishad

5.3.4.1 Election and Composition of the Zila Parishad

The Zila Parishad Udaipur consists of 45 members. As per the elections on political party basis on February 11th, 1995 and the given reservation quotas⁴³⁸, it is composed as follows.

Table 15: Caste- and Sex Wise Composition of the Zila Parishad Udaipur

Category	Total number	Male	Female
General	16	10	6
OBC	1	1	-
SC	3	2	1
ST	25	17	8

Table 16: Political Party Wise Composition of the Zila Parishad Udaipur

Party	Total Number
BJP	22
Congress	23
Independent	-

Jhadol: 4 (3 Congress, 1 BJP); Badgaon: 2 (1 Congress 1 BJP);
Mavli: 5 (4 Congress, 1 BJP)

As per the Rajasthan Panchayati Act, 1994, the members of the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly representing constituencies in the Udaipur district are the ex-officio members of the Zila Parishad. The 45 directly elected Zila Parishad members elected the Zila Pramuk. The post of the Udaipur Zila Pramuk is reserved for a women from the Scheduled Tribe community.

In the Zila Parishad four out of the eight Scheduled Tribe women were literate. The members of the Zila Parishad decided to elect a literate women as constitutional head of the district Panchayat. They considered it necessary for the chairperson to follow written communication with bureaucracy and lower level Panchayat Institutions.

A women from the BJP was eventually elected Pramuk on February 18th, 1996 despite the one vote majority of the Congress Party among the members. According to her own information she spent Rs. 40 000-50 000 personal money on her election campaign and the BJP gave her only Rs. 4000-5000 for transportation.

The BJP managed to get a vote from a Congress Zila Parishad member from Veerdholia in Mavli.⁴³⁹ Sources from the BJP confirmed that big money was involved

438 Seats under the "general" category are not reserved but are in practise filled in only with representatives belonging to the "general category".

439 Veerdholia is one of the six Gram Panchayats covered by the field study; see chapter 5.6.4.

to secure her vote for the BJP. Competing Congress/BJP affiliations among her family background made her easily accessible for the BJP.

The BJP attached great importance to the post of the Zila Pramuk for three main reasons (i) the Zila Pramuk could play a useful role in mobilising additional votes for the national elections in May 1996 (ii) the Zila Parishad is likely to get more powers and financial resources in the context of the Panchayati Raj reform (iii) the BJP party policy focuses on extending its party basis in rural areas, a traditional stronghold of the Congress Party, and (iv) the Zila Pramuk is the highest elected Panchayati Raj representative.

The Zila Pramuk is 32 years of age and has three children with her husband who is a veterinary doctor. She is educated to the 11th Standard. Her in-laws are active in BJP politics at district level. She considers her role not very powerful in terms of direct decision-making powers. She feels, however, that she is given due respect by the District Collector and that the Chief Executive Officer is co-operative.⁴⁴⁰ She presides over the Zila Parishad meetings and other committee meetings dealing with district affairs. One of her major tasks consists of the recruitment of teachers for the primary schools (administered by the Panchayat Samitis and supervised by the Zila Parishad). People mostly approach her for transfer and recruitment requests. She mentioned that she would be in favour of a transfer of the DRDA chairmanship from the Collectorate to the Zila Parishad. Only then she would have substantial powers. She told me that MLAs and bureaucrats in her environment are against such a transfer from bureaucratic to popular control

The Zila Pramuk gets a salary of Rs. 1500 per month plus accommodation in Udaipur and allowances (servants, telephone, etc.)

5.3.4.2 Competencies

Two major competencies of the Zila Parishad consist of (i) the recruitment of teachers for primary schools functioning directly under the Panchayat Samitis, and (ii) the monitoring and supervising of such schools. These functions explain why the Zila Parishad office is usually a busy place. People try to personally approach the Zila Pramuk and Zila Parishad members for transfer requests of their relatives who work as teachers or other government staff. They hope that a contact with Zila Parishad members, especially the Zila Pramuk, would help to push their case. In Udaipur district, decision-making depends more on personal contacts than on established rules, regulations and procedures.

Concerning other development activities, the Zila Parishad plays only a consultative role at the district level and is not involved in the release of funds and implementation of the projects. It only assumes a supervisory role for a few minor schemes and projects; e.g. Janta Awas (a small housing scheme) and a small scheme on distribution of land to poor villagers. Under the SWACH project, the Zila Parishad played previously a supervisory role and had one vehicle at its disposal as Zila Parishad members proudly mentioned.

The Zila Parishad is otherwise involved in general political and development district matters such as drought relief programmes, pulse polio vaccination programmes.

440 Interview and discussion with Zila Pramuk in her office on 22.2.1996.

The Zila Parishad has, however, not yet been given direct decision-making powers for the main rural development programmes. These powers still remain with the District Collector and the Additional District Magistrate managing the DRDA.

In the context of the ongoing Panchayati Raj reform, the political status of the Zila Parishad has become more important. However, the political and development role of the Zila Parishad are not (yet) well defined and are subject to informal arrangements and personal relations between elected representatives and bureaucrats.

Zila Parishad members are not easily available. Except the Zila Pramuk, they do not frequently come to the Zila Parishad office. Only one interview was carried out with an ordinary female Zila Parishad member from the Congress Party. She lived in the village Madar in Badgaon block, about 25 km from Udaipur. She is a 60 year old Brahmin women. Her husband and other family members were active in the Congress Party but they did not encourage her to contest the elections. She was mainly supported by the previous Congress Sarpanch of her area. She is a member of the Zila Parishad Committee for Social Work and looks after local self-government hostels, mother and child welfare centres (*Anganwadis*), literacy programmes and family planning. She mentioned that she, like other Zila Parishad members, felt powerless because she had no funds to allocate. She stated that "just attending meetings and talking is meaningless". She was, however, not be in favour of a transfer of the DRDA from the District Collectorate under the authority of the Zila Parishad. She stated that this would further politicise development works and referred to her village, where a road was not completed due to fights between the Congress Party and the BJP.

5.3.4.3 Zila Parishad Meeting

During the three month period of the field study, one Zila Parishad meeting was held on January 11th, 1996 at 12 noon at the Zila Parishad office in Udaipur. The minutes of the Zila Parishad meeting give the following information.

Minutes of the Udaipur Zila Parishad meeting on January 11th, 1996⁴⁴¹

(i) Venue, Date, Participation

The meeting was attended by 73 people including the Zila Pramuk as chairperson and 34 elected Zila Parishad members. Moreover, 2 MPs (Behru Lal Meena from Salumbar and Dr. Girija Vyas from Udaipur) and 3 MLAs (Narayan Lal from Lasadia; Raghuvveer Singh from Sarada; Mahaveer Bhagora from Gogunda) attended. Government officers of various departments, the District Collector and three Additional District Magistrates also attended the meeting.

(ii) Agenda and Procedures of the Meeting

1. Discussions on previous meeting on 12.12.1995

2. Drought Relief Programme

The ADM DRDA informed about the drought relief programme in the district; discussion on the implementation of the programme in different areas and problems

441 Source: Zila Parishad Udaipur 1996, Minutes of the Zila Parishad meeting.

related to it. Dr. Girija Vyas (MP Udaipur) stated that funds were not sufficient and that the Zila Pramuk should approach the Chief Minister. The District Collector told that Drought Relief Works started from December 1st, 1995 and that employment has been given to 15 000 labourers. On the issue 'grass for cattle' it was decided that sufficient provisions will be made from March 1996 onwards. 459 drinking water handpumps were sanctioned; 217 were already installed: the targets and the progress for the case study blocks were as follows: Badgaon: 43 (13 are operating); Mavli 41 (29); Jhadol 40 (9).

3. Discussion on the pulse polio programme;
4. Discussion on the literacy programme;
5. Discussion on the family planning programme;
6. Transfer matters of Gram Secretaries;
7. Encroachment of forest land. Complaints were raised that the forest departments didn't pay labourers;
8. Discussion on better medical facilities in rural areas;
9. Complaints on BDOs. The Badgaon, Salumbar, and Gogunda members complained about the work of the BDO; transfer requested.

signature: Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad

5.3.4.4 The Zila Parishad Budget 1995/1996

The budget of the Zila Parishad is of pure administrative nature except a provision of Rs. 100 000 to be sanctioned in case of any natural calamity by the Zila Pramuk. The official budget 1995/1996 as given below might not fully represent the reality, e.g. the stamp duty on property sale has not been collected in Udaipur and probably in all over Rajasthan so far. "Corruption rates" between two and five percent are fixed for the senior staff of the Zila Parishad for contracts given to outside agents. I was told that some officers would refuse such payments.

Expenditure was less than income in the year 1995/1996. The Zila Pramuk did not spend the Rs. 100 000 for natural calamities for 1995/1996. The contribution of Panchayat Samiti to the Zila Parishad budget has been raised from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 5000 this year.

The budget of the Zila Parishad in 1995/1996

Table 17: Zila Parishad Udaipur Income

income	source	amount
	11 Panchayat Samitis	55 000
	Rs. 5000 collected from each Panchayat Samiti	
	Application form from teachers recruitment;	600 000
	Rs. 40 per candidate	
	examination arrangements	120 000
	previous balance	46 849

	others (supervision; building rent; store of cement; vehicle loan)	3 42 774
	5 % stamp duty on property sale ⁴⁴²	25 000
total		1 189 623
salaries paid by the state government		24400000
Grand total		25 589 623

Table 18: Zila Parishad Udaipur Expenditure

expenditure	source	amount
	telephone (office + Zila Pramuk residence)	150 000
	maintenance of vehicles	60 000
	tea and others	8000
	advertisement	4000
	travelling allowance for members and Zila Pramuk	40 000
	printing of forms and question paper for exams	1 20 000
	driver	30 000
	rite petition for lawyers	10 000
	furniture for meeting hall	150 000
	construction of cycle stand	100 000
	furniture for employees	30 000
	Photostat machine	75 000
		(150 000)
	intercom telephone facilities	50 000
	audit fees	3000
	vehicle loan for employees	50 000
	sports tournament	15 000
	others (tender advertisement)	100 000
	natural calamities according to Art. 33 of Raj. Panch. Raj Act to be allocated by Zila Pramuk	100 000
total	total	1 095 000

5.3.4.5 Staffing of the Zila Parishad

The Zila Parishad Udaipur has the following staff members:

- 1 Chief Executive Officer;
- 2 Deputy Senior Officers (Education);
- 2 Assistant Engineers;
- 3 Upper Division Clerks;
- 3 Lower Division Clerks;
- 2 Drivers;

5.3 Udaipur District Profile

6 Peons (file pushers);
1 Assistant Secretary;
3 Accountants;
1 Computer Operator;
1 Steno Secretary;
2 Panchayat Extension Officers.

Most of the staff members are recruited from the Rajasthan Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Services, which is a state government administration service. The Zila Parishad has no powers to recruit its own staff.

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This chapter analyses the block level Panchayat Samiti of the economically backward block of Jhadol and the two Gram Panchayats Kharkar and Godana. Both have a women Sarpanch. The Panchayati Raj reform has further politicised development in the tribal block of Jhadol. The government and NGOs provided significant development assistance in Jhadol, but their co-operation with the Panchayats was rather poor. NGOs in particular demonstrated little efficiency in their work and conflicts arose between them.

At the block level, the female tribal Pradhan did not demonstrate leadership qualities and was not part of the local male power clique. She lived far away from headquarters. She was also inexperienced and did not have influential contacts within the district administration. However, she received some respect from her staff and demonstrated a moderate commitment to forward development proposals of Gram Panchayats, preferably of those with a BJP affiliation of the Sarpanch.

In the Gram Panchayat Kharkar development frustrations were at peak level and villagers were divided among themselves. The illiterate tribal female Sarpanch was unable to provide guidance and to approach the female Pradhan from the rival BJP party for development proposals.

The Gram Panchayat Godana has a smart Scheduled Caste women as Sarpanch. She enjoyed good relations with the BJP Pradhan. The Gram Panchayat has played a substantial role in obtaining development funds, which were used chiefly for construction activities.

5.4.1 Characteristics

General Information, Statistics

Jhadol block, located in the hilly regions south west of Udaipur, has a high concentration of tribal people. The block is one of the poorest in Udaipur district. Deforestation is a major problem, migration (in particular seasonal migration) is high and the literacy rate is the third lowest in Udaipur district. Out of the 45 elected Sarpanchs of Jhadol, 15 Sarpanchs are women. Nine women out of 15 and seven men out of 30 are illiterate and are only able to give their signature. In the past decades, government officers on assignment to Jhadol considered it as a punishment to work in the area⁴⁴², because of its few infrastructure facilities, its isolated location in the hills and the high occurrence of diseases (e.g. guinea worm, naru). The situation has, however, improved somewhat in recent years. There is now a small metal road from Jhadol to Udaipur making the block more accessible.

Jhadol receives a high level of development assistance. Government and a large number of ever increasing NGO projects mainly target literacy, watershed and forestry deficiencies.

Table 19: Jhadol Block Statistics

1428.34 square kms.
45 Gram Panchayats
256 villages
population: 147 044
density: 103
literacy: 19.81 % (third lowest)
SC 2.92 % (second lowest)
ST 71.23% (third highest)
Source: DRDA Udaipur; 22.8.1995

442 The local expression for describing Jhadol was "Kala Pani".

The allocated reservation quotas for Sarpanchs in Jhadol reflect the population densities of the different castes and classes.

Table 20: Reservation Quotas for Sarpanchs of 45 Gram Panchayats in Jhadol

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	9	5	4
OBC	1	1	-
SC	1	-	1
ST	34	24	10

Source: Panchayat Samiti office Jhadol; dated 8.2.1996

Government Development Assistance in Jhadol

DRDA schemes are operating in Jhadol and a large number of families living below the official poverty line (annual income below Rs. 11 000) are eligible for support under the various schemes.

The Lok Jumbish and the Sericulture Development Programme are jointly implemented by the government and NGOs.

(a) Lok Jumbish is a literacy programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan⁴⁴³ with a separate project administration unit consisting mainly of staff on deputation from the Education Department of the Government of Rajasthan. It started in Jhadol in June 1992 and covers all 256 villages. The project divides the block into 9 clusters and NGOs are appointed 'Project Implementation Agencies' in most areas. Seva Mandir is the implementing agency in two clusters.

The project is termed a full literacy programme, targeting children as well as adults. Literacy points where education material is available are established all over Jhadol block and volunteers are recruited either by NGOs or directly by Lok Jumbish educated villagers.

The government's monitoring is quantity-(number of literacy point) rather than quality-oriented. The project implementation further suffers from administrative problems with regards to recruitment and payment of volunteers. There is also a lack of co-ordination and communication between the government and the NGOs.⁴⁴⁴ The following field experience illustrates such problems:

The Lok Jumbish project had a provision of paying Rs. 300 to so-called "para-workers" who look after the literacy points in the villages. When Seva Mandir was appointed 'implementing agency' of the Lok Jumbish project in two clusters, it paid Rs. 200 to its para-workers because the NGO had a general pay-rate of Rs. 200 for its para-workers. After some time, the Seva Mandir para-workers under the Lok Jumbish project discovered that they got less money than Lok Jumbish para-workers in other clusters. When they

443 The funding ratio SIDA, Gov. of India, Gov. of Rajasthan is 3:2:1.

444 The SDM of Jhadol, however, organised one meeting with NGOs in order to learn about the progress of the project and to improve communication between the various implementing agencies.

complained to Seva Mandir, they were told that the Lok Jumbish project was only temporary and that Seva Mandir could not increase the pay-rate just for this temporary period. The villagers suspected that Seva Mandir kept the additional Rs. 100 for the organisation instead of giving it to the workers. Seva Mandir staff rejected the allegations and told the villagers that they should believe in voluntary work and not demand the Rs. 300. This argument was not persuasive to the para-workers and they organised a strike against the organisation. What transpired could not be followed up during the period of the field study.

(b) Another major project is the Sericulture Development Programme under the supervising authority of the Tribal Area Development Department. The implementing agency is the NGO Rajasthan Vidyapeeth (NGO). The programme was introduced in 1985 with the overall objective of promoting income generation and to reducing migration. The advantage of silk production is that it has the shortest crop period (spanning only 35) with three harvest seasons in March, August and October. The project provides training for farmers in mulberry and castor cultivation, silk worm rearing, silk yarn reeling, silk spinning, silk yarn twisting, silk yarn weaving, silk dyeing and painting and manufacturing of handloom.

In Pai village, where a sericulture society was established in 1984, 50 percent of the villagers are employed in the silk worm production process. Production levels, however, are low⁴⁴⁵ and child labour, particularly with female children, is involved in the production process.

The major Sanitation Water and Community Health Project - which has (almost) eradicated the guineaworm disease in Jhadol and provided safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to villages - was, after nine years, completed in 1995.⁴⁴⁶

NGO Development Assistance in Jhadol

The Jhadol block with its specific characteristics (high concentration of tribal population, low literacy rate, rampant deforestation, natural beauty) experiences an ever-growing NGO activity. Jhadol is one of the major areas of operation of Seva Mandir. Seva Mandir has a Jhadol budget of around Rs. 6 million in 1995/96 (Rs. 7 million in 1994/95), 35 full time staff and 235 para-workers. Seva Mandir is operating in 25 Gram Panchayats covering 120 villages. Its activities include education, wasteland development, women development, Joint Forest Management, water resource development and health.

During the period of the field study, a dispute occurred between the NGO forum SATI and Seva Mandir over a literacy programme. The fifteen NGOs, associated under the forum SATI, had elaborated a literacy project proposal and had submitted it to the donor agency CCF. Seva Mandir complained that the project was a duplication of existing literacy activities under Lok Jumbish and Seva Mandir implementation. One of the NGOs is Gramin Vikas Evam Paryawaran Sixan Sansthan (GVEPSS) which started

445 This is mainly due to difficulties in maintaining the proper temperature for the Indian-Japanese silk worm egg species imported from Bangalore / South India.

446 The project is further described in chapter 3.2. It was an all India example for changing government development strategies by setting up special project management units. The SWACH Government unit has now been transformed into a registered NGO.

with survey activities in the Gram Panchayats Badrana, Kharkar, Godana and Wogala in February 1996. What transpired could not be followed up during the course of the field study.

A number of NGOs were involved in the Lok Jumbish programme. During the period of the field study, one meeting was held between NGO representatives and the Sub-Division Magistrate in order to discuss the project implementation.

During the period of the field study, the activist oriented NGO GVEPSS organised a protest rally at the Panchayat Samiti office on January 29th, 1996 to complain about the failure of government programmes. The organisation is also working on bonded labour issues and has the support of the famous national child labour eradication activist Swami Agnivesh.

5.4.2 Panchayat Samiti Jhadol

Composition, Elections, Personal Profiles

Panchayat Samiti elections were held on a party political basis in February 1995. The BJP won a majority of seats. Pradhan and Up-Pradhan both belong to the BJP. Given the sex- and caste/class-reservation quotas, the composition of the Jhadol Panchayat Samiti is as follows:

Table 21: Composition of the Panchayat Samiti Jhadol

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	6	3	3
OBC	-	-	-
SC	1	1	-
ST	16	10	6

The seat of the Pradhan is reserved for a women, but not allocated to a particular caste. A 23 year old unmarried Scheduled Tribe women won the seat. She completed the 9th Standard in school. Her father and some of her relatives are active in BJP district politics. She did not give the impression of a powerful person, but she enjoyed at least some respect from the government officers in the Panchayat Samiti office. She belongs to the remote village of Som. Therefore she did not frequently come to the Panchayat Samiti headquarters.

The previous Pradhan is a Rajput belonging to the former royal family. His strong personality made him a powerful and influential person in Jhadol. The powerful local business men (hotel industry) and agriculturist became the Up-Pradhan since he could not qualify for the post of the Pradhan, which was reserved for a female candidate. He was well respected by government officers as well as Panchayat Samiti members and Sarpanchs of the area. He was previously the unopposed Pradhan and this time nobody contested the post of the Up-Pradhan against him.

Among the other Panchayat members were a few vocal women. They showed some interest in Panchayat affairs. However, they seemed to have no major opportunities to participate in Panchayat affairs as meetings were frequently postponed or cancelled.

Finances, Staff, Meetings

Getting information on finances at Panchayat Samiti level was extremely difficult. The elected representatives and government officers seemed not completely aware of the various sources of income as well as expenditures and were confusing regulations and budget heads.

It was, however, mentioned that the Panchayat Samiti gets Rs. 5 per person in four instalments from the government, funds from the DRDA under the various schemes and a small income of an education tax (Rs. 2 per family per year), a flour meal tax (Rs. 25 per year as occupation tax). A sum of Rs. 50 000 per year received for carcasses was also mentioned.

The staff of the Panchayat Samiti (as mentioned by the Pradhan with help of the Education Extension Officer) consists of the BDO, four Education Extension Officers, one Panchayat Extension Officer, one Khadi Extension Officer (hand loom textiles) and Pragati (Progress) Extension Officer, two Accountants, one Junior Engineer, one Driver, one UDC, two LDC, four Pyons, 21 Gram Secretaries (Gram Sevaks). 320 teachers are working in the primary schools administered by the Panchayat Samiti.

During the period of the field study, a Panchayat Samiti meeting was initially scheduled for the January 24th, 1996 but was later postponed until January 29th, 1996. The first invitation letter was issued on January 12th, 1996 and signed by the BDO. The meeting was cancelled because Panchayat Samiti officers who were supposed to attend the meeting were unavailable. A new invitation letter, again signed by the BDO and not the Pradhan, was issued on January 17th, 1996 inviting the Panchayat Samiti members for January 29th, 1996 to the Panchayat Samiti office in Jhadol village. The following agenda was attached (i) review of previous meeting; (ii) literacy; (iii) family planning; (iv) Aakal Rahat (drought programme); (v) any other topic. The agenda was signed by the BDO.

The meeting was again postponed. The Pradhan was apparently not very keen to hold the meeting. The BDO was absent. He was at short notice called to Udaipur by the District Collector. Other Panchayat Samiti officers to whom problems relate were also not present.

The Panchayat Samiti members seemed to be frustrated and walked out of the Pradhan's office and gathered outside. The Panchayat Samiti members were complaining that Panchayat Samiti officers did not attend Panchayat Samiti meetings and that they did not receive the minutes of Panchayat Samiti meetings. One member stated "...all we get is transport allowance and tea, nothing else, no discussions even". One well educated handicapped person had come from the village Daya, almost 100 km away and had to walk the last 9 km. The SDM made a token effort to bring everyone back into the office. The Up-Pradhan was balancing the views of the Panchayat Samiti members.

According to information provided by the Panchayat Samiti member of the Godana area, another Panchayat Samiti meeting was held on March, 13th, 1996. An inspection of Gram Panchayats - covering four per week - was under discussion. The use of drought relief funds and other construction proposals were also discussed.

Political and Development Dynamics

The political and development status of the Jhadol block has been enhanced within the context of the Panchayati Raj reform. The number of Gram Panchayat constituencies was increased from 26 to 45 taking into account the population growth. The BJP secured a major victory in the Panchayat Samiti elections and the Sarpanch elections. While the local MLA is from the Congress Party, the Pradhan and the majority of the elected Sarpanchs are affiliated with the BJP.

Since new roads have made Jhadol more accessible, the block has been discovered by many political and development agents. Jhadol experienced the highest level of political party and NGO activism of all three blocks during the course of the case studies. It is the only block where I witnessed demonstrations and functions by political parties and NGOs between January and March 1996.

Local policy issues and conflicts were mainly related to land matters. In the past decade, a large piece of land which was originally allocated for a temple site had been sold and many people made money out of it. Rajputs and other upper castes often used middle-men from backward communities for land acquisition because legislation prohibits people from the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities to sell land to other communities.

Drought relief was a major development issue in 1996. A committee at Sub-Division level had been formed to submit proposals to the District Collector. In the sub-division Jhadol / Kotra, the Sub Division Magistrate is the chairman of the committee and the Pradhans and the BDOs of Jhadol and Kotra, four Panchayat Samiti member, the two MLAs of the area, three members of national political parties, ten nominated Sarpanchs, two NGO representatives, the two Teshsildar and an assistant Engineer are members of the committee.⁴⁴⁷

The Sub-Division Magistrate with office and residence in Jhadol village, the main village of the block, the Sarpanch of Jhadol village, the Up-Pradhan and the BDO appeared to be the most influential people in Jhadol. Respect was paid to the Pradhan, but she lived far away from block headquarters and her social status as an unmarried young woman didn't allow her to have informal contacts with the others.

The Panchayat Samiti members, including the Pradhan, have no clearly defined decision-making powers. Their influence in forwarding proposals of different Gram Panchayats depends mainly upon personal contacts with government officials; in particular the BDO, the District Collector and the Additional District Magistrates, but contacts to local politicians also helped in the negotiation process. This underscores the theory that the personal factor is crucial for the development performance of the Panchayat institutions. Panchayat members gain influence through vertically constituted social and political relations with influential government authorities.

The Pradhan demonstrated some commitment to approve development proposals of Gram Panchayats, preferably of those with a BJP affiliated Sarpanch. The Pradhan expressed regret over the delay in the sanctioning of development proposals. She related the problem to her undeveloped contact with the busy District Collector. She informed me that it would usually take three to four months to sanction proposals. Moreover, not all proposals would be considered for approval. However, for works under Apna Gao Apna Kam where villagers contribute 20-30% of the funds, the approval procedure

447 Source: Sub-Division Magistrate, Jhadol.

seemed to be faster. She mentioned that such proposals would get sanctioned within one to two months.

The very special role of the male Brahmin Sarpanch from the Jhadol village also illustrated the importance of vertically constituted personal relations for obtaining influence in local development and policy matters. The Jhadol Sarpanch acted as a sort of personal friend and assistant of the SDM. He was involved in all the important policy and development matters. For example, he was recruited for conducting training sessions for Wardpanchs in the Panchayat Samiti office for which he had no specific qualifications. A Sarpanch should normally not be considered to be a desirable candidate for conducting training sessions for Wardpanchs, because a major objective of such training sessions for Wardpanchs should consist in providing the trainees with more self-confidence in dealing with their often powerful and dominant Sarpanchs in order to enhance democratic decision making. The Jhadol Sarpanch also attempted to provide me with some guidance during the field visits.

The Pradhan and ordinary Panchayat Samiti members seemed to not be a part of the local power clique although they showed some activism; e.g. they loudly complained when the Panchayat Samiti meeting was cancelled for the second time in January 1996. The members of the Panchayat Samiti expressed frustration and stated that they would get little support from the Pradhan and also would not get involved in Gram Panchayat decision-making. They informed me that Sarpanchs sometimes perceived them as rivals. Panchayat Samiti members further complained about increased corruption and stated that funds for Indira Awas Yojana (Housing Scheme) were misappropriated to people who already had good houses. They also reported that not all beneficiaries of India Awas Yojana did actually construct houses with the money.

Other experience in Jhadol demonstrated that the Panchayat Samiti had no influence on the recruitment of important staff and totally depended on decisions made by higher ranking administrative authorities. During the period of the field study a change in the post of BDO occurred. The first BDO was transferred to Gogunda block on February 2nd, 1995 while the then BDO from Gogunda shifted to Jhadol. The previous Gogunda BDO had requested the *District Collector* for the transfer of the first Jhadol BDO with a fraud signature of the Jhadol Pradhan. He made allegations against the first Jhadol BDO in the name of the Pradhan because he suffered under the Gogunda Pradhan. The Pradhan filed a First Information Report (FIR) with the Jhadol police, but no action had been taken at this writing. Other reliable sources at district level informed that 16 cases were already filed against the newly appointed Jhadol BDO. The Pradhan did not enjoy good relations with the newly appointed BDO.

Table 22: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Panchayat Samiti Jhadol

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	low	See statistics, e.g. third lowest literacy level of 11 blocks in Udaipur district.
2. Social and Political Harmony at the Panchayat Samiti Level	medium	No major issues of dispute, but Pradhan and Up-Pradhan and ordinary members did also not demonstrate much unity (when the cancellation of the meeting was announced).
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Samiti Members	medium	Pradhan completed 9th Std.; Up-Pradhan highly educated, most ordinary members less educated, but not illiterate.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	Nobody among the Panchayat Samiti members was a true political activist, but most showed general awareness and took interest in local issues.
5. Participation of Women	medium	The Pradhan and a few vocal Panchayat Samiti women showed more interest and participation than the women in Badgaon and Mavli, although they were far from being political or development activists.
6. Development Commitment of the Panchayat Samiti	medium	The Panchayat Samiti regularly forwarded proposals of the Gram Panchayat without showing a special commitment or strategy to develop the block or certain areas within.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	high	The Lok Jumbish programme and the Sericulture project provide for major development inputs in Jhadol. Many poor tribal families are eligible for DRDA funds.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	high	A large number of NGOs have identified the poor tribal block as one of their priority areas of operation in the district.
9. Co-operation and Harmony Between the Panchayat Samiti and the Block Level Administration, in Particular the BDO	low	The Pradhan did not enjoy good relations with the newly appointed BDO who was a corrupt officer. Panchayat Samiti members complained that block level staff did not attend the meetings.

5.4.3 Gram Panchayat Kharkar

5.4.3.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Kharkar is located 8 km south-west of the block headquarters of Jhadol. From a nearby juncture (½ km), it is connected to Udaipur by a small and hilly metal road of about 63 km. The Gram Panchayat Kharkar consists of the three revenue villages Kharkar, Nayagaon and Vanpura. It covers an area of 1808 ha. It has a population of approx. 2500 consisting of a strong Bhil Adivasi community, Meghwals and a few Brahmin, Rajput and Jain families. The biggest village is Kharkar with a population of around 1800.

There is not much social harmony in Kharkar. Villagers showed little frankness in discussing village conflicts. However, information was collected and it was observed that the Gram Panchayat is suffering from severe conflicts between different communities. A local *Sadhu* who acted as village priest monopolised religious life and antagonised between different village communities. He died three years ago, but the tense situation still prevails.⁴⁴⁸

5.4.3.2 Development Findings

The villages of the Gram Panchayat Kharkar are poor compared to the other villages covered by the field study. Some private houses and shops in Kharkar give not the impression of a very poor Gram Panchayat, but few community assets are available. There is no check dam in Kharkar. Fifty to seventy tubewells are channelling water from the wells to private fields. Some wells have gone dry and tubewells would need better maintenance. Kharkar is suffering from water scarcity and a lack of irrigation facilities. Seasonal migration is among the highest (around 40 percent) of all six Gram Panchayats covered by the field study. The estimated literacy rate - around 10 percent -15 percent according to estimates of school teachers and villagers - is very low, particularly among older people. There is a primary, a middle, a secondary school and an adult literacy centre in the main village Kharkar. The other villages have no education facilities. 110 boys and 23 girls went to secondary school at the time of the field study. A sub-health centre is located in Kharkar in a small rented building, but a new dispensary is about to be constructed.

The Gram Panchayat Kharkar has a large forest area and a cattle population of about 2300 cattle. The main crops are wheat, maze, chana, dal, chilly, ginger, barley and sugar cane, but agriculture has been badly affected by the drought in 1995. Around 20 percent of the agricultural products are directly sold in Udaipur. An agricultural co-operative society provides for seeds, fertiliser and crop treatment.

Villagers mentioned employment for the younger and educated unemployed, medical facilities, veterinary services, building of check dams and irrigation networks, drinking water through deepening of old wells, electricity, a library and allotment of residential areas for housing schemes as the main development priorities. They

448 Information were mainly collected from the Gram Secretary.

expressed much frustration over the work of government departments, the DRDA, banks as well as NGOs. Villagers claimed that attendance of government department staff was poor and that they had not been properly informed or trained about the nature and eligibility of schemes and procedures involved in getting loans.

The construction of boundary walls and plantations which was carried out by the Forest Department was not considered as a development priority by the villagers. Villagers experienced maintenance problems with tubewells and handpumps supplied by NGOs (CASA) or government departments. Villagers informed me that other development interventions by NGOs (Vanwas Kalya Parishad in literacy) and Ankur (agriculture) were sporadic and showed no serious commitment.

5.4.3.3 Gram Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

Kharkar is one of the newly created Gram Panchayats in Jhadol, before it was a part of Badrana Panchayat. The seat of the Sarpanch is reserved for a Scheduled Tribe women. The Gram Panchayat has 9 Wardpanch seats. The caste / class- and sex composition of the present Gram Panchayat (without Sarpanch) is as follows:

Table 23: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Kharkar in Jhadol

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	2	1	1
OBC	2	1	1
SC	1	1	-
ST	4	3	1

Elections

Six tribal women candidates (two Congress-, two independent-, two BJP candidates) contested the Sarpanch elections held in February 1995. A 32 year old women who is affiliated with the Congress Party won the elections with a majority of 327 votes. She mentioned that she spent about Rs. 10 000 from her family's pocket on the elections, while political parties - usually generous in providing food, hard drinks, blankets and cash - were not actively involved in the election campaign.

Panchayat Samiti elections were contested by three independents, one BJP and one Congress candidate. The successful BJP candidate had been given a party ticket by the three member election committee at block level. He mentioned that he had carried out an intensive door-to-door campaign.

Personal Profiles

The Sarpanch is illiterate but able to give her signature. She admits that her husband, a government employee in the Irrigation Department, is making all the decisions and has motivated her to contest for the elections on a Congress ticket. Villagers expressed regret that she had no knowledge of development schemes and no experience in approaching authorities on her own. Her husbands' government job and

the absence of other competent candidates have helped her to win the election. The Gram Secretary, stationed in the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Meghwas, told me that she was passive like a "statue" and that working with her was almost impossible despite best efforts. She would make no decisions on her own, but only with her husband and without the involvement of other Wardpanchs. She did not involve the Wardpanchs in the allotment of houses to the poorest and handicapped persons which later created problems. Villagers also mentioned that she did not respect Gram Sabha decisions.

The Up-Sarpanch is a young assertive Rajput from the BJP. He has not good relations with the Sarpanch. He told me that he would sometimes boycott Gram Panchayat meetings because the Sarpanch did not share any relevant information with the Wardpanchs.

The Panchayat Samiti member who represents Kharkar at Panchayat Samiti level belongs to the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Meghwas. He is a young unemployed person from the Meghwal community (Scheduled Caste). He told me that he was not involved in decision-making in Kharkar and that he could hardly see any substantial development role for a Panchayat Samiti member. Villagers stated that they observed rivalries between him and the Sarpanch. Both would claim leadership.

The Gram Secretary is in charge of the two Gram Panchayats Meghwas and Kharkar. He did not regularly visit Kharkar. He spent most of his time in Meghwas. He himself claimed that he would visit Kharkar around 10 times per month, but this seemed to be an exaggerated figure according to information received from the villagers. He seemed not to be a very dynamic person and did not familiarise with villagers during the Gram Sabha meeting.

He expressed some frustrations working in Kharkar, referring to major conflicts between different communities in the village. He told that the Sarpanch was illiterate and was guided by her husband, who only wanted to extract some personal benefit out of her job. He further analysed that villagers were divided into factions, had high expectations, but showed now commitment if asked to provide matching funds for development works.

The Patwari is a young man who apparently has some friendship with the Panchayat Samiti member. He seems to have no major conflict with the villagers. In the Gram Sabha meeting, however, a tribal villager complained that he had taken a Rs. 500 bribe from him without delivering services.

Training

The Sarpanch has received a five day training in Udaipur organised by the Zila Parishad. She remembered very little. Her knowledge on the new Panchayati Raj Act was confined to the reservation issue and the number of mandatory meetings. Some Wardpanchs attended the training session at the Panchayat Samiti office.

Meetings

The Sarpanch and the villagers resorted to formal replies regarding Panchayat meetings, Gram Sabha meetings and the co-ordination between Sarpanchs and Wardpanchs.

Gram Sabha Meeting in Kharkar on March 19th, 1996

Date and Venue: March 19th, 1996 at 11 a.m. (scheduled time, the meeting actually started two hours later at around 1 p.m.) in the courtyard of the middle school building in the main village Kharkar.

Arrangements: for "VIPs" some blanket for sitting and some desk for writing were arranged; tea and water was served on priority basis for VIPs, and special milk was prepared for the BDO. The female Sarpanch, the BDO and the Gram Secretary were seated in the centre. My research partner and I sat close to the female Sarpanch. Headmasters, Extension Officers and Panchayat Samiti member were seated near the desk.

Participants: around 120 people, arriving and leaving participants, the core group consisted of 70-80 people, the ST women Sarpanch attended without her husband (on duty as Peon); 7 out of 9 Wardpanchs attended the meeting, among them all three women Wardpanchs; BDO, Education Extension Officer, Gram Secretary, Headmasters of primary, middle and secondary school; Patwari, Panchayat Samiti member and other villagers, among them 6-7 women; the SDM and the Jhadol village Sarpanch joined (as VIPs) at 5 p.m. for a follow up meeting; the husband of the Sarpanch came also after his work at around 5 p.m.

the quorum (10 percent of the of electorate) was not completed according to the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act but nobody bothered.

Agenda: (written agenda prepared by the Gram Secretary):

- 1. review of previous meeting;*
- 2. proposal for IRDP;*
- 3. preparation of proposals for Jiwan Dhara (well scheme);*
- 4. selection of Indira Awas beneficiaries (rural housing);*
- 5. discussing construction work for 1996/1997;*
- 6. others (with the permission of Sarpanch): Vigilance Committee (suggestions of my research partner Ms. Shamata Seth).*

Proceedings:

The Gram Secretary started the meeting after the Sarpanch had arrived at 1 p.m. He did not read out any minutes but started to inform about income and expenditure of the year 1995/1996. He could not speak very loudly and the situation quickly got out of his control. Villagers complained that the information was too brief.

Then the Education Extension Officer took over and started to inform about the government development programmes: Indira Awas Yojana, Janta Awas Yojana⁴⁴⁹,

449 Another housing scheme. Villagers have to deposit an amount of Rs. 6000 at the Gram Panchayat office, the Government then provides Rs. 6000 matching funds for a construction of a house. The initial payment of Rs. 6000 will be returned after 15 years.

construction work in the village; road, handpumps, wells, deepening the wells and pipeline funds available under from Jawahar Rozgna Yoyana, Apna Gaon Apna Kam and Tis Zila - Tis Kam. Villagers complained that last years' work should be discussed because their was little work.

Then the BDO arrived and put himself in the centre of the little VIP arrangement and first called upon all Wardpanchs like school children. Then he requested the Gram Secretary to give him precise information on the budget. It turned out that there was a balance of Rs. 27 326 which had not been used for works. Moreover, the budget was not prepared according to allegedly prescribed rules and not entered into the register book. The BDO scolded the Gram Secretary in front of everybody and suggested that villagers should request his replacement.

Then the BDO himself made proposals for village development: an extension of the bus stand; repair of the school building in Nayagaon; construction of a platform in every village. Villagers agreed on these construction proposals.

Then a discussion on previous failures started and villagers made complaints. The BDO had a very rough and arrogant way of talking and suggested that people should directly come to him. The Up-Sarpanch was assertive and aggressive to the BDO and the Sarpanch and told the BDO to listen and stop his monologue. He also informed the audience that he did not normally attend Gram Panchayat meetings, because the Sarpanch did not share any information with Wardpanchs.

An apparently poor tribal villager complained that he had paid Rs. 500 to the Patwari for the digging of his well under Jiwan Dhara but no action has followed. Other villagers, including the Panchayat Samiti member, laughed at him and asked him why he had made such stupid payment. They told him that it was all his own fault.

The BDO informed the audience that the DRDA had sanctioned three proposals in Kharkar village: (i) Sub Health Centre Rs. 250 000 sanctioned in February 1996; the Gram Panchayat had received confirmation on March 17th, 1996; (ii) community centre in Kharkar; (iii) boundary walls for the school in Kharkar.

Aggressive discussions with almost physical fighting started about the selection of Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries. Villagers were suggesting their own names and names of their family members, friends and people in their home village.

The Sarpanch and the Up-Sarpanch argued with each other and the previous Sarpanch (who was an office holder for three terms) and the Panchayat Samiti member were also involved in the discussion which lasted for over one hour. The Panchayat Samiti member, a young educated man, tried to appease people.

Finally, sixteen names were selected and the Up-Sarpanch read out the names. No agreement could be reached over the priority list of Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries and it was proposed to postpone the matter to the next Gram Panchayat meeting. In the meantime the BDO had left. The fighting continued for some time and the headmaster of the secondary school, who spoke English, stated that villagers were fighting like the Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha and that the Indian fighting culture was the reason why the country was still underdeveloped.

The next agenda point was the appointment of members for the Vigilance Committee. Again heated discussions between BJP and Congress supporters started. The Up-Sarpanch suggested that only literate people should be members of the committee. Among the eventually selected six members were one women and the previous Sarpanch.

Follow up meeting with the Sub-Division Magistrate

At 5 p.m. the SDM approached with his Jeep and villagers gathered again. He presented government welfare schemes in a "godfather talking style", but certainly more friendly and more interactive than the BDO. He informed the villagers about famine schemes. He said that nobody should die because of the drought and that the state government has made the following two provisions to prevent starvation: (i) to establish a grass depot at each Gram Panchayat; and (ii) to establish a food depot at each Gram Panchayat. He further informed the patiently listening audience that the grass depot was not needed in Jhadol because there would be no shortage of grass in the Gram Panchayat area. He promised, however, that one bag of wheat would be delivered to the Gram Panchayat for free distribution to needy people.

He also addressed the issue of water scarcity and requested the Sarpanch to provide a list of defect handpumps. He informed the audience that the defect pumps should be repaired by the water works department. He claimed that the BDO had not given all information because he did not tell about the state government provisions to avoid famine. At the end, he encouraged particularly the Sarpanch and other villagers to become literate.

Overall Observations

Compared to others, this Gram Sabha meeting had a high profile character. All concerned government officers, including the BDO, were present and the total participation was more than one hundred people. The women Sarpanch is illiterate and rather weak. She is not able to unite the village and to push development concerns.

The Gram Sabha meeting was characterised by the arrogant talking style of the BDO and heated discussions among villagers, but also between villagers and government staff. The main issue was the selection of Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries for which a list of sixteen people was finally prepared. No agreement could be reached on a priority list of five names.

People in Kharkar demonstrated assertiveness but they were not at all united. They claimed to have experienced big frustrations with implementation of DRDA and other government schemes. According to the villagers NGOs had only shown sporadic presence and executed few unsustainable works in the past.

The only hope for this village lies in a comprehensive development assistance approach showing awareness for social and political conflicts and a serious attempt to regain confidence of the villagers through proper implementation of government schemes and/or truly committed NGO work. The interest which government staff has taken in the Gram Sabha meeting has certainly encouraged the village community and strengthened their believe that the new Panchayati Raj Act could lead to some empowerment of village representatives.

Finances and Works

Getting precise information on the Panchayat budget, the status of Panchayat works and Panchayat proposals was very difficult. Budget and works relate to different financial sources (Panchayat Samiti, DRDA, government departments, own Panchayat sources) and answers of the Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and other villagers created a lot of confusion.

Concerning Panchayat works, the construction of a Kanji House (for animals) and a meeting platform were mentioned by the villagers. Regarding proposals, the Sarpanch informed that a proposal for a small dam (Rs. 100 000) has been sanctioned while a proposal for a bridge in Nayagaon/Vanpura was still pending. A proposal for a dispensary in Kharkar was also sanctioned according to information in the local press which were later confirmed by villagers.

The Sarpanch expressed the will to develop the village, but she did not specify priorities. She felt powerless in dealing with authorities and apparently had great difficulties in approaching the Panchayat Samiti. Villagers and herself complained that the female Pradhan was not co-operative because she belonged to the BJP.

Older male villagers expressed no favourable opinion of the new Panchayati Raj Act and its consequences for village development. They told me that reservation quota and over-confidence in youngsters would negatively affect the functioning of the Gram Panchayat. The previous Sarpanch and the Wardpanchs of the area were more experienced than the newly elected representatives of the newly created Gram Panchayat Kharkar.

External Relations

The Gram Panchayat Kharkar had no good external relations. The Sarpanch and villagers complained that the Pradhan was not listening to the concerns of the Congress Sarpanch. Villagers further complained that the previous BDO (until February 5th, 1996) was not very co-operative. With the new BDO, villagers had heated arguments at the Gram Sabha meeting. Villagers also expressed dissatisfaction with Panchayat Samiti Extension Officers. They did not visit the villages regularly. NGOs in their view were not reliable partners because their work was only sporadic.

One male villager told me a story from his visit to the local bank when he wanted to get IRDP funds.

When I arrived at the bank with my proposal which had already been signed and stamped by government authorities, the officer of the bank refused to give me the money. Later I returned with friends to see the bank manager, but I still did not get the money. We exchanged heated arguments. He told me that I would not repay the loan even if the papers were signed by government authorities. The bank manager eventually threatened us to call the police if we did not immediately leave the place. Since then I have not taken any further action.

The Gram Panchayat Kharkar did not have any kind of established co-operation with the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Meghwas although both were represented by the same Panchayats Samiti member at the block level.

5.4.3.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Kharkar

The findings in Kharkar Panchayat are the most depressing among all villages. The Scheduled Tribe women Sarpanch is illiterate, fully directed by her husband, and unable to provide leadership.

Kharkar itself is a newly created Gram Panchayat and village representatives have neither administrative experience nor knowledge on development schemes, budget and

funds. The literacy level is low. Training for Sarpanch and Wardpanch was considered to be not very useful.

The village communities were divided among themselves and frustrated over Panchayat, government and NGO development work. Villagers generally rely on their private development initiatives rather than believing in assistance from outside authorities. Villagers were assertive. They enthusiastically gathered for complaining and spontaneously mentioned various development priorities. The attendance of the Gram Sabha meeting was high.

The Gram Secretary and the Panchayat Samiti member are both stationed in the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Meghwas and have no permanent presence in Kharkar. The villagers did not consider them as partners of the Gram Panchayat. Their visits to the Gram Panchayat Kharkar were rather sporadic. The Sarpanch felt that she was disconnected from the Panchayat Samiti because the Pradhan and the local Panchayat Samiti member belonged to the rival political party.

Table 24: Ranking of Development Indicators in Kharkar

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	low	Few community assets (no check dam), high migration, low literacy level and serious water scarcity.
2. Social and Political Harmony	low	Conflicts between different castes and communities. A local <i>Sadhu</i> who acted as village priest monopolised religious life and antagonised between different village communities. He died three years ago, but the tense situation still prevails.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	low	The Sarpanch is illiterate, she can only give her signature. Some of the Wardpanchs are also illiterate.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	Villagers have little knowledge on Panchayat affairs, but they are assertive and vocal. Their participation is not very productive.
5. Participation of Women	low	The female Sarpanch is guided by her husband, other women are not active.
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Gram Panchayat	low	The Panchayat is paralysed by conflicts between its members.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	medium	People expressed frustrations over government development assistance, but Kharkar received at least approval for a dispensary; literacy programmes were also operating in Kharkar.

5.4 Jhadol Block

8. Level of NGO Development assistance	low	CASA has installed a few handpumps in the late 1980s; only preliminary discussions were recently held with an NGO
9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary	low	The Gram Secretary did not regularly visit Kharkar. He was discouraged by the social disharmony in the villages.
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	medium	Fairly big attendance (120 people). Heated, but not very productive discussions. SDM and BDO joined the meeting for a while.

5.4.4 Gram Panchayat Godana

5.4.4.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Godana is located 5 km south of the block headquarters of Jhadol. Its distance from Udaipur is 59 km. Godana is near a small metal road which continues to the Gram Panchayat Kharkar. The Gram Panchayat Godana consists of five revenue villages: the main village Godana, Aarwarda, Lilawas, Ganeshpura and Kharkrakhera. The whole Gram Panchayat extends to an area of 1270 ha. It has a population of approx. 2700 consisting of mainly Meghwals, Brahmins, Bhil Adivasis, Rajputs and Suthars. The biggest village is Godana with a population of approx. 1300.⁴⁵⁰

5.4.4.2 Development Findings

Godana enjoys a slightly better development status than Kharkar. The Gram Panchayat has a new Panchayat building and the government has recently established a mother and child welfare unit. Family programmes are carried out on a monthly basis. Houses were allocated to villagers under Indira Awas Yojana. Children get food in schools. The literacy level is low (around 15 percent as per estimates of government officials and villagers). Godana, Aarwarda and Kharkrakhera have upper primary schools. The nearest dispensary is in Jhadol where a nurse from Godana works.

Agriculture is the main occupation of villagers in Godana. The main crops are wheat, maze, ginger, barley, sugar cane. Rice is grown in Ganeshpura. Crops were badly affected by the drought in 1995. Villagers mentioned a loss of income of about 25 percent. The Gram Panchayat has a few irrigation facilities such as small dams (*anicuts*), wells and tubewells. No agricultural co-operative society is operating in Godana. Gram Panchayat Godana has a strong cattle population (approx. 3850⁴⁵¹). A few people in Godana get their main income through a government job.

Villagers mentioned that NGOs so far had only made surveys or held discussions and no action has followed. The NGO Naryana Seva Sansthan had organised a meeting on literacy.

The Sarpanch and her husband, a government employee, but also other villagers expressed some satisfaction with government development activities and mentioned that some officials discussed work with them. They did not place much hope in NGO work.

Villagers complained that the water level had gone down over the past years, in particular this year and mentioned irrigation, drinking water (deepening of wells), street lights, the establishment of a post office and employment as their main development priorities.

450 Population figures are calculated on the basis of Census 1991 documents and some updated information from the Office of the Sub-Division Magistrate.

451 Figures were given by the Office of the Sub-Division Magistrate.

5.4.4.3 Gram Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

According to Panchayat members and villagers, Gram Panchayat elections were last held in 1977 before elections took place under the new Panchayat legislation in January 1995. A Brahmin Sarpanch continued as Sarpanch until 1987 when the government declared the Gram Panchayat dissolved and appointed the Gram Secretary as the caretaker.

The Gram Panchayat consists of the Sarpanch and 9 Wardpanchs. The seat of the Sarpanch is reserved for a Scheduled Caste women. Information received on the caste- and sex-composition of the Gram Panchayat (without Sarpanch) were not consistent (e.g. confusion between OBC, SC and ST persons). The below given table attempts to standardise various information given at different meetings with villagers, but should not be taken for granted.

Table 25: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Godana in Jhadol

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	1	1	-
OBC	-	-	-
S.C	4	3	1
S.T	4	2	2

Elections

Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat elections were held on January 30th, 1995. Elections were officially not held on party basis, but the BJP organised an information session and distributed food and liquor. Four candidates contested the elections for the post of the Sarpanch: two affiliated with the BJP, one Congress-oriented candidate and one independent candidate.

The winning women candidate and now Sarpanch is 25 years old. Her husband and other villagers motivated her to contest elections. However, she also expected some personal advantages from her post, but did not elaborate any further. She secured a comfortable majority of 575 votes and was also supported by some Brahmin families.

She mentioned that she spent around Rs. 25 000 for and after the election for campaigning and the election party. She stated that she had not received a cash contribution from the BJP.

Mr. Manaria⁴⁵² stated that the Sarpanch is related to the powerful local Vasow family. The tribal family owns a lot of land in the village.

In the constituency⁴⁵³ of the Up-Pradhan, three candidates contested the elections: the now Up-Pradhan affiliated to the BJP, one Congress candidate and one independent candidate. The now Up-Pradhan won by 64 votes. He mentioned that

452 Prof. Rajendra Manaria is a sociologist in Mohan Lal Sukaria University Udaipur and had carried out a survey covering also the Godana area. Discussions on 27.3.1996.

453 The Hindi word is *ward or hamlet*.

he did not spend any money on his election campaign. The Sarpanch informed me that all other elected Wardpanchs were affiliated with the BJP.

Panchayat Samiti elections in Godana area were contested on party basis by three candidates: one from the Congress Party, one from the BJP, and two independent candidates. The BJP candidate won the elections with a majority margin of 960 votes. He mentioned that he had not spent any money on the election campaign.

Personal Profiles

The Sarpanch is a married housewife with four children from the first marriage of her husband. She is a smart and active women and approaches the block office independently. Nevertheless, she was rather shy at the Gram Sabha meeting in front of her relatives and sometimes wore a veil. She became literate through a government literacy programme and is able to do simple reading and writing. Before becoming a Sarpanch, she had done some voluntary social work in the village by helping sick people.

Her husband is revenue inspector in the government. During the period of the field study he had been transferred from Jhadol to another block because Panchayat money had allegedly been used for the construction of his and his wives private house. Information were given by relatives and the District Magistrate had made inquiries.

A few weeks later, I met both at the Collectorate, and by the time of the Gram Sabha meeting they had managed to remove the charge, and achieved that he was transferred back to Jhadol.

The BJP affiliated Up-Sarpanch is a 54 year old Rajput who completed the seventh educational standard. He works as an agriculturist. He already has experience as a Wardpanch of Godana, Gorana and, last, of Jhadol village (1988-1991). The Up-Sarpanch mentioned that he did not get the opportunity to get work in his ward, but that he was active in all meetings.

The Panchayat Samiti member (BJP) is a Brahmin of 50 years. He completed the seventh educational standard and works for a cement business. He mentioned that he was the Up-Sarpanch of Kharkar from 1978-1983, but delimitations of Panchayat constituencies were different at the time. After his tenure as Up-Sarpanch he continued to be an active social worker. He enjoys good relations with the Pradhan and also with the new BDO. He informed me that the new BDO was more competent than the previous BDO. He expressed, however, dissatisfaction that Panchayats and the Gram Sabha were not working according to their prescribed functions in the new Panchayat Raj Act. He mentioned that the Sarpanch did not involve him in development works but would directly submit proposals to the Pradhan.

The Gram Secretary had been transferred form Badgaon block on February 28th, 1996 and had just resumed his work when the case study was carried out. He was fairly well prepared for the Gram Sabha meeting.

Training

The Sarpanch received a five days training in Udaipur organised by the government. She appreciated the session but mentioned that about 15 days would be needed to be fully informed of all Panchayat matters. She demonstrated some general awareness on Panchayati Raj and government development schemes without knowing details of the new Panchayati Raj Act.

The Up-Sarpanch and some Wardpanchs attended a two days training in Jhadol block headquarters in February 1996 and expressed satisfaction. They mentioned that the session was informative without elaborating any further.

The Panchayat Samiti member had received a one-day training in Udaipur on February 28th, 1996 at the Municipality Community Centre in Udaipur organised by the government. He was not satisfied with the training, but did not add any details as to why.

Meetings

Sarpanch and Wardpanchs claimed that Gram Panchayat meetings were held twice a month with few exceptions. Invitations were given at short notice and on an informal basis. I was only able to attend the Gram Sabha meeting.

Gram Sabha meeting in Godana on March 23rd, 1996

Date and venue: March 23rd, 1996; 12 noon; Gram Panchayat Bhawan, Godana

Arrangements: a colourful blanket for VIPs was put on the floor of the small hall. The Sarpanch, the Panchayat Samiti member were seated in the centre. My research partner, Ms. Shamata Seth, and I were seated next to them. The Gram Secretary, the Patwari and the Extension Officers were seated close to the centre. The previous Sarpanch joined little later and sat close to the centre with the Up-Sarpanch. Participants: around 60 people (that was also the capacity of the hall) including Sarpanch (SC women) without her husband, Up-Sarpanch; Wardpanchs (two women sat close to the centre and only half in veil), Panchayat Samiti member, Gram Secretary, Extension Officer Progress, Patwari, later the Sub-Division Magistrate (SDM) joined and occupied in a "godfather manner" the central seat on the blanket.

The quorum (10 percent of the electorate) was not complete but nobody bothered.

Agenda: I was only verbally informed on the agenda points.

- 1. review of the previous budget 1995/1996;*
- 2. speech of the Extension Officer: information on development schemes;*
- 3. proposals for Indira Awas Yojana;*
- 4. proposal for vigilance committee;*
- 5. construction proposal for the coming year;*
- 6. other matters (with the permission of the Sarpanch).*

Proceedings:

When I joined the meeting one hour late - it surprisingly started in time - the Gram Secretary was reading out a long typed list for eligible families under Indira Awas Yojana, Jiwan Dhara and other schemes. Then Indira Awas Yojana was discussed and 46 names were selected after discussions. The Gram Secretary informed that 12 houses have been sanctioned for 1995/96.

Then the Sub Division Magistrate arrived with his Jeep. Everybody stood up and paid respect to him. He sat in the centre and first requested information on the procedures of the meeting. The Gram Secretary informed him on the discussion on Indira Awas Yojana and the shortlisting of 46 names. The SDM requested the Patwari to bring some documents on land and revenue matters. Then a brief discussion started on the role of the Gram Sabha and implementation and problems of villagers.

Villagers informed about problems with consumer goods in the government shop with fixed prices. Villagers requested to increase quotas for sugar and kerosene and the SDM promised to talk to the supply officer at district level. One villager then stood up and complained about a defunct handpump. He was obviously drunk.

Then the SDM addressed the meeting in "godfather manner" for the next 1 ½ hours. He started to talk about the role of the Gram Sabha and discipline in Gram Sabha meetings referring indirectly to the drunken villager. After he had continued to talk on discipline for a while, he requested that the drunken villager stands up. The villager, a man in his twenties, desperately tried to close the top bottom of his shirt but did not manage, and senior villagers eventually sent him out of the hall. Other villagers who produced some noise outside the hall were called to be quiet.

The SDM then informed on drought relief funds and encouraged the villagers to forward proposals for sanctioning. He discussed with the villagers concrete proposals (the construction of a metal road from Lilawas to Godana). He also encouraged the villagers to prepare a list of defunct handpumps.

The Panchayat Samiti member expressed his gratitude to the SDM for coming and the SDM replied that it was his pleasure but that the women Sarpanch had not invited him (which is not common since SDMs usually do not attend such meetings).

The SDM's following lecture focused on social problems in the villages. He educated the villagers that child marriages and costly provisions of meals after death should be stopped in the village. He told about family planning by putting it in the perspective of overall family welfare. The main point of his lecture was to motivate people for the ongoing literacy campaign. He suggested that a motivation committee should be established in the village to promote literacy. He requested a report of the Sarpanch within 15 days.

Then the SDM requested the Sarpanch, the Panchayat Samiti member and the previous Brahmin Sarpanch to deliver a little speech. First the Sarpanch started. I was surprised by her rather passive role in the meeting since I had met her at the Panchayat Samiti and in Udaipur city in a cheerful and specifically active mood. She was also wearing a veil, and later informed us that by doing she was paying respect to senior people of her village. She talked about road construction and literacy (referring to the SDM's lecture) and then expressed her annoyance that some villagers spread the news that she and the previous Sarpanch had personally taken Rs. 30 000 meant for road construction. She categorically refused the allegations.

The Panchayat Samiti member addressed the meeting more fluently than the Sarpanch. He talked about literacy. Then the previous Sarpanch also expressed his appreciation with the suggestions of the SDM on promoting literacy in the villages.

The Sarpanch offered tea to the SDM after they had all finished their little speech, but the SDM refused and left. After the SDM had left, villagers took a little break and the Up-Sarpanch started to smoke a Bidi-cigarrete.

The Gram Secretary resumed the meeting. He informed the audience that the Gram Panchayat would receive 3 Lakh Rupees (Rs. 300 000) and construction work should be planned. Villagers started to give proposals: construction of roads in Kharkrakhera, Lilawas, Ganeshpura and Godana; a community centre in Kharkrakhera and construction of new rooms in the school in Ganeshpura.

Then the Vigilance Committee was formed. Five men were selected, one from Godana, one from Ganeshpura, one from Aarwarda, a previous border police officer from Kharkrakhera and one man from Lilawas.

Some villagers then proposed to have a government shop with fixed prices to be opened in Godana.

One villager complained that the handpump in Lilawas was not functioning. The Panchayat Samiti member told him that he should be co-operative and the Gram Secretary told him that he would consider his complaint.

Before the meeting concluded, the Gram Secretary made a list of defunct handpumps in the Gram Panchayat area. The meeting concluded at 4.15 p.m. and sweets (brought by me) and tea were distributed.

Overall Observations

The meeting was better organised than in most other villages of the field study area. At least, a list of defunct handpumps was prepared, the Vigilance Committee formed and information gathered on drought relief assistance. However, the Panchayat building could hardly accommodate all villagers even though only around 60 people had come. The Sarpanch, though known as an active women, did not head the meeting and had (literally) put the veil. People paid respect to her. She sat in the centre but spoke only occasionally. The Panchayat Samiti member and the Up-Sarpanch were the most active members of the meeting. The previous Sarpanch, a Brahmin, seemed to be respected by all villagers. People sometimes had controversial views but no heated arguments or disputes were exchanged.

When the SDM had arrived, he delivered a long speech and totally dominated the meeting. Initially people listened to his 'godfather' like lecture on Gram Sabha discipline, drought relief, literacy campaign, family planning and social problems but eventually lost interest and some people even left the hall.

Finances and Works

The Sarpanch informed me that at least Rs. 50 000 were received for a number of development works (mainly road construction) in the previous year plus additional Rs. 100 000 for the construction of the Panchayat Bhawan. A proposal for construction of a small dam has been sanctioned and funds are expected. The Sarpanch expressed satisfaction that Panchayat funds had increased and a nice Panchayat Bhawan could be constructed.

External Relations

The Gram Panchayat Godana and, in particular, the women BJP Sarpanch enjoy good relations with the women Pradhan from the BJP. The Gram Panchayat also has good relations with government officers since the husband of the Sarpanch is a government official working in Jhadol. The Sarpanch seemed not to have much interest in working with NGOs.

5.4.4.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Godana

The Gram Panchayat Godana benefited from the Panchayati Raj reform. Villagers expressed some appreciation that development works have been sanctioned under the new Sarpanch. She has easily access to the block level Panchayat Samiti because the Gram Panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti are both headed by a BJP women.

The Gram Panchayat Godana also counts on personal contacts of the husband of the Sarpanch and a few other villagers with government officials for getting development works sanctioned. NGOs play no major role in the Gram Panchayat and are not regarded as important development agents.

Table 26: Ranking of Development Indicators in Godana

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	medium	The Gram Panchayat has a few community assets (Panchayat building, mother and child care centre) and some people have decent houses. However, the literacy level is low and most people are rather poor.
2. Social and Political Harmony	medium	The female Sarpanch from the Scheduled Caste community enjoyed good relations with upper castes and lower castes. However, opposition against her was raised in connection with alleged misappropriation of construction material. No major conflicts occurred at the Gram Sabha meeting.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat members	medium	The Sarpanch became recently literate. Most other Wardpanchs are literate.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	Sarpanch and Wardpanch showed a fair level of awareness and participation on Panchayat affairs at the Gram Sabha meeting. However, there seemed to be no political or development activists among the Panchayat members.
5. Participation of Women	medium	The Sarpanch was a smart young women who independently approached the Pradhan, but she was shy in front of senior villagers at the Gram Sabha meeting. Other women Wardpanchs were passive.

6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Gram Panchayat	medium	The Panchayat managed to get a few works approved under the tenure of the present Gram Panchayat, among them a Panchayat building. The Sarpanch showed interest in development works, but no extraordinary development commitment. She allegedly sought personal gains from her post.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	medium	The Gram Panchayat has received a fair amount of assistance, but no extraordinary programme was implemented during the period of the field study.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	low	NGOs so far had only made surveys or held discussions and no action has followed. The NGO Naryana Seva Sansthan had organised a meeting on literacy.
9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary	medium	The <u>Gram Secretary</u> had only recently been transferred from Badgaon block and had just resumed his work when the case study was carried out. He was fairly well prepared for the Gram Sabha meeting and showed no arrogance towards the villagers.
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	medium	The meeting was better organised than in most other villages of the field study area. At least, a list of defunct handpumps was prepared, a vigilance committee formed and information gathered on drought relief assistance. However, the small Panchayat hall could only accommodate around 60 people. The Sarpanch played a rather passive role and provided not much guidance.

5.5. Badgaon Block

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This chapter analyses the Panchayat Samiti and two Gram Panchayats of Badgaon: Karia and Dhar. Badgaon is the smallest block in Udaipur district located in close proximity to Udaipur city. At the block level, party political rivalries and conflicts with the block level administration negatively affected the execution of development activities of the Panchayat Samiti.

In the socially heterogeneous Gram Panchayat Karia, an energetic male Sarpanch from an Other Backward Class (OBC) community with good contacts to government departments managed to secure substantial development funds for the Gram Panchayat which were chiefly spent on construction activities. His role was, however, challenged by the local Brahmin community. Furthermore, he also did not work well with the NGO Seva Mandir which has worked in the area for more than 20 years.

The homogeneous tribal Gram Panchayat Dhar, despite its close proximity to Udaipur, is still a backward area. The NGO Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal purports to have

created awareness for environmental issues and mobilised the self-help capacity of the village community. In reality, however, people in Dhar, had little knowledge on Panchayati Raj affairs and it appears their women are completely excluded.

5.5.1 Characteristics

General Information, Statistics

Badgaon is located north-west of Udaipur city. Udaipur's urban sprawl has generally been northward. Some areas of Badgaon now have an urban character but parts of the hilly western Badgaon with a stronger concentration of tribal population are still not accessible by metal road. Badgaon is the smallest block with the lowest population in Udaipur district and forms a *tehsil* only together with Girwa block. It has the highest literacy level of any block in Udaipur district, but large disparities in economic development occur in different areas of the block.

Major political issues in Badgaon are related to land ownership (encroachment, illegal construction). As city vicinity has expanded towards Badgaon, prices have risen tremendously.

Table 27: Badgaon Block Statistics

648.00 square kms.
25 Gram Panchayats
88 villages
population: 91 640
density of population: 141
literacy: 35.25 % (highest)
SC 7.26 % (fourth highest)
ST 36.61 % (third lowest)
Source: DRDA Udaipur; dated 22.8.1995

The allocated reservation quotas for Sarpanchs in Badgaon reflect the population densities of the different castes and classes.

Table 28: Reservation Quotas for Sarpanchs of the 25 Gram Panchayats in Badgaon

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	13	8	5
OBC	2	1	1
SC	2	1	1
ST	8	7	1

Source: Panchayat Samiti, Badgaon

Development Assistance in Badgaon

The Department of Agriculture was implementing a soil and water conservation project during the period of the field study. The NGOs Seva Mandir and Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal were carrying out watershed and wasteland development projects and forestry activities. Seva Mandir was running literacy centres in the Badgaon block. Seva Mandir's total budget for the year 1995/1996 amounted to Rs. 3,86 million, but until December 31st, 1995 only Rs. 1,48 million have been spent. The major component was education and training with an expenditure of Rs. 426 896 until December 31st, 1995. Badgaon received a medium level of development assistance compared to Jhadol and Mavli.

5.5.2 Panchayat Samiti Badgaon

Composition, Elections, Personal Profiles

Panchayat Samiti elections were held on party political basis at the end of January 1995. The Congress Party won the majority of seats. The caste / class and sex-composition of the Panchayat Samiti is as follows:

Table 29: Composition of the Panchayat Samiti Badgaon

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	7	4	3
OBC	1	1	-
SC	1	1	-
ST	6	4	2

Source: Panchayat Samiti, Badgaon

The seat of Pradhan was reserved for a female candidate. The Congress candidate, a Brahmin, won the election with 10:5 votes. She is an unmarried retired teacher who holds a Ph.D. She was elected as a Panchayat Samiti member from Losinga / Karia area but actually lived in Badgaon main village close to Udaipur city where she constructed a new house during the period of the field study.

The district unit of the Congress Party had decided to field her for the Pradhan elections. She is well educated and has a clean image as a newcomer in politics. Her uncle was a former Education Minister in the central government and her brother was the previous Pradhan. He was a powerful Pradhan with good contacts, but he was apparently involved in some major corruption cases. He contested the past MLA elections but lost by 2000 votes according to information from Congress Party activists.

A businessman (brick manufacturing, agriculture, transport) from the BJP living with his family in a large residence in Bedla village nearby Udaipur was elected Up-Pradhan with some votes from the Congress faction. He belongs to the OBC category and has higher secondary school education. Like the Pradhan, he understands English but does not speak it well. He has a political background as a Sarpanch of Bedla (1988-1991) and as a President of a local Youth Association. He did not contest Panchayat

Samiti elections from Bedla (as per reservation quota, he was not eligible) but shifted his candidature to the large Lakhawali constituency; a shift which probably involved some bribery. He spent Rs. 10 000-12000 from his own pocket for the elections and won with a margin of 500 votes.

The Panchayat Samiti has formed one "High Committee" and four "Standing Committees". The High Committee comprises the Pradhan, the Up-Pradhan and two Panchayat Samiti members. The four Standing Committees are as follows:

- (i) Administration and Finance Committee, the most important committee with the Pradhan as chairman
- (ii) Agriculture Production Committee
- (iii) Education Committee
- (iv) Social Service Committee

Finances, Staff, Meetings

The following budget sheet was received from the Panchayat Samiti Badgaon⁴⁵⁴.

Table 30: Budget of the Panchayat Samiti Badgaon 1995/1996

	Plan	Estimated Income in Rs.	Estimated Expenditure in Rs.
1. Grants from State Government and Departments	Education	13 581 300	13 581 300
	Family planning	3000	3000
	Handpumps	239 000	239 000
	* new construction		
	* repair		
	Accommodation	91 000	91 000
	Information and Publicity	6000	6000
	Welfare of SC, ST Backward Class	3000	3000
	Rural Employment	65 520	65 520
	Other Rural Dev. Programmes	2113700	2025200
	Energy	41 000	25 000
	Grant Local Institutions.	366560	366560
	Grant other Departments.	3020 000	3020 000

454 This budget sheet is not necessarily representative of reality. It is likely that the budget is not consistent for data on taxes and salaries. The budget is presented here only with a view to providing a rough overview of Panchayat Samiti finance and the format in which budgets are presented in rural Rajasthan.

Total	19 530 080	19 425 580
2. Other Grants from State Government	---	---
3. Recovery of Loans and Repayment	400 000	400 000
4. Personal Income	174 000	164 000
Grand Total	20 104 080	19 989 580
Balance		104 500

Signature:

BDO and
Pradhan of Badgaon

The BDO further mentioned that the state government gives altogether Rs. 14.4 million for salaries, mainly teacher salaries. According to information from him, funds from the DRDA amounted to Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 million per year, Rs. 900 000 were received from the Congress MP while the MLA provision of Rs. 500 000 was not received. The only tax income of Rs. 30 000 per year results from an education tax (Rs. 2 per family per year). The BDO stated that there would be scope for more taxes, but the Pradhan for obvious political reasons did not want to levy additional taxes. This would make her unpopular. The Pradhan stated that the Panchayat Samiti would only levy taxes following the State Finance Commission Report and instructions by the government to implement the recommendations of the report.

The staff pattern of the Panchayat Samiti Badgaon was as follows:

BDO; one Panchayat Extension Officer; one Pragati (Progress) Extension Officer; two Accountants; one Co-operative Extension Officer; two Education Extension Officer; two Junior Engineers; four Upper Division Clerks, one Lower Division Clerk; four Peons; 10 Gram Secretaries (Gram Sevaks). 308 teachers are working in primary schools administered by the Panchayat Samiti.

I was unable to attend a Panchayat Samiti meeting. Information was gathered that meetings were organised once every six weeks to two months on average (instead of once a month as per the legislative provision). Usually around 10-12 elected representatives attended. MLAs and Zila Parishad members sometimes also attended. I was informed by the Up-Pradhan and the Pradhan that no major open conflicts occurred during the last meetings.

Political and Development Dynamics

Major political rivalries between political parties occurred in Badgaon. The conflicts had a negative impact on development works. The Congress Party historically has a stronghold in the area. Congress affiliated Brahmin leaders played an important role in the freedom struggle and were later accommodated as Sarpanchs. Later, the Congress Party gained credit because the party was engaged in the fight against the feudal order of Rajputs in parts of Badgaon. However, the stronghold of the Congress Party is now challenged by assertive BJP politicians. In recent years, two factors have contributed to the rise of the BJP in Jhadol. (i) the success of the BJP at the state level

made the party more attractive for the tribal population in Jhadol; (ii) the involvement of many Congress Sarpanchs in corrupt practises of distribution of Panchayati land has provoked protest against Congress leadership.

The major cause for dispute between the Congress Party and the BJP were two hospitals in Badgaon village, an ayurvedic- and a veterinary hospital. The Congress Party initiated the construction of the hospitals while the BJP questioned the legal status of the property and objected to the work. The hospitals have recently opened after one year delay.

In Badgaon village, an Udaipur chemist and unsuccessful candidate for the post of Badgaon Sarpanch disturbed the Gram Sabha meeting with a crowd of students, protesting against the hospitals.

The Panchayat Samiti Badgaon experienced heavy disputes between the female Congress Pradhan and the BDO appointed in November 1995. Relations between the Pradhan and the previous BDO were better. Conflicts did not only occur on the approval of development proposals by different Gram Panchayats, but also on ordinary office affairs. The Pradhan was not permitted to frequently use the single Panchayat Samiti Jeep in order to pay regular visits to the villages. She could only use the for 68 days in a year, while the BDO claimed it for at least 12 days per month (144 days per year). The Pradhan also complained that the BDO did not hand over her letters. She instructed the post office that letters should be delivered to her residence.

She had already written two complaint letters to the District Collector for disciplinary action against the BDO. The matter was discussed in the Zila Parishad meeting on January 11th, 1996. The Pradhan recommended that he should be transferred for irregularity in the execution of his duties. No action had been taken until April 1996.

The Pradhan explained the conflict in terms of the BDO's inability to accept a female Pradhan as boss. She was rather inexperienced and it was therefore difficult for her to deal with the BDO despite the guidance she received from her brother.

The BDO, who had served in the Badgaon Panchayat Samiti since November 1995, was an assertive and knowledgeable person allegedly favouring the BJP. He frequently referred to the Act, in particular Art. 33 on the powers of the state government to supervise the work of the Pradhan. He considered the Pradhan as not competent in exercising her duties. He stated that "everything should be done according to rules and regulations and not as per instructions and wishes of the Pradhan". He gave the example of the allocation of houses under the Indira Awas Yojana scheme. He rejected the proposals approved by the Panchayat Samiti for Lakhawali and Bedla because the Sarpanchs in co-operation with the Gram Sevaks had allotted the houses to non-eligible persons. He initiated disciplinary action against the concerned Gram Sevaks. The Pradhan replied that the selection of Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries was most corrupt between 1991-1994 when no elected representatives controlled the government officers. Panchayat Samiti officers still wanted to forward the names of the old list but she refused it and insisted on new names.

The Pradhan stated that her top development priority was to improve the IRDP programme in Badgaon (loans for productive assets) which suffered from non-co-operation of the banks. She stated that the BDO did not support her in dealing with the bank managers. She further mentioned self-employment for educated persons through small enterprise development and extending of education programmes as her development priorities.

The Pradhan stated that the Panchayat Samiti under her tenure carried out the boring of tubewells for drinking water, the construction of a community centre building, school rooms and metal roads. A sub-health centre and a kindergarten were established in Badgaon village. The Pradhan expressed overall dissatisfaction with development works. She stated that state government officers would favour the ruling BJP party for their career planning and were not co-operating with a Congress Pradhan.

Panchayat Samiti members complained that the Standing Committees had no powers.

Table 31: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Panchayat Samiti Badgaon

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	medium	High literacy level, but significant economic development disparity between different areas. The Gram Panchayat Dhar, for example, is a poor area.
2. Social and Political Harmony at the Panchayat Samiti Level	medium	No major open conflicts occurred within the Panchayat Samiti itself as it was the case between the political parties and between the Pradhan and the BDO.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Samiti Members	high	The Pradhan holds a Ph.D., the Up-Pradhan completed senior secondary school, all Panchayat Samiti members were literate.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	high	Pradhan and Up-Pradhan were closely involved in party politics. The block was highly politicised due to its proximity to the city. Political parties took a keen interest in political affairs at block level; land issues were of major importance.
5. Participation of Women	low	The Pradhan was strongly influenced by her brother, other female Panchayat Samiti members showed no activism at all.

5.5 Badgaon Block

6. Development Commitment of the Panchayat Samiti	medium	The Pradhan showed interest in promoting development. Her alleged political bias, however, seemed to obstruct the implementation of development works. Other Panchayat members showed not much development commitment.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	medium	Government departments are carrying out some projects, but Badgaon is not a priority area of assistance since the block is in many parts economically relatively well of.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	medium	Fewer NGOs are operating in Badgaon than in Jhadol. However, Seva Mandir and Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal run significant programmes in the area (mainly literacy and watershed development).
9. Co-operation and Harmony Between the Panchayat Samiti and the Block Level Administration, in Particular the BDO	low	Major conflicts occurred between the Pradhan and the BDO over the approval of development works as well as over the use of the single block vehicle.

5.5.3 Gram Panchayat Karia

5.5.3.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Karia is located 28 km north of Udaipur, close to the main road. It consists of the three revenue villages Karia (also known as Shrimali Ka Karia), Dulawaton Ka Gura, and Morion Ki Karia. Morion Ki Karia comprises the villages Mataji Ka Khera and Kumawato Ka Gura which are only connected by a small rocky way to the other villages.

The Gram Panchayat extends over an area of 2134 ha and has a population of approx. 3200 - each village having between 970 - 1100 inhabitants.⁴⁵⁵ Its population comprises around 40 percent upper castes (Brahmins, Jains, Rajputs) and 60 percent backward castes (Suthars⁴⁵⁶; Luhars⁴⁵⁷ and Nai⁴⁵⁸), Scheduled Castes (mainly Kumhars⁴⁵⁹) and Scheduled Tribes (Gamati Adivasis).

5.5.3.2 Development Findings

The main village Karia, where a strong Brahmin community lives, is a fairly well-developed village with good community assets and facilities, many solid individual houses and an office of the NGO Seva Mandir. A business man from Bombay is constructing a multi-store building near the main road and members of his family are apparently planning to shift to Kharkar. A large playground and a temple are located near the main road. The Gram Panchayat Karia has a small check dam, electricity and public telephone facilities. However, certain *hamlets* in the other villages have very few facilities and are difficult to access.

The main source of income is agriculture. Maze, wheat, barley and vegetables are the main crops. Most land holdings are small, on an average approx. 1 ha per nuclear family. Villagers mentioned that the drought in 1995 reduced their incomes by 20-30 percent. The Gram Panchayat Karia is suffering from water scarcity and poor rocky soil, in particular in Morion Ki Karia. The seasonal migration of labourers to construction sites in Udaipur is around 25-30 percent. The literacy rate is around 40 percent.

The villages Karia and Dulawaton both have upper primary schools (8th Standard) and Morion Ki Kharia has a primary school (5th Std.) A medical sub-centre with a doctor and a nurse is located in Karia village. One co-operative society is operating in the Gram Panchayat. Other agricultural and water user groups are informally organised on a hamlet basis.

The Department of Soil and Water Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture, is carrying out a watershed development project, and villagers - including young girls - are employed in construction work. The Gram Panchayat Karia has also received funds

455 Estimates on the basis of Census 1991 figures.

456 Caste of carpenters.

457 Caste of iron workers.

458 Caste of haircutters.

459 Caste of brick and pot makers.

under various DRDA schemes with a strong involvement of the Gram Panchayat in identifying and designing the respective proposals.⁴⁶⁰

The large NGO Seva Mandir started its work in the Gram Panchayat Karia on adult literacy more than 20 years ago. Over the years, it has carried out literacy, watershed resource development, forestry, and mother and child health care activities in Karia. The main target group is the tribal population. During the period of the field study Seva Mandir was involved in a water lifting system. Villagers wanted to construct a new well, and Seva Mandir contributed Rs. 35 000 Rs. The 43 feet deep well should cover a command area of 20 ha. The place was identified by villagers. No hydrological survey had been carried out. 35 families are supposed to benefit from the scheme. The construction period was one year due to the rocky soil. By the time of the case study, the villagers had submitted a proposal on a diesel pumpset to Seva Mandir, which the organisation was likely to fund.

The Sarpanch described the literacy work of Seva Mandir as "rather static". He informed me that few people had learned more than just the basic alphabet. A Canadian volunteer of the organisation confirmed this assessment. Frustration was also expressed about an irrigation proposal which the Sarpanch had first discussed with Seva Mandir staff at a training seminar in Kaya in February 1995. He complained that Seva Mandir had actively encouraged him to forward the proposal, but later showed no further interest in the proposal. He was awaiting a constructive reply from the organisation. Seva Mandir did not want to take up the subject. I got the impression that the assertive behaviour of the Sarpanch was not liked by Seva Mandir.

Villagers complained that the government would take little action in implementing the development schemes. They told me that the drought related programmes and TRYSEM were not operative in the Gram Panchayat. Under the IRDP programme, only very few loans for cattle have been given over the years. The Sarpanch told about conflicts between the government and the banks. Banks were apparently refusing to cash loans under the IRDP programme since repayment of loans was known to be poor in villages.

The Rajput community in Mataji Ka Khera expressed frustration that most government schemes targeted Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and that little benefits would be given to other people. Wardpanchs and villagers mentioned the failure of a drinking water pipeline from Karia to Morion Ki Karia. Funds had run out and the construction was stopped half-way. Villagers mentioned irrigation, drinking water supply and construction activities as their top development priorities.

5.5.3.3 Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

Sarpanch and other Wardpanchs mentioned that the previous Gram Panchayat (before its dissolution in 1991) consisted of a Sarpanch and only five Wardpanchs, among them three women from a Scheduled Tribe community. The previous Congress-Sarpanch was a rich farmer and owner of a red soil mine (which is now closed) from

460 Activities are therefore mentioned under chapter 5.5.3.3 "Panchayat Profile and Dynamics: Finances and Works."

the Charan community (since 1992 included in OBC). He had long dominated the Panchayat and some Wardpanches and villagers complained that he was arrogant and not responsive to development suggestions and that the Panchayat had not effectively functioned. It was also mentioned that he had launched threats before the elections to force people to vote for him. A few others, however, stated that he was "all right as Sarpanch". He contested the 1995 elections but was not re-elected. A previous elderly tribal women Wardpanch seemed to be quite outspoken and her active participation in the Panchayat was confirmed by villagers. No reason was given why she did not contest elections in 1995.

The seat of the present Sarpanch is reserved for a person from the OBC category. The caste/class and sex-composition of the present Gram Panchayat (without Sarpanch) is as follows:

Table 32: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Karia

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	4	2	2
OBC	2	1	1
SC	1	1	-
ST	4	3	1

Elections

Gram Panchayat and Sarpanch elections were held end of January 1995. The Congress Party candidate from the Vaishanuv⁴⁶¹ community was elected Sarpanch. Villagers mentioned that party politics had a strong impact on the elections. Food and liquor was provided at election time by the candidates.

Panchayat Samiti elections were also held in January and a female Congress Party candidate who later became the Pradhan was elected from the constituency covering the Gram Panchayat Karia.

Personal Profiles

The Sarpanch is 32 years of age, married, and has two sons and one daughter. He has a fairly large house in the centre of Karia village and works as a contractor for electrical works. This job has given him many opportunities to develop relations with government officers and to gain experiences in dealing with the administration. He also fostered relations with neighbouring Sarpanchs. He has a 2 ha land holding, but after becoming a Sarpanch he spends most of the time on performing his duties as Sarpanch. He frequently travelled to Badgaon and Udaipur. He is educated until the 11th Standard and has a little knowledge in English.

The Sarpanch is an assertive, dynamic and sociable person who demonstrated development activism. His assertive attitude, however, did not appear when I first interviewed him in the presence of the Education Extension Officer in the Panchayat

461 Caste of care takers of temples.

Samiti office. The Sarpanch was well aware of various government schemes including procedures, but had a limited knowledge on the Panchayat Raj Act. He did not know that he would have the power to convene a Gram Sabha meeting. The Sarpanch respected the BDO as a knowledgeable and committed person but mentioned that he would also enjoy good relations with the Congress Pradhan. The wife of the Sarpanch was not even allowed to look and speak to me in the presence of her in-laws.

The Up-Sarpanch is a Rajput from the BJP. He is 37 years, married, and has passed the 9th educational standard. He was elected and supported by the Rajput community of about 300 people in Mataji Ka Khera. He worked as a permanent employee in a reliance factory in Udaipur. He enjoyed good relations with the Sarpanch. Both belonged to a different political party but were of the same age group and were both assertive persons.

The Panchayat Samiti member of the area has become the Pradhan of Badgaon.⁴⁶²

The Gram Secretary appeared to be a knowledgeable but not a very frank person. He supported the Sarpanch in guiding meetings and respected him as the constitutional head of the Gram Panchayat. He joined the service in 1963 and has worked in Karia since 1995. He looked after two Gram Panchayats (Karia and Losinga). He informed me that his responsibilities have been changed over the years: "Before 1976, I was only looking after agriculture, but now the duties of Gram Secretaries are related to all development works." He visited Karia three to four times in a months. He mentioned that the Sarpanch was very active and well informed and did not need much guidance. He told me that the female Sarpanch of Losinga was not very aware of development works and her role. He would visit her frequently, almost daily. He stated that he had no interest in the work of Seva Mandir since he was busy with his own work.

Training

The Sarpanch has received a three days training by Seva Mandir in March 1995 and later a six days training on Panchayat affairs by the Zila Parishad in October. He liked the government training better since it was better organised and more informative on duties, rights, responsibilities and procedures. He told me that the Seva Mandir training had rather the character of a talking session on moral values.

Meetings

The Gram Panchayat meetings were probably more regularly held than in other Gram Panchayats. However, information given by the Sarpanch could not be confirmed. During the three months of the field study at least two out of six meetings were postponed or cancelled - one because of the Holi festival and the other because of the Gram Sabha meeting. Land encroachment of Suthars over government lands were on the agenda of Gram Panchayat meetings in February.

The Rajput community in the remote hamlet Mataji Ka Khera had very little involvement in Panchayat affairs and some of the Rajputs did not know anything about the Gram Panchayat meetings and the Gram Sabha. I attended the following Gram Panchayat meeting:

462 Her bio-data and personal profile were already given in chapter 5.5.2.

Gram Panchayat meeting in Karia on February 24th, 1996

Date and venue: February, 24th, 1996 at 1 p.m. (start 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.), Panchayat Bhawan, Karia

Arrangements: carpet and a small desk; tea was served for everybody

Participation: Sarpanch, Gram Secretary; four male Wardpanchs; five male Wardpanchs (two were absent); one concerned villager; the Sarpanch from the Gram Panchayat Kathar in Badgaon attended as a guest of the Sarpanch.

Proceedings

The Gram Secretary (GS) played a guiding role in the meeting. He first started with reading out the minutes of the previous meeting of February 9th, 1996. At the previous meeting the following actions or observations had been recorded in the minutes⁴⁶³:

- (i) handpumps were repaired;*
- (ii) construction work for Anganwadis (mother and child centre) for Morion Ki Karia was sanctioned under the Ashwasit Rozgar Yojana (work for people registered under the employment office);*
- (iii) the payment for the construction of a road in Karia was received.*

Then the following points were discussed:

- (i) postponement of the next meeting because of the Holi festival (February 16th, 1996 instead of February 9th, 1996)*
- (ii) construction of a community centre for Scheduled Tribes in Karia under the state government scheme Tis Zila Tis Kam.*
- (iii) Illegal land encroachment by a villager. Heated arguments were exchanged between the villager, the Sarpanch and Wardpanchs. The villager denied the allegations made by his neighbour who was not present in the meeting. Eventually a letter was formulated with a thumb stamp. A Wardpanch helped the illiterate villager in setting up a complaint letter. The Gram Secretary appointed a committee of three Wardpanchs to visit the place and to report to the Gram Panchayat on the situation. It was decided that further action will be taken at the next meeting.*

Overall Observations

The meeting was fairly well organised and concrete agenda points were discussed. The Gram Secretary and the Sarpanch played a dominant role in the meeting. The other Wardpanchs did not have much knowledge on Gram Panchayat affairs. Given the existing schooling facilities and the literacy work of Seva Mandir, their education level did not seem to be impressive either. The two women Wardpanchs did not raise their voices.

⁴⁶³ As I did not attend the previous meeting, no further details can be given on the below mentioned issues. The minutes were of a very brief and general nature.

Gram Sabha meeting in the Gram Panchayat Karia on March 29th, 1996

Date and venue: 29.3.1996 at 11 a.m.; Panchayati Bhawan (disputed)

Arrangements: The Sarpanch and his associates had prepared for the meeting in the recently constructed Panchayat Bhawan. They had put the Gram Panchayat carpet and a small desk on the floor of the hall. The Brahmin community and some other villagers had prepared for the same Gram Sabha meeting in front of the old temple in the main village Karia. A carpet was also lying there.

Participants: The Sarpanch and Wardpanchs (two women Wardpanchs) and about 30 villagers had come to the Panchayat Bhawan. About seven elderly Brahmins and another 10 villagers had gathered in front of the temple in Karia

Agenda: The agenda was not presented since villagers were in conflict about the venue and the Gram Secretary was negotiating between the two rival factions.

Proceedings:

The Gram Sabha meeting did not start because the Sarpanch and his associates could not reach an agreement with the Brahmin community over the venue of the Gram Sabha meeting. The Sarpanch insisted that it had to be held on the newly constructed Panchayat Bhawan close to his house on a little hill, while the Brahmin community wanted the meeting to be held in front of the temple which had been the venue for such meetings in the past. The Gram Secretary spent most of the time with the Sarpanch in the Panchayat Bhawan, but he also tried to convince the others to join the meeting in the Panchayat Bhawan.

When I arrived at the temple site, some Brahmins and other persons took the opportunity to complain about wrong instalments of handpumps by the Sarpanch and his associates. No compromise over the venue could be reached until 2 p.m. and people had started to leave both places.

Overall Observations:

The Gram Sabha meeting disclosed the social disharmony in the Gram Panchayat. The formerly powerful Brahmin community objected to hold the Gram Sabha in the newly constructed Panchayat building close to the house of the upcoming Sarpanch from a backward community. The Gram Secretary tried to reconcile the two factions but eventually remained at the side of the Sarpanch when no compromise could be reached.

Finances and Works

The Gram Panchayat managed to get substantial development funds. The Sarpanch showed interest in taking up new development programmes, in particular construction activities. He informed me that villagers appreciated construction activities because they would get employment. When I approached the construction sites, men, women and even children were busy working. When I told him that I would have not expected so many children at the site - presuming that the literacy activities of the NGO Seva Mandir might have created some awareness on the importance of education for children - he informed me about a new government scheme on child labour elimination. This

scheme would provide children with food and vocational training. He did not presume that villagers were very interested in the scheme. He also informed me that an NGO (he did not say the name) had approached him for a training programme for women on stitching machines, but the women were not interested and did not make the required cash contribution.

Since its constitution in February 1995, the Gram Panchayat has carried out the following construction works:

- (i) 7 km road from Karia to Dulawaton (through JRY scheme);
- (ii) child care centre (*Balwar Bhawan*);
- (iii) platform in Mataji Ka Khera;
- (iv) small village road.

The Sarpanch informed me that the following proposals had been sanctioned under various DRDA schemes and other government programmes in 1995/96:

- (i) construction of a metal road for Rs. 100 000;
- (ii) construction of a public water pipeline for Rs. 210 000;
- (iii) construction of two mother and child care centres in Dulawaton Ka Gura and Morion Ki Karia for Rs. 95 000 each;
- (iv) construction of a community platform in Kumawato Ka Gura for Rs. 35 000

According to the Sarpanch, Rs. 400 000 had been received for these works so far. The Sarpanch further mentioned that the Gram Panchayat received an amount of Rs. 55 000 as first instalment under the Rs. 4 per person grant-in-aid provision of the state government. He mentioned that funds under Jawahar Rozgna Yojana had not been received "since the BJP has taken over the state government".

The Gram Panchayat was planning to submit a Rs. 750 000 proposal for a drinking water pipeline to the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) as well as to the DRDA. He told me that he would directly approach the PHED Department in Jaipur for such a big amount.

Some Wardpanchs, apparently close to the NGO Seva Mandir, stated that the Gram Panchayat could do more work if internal conflicts, corruption, and party politics had not such a negative influence. They also mentioned that corruption in government departments would make it difficult for the Panchayat to achieve progress in development.

External Relations

The assertive and dynamic Sarpanch had a good contact to the Block Development Officer and other government staff. He was not involved in the political conflicts at block level, but fostered contacts with neighbouring Sarpanchs and the Pradhan. His contacts facilitated the sanctioning of development proposals for Karia.

Major communication problems, however, seemed to occur between the Sarpanch and the NGO Seva Mandir which was apparently not used to deal with assertive local politicians like the Karia Sarpanch. Seva Mandir showed a lack of flexibility in this matter.

5.5.3.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Karia

Despite some internal rivalries and alleged corruption practises, the Gram Panchayat played a significant role in development activities. The Gram Panchayat Karia managed to get more development funds in 1995/96 than any of the other five Gram Panchayat covered by the field study. This could be attributed to its good external relations with the Panchayat Samiti as well as with government departments and his Congress Party affiliation. According to the Sarpanch, villagers considered construction activities as their development priorities because they needed employment and income.

The proximity of Karia to the main road and Udaipur city made the Gram Panchayat politically and economically important. The Sarpanch enjoyed a prestigious status and was busy dealing with Panchayat affairs. His training by the government and Seva Mandir was, however, not found useful by him. He was an assertive person, an attitude which was not liked by the NGO Seva Mandir and the Brahmin community in Karia village. The Brahmins complained that their community were not considered for the distribution of handpumps and that the Sarpanch would take personal profit out of his post.

Table 33: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Gram Panchayat Karia

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	high	The Gram Panchayat Karia has a small check dam, electricity and public telephone facilities. The main village Karia, located near the main road, is a fairly well-developed village with good community assets and facilities, many solid individual houses, a large playground and a temple. However, some hamlets in the other villages are less developed and more difficult to access.
2. Social and Political Harmony	low	The dispute over the venue of the Gram Sabha meeting disclosed the social disharmony between the Brahmin community and the backward caste Sarpanch and his associates.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	medium	Given the existing schooling facilities and the literacy work of Seva Mandir, the education level of the Wardpanchs was not impressive. Although most were able to do basic writing and reading, a higher ranking than 'medium' would not be justified for the Gram Panchayat.

4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	The Sarpanch was a very active person, but he was not well aware of Panchayat legislation. Other Wardpanchs were neither very knowledgeable nor very active in Panchayat affairs.
5. Participation of Women	low	Women did not play an active role in the Gram Panchayat or otherwise. The wife of the Sarpanch was not even able to speak in front of me.
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	high	The Sarpanch showed a strong commitment to develop the village and was supported by the other Panchayat members. The Panchayat carried out a significant number of works.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	high	The Department of Soil and Water Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture, was carrying out a watershed development project. The Gram Panchayat Karia has also received funding under various DRDA schemes.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	high	Seva Mandir has worked in the Gram Panchayat for more than 20 years and has an office in the main village Karia.
9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary	medium	The Gram Secretary fulfilled his duties adequately without showing a special motivation or commitment for developing the villages..
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	low	The meeting could not take place because of the dispute over the venue.

5.5.4 Gram Panchayat Dhar

5.5.4.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Dhar is located 18 km south-west of Udaipur. Among the six villages covered by the field study it is the closest to Udaipur, but the part of Badgaon where Dhar is situated is more difficult to access than the northern part of Badgaon. The small and hilly metal road ends about 5 km before the main village Dhar. Construction activities to pave a few more kilometres were ongoing during the period of the field study. A locally famous temple is located in Kundal Ubeshwar, a small hill station. The NGOs Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal and Seva Mandir are working in the Panchayat area.

The Gram Panchayat Dhar has a population of approx. 3350, consisting of six scattered tribal villages. 95 percent of the population are Bhil Adivasis. The remaining families are mainly Brahmins (*Pandits*) and Rajputs of lower caste status (*Sisodia*, *Solanki*).

Table 34: Area- and Population Figures of the Different Villages of the Gram Panchayat Dhar

Name of Village	Total Area in ha	Total Population
Dhar	628	859 (854)
Kundal Ubeshwar	636	440 (445)
Viyal	315	371 (385)
Gahloton Ka Vas	201	188 (188)
Banadiya	597	732 (732)
Badanga	680	740 (740)

Source: CENSUS 1991 data, in brackets latest figures from the *Patwari*.

5.5.4.2 Development Findings

Dhar is a poor Gram Panchayat in terms of agricultural income and community assets. People live from subsistent agriculture on small land holdings (0.58 ha per family on an average⁴⁶⁴). Maize and barley are the main crops in the *Kharif* season and mustard, pulses and wheat are the main crops in the *Rabi* season. The Gram Panchayat Dhar, however, has a large cattle population of more than 5100.⁴⁶⁵

Villagers mentioned irrigation and drinking water as their main development priorities. On the average, people have to walk for 4 km to fetch water. Seasonal migration to Udaipur for construction activities is about 25 percent of the adult villagers.

464 Source: Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal, information sheet of March 1996.

465 Source: Statistics from Gram Secretary and Patwari.

All the villages have a primary school and Dhar also has a middle school. Dhar, Viyal, Banadiya and Badanga have an adult literacy centre. The literacy rate estimated by teachers is around 20-30 percent. Dhar has two small hospitals, one is an ajuvedic hospital.

Co-operative societies are not operating in the Gram Panchayat, but water user groups (with Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal) and forestry groups (with Seva Mandir) have been formed in the context of NGO activities.

The Gram Secretary in charge of Gram Panchayat Dhar was able to give detailed information on the implementation of various government development activities and DRDA schemes in the villages. He mentioned the following activities in 1995/96.

Activities under Jawahar Rozgna Yojana I (JRY I)

- (i) construction of a community centre in Kundal Ubeshwarji for Rs. 50 000;
- (ii) construction of a community centre in Gahloton Ka Vas for Rs. 50 000;
- (iii) construction of a road in Banadiya for Rs. 50 000;

The Gram Secretary informed me that Rs. 107 000 had been received for these activities under JRY I. More funds were expected either under JRY I or other schemes to complete these activities.

Activities under Jawahar Rozgna Yojana II (JRY II)

The total provision of JRY II for the year 1995/96 was 310 000 Rs. By March 1996 the financial status of the various projects was as follows.

(i) construction of a sub-health centre	Rs. 150 000 (provision)
	Rs. 120 000 (received)
(ii) Ajuvedic hospital in Dhar	Rs. 110 000 (provision)
	Rs. 80 000 (received)
(iii) Upper primary school in Dhar	Rs. 50 000 (provision)
	Rs. 50 000 (received)

Further proposals have been submitted to complete the construction activities for the Panchayati Bhawan, and a metal road. For the Panchayati Bhawan 120 000 Rs. had been received. Nevertheless the building was still incomplete. Doors and windows were missing.

Under Jiwan Dhara, two proposals for the construction of wells were sanctioned in 1995/1996. One family already received the sum of 32 000 Rs, the other was awaiting the funds. 45 wells were blasted under the Manda scheme. He further mentioned that villagers had collected Rs. 15 000 for activities under Apna Gao Apna Kam. Construction activities for the primary school in Gahloton Ka Vas were funded by Sunishchit Rozgar Yojana. Under Indira Awas Yojana three houses were completed and three more constructions were ongoing. Under the Massive Programme for Small and Marginal Farmers Rs. 30 000 out of a total provision of Rs. 50 000 Rs. were received for a road construction in Dhar. These funds were only meant for purchase of material. He stated that 45 private wells were blasted under another scheme.

The Sarpanch informed me that the new national scheme for school meals for children from the first to the fifth educational standard (provision of 3 kg wheat per child) was operating well in Dhar. However, he also stated that the overall situation of the schools has unfortunately deteriorated over the years. Poor families did not receive any financial help for teaching aids and school uniforms.

The Sarpanch and some Wardpanchs mentioned that most schemes were operating in the Gram Panchayat, but actual disbursement rates were only about 55 percent. Costs, fees and bribes for getting proposals sanctioned amounted to around 45 percent. Frustration was expressed over the major IRDP scheme. Panchayat members mentioned that villagers were not interested in IRDP, because they were unable to pay back the loans (e.g. loans for the purchase of cattle, and sewing machines) in times of water and grass scarcity. It was further mentioned that people had not even a little private capital and also had no experience with small enterprise development.

Villagers complained that the government sometimes distributed low quality seeds to farmers.

Villagers mentioned the following development failures of government sponsored activities and schemes:

- (i) the construction of a small dam in Dhar has not been completed;
- (ii) the construction of a road from Godan to Dhar has not been completed;
- (iii) the construction of a road between Ubeshwar and Viyal has not been completed;
- (iv) the construction on the small main road (Udaipur to Dhar) is still incomplete. Villagers were of the opinion that the Public Works Department did not supply sufficient funds to the contractor. Work resumed again in mid March 1996;
- (v) the construction of the Panchayat Bhawan has not been completed. Doors and windows were still missing.

The NGOs Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal and Seva Mandir were involved in water resource development and plantation activities in Dhar. Both claimed that they had also created awareness for social and environmental issues and encouraged meetings of villagers.

Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal has its co-headquarters in Dhar. The organisation employed villagers. It carried out private and public pasture protection and plantation, field bounding and gully plugging works. It set up a few rain water harvesting structures, irrigation channels and constructed *anicuts*. It also sponsored 10 biogas plants.

Seva Mandir carried out a small soil conservation and plantation programme with tribal families. The trees grew very slow because of the severe water scarcity in the area after the failed monsoon in 1995.

Many villagers and also government extension officers stated that they were not very impressed by the quality of the work of the NGOs in the Gram Panchayat area and that Seva Mandir had only a very small programme anyway.

5.5.4.3 Gram Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat Dhar previously formed a combined Panchayat with the neighbouring village Warda which consists mainly of Rajputs. The Sarpanch of the previous Gram Panchayat was also a Rajput.

An extension worker of Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal stated that the Rajputs strongly dominated the tribals, but the Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and other villagers in Dhar denied this and told me that they had good relations with the Rajputs in Warda, who were also poor people. Nevertheless, they welcomed the creation of an independent Gram Panchayat for the tribal community in Dhar. The seat of the Sarpanch is reserved for a Scheduled Tribe. The Gram Panchayat has 11 Wardpanch seats. The caste/class- and sex- composition of the present Gram Panchayat (without Sarpanch) is as follows:

Table 35: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Dhar

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	1	1	-
OBC	-	-	-
SC	-	-	-
ST.	10	6	4

Elections

Gram Panchayat and Sarpanch elections were held at the end of January 1995. The winning Sarpanch candidate was a member of the Congress Party. He spent Rs. 5000 from his own pocket for election expenses and won with a majority margin of 600 votes.

The Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and some villagers mentioned that direct elections Panchayats at all levels were a costly and time consuming affair in a place like Dhar. The tribal people of Dhar lived scattered over a large area and the election participation was therefore only 50-60 percent.

Panchayat Samiti elections were also held at the end of January. Two candidates, one from the Congress Party and one from the BJP, contested the seat, reserved for a Scheduled Tribe.

The young Congress candidate won the elections by a margin of around 600 votes. He mentioned that he had spent Rs. 15 000 on his campaign, Rs. 8000 from his own money and Rs. 7000 from the Congress Party for travel expenses, posters and sundry expenses.

Personal Profiles

The Congress Sarpanch is a Bhil Adivasi above 40 years of age. He has seven children with two wives. According to the Panchayati Raj legislation in Rajasthan, the number of children should have prevented him from contesting the elections, but the provision of the Act was not applied. He is born in Dhar and has approx. 2 ha of agricultural land. He went to school only up to the third educational standard. He was Sarpanch for the first time but had twice been a Wardpanch. His brother is a handpump mechanic in government service. Otherwise he had no influential relatives. The Sarpanch was not a very dynamic but rather, a passive person. At least he sometimes combined a private visit to Udaipur for presenting cases of villagers in the Panchayat Samiti. He seemed to be respected by most villagers and tried to avoid conflicts.

The Up-Sarpanch, a Bhil Adivasi in his thirties, is a more assertive man. He was one of the few persons in the Gram Sabha meeting who complained strongly on the failures of the various development schemes.

The Panchayat Samiti member is a 22 years old College student. He is also a Bhil Adivasi. He holds a Bachelors' degree and attended the first year of a Master's programme at the Mohanlal Sukaria University of Udaipur. He was not a very active person and knew little about the Panchayat budget and development programmes. However, he listened to personal problems of villagers and tried to help wherever he could. This was confirmed by a few villagers.

The Gram Secretary comes to Dhar three to four times a week and sits in the school of Dhar village. He lives himself in the staff quarters of the Panchayat Samiti in Badgaon and covers the Gram Panchayats Warda and Dhar. He is 37 years of age and joined the service in 1989. He works in Dhar since 1990. The Gram Secretary was a knowledgeable and hard working man who showed no arrogance to villagers at all. He enjoyed good relations with the Sarpanch and other people in the village. After the Gram Sabha meeting he had a cup of tea with villagers in both tea stalls of Dhar. He told me that he also had good relations with the BDO. He mentioned that the period 1991-1994 (when Panchayats were dissolved and Gram Secretaries were appointed care taker of Panchayats) was not a good time for him, because he preferred to involve Panchayat representatives and villagers into decision-making instead of making all decisions himself.

The Patwari is a knowledgeable and dynamic person from an OBC community. He kept land and revenue records (e.g. crop estimates, land encroachment) and carried out election preparation work (e.g. he preped a list of voters). He also actively supported the villagers in filling-out application forms for the various schemes (Jiwan Dhara, Indira Awas Yojana, IRDP) at the Gram Sabha meeting.

Training

The Sarpanch attended a four day training session in September or October 1995. The session was organised by the Zila Parishad at Fathi school in Udaipur. He said that he had received a booklet and information on the various government development schemes. He found the training not sufficient. He did not know much about the new Panchayat legislation, but he remembered a few Panchayat slogans.

Meetings

Villagers and even a Wardpanch were quite confused regarding Panchayati Raj meetings. Many people did not know about the meetings at all, others confused Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat meetings and were not clear which meeting they should attend. Gram Panchayat meetings are theoretically organised on two fixed dates twice a months (14th and 28th of each month), but during the period of the field study not more than one meeting per month was held on the average. Villagers mentioned that they sometimes gather for discussing development work with the two NGOs, in particular Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal.

Gram Sabha meeting in Dhar on March 21st, 1996

Date and venue: 21.3.1996; platform around old village tree, Dhar village

Arrangements: carpet for men on the platform; carpet for women on the ground. Women were not permitted to sit on the platform; otherwise no special arrangements; just snacks at the end.

Participants: around 100 people (core group 60 people), among them four to five women; Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch, Gram Secretary, Patwari, Panchayat Samiti member (delayed); Headmaster of middle school, Wardpanchs; (no extension officer from the Panchayat Samiti, no BDO, no NGO representative).

The quorum was not completed but nobody bothered.

Agenda: The following written agenda was presented by the Gram Secretary

- (i) annual report of accounts of 1995/96*
- (ii) proposals for new development work in 1996/97*
- (iii) approval of Gram Panchayat budget*
- (iv) discussion on literacy campaign*
- (v) drought relief fund*
- (vi) discussion of water scarcity problem*
- (vii) family planning programme*
- (viii) other matters with the permission of Sarpanch*

Proceedings:

The meeting started at around 1 p.m. when about 60 men were sitting on the platform and 3 women on the ground - quite remote from the platform so that they were not able to listen to the discussions on the platform. The Patwari informally started the meeting by explaining development schemes like Jiwan Dhara (well construction and well deepening scheme; Indira Awas Yojana (rural housing scheme), the new pension schemes and the ongoing literacy campaign.

Then the Gram Secretary informed the villagers about the budget for 1995/1996 which he had prepared just before the meeting started. Villagers listened to the Gram Secretary without making interventions.

Not all villagers could actually follow his Hindi (he is from Uttar Pradesh. My research partner Ms. Shamata Seth also informed the villagers in the local dialect Mewari on the various government schemes and registration of birth and death.

Some villagers reported their frustrations with development schemes. One villager had filled up all forms for Jiwan Dhara and his proposal got sanctioned. However, the digging machine never arrived. He was informed by government authorities that he should first provide proper access for the machine to the site. He had levelled the access-way for the digging machine last month but is still awaiting the machine.

The Headmaster then informed the audience about the literacy programme for the Gram Panchayat Dhar, trying to arouse some interest. Again the Gram Secretary spoke about Jawahar Rozgna Yojana, Janta Awas (loan for rural housing), Apna Gao Apna Kam and details of Jiwan Dhara. No information on any women's programme was given during the presentation.

While some villagers were listening to the Headmaster and Gram Secretary, others filled out application forms and gave reports and forms to the Sarpanch for his signature.

Then the Gram Secretary asked the villagers about development proposals for 1995/1996. Villagers from different villages made proposals for construction of anicuts in Dhar and Badanga and a provision for drinking water storage (piaus). New schoolrooms were proposed for Baranga. Construction of internal village roads were proposed for all villages.

The Gram Secretary then started with collecting names for the rural housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana. He had no information from the Panchayat Samiti in regard to how many houses would be allocated. No priority list was prepared. Few people mentioned names. However, eventually 46 names were included in the list. Then the Gram Secretary continued to inform the villagers about the Integrated Rural Development Programme. Villagers were not enthusiastic and did not believe that they could get any loans from the bank for productive assets. The Patwari explained that the non-cooperative attitude of the bank was due to pending repayments, which should be cleared. He read out names and payable amounts.

Then the Gram Secretary informed the villagers that the neighbouring Viyal village had given Panchayat grazing land to the NGO Seva Mandir for wasteland development for five years. Some land dispute problems were presented to the Gram Secretary who referred to the Sarpanch. The Sarpanch said that he could not take any decision but he would seek the advise of older village people. Villagers then proposed that the quota for sugar on ration cards should be increased. The Patwari assured that he would take action on the matter before the end of the month.

The Vigilance Committee had been formed at the last meeting and no more agenda points were discussed. The meeting concluded with small chats and little snacks and tea. People took tea at both stalls - one showed a BJP sign and the other was run by a friend of the Congress Sarpanch. Gram Secretary and Patwari socialised with the villagers.

Overall Observations:

The sitting arrangement of the Gram Sabha on the platform totally excluded the women. This was all the more discouraging because two NGOs Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal and Seva Mandir claimed that they had actually brought about social change in this Gram Panchayat.

The meeting was not characterised by aggressive discussions and heated arguments or by political rivalries. Respect was paid to older villagers. Nobody addressed or guided the meeting properly, and the Sarpanch was very passive. The Gram Secretary played a productive role. Together with the Patwari, he provided information on various schemes and villagers filled in application forms. Villagers actually regarded the meeting more as an opportunity to present applications to the Sarpanch and to approach government officials like the Gram Secretary, the Patwari and the Headmaster. The college-going Panchayat Samiti member who arrived later was also not active. Interaction of government officials with villagers was very friendly.

Finances and Works

The Gram Secretary provided me with comprehensive information on finances and development works which chiefly consisted of construction activities. The levy of the following taxes and fines were decided at a Gram Panchayat meeting in 1995.

- (i) building tax: Rs. 10 per door and Rs. 7 per window for newly constructed houses;
- (ii) cattle stand tax (*Kayna* house): Rs. 5 per day for cattle which has entered prohibited areas (i.e. protected plantation areas) and is taken to the cattle house where it gets fodder;
- (iii) mining tax: Rs. 10-25 per truck load for mining activities between two and seven feet (above seven feet, the tax is collected by mining department); Badanga and Banadiya have mining areas;
- (iv) shop tax at the time of the Ubeshwar fare (*Shivratri*, held in February): Rs. 10 per shop;
- (v) fee for certificate of death and birth: Rs. 20 per certificate (registration is free but handing out of certificate is charged);

The Gram Secretary stated that the total income amounted to only Rs. 250 in 1995/1996. People approached the Sarpanch and Wardpanchs for development works, but the Sarpanch fully relied on the Gram Secretary and the Patwari for designing proposals under the various schemes. The Gram Secretary and the Patwari helped the Gram Panchayat to get substantial funds under the two Jawahar Rozgna Yoyana schemes.

External Relations

Dhar Gram Panchayat does not show much commitment to build strong relations with government departments or NGOs. However, it benefits from the services of an active Gram Secretary and the two NGOs Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal and Seva Mandir. However, the work of the NGOs seemed not to be very effective. According to information from Panchayat members and villagers, the party affiliation of the Sarpanch was useful for getting support for the approval of development proposals at Panchayat Samiti level.

5.5.4.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Dhar

The tribal Gram Panchayat Dhar was characterised by overall social harmony. It was also in the fortunate situation of being supported by motivated and knowledgeable government extension officers (Gram Secretary, Patwari). The friendly relations of the Dhar people with the Gram Secretary and the Patwari have apparently helped the Panchayat to receive substantial funds under the employment generation schemes JRY I and JRY II. However, many government works also failed, for example the construction works for the road to Udaipur. Two NGOs have targeted the villages of the Gram Panchayat for carrying out water resource, soil conservation and forestry works, but the results were not impressive.

The Sarpanch, most Wardpanchs and many villagers were passive people, and the Gram Panchayat itself has contributed little to build relations with outside institutions. It stands more at the recipient end, and, to some extent showed a fatalistic attitude

towards development progress. The Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and most of the villagers in Dhar were not very enthusiastic about the Panchayati Raj reform and had little knowledge about it.

Table 36: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Gram Panchayat Dhar

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	low	Dhar has few infrastructure facilities and community assets. Incomes are low.
2. Social and Political Harmony	high	No social conflicts or political rivalries occurred during the period of the field study. The Gram Sabha meeting was peaceful. Villagers seemed to have friendly relations between each other and visited two different tea stalls for sitting together and discussing after the Gram Sabha meeting.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	low	The Sarpanch only went to school up to the 3rd Standard, other Wardpanchs had only basic writing and reading skills, if at all.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	low	The Wardpanchs were confused about the new Panchayat legislation and showed no active participation in political or developmental affairs.
5. Participation of Women	low	Women were not even allowed to sit on the platform during the Gram Sabha meeting. Therefore they were not even able to follow the proceedings.
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	low	The Panchayat played no active role in submitting development proposals, but was depending on the guidance of the Gram Secretary
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	medium	Dhar has received substantial funds under the employment schemes, but major works failed or were delayed (road construction).
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	high	Two NGOs are working in the Panchayat area. Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal has its co-headquarters in the Gram Panchayat and Seva Mandir is active in forestry works.

- | | | |
|--|--------|---|
| 9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary | high | The Gram Secretary was a motivated person and provided good guidance to the villagers. They accepted him and asked him for advice. |
| 10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting | medium | People received valuable information on application procedures for schemes from government officers, but they were not very active in the meeting. Women were not allowed to sit on the platform. |

5.6 Mavli Block

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This chapter analyses the Panchayat Samiti Mavli and the two neighbouring Gram Panchayats Nurda and Veerdholia. Mavli is economically relatively advanced. Conflicts between ambitious and assertive local politicians and a corrupt Block Development Officer were the chief characteristics at the block level. However, it was observed that political assertiveness actually assisted in obtaining approval for development works.

The Gram Panchayat Nurda was dominated by a politically experienced Brahmin Sarpanch who manipulated Panchayati Raj matters for personal gain. He had a conflictual relationship with the Panchayat Samiti member of the area who belonged to another village and the rival political party. Women and Scheduled Castes were totally excluded from decision-making in Nurda.

In Gram Panchayat Veerdholia, harmony prevailed between different communities. The Gram Panchayat benefited enormously from the outstanding social and development commitment of an individual from the Scheduled Caste community.

5.6.1 Characteristics

General Information, Statistics

Mavli block is located north-east of Udaipur. It is connected with the district capital through a newly extended large state highway⁴⁶⁶ with busy truck and airport traffic, in particular near Udaipur.

Mavli is one of the economically most advanced blocks in Udaipur district with more developed industrial infrastructure (marble, cement and zinc factories), a higher agricultural productivity and better facilities than other blocks in Udaipur district. Mavli will soon become a new settlement area for Udaipur city due to its good infrastructure (roads, petrol stations). Land prices have already increased. Mavli is politically a high profile block with the Rajasthan Assembly speaker, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shanti Lal Chaploli, and two state ministers coming from the area.

Mavli has the third highest literacy rate in the district. This densely populated block has the lowest tribal population in Udaipur district. Rural society in Mavli is stronger stratified along caste lines than in most other blocks in Udaipur district.

Table 37: Mavli Block Statistics

798.72 sq.kms
47 Gram Panchayats
148 villages
population: 164 468
density: 206
literacy: 31.62 % (third highest)
SC population: 10.76 % (highest)
ST population: 18.53 % (lowest)
Source: DRDA Udaipur; 22.8.1995

The allocated reservation quotas for Sarpanchs in Mavli reflect the population densities of the different castes and classes.

Table 38: Reservation Quotas for Sarpanchs of 47 Gram Panchayats in Mavli

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	17	11	6
OBC	15	11	4
SC	5	3	2
ST	10	5	5

⁴⁶⁶ Construction on the state highway was ongoing during the field study period and completed in mid-March 1996.

Development Assistance in Mavli

Mavli receives little development assistance compared to other blocks in Udaipur district. One major exception is a World Bank supported forestry, soil and water conservation project which showed rather poor results in the villages of the field study area. The project implementation apparently suffers from manipulations in the number of planted trees. A local Sarpanch spoke of corruption and manipulation in the project implementation. He informed me that he had filed a complaint with government authorities in Jaipur without getting any response.⁴⁶⁷

There are almost no continuous NGO activities in Mavli which is quite extraordinary for Udaipur district.

5.6.2 Panchayat Samiti Mavli

Composition, Elections, Personal Profiles

Panchayat Samiti elections were held on party political basis in February 1995. The Congress Party won 13 and the BJP 12 seats out of 25. Given the sex and class / caste wise reservation quotas, the composition of the Mavli Panchayat Samiti is as follows:

Table 39: Composition of the Panchayat Samiti Mavli

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	10	8	2
OBC	7	4	3
SC	3	2	1
ST	5	3	2

The seat of Pradhan is reserved for a Scheduled Caste person. An experienced 41 year old local Congress politician from the Meghwal community was elected from the high profile village Sanwar⁴⁶⁸ in the Panchayat Samiti constituency Jawana / Lopara / Bhawali. He won his Panchayat Samiti seat against five other candidates, one from the BJP and four independents. He mentioned that he spent Rs. 10 000 over and above party support. He holds a Bachelors degree in Commerce, works as agriculturist and is affiliated with a contractor firm.

His election as a Pradhan was subject to a controversy within the Congress Party over the most suitable candidate. Initially a majority of Congress Panchayat Samiti members favoured a senior Congress worker and Gandhian volunteer from Gram Panchayat Veerdholia who has been highly engaged in social and development work over the past 25 years. However, the political contacts and assertiveness of the Sanwa candidate eventually prevailed in the internal selection process of the Congress Party.

⁴⁶⁷ As the issue is of no major importance for this study, information gathered from local people and few field visits were not cross checked with World Bank authorities. The author is most willing to review his opinion on the overall project implementation as the project might function better in other areas not visited by the author.

⁴⁶⁸ The BJP MLA and Speaker of Rajasthan State Assembly and the BDO also belong to Sanwar.

The Pradhan has a strong political background. He was the President of Kanori College in 1977/78, President of Bhilwada Hostel in 1980 and for the past 8 years a member of the Village Corporate Society, Fatehnagar. The Pradhan is a member of the Udaipur Corporate Society for purchase of consumer items and is the Joint Secretary of the state level Congress committee. He informed me that his contractor business prevented him from attending the Pradhan training session in Jaipur from March 13th-16th, 1996.

The Up-Pradhan from the BJP is a Rajput of high status and a member of the former royal family. He holds a Masters degree in English literature and lives with his family in a palace in Nahamagar half way from Mavli main village to Udaipur on a large land holding. He owns a hotel in Lake Palace road in Udaipur city. When he returned to Udaipur from Bangalore a few years ago, he decided to join politics and became associated with the BJP. He mentioned that he was very active in the previous elections for the state legislative assembly. He mentioned that the MLA Shanti Lal Chaploli had won the elections largely because of him. His wife is the Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat Nandwel in her own right, but she is strongly influenced by him in her decision-making.

Six Standing Committees have been formed under the authority of the Panchayat Samiti each of them comprising of different Panchayat Samiti members:

(i) Administration; (ii) Finance & Tax; (iii) Education; (iv) Production; (v) Social Welfare; (vi) Special Committee for the Literacy Campaign

Finances, Staff, Meetings

Obtaining accurate information on finances was again difficult. The Pradhan eventually presented me with some kind of official budget or quasi-official budget which allocated Rs. 20 million for the fiscal year 1995/1996. He further referred to funds received from the Udaipur Congress Member of Parliament (MP) Dr. Mrs. Girja Vyas. She had given Rs. 895 000 for 11 development works. The Rajya Sabha candidate of the area, Sunder Singh Bhandari, had supported 12 works for a total Rs. 900 000 each for Rs. 75 000. The money was spent on employment generating construction activities, e.g. boundary walls. The Pradhan further mentioned that the DRDA target for Indira Awas Yojana was 260 houses for Mavli.

The staff of the Panchayat Samiti consists of the BDO as the administrative head, an Education Extension Officer, a Panchayat Extension Officer, an Accountant, a Co-operative Extension Officer, an Extension Officer for food and village industries, a Junior Engineer; two Upper Division Clerks, three Lower Division Clerks, six Peons, and 47 Gram Secretaries. 400 teachers are employed in the Panchayat Samiti primary schools.

In the field study programme it was foreseen to attend the Panchayat Samiti Meeting scheduled for February 28th, 1996, 11 a.m. Congress Panchayat Samiti members gathered in the office of the Pradhan. However, no BJP Panchayat Samiti member was to be seen. I was firstly informed that the BJP members were boycotting the meeting because of the Congress attitude towards the Sanwar sub-Tehsil issue (see local political and development dynamics) only to later learn that BJP members had in fact not received an invitation.

Another meeting was held on March 25th, 1996 and approximately fifteen Panchayat Samiti members from both parties attended. Participants discussed drought relief activities and, at the initiative of the Up-Pradhan, the removal of the BDO.⁴⁶⁹

Political and Development Dynamics

The Mavli Panchayat Samiti was driven by conflicts between local politicians of different parties, personal rivalries within political parties and problems between assertive elected representatives and an arrogant and corrupt Block Development Officer.⁴⁷⁰

The major cause of conflict was the establishment of a Sub-Tehsil office with certain administrative powers in the politically high profile village Sanwar. The BJP MLA and Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly and the BDO strongly supported their home village as location for the Sub-Tehsil. The Congress Party strongly opposed it arguing that Sanwar is a remote village close to Chittor (0.5 km) and Rajsamand district (1.5 km) and that only 9 surrounding villages could be embraced by it. The Congress Party favoured the more centrally located Gram Panchayat Khemali, which had the potential to embrace 25 villages. The Pradhan also belongs to Sanwar and initially favoured the idea of establishing a Sub-Tehsil in his home village, but then formally objected to it for party political reasons.

A harmonious relationship is not withstanding between the Pradhan, Up-Pradhan and BDO. The Pradhan appeared to be a ruthless politician who enjoyed a large political clout. He complained that the BJP government would obstruct the process of devolution of powers to Panchayats. The Up-Pradhan and also the Pradhan referred to the BDO as "the servant of the Panchayat Samiti" and emphasised their role as constitutional heads of the Panchayat Samiti. The Pradhan sought to establish good links with Sarpanchs and organised a Mavli wide Sarpanch meeting on March 26th, 1996.

The Up-Pradhan, a well educated ambitious and assertive politician with a distinctive arrogance towards bureaucrats, was at odds with the BDO and made a number of allegations against him (e.g. harassing women teachers of the Panchayat Samiti Primary schools). Some of them were confirmed to be true by others. He told me the following story:

A local student from his wives and his constituency required a signature for confirming that he belongs to a certain (backward) community in his village. He needed the signature to upgrade the results of his exams. People of backward communities usually require less marks than others for obtaining jobs and admission to colleges if they can prove their social background. A double signature by the Sarpanch, the Up-Pradhans wife, and the BDO was required. The Up-Pradhan informed me that his wife had given him the signature but the BDO wanted to charge Rs. 100 for it. The local student approached the Up-Pradhan who gave an undertaking to talk to the BDO. The BDO agreed to give the signature free of charge but when the student

469 I did not attend the meeting but spoke with participants after the meeting.

470 Information on the corrupt practises of the BDO were collected from different sources and I had the impression that the BDO also wanted some money from me for giving me information although he did not directly ask for it.

came to the block office in the morning he had to wait for several hours. Only at the end of the working day, the BDO signed the document.

The Up-Pradhan and Pradhan, having different party political backgrounds, did not openly fight, but did not have much appreciation of each other either. The BDO having a low level Rajput community background was a class mate of the BJP MLA. The BDO mentioned that his tenure during the dissolved Panchayat 1991-1994 was a golden period because he was the (uncontested) 'king'. He mentioned that he still felt directly accountable to the Collectorate's office and not to the Pradhan or any Panchayat body.

He blamed national and state politics for concentration of powers in the hand of the chairpersons. The position of Up-Pradhan, in his opinion, was a powerless position.. He mentioned that only chairpersons were powerful, in the Gram Panchayat as well as in the Panchayat Samiti: "Ordinary members of Panchayats are always powerless. This is the same for MPs toward the Prime Minister as for MLAs towards the Chief Minister and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly." The BDO further questioned why he should feel any accountability to villagers or Sarpanchs.

During the training sessions for Wardpanchs in the Panchayat Samiti office, the BDO delivered a concise lecture on the nature of the various development schemes, physical and financial targets for Mavli and eligibility of beneficiaries. He gave much information to the trainees, but spoke very fast in classic Hindi and not all Wardpanchs could follow him.

Pradhan and Up-Pradhan informed me that they had been quite successful in getting development proposals sanctioned. Political assertiveness and personal connections have obviously helped both of them in dealing with the development administration at district and block level. The Pradhan mentioned that he regularly attended the three monthly DRDA meetings. He told me that he had good relations with the Congress MP of Udaipur and also with her boyfriend. The block chairman of the Congress committee Mavli (a very senior and influential person) a Zila Parishad member of Mavli block and a Western Railways trade unionist all are close associates of the Pradhan.

The Up-Pradhan also mentioned that he got his development proposals sanctioned because of his connections with political authorities. He further informed me that he wanted to raise the levy of taxes from the cement factory within his constituency from Rs. 18 000 Rs to Rs. 1.2 million per year. The case has been referred to the courts, and to date no decision has been made.

Complaints were raised concerning the activities under the Drought Relief Programme. The Up-Pradhan criticised the concept of the Drought Relief Programme based on a 60 percent labour component and a 40 percent material component. He stated that 40 percent for material was insufficient to carry out sound construction work. The primary purpose of the programme seemed to be employment generation and not drought relief or natural resource management. The obvious strategy behind the concept of the programme was that employment would meet the short-term needs of the poorest people and secure their votes in elections. This observation confirmed that government development policies despite lip services to sustainable ecological development have not significantly changed over the past years.

The actual procedures for sanctioning proposals under the Drought Relief Programme in Mavli were unclear. Gram Panchayats were apparently supposed to play a role in identifying and forwarding the proposals to the Panchayat Samiti office where the proposals were examined by the Pradhan and the BDO. However, the Sub-Division

and Tehsil office were also considered important authorities for sanctioning works according to information of Panchayat Samiti members.

It was mentioned that a scheme for recruitment of educated unemployed as additional Panchayat Samiti staff was under consideration but the state government had not yet approved it.

Table 40: Ranking of Development Indicators in Mavli

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	high	Mavli is one of the economically most advanced blocks in Udaipur district with some industrial infrastructure (marble, cement and zinc factories) and a higher agricultural productivity and better facilities than other blocks in Udaipur district.
2. Social and Political Harmony at the Panchayat Samiti Level	low	Major conflicts occurred between the Congress Party and the BJP, and even within the Congress Party at Panchayat Samiti level.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Samiti Members	high	The Pradhan holds a Bachelor's degree and the Up-Pradhan a Masters degree. All Panchayat Samiti members are literate.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	high	The Pradhan and the Up-Pradhan are both political activists. Other Panchayat members, like for example the Panchayat Samiti member of Veerdholia, are also active in politics.
5. Participation of Women	low	Women were not actively partaking in Panchayat Samiti meetings, if they attended at all.
6. Development Commitment of the Panchayat Samiti	medium	Pradhan and Up-Pradhan were primarily interested in politics, but were successful in getting funds for development works.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	low	Mavli is one of the better developed blocks in Udaipur district and receives little development assistance from the government.

8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	low	There are almost no continuous NGO activities in Mavli which is quite extraordinary for Udaipur district. The Bajaj Foundation has carried out works in Veerdholia in the late eighties.
9. Co-operation and Harmony Between the Panchayat Samiti and the Block Level Administration, in Particular the BDO	low	Open disputes occurred between the Up-Pradhan and the BDO. The BDO was also disliked by other Panchayat Samiti members for his corrupt practises.

5.6.3 Gram Panchayat Nurda

5.6.3.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Nurda is located 38 km north-east of Udaipur city and 16 km south-west of block headquarters in Mavli village. It is connected to the main road Udaipur-Mavli by small mainly sandy roads. The distance to the main road is 7 km, to the train station 6 km and to the bus station 2 km.

Many upper caste farmers in Gram Panchayat Nurda live in nice and spacious houses with electricity. Most of them employ (mainly) Scheduled Caste people as agricultural labourers. Upper and lower castes live separate in the villages and untouchability still occurs.⁴⁷¹

Gram Panchayat Nurda consists of the revenue villages of Nurda, Piproli, Rathana and Dhana. It covers an area of 2463 ha. and has a population of approx. 4000 consisting mainly of Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhil Adivasis. Other communities represented in the villages are Meghwals, Gurtar and Gayri. The village Nurda has the highest population figure with approx. 1800 followed by Rathana (approx. 1100) and Piproli (approx. 930). The villages Nurda, Piproli and Rathana are of equal geographical size while Dhana only accounts for 31 ha. and a population of approx. 170.⁴⁷²

5.6.3.2 Development Findings

Gram Panchayat Nurda is characterised by a large number of medium and big land holdings (5 ha -30 ha) and some Brahmin and Rajput farmers have individual farming assets such as tractors, sprinklers, irrigation (tubewells) and drainage facilities. However, the Gram Panchayat has few community assets. The internal roads are in poor condition.

The main crops are wheat in the *Rabi* season (March) and maze in the *Kharif* season (October). The drought in 1995 has seriously affected agriculture and reduced income up to 50 percent. The water level has gone down to 65 feet from around 40-50 feet. Most families have cattle. Some younger people have received veterinary training under the TRYSEM scheme. Only few people have biogas plants.

Primary schools are in all villages. Piproli also has a middle school up to the 10th standard. One medical centre with no doctor but a nurse is located in Nurda. One agricultural co-operative society is situated in Veerdholia which also covers the villages of Gram Panchayat Nurda. The society provides for fertiliser and seeds.

471 One Wardpanch from the Scheduled Caste community told me that he was once asked to get down from his bicycle in front of a walking Brahmin.. He filed a case against the Brahmin who was then sent to prison for a few days.

472 Estimates on the basis of Census 1991 data; source: *Government of India; Directorate of Census Operation Rajasthan 1994*:: Census of India 1991; Series 21 Rajasthan Part XII - A and B District Census Handbook (Village and Town Directory and Village and Town Primary census Abstract); Jaipur; p.160.

Panchayat representatives mentioned supply of drinking and irrigation water, a metal road to the main road, a doctor for the hospital and a higher secondary school as development priorities. Villagers from the Scheduled Caste community mentioned also unemployment as their concern. Villagers complained about uncompleted soil and water conservation and forestry projects by the World Bank and the fertiliser company IFCO.

5.6.3.3 Gram Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat was dissolved by state government orders in 1991. Before it was actively functioning according to information of the Sarpanch, a few Wardpanchs and villagers. The present Sarpanch was also the previous Sarpanch. The Gram Panchayat comprises one Sarpanch and twelve Wardpanchs. The seat of the Sarpanch is not reserved. The caste and sex wise composition of the present Gram Panchayat (without Sarpanch) is as follows:

Table 41: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Nurda

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	7	4	3
OBC	1	-	1
SC	1	1	-
ST	3	2	1

Elections

Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat elections were held on February 2nd, 1996. Four candidates contested the Sarpanch elections: two from the Congress Party, one BJP candidate and one independent candidate. The previous Congress Sarpanch from Piproli won the elections by a small margin. The figure of only eight votes was given. He spent between 10-15 000 Rs. on his election campaign. Panchayat Samiti elections in the constituency Nurda, Bhirmal, Wansalia were won by a BJP candidate from Nurda.

Personal Profiles

The Sarpanch is a Brahmin. He is 53 years old and has three sons. He is born in the village, works as an agriculturist and his joint family has a large land holding (around 35 ha). He has two Jeeps and lives in a spacious house with his family. He is educated until the 10th Standard and has been active in the Congress Party for many years. He was well aware of the Congress social policy in rural areas and mentioned that he would support the fight against dowry, child marriage and Mritu Bhoy, a custom where the family of a death spends a little fortune in giving meals to others. He is also a diplomatic person who is experienced and knowledgeable on Panchayati Raj affairs. He diplomatically mentioned "conflict solution, development work and lobbying at Panchayat Samiti level" as his priorities. Several people informed me that he has used

his post as Sarpanch for getting personal benefits, e.g. he allegedly shifted the public telephone to his private house. Villagers from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes communities complained that he had an arrogant behaviour towards lower castes. However, some of them still voted for him as they could not think of a better alternative. They mentioned that they would, however, not vote again for him as they were again disappointed.

A respected Rajput from Piproli with a degree in Political Sciences who works for Seva Mandir in Udaipur has been approached for becoming a Sarpanch but he is afraid of getting too much involved in local politics.

The Up-Sarpanch is affiliated to the BJP. He is a young Rajput who has a business in Nurda but actually belongs to Udaipur. He occasionally visits the village for meeting people.

Wardpanchs were apparently grouped according to their castes and home villages. The Sarpanch seemed to entertain a group of Wardpanchs in the Piproli area. Scheduled Caste Wardpanchs complained that the Sarpanch did not involve Wardpanchs in spending of Panchayat funds.

The BJP Panchayat Samiti member is an assertive 61 year old Rajput. He is an agriculturist educated until the 10th Standard. At Panchayat Samiti level, he is the chairman of the Standing Committee of Agricultural Production and Small Scale Industries. He has no good relations with the Sarpanch and sometimes open fighting because he feels excluded of Panchayat and development affairs. He complained that the Sarpanch was not co-operative. He would take decisions himself or with his close associates. The Panchayat Samiti member further stated that he would enjoy good relations with the women Sarpanchs in Bhirmal and Wansalia.

The Gram Secretary is a 52 year old Brahmin. He holds a Bachelor degree and completed a two year training course for Gram Secretaries. He joined as Gram Secretary for the Gram Panchayats Nurda and Veerdholia on February 14th, 1996. For family reasons, he now lives in Udaipur and since 1991 comes every day to Mavli by public bus. He complained about the corrupt BDO in Mavli. He seemed to be an active Gram Secretary knowing about the provisions of the Act. After the (suspended) Gram Sabha he socialised with the Brahmins and Rajputs of Piproli.

Training

The Sarpanch had received five days of training organised by the Zila Parishad in Udaipur. He was not very satisfied and stated that five days were not enough, at least for the many illiterate Sarpanchs. His knowledge on the provisions of the Act was excellent. Only few Wardpanchs attended the training session in the Panchayat Samiti office in February 1996. The training mainly consisted of information on the various government schemes and procedures to present proposals. The BDO and the Education Extension Officer were the lecturers.

Meetings

The Sarpanch and some Wardpanchs informed me that Gram Panchayat meetings were held twice a months but I experienced cancellation or postponement of meetings. Wardpanchs mentioned that development proposals discussed at the Gram Panchayat meeting were directly sent to the Pradhan without involvement of the Panchayat Samiti member.

Gram Sabha Meeting in Nurda on February 23rd, 1996

Date and Venue: February 23rd, 1996 at 5 p.m.; Panchayati Bhawan in Nurda

*Arrangements: Carpets on the floor of the small Panchayat Bhawan.
The Gram Secretary sat close to the Sarpanch.*

Participants: 37 people out of them three women (according to the list of participants; one was standing outside, the others were not present, at least not the full time) Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch, four Wardpanchs; the Panchayat Samiti Member arrived little later with a group of people; Gram Secretary, Headmaster, Patwari and mainly elderly villagers from upper castes; no Panchayat Samiti Extension Officer or other government officer was present.

Proceedings:

The meeting started with a complaint by the Panchayat Samiti member that notice for the meeting was not given properly by the Gram Panchayat. The Sarpanch and one young Rajput Wardpanch mentioned that they had offered car transport to villagers for joining the meeting. They admitted that the response to their offer was poor because villagers claimed to be busy with other works.

The Sarpanch noted that the quorum (10 percent of the electorate) was not complete and that the meeting was to be suspended. It was discussed why only few people had come. People mentioned that Nurda headquarters were quite far from other villagers (Rathana 8 km; Piproli 4 km) and that people had no transport facilities and were busy with their own work such as cutting the crops (wheat) and social functions (weddings). However, they admitted that people were also not interested in Gram Panchayat affairs.

Such discussions continued for a while, in particular between the Sarpanch and the Panchayat Samiti member. The Panchayat Samiti member who was surrounded by a small group of people was very assertive and talked most powerful. The Sarpanch was mainly replying, but in a less assertive way.

After some time, discussions started on the constitution of the Vigilance Committee. Different names were suggested and an agreement was easily found. However, only higher caste male persons were included in the list. Two people from Nurda, one from Piproli, one from Rathana and one from Dhana were suggested as members. When I asked why women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were not considered for the Vigilance Committee, participants told me that they would not favour such a proposal. People apparently wanted to accommodate their own candidates.

Then the Sarpanch repeated that the meeting had to be officially suspended because the quorum was still not fulfilled. He decided with his associates and the assent of the Gram Secretary that the Gram Sabha should be held the next day at 10 a.m. The Sarpanch then told everybody that tomorrow's meeting was only a formality. I was told that it would not be worthwhile to come all the way from Udaipur. Nothing would be decided just the members of the Vigilance Committee would be confirmed. After the meeting my research partner, Ms. Shamata Seth, and myself had tea with the Sarpanch, his relatives and friends (all upper caste men) and the Gram Secretary.

Overall observations

The Sarpanch and his associates made use of the quorum requirement to cancel the meeting. Villagers associated with the Rathana Panchayat Samiti member were in opposition to the group of the Sarpanch. The three women who figured on the list of participants were not at all involved in the proceedings of the meeting.

2nd Gram Sabha meeting in Nurda on February 24th, 1996

I did not attend the meeting on the following day because I was told that it would only be a formality. I also had planned to visit some other village at this day. I later regretted the decision and felt that I was fooled by the Sarpanch when the Gram Secretary informed me about the character of the meeting on the following day.

On February 24th, 1996, 32 men (no women), mainly Congress affiliated Wardpanchs and friends and relatives of the Sarpanch, attended the Gram Sabha. The Up-Sarpanch and the Panchayat Samiti member (both BJP) did not attend. The Panchayat Samiti member was surprised and angry that substantial decision had been taken in the meeting.

The Gram Secretary informed me on the proceedings, decisions and discussions of the meeting:

(i) 13 Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries were selected, mainly supporters of the Sarpanch.

(ii) Two names of members of the Vigilance Committee were changed. The Rajput persons from Rathana and Dhana were removed from the list and replaced by a person from a Scheduled Caste community. The other seat was allocated for a literate women who had not yet been identified.

(iii) Some area of grazing land was converted into a residential area. This directly concerned the Sarpanch who had encroached some grazing land and legalised the encroachment through the decision. He might have to pay some little fee for registering the area under his name.

(iv) It was decided to construct new handpumps in Nurda and Piproli

(v) It was discussed to forward a proposal for construction of a metal road from the main road to the Panchayati Bhavan.

(vi) It was discussed to forward a proposal on the construction of a new road from Piproli to Dhana.

(vii) The proposal of a health centre in Piproli was discussed.

(viii) The development of grazing land in Dhana by the Watershed and Soil Conservation Department was discussed.

(ix) Panchayat land was allotted to poor villagers (23 45 feet per plot).*

(x) Proposals on constructions of community centres in Nurda for Scheduled Tribes, in Piproli for Scheduled Castes and in Rathana for OBCs were discussed

Finances and Works

Information on finances and works were again confusing. The Sarpanch informed me vaguely that different funds were received from different sources, mainly for construction works. In 1995/1996 one road and one platform for a cattle water pump were constructed. The Sarpanch mentioned that the Gram Panchayat had also received Rs 60 000 under Jawahar Rozgna Yojana I in 1995 and a government grant of Rs. 6000. No taxes were levied at Gram Panchayat level.

A proposal for construction of an additional school building under Jawahar Rozgna Yojana II (Rs. 88 000) was sanctioned and funds were awaited. The Sarpanch mentioned that the Gram Panchayat had received regular funds under JRY in the years before, usually of an amount of Rs. 75 000.

External Relations

The Congress Party membership of the Sarpanch was helpful in getting development works sanctioned although the Sarpanch seemed not to be a close associate or friend of the Pradhan. The Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and villagers expressed overall satisfaction with government works in the Gram Panchayat area but criticised the World Bank project. One Rajput from Piproli is a senior member of Seva Mandir. The Sarpanch, Wardpanchs and other villagers had approached him for doing work in Piproli but Mavli block is not an area of operation of Seva Mandir. The Gram Panchayat Nurda did not have any kind of established co-operation with the neighbouring Panchayat Veerdholia.

5.6.3.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Nurda

The Gram Panchayat Nurda gives the impression of a relatively rich Panchayat, but agricultural assets, nice houses and facilities are private property of medium and large farmers. People rely on their own initiative for carrying out development works. The status of community assets (e.g. internal roads) is rather poor.

The Sarpanch apparently used his good knowledge on development schemes and his political party membership more for personal benefit than for the benefit of the Gram Panchayat. As in most other Gram Panchayats construction activities constituted the core part of development activities.

The Gram Panchayat situation has not much changed in the context of the ongoing Panchayati Raj Reform. The previous Sarpanch has become the new Sarpanch and dominates Gram Panchayat affairs with his close associates as before. He entertained a small support group including Wardpanchs and village elders which took all relevant decisions. People from Rathana strongly opposed the Sarpanch and his group. When I returned to Udaipur district in the first week of September 1996, I visited Mavli again and I was informed that serious fights had happened in the Gram Panchayat in June/July 1996. A motor cycle was burnt and somebody was admitted to the hospital in Udaipur. I was informed that the Sarpanch and his associates had decided to give Panchayat land on lease which was encroached by families from Rathana belonging to the BJP. The Rathana people didn't want to withdraw from the land and the two groups started fighting over the issue.

Concerning casteism, however, my observations at social and religious functions during the period of the field study suggested that traditional social conventions (separation of castes, untouchability) might become less rigid in Gram Panchayat Nurda. More tolerant attitudes of young and mobile upper caste persons towards Scheduled Castes might favour a better inter-caste communication in the villages.

The newly appointed Gram Secretary seemed to be a motivated and honest person. He visited the village regularly. He could potentially balance the dominance of the Sarpanch and his group as he should also be interested to have good relations with the BJP Panchayat Samiti member.

Table 42: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Gram Panchayat Nurda

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	medium	Upper caste farmers have good individual agricultural assets and nice houses with electricity, but the Gram Panchayat has few community assets; there are only very small sandy internal roads.
2. Social and Political Harmony	low	The Gram Panchayat experienced major conflicts, including physical fighting, between the Congress Sarpanch and his associates from Piproli and BJP people from Rathana.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	high	The Sarpanch, the Up-Sarpanch and other Wardpanchs were well educated people with more than basic writing and reading skills. They also had a high level of information on national and local political affairs.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	high	The Sarpanch and some Wardpanchs were very well informed about Panchayat legislation. The male Panchayat members themselves seemed to be active people, but were not able or were not interested to motivate other people for Panchayat affairs.
5. Participation of Women	low	Women figured only on the Gram Sabha attendance list, but did not actively participate. Gender relations were still very traditional in Nurda. Both young and old women were not allowed to raise their voices in public.

6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	low	The major interests of the Sarpanch and his associates consisted of gaining personal benefit from their Panchayat posts.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	low	The upper caste dominated Gram Panchayat area is not considered to be a priority area for government development assistance. People rely on themselves for developing irrigation and other agricultural facilities.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	low	According to information from Nurda people, no NGO has ever operated in the Gram Panchayat
9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary	high	The Gram Secretary who had only recently joined Nurda was a motivated and well educated person who sought the co-operation with the Panchayat.
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	low	The attendance was below 40 people. The Sarpanch and his associates made use of the quorum requirement to cancel the meeting. People close to the Rathana Panchayat Samiti member were in opposition to the group of the Sarpanch. The three women who figured on the list of participants were not at all involved in the proceedings of the meeting. The next meeting was staged in order to manipulate the list of Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries.

5.6.4 Gram Panchayat Veerdholia

5.6.4.1 Characteristics

The Gram Panchayat Veerdholia is located 32 km north-east of Udaipur city and 17 km south-west of block headquarters in Mavli village. From the main road Udaipur-Mavli a small road of good quality leads to Veerdholia which is in 6 km distance to the main road. Four revenue villages (Veerdholia, Palwas Kalan, Palwas Khurd, Nagon Ka Khera) form the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia which extends over an area of 1335 ha. It has a population of approx. 3000 consisting of about 1030 Scheduled Tribes (Bhil Adivasis), about 320 Scheduled Castes (Meghwal, Dholi, Sargara, Gurjar), Brahmins, Rajputs and some OBC (Gayari, Teli, Nai, Kumhar, Soni, Sadhu, Luhar and few Muslims). Veerdholia is the biggest village with a population of approx. 1616 among them 781 tribals.⁴⁷³

5.6.4.2 Development Findings

The Gram Panchayat Veerdholia has a significant number of community assets and a high literacy rate of about 70 percent. Each village has a primary school. Veerdholia has a private primary school and an upper primary school. According to information from the local Panchayat Samiti member only 713 people were counted illiterate. However, Panchayat members and other people had not the level of communication skills as the upper caste families in the neighbouring Panchayat Nurda. An ayurvedic hospital with a permanent doctor and a veterinary hospital are located in the Gram Panchayat area.

Seasonal migration to Udaipur city and to road construction sites elsewhere in the district is around 10-15 percent. The major source of income is subsistent agriculture and earnings from government employment programmes in times of drought. Wheat, gram and barley are the main *Rabi* crops, maze and oil seeds are the main *Kharif* crops. Veerdholia suffered from the severe drought in 1995. Around 100 of the 250 village wells dried up. Two agricultural co-operative societies are operating in Veerdholia. The Veerdholia Gram Seva Sahkari Samiti has 1057 members. It distributes seeds and fertiliser and gives loans for agricultural purposes to its members. The Dudh Utpadan Sahkari Samiti provides fodder for cattle and sometimes organises collection and marketing of diary products. According to information from villagers, the Department of Agriculture advises groups of farmers and individual farmers on new cultivation techniques. Saving and credit facilities are available at the local post office.

The Panchayat Samiti member gave me a list of development activities which have been carried out since 1990:

- (i) construction of a 2 km road from Veerdholia bus stand to the other villages;

473 Estimates on the basis of Census 1991 data: source: *Government of Rajasthan: Directorate of Census Operation Rajasthan* 1994; Census of India 1991; Series 21 Rajasthan Part XII - A & B District Census Handbook (Village & Town Directory and Village & Town Primary Census Abstract); Jaipur; p. 162.

- (ii) electricity supply for all four villages;
- (iii) construction of sandy roads in villages;
- (iv) installation of 32 handpumps;
- (v) construction of a colony of 10 houses for ST people;
- (vi) construction of 75 houses under Indira Awas Yojana;
- (vii) loans for cattle were given to 150 beneficiaries;
- (viii) five shops constructed by DRDA (SC people);
- (ix) setting up of mother and child welfare centres (Anganwadi) with literacy, family planning, food supply activities;
- (x) construction of an upper primary school in Veerdholia;
- (xi) construction of a veterinary hospital under JRY in 1990;
- (xii) construction of small dams in Palwas;
- (xiii) repair of tanks under the Drought Relief Programme;
- (xiv) forest plantations of around 30 ha;
- (xv) training for one person in animal husbandry / veterinary services;
- (xvi) construction of a community platform;
- (xvii) constructing of a *Dharamsala* (a logging place) for ST people.

The constructed roads in Veerdholia were of better quality than most other village roads in the case study area. Villagers still remember the work of an NGO in the late 1980s. The Bajaj Foundation provided 12 motor pumps for wells and funded 540 individual latrines under an NGO programme called "Sulab". Moreover, 60 women were trained in stitching activities for a period of three years, and a vaccination programme for mothers and children was carried out. Fodder was provided during the drought in 1988. The then Sarpanch and now Panchayat Samiti member, a Meghwal, had approached a woman of the Bajaj Foundation who had worked with him and his father under Mahatma Gandhi. Villagers expressed deep satisfaction with the work of the NGO.

Information on ongoing development works were rather confusing. Apparently, no work had been carried out between April 1995 and December 1996. Villagers gave the reason that the Gram Secretary did not visit the villages. The subject was discussed at the Gram Sabha meetings (see chapter 5.6.4.3).

Villagers informed me about failed development projects: a drinking water pipeline programme (Nal Yojana); the construction of a health centre; the construction of a secondary school and a quarter for the post officer. As development priorities, the following works were mentioned:

- (i) construction of a public drinking water pipeline, because the previous construction has failed;
- (ii) upgrading of primary schools into upper primary schools;
- (iii) construction of school hostels for children coming from outside the village;
- (iv) better supply of consumer items in the 'fair priced shop' run by the government.

5.6.4.3 Gram Panchayat Profile and Dynamics

Brief History and Composition of the Present Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat Veerdholia earlier consisted of the same villages. The present Panchayat Samiti member of the area had been the previous Sarpanch for a period of almost 10 years.

Villagers when asked to show the way to the house of the Sarpanch mentioned two names. As the Sarpanch traditionally enjoys a lot of respect, this is either an example that they were still paying respect to the previous Sarpanch by giving his name or that they were confused about Panchayati Raj affairs. Both might have been true in this case. The tenure of the previous Sarpanch was perceived as a period which has brought development to the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia. The seat of the Sarpanch is reserved for a Scheduled Tribe person. The previous Sarpanch could therefore not contest Sarpanch elections again. The present Gram Panchayat has 9 Wardpanchs seats. The caste and sex wise composition is as follows:

Table 43: Composition of the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia

Category	Total Number	Male	Female
General	3	2	1
OBC	2	1	1
SC	1	1	-
ST	3	2	1

Elections

Gram Panchayat elections were held on February 2nd, 1995. Two candidates contested the elections, one from the BJP and one from the Congress Party. The elected Sarpanch belongs to the BJP but he was earlier associated with the Congress Party. According to his information, he spent between Rs. 2000 and Rs. 4000 for his election campaign. Information on his majority margin varied between 80 votes (Panchayat Samiti member) and 244 votes (Sarpanch himself).

Panchayat Samiti elections were held on January 22nd, 1995. The seat was open. A candidate from the Scheduled Castes community who was the previous Sarpanch won the elections. This is quite unusual as open seats usually are won by people from higher castes who can spend more money on elections or have a better authority. Scheduled Castes often dare not to contest open seats. The Panchayat Samiti member spent around Rs. 9000. He informed me that other candidates had spent more, in particular on cash and liquor.

Personal Profiles

The Sarpanch is a 60 year old Scheduled Tribe man. He is born in the village and has three daughters. He had not been to school and is illiterate. However, he is now able

to make his signature. He mentioned that people in the village had motivated him as one of the most senior Scheduled Tribe persons to contest the elections. The Sarpanch was previously with the Congress Party and close to the previous Sarpanch. He mentioned that some frustrations with the Congress Party's local development policies had led to his decision to support the BJP. The Sarpanch is guided by a powerful OBC person from the BJP.

The Up-Sarpanch is a Rajput from Palwas Kalan affiliated with the Congress Party.

The Panchayat Samiti member was the previous Sarpanch. He belongs to the Meghwal community which is a Scheduled Caste community. He is 58 years old and has one son after four children had died immediately after birth. He is a very experienced Gandhian social worker and has received many awards. He is an active member of the Congress Party. He is highly respected in the Gram Panchayat and interacts with people from all communities. He had always lived a simple lifestyle and committed a lot of time and energy for village development. He put photographs of great national leaders on the floor of his house: Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. He has an excellent knowledge of development schemes and the Panchayati Raj reform. People informed me that he had sacrificed for the unity of the Congress Party in withdrawing his application for the Pradhan elections.

One Zila Parishad member of Mavli was elected from Veerdholia. She was the Congress person who later shifted her vote to support the BJP Pramuk.

The Gram Secretary is the same person as for Nurda Gram Panchayat (see chapter 5.6.3.3 Nurda: Gram Panchayat profile and dynamics: personal profiles). He regularly visits the Gram Panchayat and seems to be co-operative and friendly with villagers. He is probably slightly more patronising with the Sarpanch and Wardpanchs in Veerdholia than with the Brahmins and Rajputs in Nurda Gram Panchayat. Villagers are happy with his appointment, because the previous Gram Secretary did not regularly visit the Gram Panchayat.

The Patwari works only in the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia. He is 54 years of age and joined the Panchayat Samiti Mavli in 1968. He provided me with information on government land revenue in Veerdholia (1 ha irrigated private land: 42 Rs.). He complained that the government had charged the full amount in the 1995/1996 though the year was declared as 'drought'. He seemed to be co-operative and friendly with villagers in the Gram Sabha meeting.

Training

The Sarpanch mentioned that he had attended a five day training session in Udaipur organised by the government. He had forgotten the contents. Two or three Wardpanchs of Gram Panchayat Veerdholia attended a training session at the Panchayat Samiti office in Mavli in February 1996. No women were among the participants from Veerdholia. The participants expressed dissatisfaction saying that the Panchayat Samiti staff had not been dedicated to give good lectures. The BDO was most of the part absent because he supposedly attended other Gram Sabha meetings.

The Panchayat Samiti member had received a one day training on December 28th, 1995. The training was organised by the government at Sukharadia Rangmanch (a municipality building) in Udaipur.

Meetings

No Gram Panchayat meeting, but two Gram Sabha meetings could be attended.

Gram Sabha meeting in Veerdholia on February 28th, 1996

Date and Venue: February 28th, 1996; 5 p.m. at the Panchayati Bhawan, Veerdholia

Arrangements: nothing special was arranged in the small Panchayati Bhawan building. People were nicely dressed (some in turbans), in particular the old Sarpanch. Tea was served later. The women were sitting a little bit apart from the core group but were able to listen.

Participants: Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti member; Gram Secretary, Patwari, Headmaster, Progress Extension Officer; all Wardpanchs (3 women), some villagers; altogether about 40 people; the quorum was not completed, the meeting was therefore postponed to March 14th, 1996 at 11 a.m.

Agenda: The following agenda was prepared by the Gram Secretary:
(i) review of the budget of 1995/1996;
(ii) budget of 1996/1997;
(iii) Vigilance Committee;
(iv) other matters with the permission of the Sarpanch.

Proceedings:

Villagers started to arrive at 5.10 p.m. and were sitting and talking together. They first discussed why only few people had come for the meeting. Transport problems and the busy harvest season were mentioned. It was also stated that the quorum requirement was unrealistically high.

Then the young and dynamic Panchayat Samiti Progress Extension Officer informed for about 25 minutes on various government development schemes. The Progress Extension Officer has served in Mavli for the last four years. His talking style was friendly and interactive. People listened carefully.

He started to inform on the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), its nature, criteria of eligibility, procedures and later on a new insurance schemes for productive assets received under IRDP (i.e. cattle). Then he informed the participants about the new pension scheme from the central government for handicapped persons, widows and elderly people. Application forms for the scheme would be available at the Panchayat Samiti office and eligible persons could get Rs. 100 per months. The Gram Panchayat should inform people if they had further queries. The scheme would be implemented in two months time. He then informed the audience on the details of the Jivan Dhara (JD) scheme and Indira Awas Yojana (IAY). Concerning IAY, he mentioned that the Gram Sabha should decide on names of eligible beneficiaries for houses and the list of names should then be forwarded to the Panchayat Samiti for implementation. He encouraged villagers to complain to the Gram Panchayat if handpumps were not working. The Gram Panchayat should forward the complaints to the Panchayat Samiti which would then send a mechanic. The mechanic would produce

a report and spare parts would be purchased if necessary. The pump would then be repaired. He further informed that people should register birth and death within 21 days at Gram Panchayat level. They could go to the headmaster. He stated that the Panchayat Samiti would no longer be in charge of it. In this respect, responsibility had been shifted to the Gram Panchayat level.

The Gram Secretary also mentioned a few things in connection with the information given by the Panchayat Samiti Extension Officer. Then people started to leave the place.

Overall observations:

The meeting was postponed because the quorum was not complete but people remained at the place for about one and a half hour and mainly listened to the Panchayat Samiti Progress Extension Office. The Panchayat Samiti Extension Officer delivered a good presentation on development schemes. There is a good chance that people might have got some valuable information out of it. The Sarpanch did not address the Gram Sabha and was only talking a few sentences with people sitting close to him. The atmosphere between the participants was peaceful and friendly, no political or otherwise motivated fights occurred. People were not very active.

Second Gram Sabha meeting in Veerdholia on March 14th, 1996

Date and Venue: March 14th, 1996; 11 a.m. at the Panchayat Bhawan, Veerdholia (rescheduled because the first meeting was suspended)

Arrangements: as per the first Gram Sabha meeting

Participants: Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti member, four Wardpanchs (one woman) one other women, Gram Secretary, Sarpanch of the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Rakhiyal as visitor, husband of the Zila Parishad member from the constituency covering Veerdholia, around 40-50 villagers had shown up, while around 20-25 were continuously present during 5 hours.

Agenda: The following agenda was prepared:

- (i) review of the previous meeting;
- (ii) Vigilance Committee;
- (iii) Indira Awas Yojana: selection of beneficiaries;
- (iv) supply of food for cattle;
- (v) other matters with the permission of the Sarpanch.

Proceedings:

The meeting started with the a brief review of the previous meeting. Some general problems of the functioning of the Gram Panchayat were discussed. Villagers complained that the previous Gram Secretary had not regularly visited Veerdholia and that he had not attended meetings. It was mentioned that this was the reason why no Panchayat works had been started (though sanctioned) in the year 1995/1996. It was then noted that the Gram Panchayat budget was not prepared. The illiterate Sarpanch had not received any guidance to do the job.

Some uncertainty rose how the meeting should go on because only 25 people had reached the place by the time. While people waited for more villagers to come, photographs which I had brought were watched and discussed for some time. I also circulated a brochure from the District Rural Development Agency on government

development schemes in Udaipur district. My research partner, Ms. Shamata Seth, explained villagers the various DRDA schemes as outlined in the brochure.

Then the Sarpanch of the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Rakhiyal from the BJP arrived with the husband of the Zila Parishad member (she was not present herself) on a motorbike. More villagers had also come in the meantime. The powerful looking 45 year old Rakhiyal Sarpanch, a Brahmin, then dominated the meeting for the following two to three hours, showing a great commitment to develop good relationship with his neighbouring GP. He apparently regarded himself as an adviser to Sarpanchs in the area and informed everybody about the successful development works in his Gram Panchayat and the effective participation of women. The presentation was dynamic and impressed the Veerdholia people, mainly from the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities. They, however, rejected his proposition to again postpone the meeting to fulfil the quorum.

Heated but still friendly arguments started later between the Panchayat Samiti member, the Sarpanch and Wardpanchs on a Rajiv Gandhi foundation scheme (provision of two handpumps per Gram Panchayat). It turned out to be a communication problem. Wardpanchs complained that the Panchayat Samiti member had not collected information and had not pushed the proposal of installation of two handpumps at Panchayat Samiti level. The Panchayat Samiti member replied that nobody had reminded him after they had discussed the matter a long time back.

At around 4 p.m. the next agenda point "Vigilance Committee" was discussed. Six members were nominated for the Committee: four from Veerdholia and two from Palwas Kalan. No women was among the selected persons. All selected members were present at the meeting.

The next point of discussion was Indira Awas Yojana. Arguments were exchanged between the Panchayat Samiti member and the Sarpanch. The Panchayat Samiti member wanted the previous list to be considered, but the list was not available. It was decided to check the previous list and to take further decisions at the next Gram Panchayat meeting on March 28th, 1996.

The next agenda point was the arrangement for cattle fodder at Gram Panchayat level in the context of the drought relief programme and the grass scarcity in Mavli. Grass had been received from the state government. It is supposed to be channelled through the Panchayat Samiti but should be distributed by the Gram Panchayat.

The arrangement of new ration cards was the next point of discussion. Villagers explained that they faced problems to get ration cards which would make them eligible to buy certain consumer items from the 'fair-price shops'. They mentioned that the required Rs. 5 stamp for the card was only available in Mavli which would be far and not easy to reach for everybody. A debate started how and if the Sarpanch could be helpful in this case. The Panchayat Samiti member expressed annoyance that the Sarpanch had not taken any action against overcharging from the shop-keeper. He suggested that the Sarpanch should issue or renew ration cards. The Sarpanch replied that this was not within his powers, and that the stamp was required and only available in Mavli. Others proposed that he should collect the money from villagers and get the ration cards from Mavli. The discussion ended when the Rakhiyal Sarpanch assured that he would talk to the Tehsildar of Mavli.

The meeting proceeded with discussions on development proposals. It was suggested to construct roads in Veerdholia, Palwas Khurd, Palwas Kalan and Nagoya

Khera. Then it was proposed to install new handpumps in Veerdholia and Palwas Kalan. Then a drinking water pipeline scheme for Veerdholia was discussed. At the end of the meeting the Gram Secretary was reading out the draft minutes of the meeting, in particular the proposals.

Overall Observations

The meeting was again not attended by enough villagers to fulfil the quorum requirement. It was, however, a long meeting and important aspects such as Vigilance Committee, development proposals and selection of beneficiaries were discussed at length. However, no decision had been made regarding Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries. The friendship visit of the Sarpanch from Rakhiyal was of a rather strange nature though he seemed to be respected by the people from Veerdholia. It was probably some sort of pre-election campaign for the BJP.

Finances and works

The budget for 1995/1996 was not prepared because the previous Gram Secretary had not regularly visited the villages. The new Gram Secretary has not yet had enough time. Apparently, the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia had received Rs. 88 000 for the construction of school buildings. Some little works had apparently started in January 1996. Information on current development activities with involvement of the Gram Panchayat were rather confusing. The Gram Secretary and the Panchayat Samiti member informed me that Rs. 75 000 had been sanctioned under JRY II in April 1995, but no work had been taken off. According to Zila Parishad information, the amount for JRY II should have been Rs. 100 000. Under JRY I, Rs. 35 000 were allocated for constructing a community centre in Nagoya Khera and Rs. 30 000 for a road construction in Veerdholia. An irrigation proposal of Rs. 100 000 and an electrification proposal (electrification from the colony where the Sarpanch lives to the main road) for Rs. 10 000 Rs. were pending.

External Relations

The Gram Panchayat enjoys good relations with the Panchayat Samiti, because the Panchayati Samiti member of Veerdholia is a well known and respected Congress activist although he did not become the Pradhan and has not very good personal relations with the Pradhan.

The Veerdholia Gram Panchayat is directly represented at the Zila Parishad by a women elected on a Congress ticket (but she supported the BJP candidate in the Pramuk elections). Her role seems not of direct importance for Veerdholia. However, the fact that a Zila Parishad member comes from Veerdholia gives the Gram Panchayat a higher political status.

Villagers expressed an overall satisfaction with government staff. There was no NGO operating in Veerdholia during the period of the field study, but people still recalled the successful NGO work in the late 1980s. The Sarpanch had approached the NGO. This is quite unusual because it is usually the other way around.

Villagers mentioned no particular complaints with banks, but their experience were limited. There is no bank in the Gram Panchayat area. Veerdholia did not have any kind of established co-operation with the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Nurda.

5.6.4.4 Conclusion: Development and Panchayati Raj in Veerdholia

The Gram Panchayat Veerdholia illustrates two aspects of village development and Panchayat Raj.

First, internal factors of village life are of major importance for achieving progress and development. The personal commitment of the previous Sarpanch and now Panchayat Samiti member and the prevailing harmony in the village (no major caste or political conflicts) created a conducive atmosphere for peace and development. Veerdholia is a rare case where the village community had approached an NGO (the Bajaj Foundation) and not the other way around.

Second, the revival and reform of Panchayat Raj has a potential to politicise village life along party basis, even in a village characterised by overall harmony. This might increase conflicts in the Gram Panchayat.

The Zila Parishad member shifted her vote from Congress to BJP. Minor conflicts have already occurred during the Gram Sabha meetings between the Panchayat Samiti member from the Congress Party and the Sarpanch who shifted from the Congress Party to the BJP. In the context of the general elections, outsiders like the Sarpanch from Rakhial intervened in village meetings.

The positive or negative impact of the Panchayat Raj Reform on village development in Veerdholia probably depends on the strength of the Gram Panchayat to protect itself against engineering of party politics by dominant outsiders.

Table 44: Ranking of Development Indicators in the Gram Panchayat Veerdholia

Development Indicator	Ranking	Comments
1. Overall Welfare Status	high	Veerdholia has a significant number of community assets, among them a school in every village, a good road and handpumps.
2. Social and Political Harmony	high	The prevailing harmony in the villages (no major caste or political conflicts) created a conducive atmosphere for peace and development. A few controversial, but always friendly discussions were held at the Gram Sabha meetings.
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	medium	The Sarpanch is only able to sign, most other Wardpanchs have at least basic writing and reading skills.
4. Political Awareness and Participation	high	Thanks to the outstanding personality and development commitment of the Panchayat Samiti member and previous Sarpanch, people seem to believe in the Panchayat system and show a fair amount of awareness and participation.

5. Participation of Women	low	Women were able to sit close to the men at the Gram Sabha meeting, but they were not vocal at all.
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	high	Veerdholia has experienced a Gram Panchayat success story under the previous Sarpanch and people believe in the Panchayat as an important institution for village development.
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	low	A number of works have been carried out in acceptable quality in the late 1980s, but recently the Panchayat has not benefited from government projects.
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	medium	The Gram Panchayat, at its own initiative, has approached the NGO Bajaj Foundation in the late 1980s and received a significant amount of assistance, in particular for sanitation. Since then no NGO has operated in Veerdholia. The ranking of 'medium', however, seems still justified in view of the amount of the assistance received during the past ten years.
9. Level of Co-operation with the Gram Secretary	high	The Gram Secretary who had only recently joined Veerdholia was a motivated and well educated person who sought the co-operation with the Panchayat.
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	medium	The attendance was twice below 50 people. The meetings, however, were informative for the villagers and some fruitful discussions were held.

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This chapter provides a comparative overview of the case studies findings and highlights the most important issues of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj reform. The presentation of the issues is based on a comparative analysis of the different sub-chapters of the case studies and topics dealt there within.

5.7.1 Functions, Competencies and Development Activities of Panchayats

The Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1994 specifies 19 functions for the Zila Parishad, 30 functions for the Panchayat Samiti and 33 functions for the Gram Panchayat, but the conformity legislation, although it is a voluminous document, remains vague in the allocation of specific responsibilities to the different Panchayat levels. In the context of the vague legislative framework, the actual influence of the Panchayats in development decision-making largely depends on the ability of individual Panchayat members to make use of their personal relations with higher political and administrative authorities.

The 'official influence' of Panchayats on managing rural development will be largely affected by a future definitive decision on the transfer of decision-making and financial authority over the District Rural Development Agency from bureaucratic to popular control. The DRDA is presently under the chairmanship of the *District Collector*. In Rajasthan, members of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly together with bureaucrats object to this transfer because they fear losing their important status if the Panchayats obtain control over the large DRDA funds.

Regarding finances, the report of the Finance Commission was released in March 1996. The report recommends significantly increasing the financial resources of Panchayats at all levels. However, as experiences at district and block level have shown, the implementation reality of legislative provisions and regulations on financial allocations is often poor in Rajasthan. The likely scenario is that after a significant delay in the implementation, the financial allocations will probably initially follow the recommendations of the report, but the mid-term perspective for sustaining the financial resources of Panchayats will depend upon political factors at the state level. The crucial question is how the Panchayats will assert themselves together or against the state

government, the political parties, the bureaucracy and Non-Governmental Organisations.

The administrative autonomy of the Panchayats towards the state government and the state government administration is an important issue. In Rajasthan, as in most other states, the Panchayati Raj Act provides the state government with ample powers to supersede and control the Panchayats. The staff of the Panchayats, in particular the higher ranking staff, is, for the most part, directly controlled by the state government. In Rajasthan, various initiatives have been discussed to strengthen the role of the elected representatives towards the state government bureaucrats serving in the Panchayats. However, such changes mainly aim at giving the elected representatives some authority in the day-to-day management and internal office affairs. Confidential reports, transfers and the promotion of Panchayati Raj staff will most probably remain under the control of the state government. Further evolution in this matter depends upon how the actual political powers of the Panchayats will develop in the consolidation phase of the Panchayati Raj reform.

Zila Parishad

Following the Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act (1959) the Zila Parishad institutions assumed a role as a co-ordinating and supervising body. The Panchayati Raj reform in Rajasthan, so far, has not brought any significant changes, and the legacy of the previous Act is still dominant. The functions of Zila Parishads in Rajasthan are of general administrative nature. Its major responsibilities are related to the supervision of school administration by Panchayat Samitis and the recruitment of teachers for those schools.

The budget of the Zila Parishad does not provide for development investments except a 100 000 Rupees provision for emergency aid (natural calamities) to be allocated by the Pramuk.

Unlike in some neighbouring districts, the Zila Pramuk in the Udaipur district is not a politically high profile person. The seat is reserved for a woman from a Scheduled Tribe community and she has almost no political experience. Nevertheless, the Pramuk elections had a high profile character. Big money was involved in the very competitive elections and the BJP finally succeeded in appointing the Pramuk despite its one-seat Congress majority in the Zila Parishad. The Zila Pramuk receives respect from the district bureaucracy. In return she remains loyal to the district bureaucrats. The importance that political parties attach to the post of Zila Pramuk increases the weight of the Zila Pramuk in the political game involving party politics, bureaucracy and business. In the Udaipur district, the informal powers of the Pramuk are probably more important than her formal influence on regulations and decision-making procedures.

Powers of the Zila Parishad body and its members, therefore, are directly connected with the personality of the members, in particular the chairperson, and the political dynamics in the district.

Panchayat Samiti

The Panchayat Samiti at the block level has traditionally played a strong role in Rajasthan. This is due to the provisions of the previous Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act (1959) which allocated most of the executive powers of the

Panchayats to the block level Panchayat Samiti. The Panchayat Samiti forwards proposals which it receives from the Gram Panchayats to the DRDA and controls the implementation of DRDA schemes.

In all the three blocks of the field study - Jhadol, Badgaon and Mavli - major conflicts occurred between the elected chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti and the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDOs were appointed as caretakers of Panchayat Samiti affairs when the Panchayat Samitis were dissolved between 1991-1994. During this period, they enjoyed freedom and a high status with ample decision-making powers. This has changed after the Panchayat Samiti elections in February 1995. The elected heads of the Panchayat Samitis, the Pradhans, fight with the BDOs over the allocation of funds to different Gram Panchayats, over the use of the single block vehicle, and over authority and prestige in daily office affairs.

Party politics played an important role in all three blocks. In the light of forthcoming national level elections, all political parties considered the block level as a strategic entry point in mobilising electoral support. The field study provides evidence that the block level covering a population between 91 640 (Badgaon block) and 164 468 (Mavli block) is regarded as a "training ground" for ambitious politicians in the Udaipur district..

Furthermore, in all three blocks powerful people occupied the post of the vice-chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti, the Up-Pradhan post. In Jhadol and Mavli, the Up-Pradhans belong to the former royal family and had large land holdings, in Badgaon the Up-Pradhan is a powerful business man. They could not qualify for the post of the chairpersons because of the reservation quotas, but they wanted to retain their political influence and their direct contact with the block level bureaucracy. All three had previous political experiences.

Ordinary Panchayat Samiti members often felt frustrated because of their limited powers. Direct elections for Panchayat Samitis are a provision of the new national Panchayati Raj Act. New constituencies comprising one to three Gram Panchayats have been created for this purpose. The villagers were not yet used to the direct elections at block level and the new constituencies.

Many Panchayat Samiti members complained that Sarpanchs would regard them as their political rivals rather than as their partners. In the Gram Panchayat Nurda, it was most obvious that the Sarpanch perceived the Panchayat Samiti Members as his rival in village politics.

A general observation was that the various Standing Committees at block level seemed rather ineffective. They were considered to be discussion forums rather than development management units. This was again due to political rivalries between different factions at block level, and was most obvious in Mavli.

Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayats are most directly concerned with the implementation of development programmes. Nature, amount and criteria of eligibility of the various development schemes are fixed according to central and state government policies, but proposing activities and, in some cases, selection of beneficiaries are the responsibilities of the Gram Panchayats. In the Udaipur district, a lot of frustration has

developed among the villagers over corruption and politically motivated allocation of benefits for villages and families.

The Sarpanch, as chairperson of the Gram Panchayat plays, together with the Gram Secretary serving in the Panchayat, the crucial role in mobilising resources for the villages. The Sarpanchs usually enjoy a lot of respect as "head of the villages". Good connections with the government administrators at the village level (Gram Secretary, Patwari), at the block level (Block Development Officer, Accountant) and with the Pradhan are crucial for receiving development funds.

Under the previous Panchayati Raj Act, the Sarpanchs were ex-officio members of the Panchayat Samiti. With the introduction of the reform, the Sarpanchs do no longer have direct access to the Pradhan. Many Sarpanchs felt frustrated that their scope of action has been reduced and perceived the newly elected Panchayat Samiti members as their potential rivals. However, their frustrations and complaints have reached the highest political level in Rajasthan. The induction of Sarpanchs in the Panchayat Samiti on rotational basis is under serious consideration.

Gram Panchayat affairs are usually less politicised than Panchayat Samiti affairs. Party politics is certainly of an important and increasing influence, but is not the most important factor in the constitution of social and political relations. Family and caste backgrounds are far more important.

Gram Panchayat elections were officially not held on a party basis, but the Sarpanchs and some Wardpanchs nevertheless had a political party affiliation which made it easier for them to approach higher authorities.

Panchayat meetings were usually not held twice a month as per the provisions of the Act. The meetings were held perhaps once a month on average and were often postponed or cancelled at short notice. National, regional or local holidays, Wedding ceremonies, funeral services and the absence of the Sarpanch or the Gram Secretary led to the frequent cancellations.

The decision-making procedure seemed not to be very transparent at the Gram Panchayat level. Sarpanchs tended to involve only a few of their close political associates and personal friends in decisions.

Most of the development activities carried out in the Gram Panchayats were construction works: road construction; boundary walls, school rooms, Panchayat buildings, etc. reflecting the central and state government development priorities of creating short-term employment to satisfy immediate needs of villagers. Construction activities are also simple to organise and involve a maximum number of people: men, women and even children. Often the results were of a rather poor quality as the works carried out under the Drought Relief Programmes have shown in some villages of the field study area.

Gram Sabha

The Gram Sabha comprises the whole electorate of a Gram Panchayat which consisted of about 3000 adults in the case study area. The Gram Sabha, or more precisely the Vigilance Committee of the Gram Sabha, is the only village authority to control the Gram Panchayat. Gram Sabha meetings are often the only opportunity for villagers to meet and discuss with block level government staff. Meetings are to be held twice a year according to the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act. Article 3 states that "there shall be at least two meetings of the Gram Sabha every year, one in the first and the

other in the last quarter of the financial year". The legislative provision is unrealistic and has created confusion among Panchayat members and government officers. The financial year starts in April. The regulation would therefore require that one meeting should be held in the period January to March and the next meeting in the following period April to July. The most convenient period for organising such meetings would be the period from October to March when the climate is pleasant enough for an almost day-long meeting in a small Panchayat building or under a tree. It would also be reasonable to have a gap of about six months between the bi-annual meetings. Information was gathered that the provisions was not to strictly applied in all areas of Rajasthan anyway. No Gram Panchayat covered by the field study has organised more than the mandatory two meetings per year.

According to the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj, the quorum requirement is 10% of the electorate. Otherwise the meeting has to be dissolved and postponed. This legislative provision is inadequate, because 10% is unrealistically high. 10% of the electorate would mean 200-300 people participating in such meetings. On average only about 50 people attended the Gram Sabha meetings in the case study area. It has to be taken into consideration that Panchayats extend over a large geographical area, in particular in tribal areas. Villagers are busy with agricultural works, in particular during the harvest season, and transport facilities are usually not available. Moreover, the Panchayat buildings where such meetings are usually held, are generally small places which can hardly accommodate more than 50-60 people. Loudspeakers to reach people outside the hall are also not available.

The most important development role of the Gram Sabha consisted of the selection of beneficiaries for government development schemes, in particular the rural housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana. The Gram Sabha is supposed to identify the poorest families. This exercise provoked heated discussions in the Gram Panchayats of the case study area. In all Gram Panchayats the lists of beneficiaries made at the Gram Sabha meetings were only regarded as preliminary lists. The final approval of the lists was subject to changes by the Gram Panchayat and in some cases perhaps even by the Panchayat Samiti.

Names for the constitution of the Vigilance Committee which is supposed to monitor Panchayat affairs were usually decided by powerful people in the village, including the Sarpanch. There are no reservation quotas for the Vigilance Committee.

Gram Sabha meetings were attended in all six Gram Panchayats covered by the field study. They each had a different character. The meeting in Kharkar/Jhadol, for example, was characterised by heated debated and almost resulted in physical fighting between different village factions and between villagers and Panchayat Samiti government officers. The tribal female Sarpanch was unable to provide any mediation or guidance.

In Dhar/Badgaon, the atmosphere was very peaceful and the meeting was rather considered as a discussion forum and an opportunity for the villagers to receive guidance from the Gram Secretary to fill out application forms for the various development schemes.

In Nurda/Mavli, the dominant Sarpanch and his close associates took advantage of the fact that the quorum was not complete and dissolved the meeting. The next day he decided together with his friends on the names of beneficiaries for houses under the Indira Awas Yojana scheme.

5.7.2 The Participation of Women

In Rajasthan, the membership of women in Gram Panchayats is 32.4%, in Panchayat Samitis 33.0 % and in Zila Parishads 33.1%. These figures demonstrate that very few women (almost none at all) were elected on seats not specifically reserved for women. The 33% reservation⁴⁷⁹ for women is a controversial issue, in particular in the socially conservative state of Rajasthan where gender inequality is rampant in public life and wearing the veil is common for married women in rural areas.

Women development initiatives appreciated the reservation quotas for women and took the opportunity to carry out training- and information programmes for the newly elected female representatives. Opposition to the reservation quotas was raised from men of different economic and caste background. A common argument was that women were not able to properly execute their role as elected representatives of Panchayats because many of them were illiterate and had no political experience. In Rajasthan, the argument is particularly popular among the Rajputs, both men and women. Rajputs, the members of the proud warrior caste, attach particular importance to upholding customs and traditional social values. Women, did not contest for not-reserved seats. The prevailing attitude in villages was to think strictly in terms of reservation quotas.

The reservation quotas have enabled women to attend Panchayat meetings in the socially conservative state of Rajasthan. The majority of elected women attended the meetings, but demonstrated a very passive attitude. However, the field study provided evidence that no generalisations could be made on the role of women in Panchayats. A study of Neera Choudhry from the Institute of Social Sciences in New Delhi came to the same conclusion.⁴⁸⁰

In many cases the family background played a major role in the motivation of women to contest elections. Women were often encouraged by their husbands or brothers to contest for seats reserved for women in order to retain or to build the political influence of the family. However, there was also a case of a woman who fought her election against the advice of her husband. A Udaipur Zila Parishad member from Badgaon was motivated by "a friend of the family" who was also a previous Sarpanch of her area.

The degree of independence enjoyed by elected women representatives in decision-making varied from case to case. In many cases husbands, brothers or fathers directed or at least 'guided' the women. The degree of independent decision-making was particularly low for younger married illiterate women, e.g. the Sarpanch of Kharkar. In some villages, it was observed that higher caste women, in particular Rajput women, had more restrictions than tribal women. Husbands usually influenced their wives more

479 This is the statistical provision of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

480 *Sunday Times of India* (Delhi) 24.3.1996; Custom of Veil Curtails Role of Women in Panchayats; p. 7; The article summarises a forthcoming study of Neera Choudhry of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi: "In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, the study reveals, the male members generally address the gatherings and take decisions. In some cases, women were not even brought to the Panchayats by their male counterparts. Their names are only on record and the Panchayat business is transacted by men. However, the study point out that it would be unfair to say that women are mute and dumb spectators on the Panchayat scene. It cites the example of Koyli Devi, a women Sarpanch of Neemuchana village of Alwar in Rajasthan, who initiated action against her own husband and father-in-law for encroachment of Panchayat land."

strongly than brothers influenced their sisters or fathers influenced their daughters. It was, however, difficult to precisely assess the women's' freedom in decision-making and to measure the influence of husbands, fathers or brothers.

The Sarpanchs in Kharkar and Godana were both younger married women. Both women, however, conducted Gram Sabha meetings on their own, but with limited leadership abilities, in particular in the case of the Kharkar Sarpanch. Their husbands could not attend the meetings because they were on government duty at the time when the Gram Sabha meetings were held.

Behaviour of women strongly depended on the situation. The Godana Sarpanch, when she was on her own, appeared to be an active and clever young lady. When her husband was present at home or when family members observed her during the Gram Sabha meeting, she often put the veil and was rather shy.

No harassment of elected women was observed during the case studies. However, some women, like the Pradhan of Badgaon, related their difficulties with male government officers to the gender aspect. Female Panchayat members were generally treated with respect when they executed their duties; chairpersons more than ordinary members. Ordinary women members of the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti or Zila Parishad were not expected to play an active role in the meetings, sometimes they even sit separate or did only attend half of the meeting. However, they seemed to have freedom to at least attend the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat meetings. Female Wardpanchs were usually the only women who attended the Gram Sabha meetings.

Female chairpersons were even expected to provide some basic inputs in meetings. From these experiences, it could be concluded that the reservation quotas have opened opportunities for women to attend meetings and, as chairpersons, to provide inputs and partake in discussions and decision-making, although often under control of their family members or village elders.

Some of the elected women representatives attended training sessions. NGOs in particular focused on training for women representatives. Most women had no previous experience with such training sessions and could not significantly improve their knowledge and awareness on legal literacy issues through the training, but might have gained self-esteem and experience by getting the freedom to attend such training. The women generally appreciated the training sessions because the attendance involved a social gathering with other women of the area.

5.7.3 The Participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment also provides for reservation quotas for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to their population strength in constituencies. Elected Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have actually gained authority and even respect within their constituency through their Panchayat membership. Without the reservation quotas most of them would have not even contested elections. In the case study area, the Panchayat members of the Scheduled Castes generally presented the interests of their community and were not directed by higher castes. The tribal Sarpanch in Veerdholia, however, seemed to be directed by a BJP politician.

Communication problems were still evident between elected Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribe Panchayat members, other Panchayat members and government

officials. In some cases, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes seemed to lack exposure to other communities in a context other than being a servant or a labourer. The following personal experience from a visit to a Gram Panchayat in Kotra block illustrates the kind of communication and behavioural problems which easily occur in rural India between people from different background because they lack social exposure to other communities.

The Sarpanch of a tribal Gram Panchayat in Kotra, a young and assertive Scheduled Tribe, offered me a tea when I visited him. After a little while, another man who had just repaired his cycle, brought me the tea in a steel cup. I pointed out that some flies were swimming in the cup and that the cup was also too hot for me to hold. The young man who had brought the tea approached and tried to get the flies out of the cup with his dirty and oily hands. After some wrestling with the hot steel cup and the flies, he succeeded, but not before half of the cup had been poured over my trousers in the course of the exercise.

Before I left the place, I invited the Sarpanch for a couple of drinks and a chicken meal whenever he could spare some time and visit me in Udaipur where I stayed with a high status Rajput family. The following day the phone was ringing little after 11 p.m. Soon after I heard my landlord loudly shouting on the phone. After another five to ten minutes I was called to receive the phone. The Sarpanch from Kotra wanted to give me a courtesy call. I explained him that the time was not convenient for talking in my landlords living room. Later my landlord, usually quite a tolerant person, complained that the Sarpanch of Kotra had given him strict orders to address him on the phone in an appropriate VIP manner because he was a Sarpanch.

The most striking example of assertive behaviour of a Sarpanch in a field study village was the case of the Sarpanch of Karia / Badgaon who belongs to an Other Backward Class (OBC) community. His assertive behaviour was disliked by the NGO Seva Mandir. Casteism was strongest in the Gram Panchayat Nurda where Scheduled Castes lived totally separate from higher castes. In the neighbouring Gram Panchayat Veerdholia, one person from the Scheduled Caste community, the Panchayat Samiti member, proved to be the most charismatic person I met during the course of the field study. Inspired by Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and other national social leaders, he has committed his life to the development of his home village Veerdholia in Mavli. As a Scheduled Caste person he succeeded in winning a non-reserved Panchayat Samiti seat. He is a genuinely respected man in his village as well as at the block level although he has, for party political reasons, not been elected as Pradhan of Mavli.

The Gram Panchayat Veerdholia was the only case where village development had largely been initiated by the Gram Panchayat and this was attributable to the development commitment of a Scheduled Caste person.

5.7.4 The Role of The Bureaucracy

Bureaucrats usually enjoy a respectable status in India. Even at the local level, government officers are considered to belong to a distinguished class of people with secure employment and salary, powers over applications of ordinary people and

contacts in administration which can be used for personal purposes. Most of them would have a caste and education background higher than the elected representatives of Panchayats at the respective level.

The District Level

The strong role of bureaucracy is probably most evident at district level where the District Collector, a centrally recruited officer from the elitist Indian Administrative Service, is in charge of law and order, revenue collection and holds the chairmanship of the District Rural Development Agency.

The district bureaucrats, in particular the District Collector (who retained his designation from the times of British colonial rule), are very busy persons. The block level administrators, recruited at state level, therefore assume an important role in supervising the implementation of various development schemes financed by the state or the central government.

In Udaipur, like in most other districts, the District Collector sits in a large, prestigious office and lives in a spacious government bungalow. His "door-men" are dressed in traditional Rajasthani clothes and turbans. The office of the Zila Pramuk is much less prestigious. It is situated in the second floor with few accessories. Her private house is very simple.

In light of such a difference in office and private facilities, it is already difficult to imagine that the Zila Pramuk, the constitutional head of the district, is supposed to hold more powers than the traditionally powerful District Collector. This would be the case if the DRDA is shifted under the chairmanship of the Zila Pramuk. In the present set-up, the District Collector and the Zila Pramuk have few working relations because the Zila Pramuk has no authority over the DRDA. The Chief Executive Officer of the district, recruited at state level, serves as administrative head of the Zila Parishad under the authority of the Zila Pramuk.

In the Udaipur district, the Zila Pramuk and the Chief Executive Officer, a senior officer of the Rajasthan Administration Service, seemed to have good working relations. At least, no major problems occurred during the period of the field study. The Zila Pramuk stated that this had not been the case with the previous Chief Executive Officer who wanted to dominate her. When I reported on my field study in Jaipur and Delhi, some participants of the lectures pointed out that they had heard of major conflicts between Zila Pramuks and Chief Executive Officers in some districts. The reason for the more or less peaceful relations in the Udaipur district was probably that the female tribal Pramuk of Udaipur was not an assertive person compared to Pramuks in other districts who had more political experience than her.

Panchayat Samiti Level

In the course of the past decades, the powers of the block level administration, in particular the BDOs, have increased in Rajasthan. This is attributable to the increase number of rural development schemes, the overall budget increase for rural development activities and the decline of the Panchayati Raj system. At the same time, the educational qualifications of the BDOs have declined due to a change in the recruitment procedures. Earlier BDOs belonged mostly to the Rajasthan Administration

Service and some were even officers of the Indian Administrative Service. Nowadays, many BDOs are from departmental services, mainly the Rajasthan Educational Service, which are classified below the Rajasthan Administrative Service.

In the Udaipur district frequent transfers of BDOs occurred in 1995/1996, and more were requested by the heads of the Panchayat Samitis. Transfers are a popular punishment for corrupt officers. Government officers are rarely suspended from their job even if they have been involved in criminal affairs. Seventeen cases had been filed against a BDO in Udaipur district. His punishment: a transfer from Gogunda to Jhadol.

In all three blocks of the field study area major conflicts occurred between Pradhans and BDOs. Bad allegations were made against the BDOs and evidence suggested that the BDOs were indeed arrogant and corrupt persons, in particular the Mavli BDO and the second BDO in Jhadol who had been transferred from Gogunda. The Panchayat Samitis of all blocks had considered requesting or had already requested the transfer of the BDOs. In Badgaon conflicts occurred over the single vehicle in the Panchayat Samiti which was almost permanently claimed by the BDO.

Other Panchayat Samiti officers (Accountants, Engineers, Progress officers) seldom attended the Gram Sabha meeting. Only the Mavli Progress Officer delivered a good presentation of development schemes at the Gram Sabha meeting. Accountants were apparently most disliked among people, since they have many opportunities to extort bribes.

Gram Panchayat Level

The relations between the government officers and elected Panchayat representatives were better at Gram Panchayat level than at Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad level. The Gram Secretaries are forced to pay frequent visits to the villages. Unlike other block level government staff, they do not have the opportunity to select their favoured working area, because they work only in two Gram Panchayats anyway. It therefore makes sense for them to have good relations with the Sarpanchs and the villagers. No major conflicts were observed between the Gram Secretary and Panchayat members. In Dhar, the relations were particularly friendly, in Karia the Gram Secretary played a true secretary role for the dynamic Sarpanch. In Nurda and Veerdholia, the Gram Secretary was a motivated and honest person fulfilling his duties. In Godana the Gram Secretary had only recently joined the Gram Panchayat but was apparently a supportive person. Only in Kharkar, some villagers complained about the Gram Secretary, saying he did not regularly visit the villages of the Gram Panchayat. During the case study period the department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj was planning to recruit a large number of new Gram Secretaries. However, they had not resumed work when I departed from Rajasthan. The stated objective of the Department was that one Gram Secretary would be in charge of one Gram Panchayat.

5.5.5 The Role of NGOs

The district of Udaipur is a centre of NGO activities in Rajasthan, and indeed, for India. On the one hand, the striking development problems of the district constitute a challenge for many NGOs: environmental degradation, low literacy level, economical backwardness of tribal communities and gender inequality in public life. On the other

hand, Udaipur is famous for its lakes, palaces, Jain temples, luxury hotels and roof-top restaurants. It is a popular destination for official missions of the staff of international development organisations and many development seminars have been organised in Udaipur. In particular the largest NGO, Seva Mandir, enjoys the best international contacts and is represented at many national development forums and workshops.

Like most of the NGOs, Seva Mandir and Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal, the second NGO active in the field study area, stress *people's participation* as a crucial element in their development strategy. Findings of the field study, however, suggest that both organisations have an inward looking approach and foster a "patron-client" relationship with their beneficiaries while largely ignoring overall social and political village affairs.

In the Gram Panchayat Karia where Seva Mandir has worked for about twenty years - starting with a few literacy activities and later extending to natural resource management and irrigation - the organisation had almost no co-operation with the Gram Panchayat and no knowledge of Gram Panchayat affairs. Seva Mandir disliked the assertive attitude of the Sarpanch from an Other Backward Class community, a quite competent person who had otherwise mobilised resources for many development works in the village.

The NGO Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal demonstrated the same ignorance towards Panchayati Raj affairs in the Gram Panchayat Dhar, one of the organisations' major areas of operation. Both Seva Mandir and Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal seemed to have little knowledge of the provisions of the Act, although they had carried out information or training sessions for representatives of Panchayats.

The more activist oriented NGO Astha showed greater political awareness and involved Panchayats in its development activities. However, Astha was not operating in the three blocks and six Gram Panchayats covered by the field study.⁴⁸¹ It was interesting to note that Astha's approach was often criticised by government officials and also other NGOs.

With regard to the performance of NGOs, anecdotes of some interest were that territorial conflicts between NGOs occurred in the tribal block of Jhadol, and that monitoring of activities was generally very informal. Hard data on the progress of activities was seldom available.

5.7.6. Party Politics

The field study experiences provided evidence that the rural areas of Udaipur district have experienced a process of politicisation over the past years. This evolution is linked with the revival of the Panchayati Raj system. Panchayati Raj elections for the Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Samitis were held on political party basis in February 1995. Sarpanch and Wardpanch elections were officially held on a non-party basis, but all the Sarpanchs and some Wardpanchs of the Gram Panchayats had party political affiliations. During the period of the case studies, the rising "election fever" of the forthcoming general elections (May 1996) further contributed to a politicisation of Panchayat affairs. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party which has its stronghold in urban centres, considered Panchayati Raj elections as a tremendous opportunity to extend its basis in rural areas and to consolidate powers and influence within the powerful state

481 The information received from the organisation could only be briefly checked in one Gram Panchayat in Kotra block of Udaipur district.

government administrations. The BJP had managed to get the post of the Zila Pramuk, despite the one member Congress majority in the Zila Parishad. The Pramuk is a tribal woman with a low literacy level and without political experience.

The role of political parties at the block level was characterised by their endeavour to recruit and to train local leaders. Panchayat elections were considered as a preparation for state and national elections. The aggressive election campaign of the BJP was most obvious in the tribal block of Jhadol where political awareness and the degree of party politics had been at a low level for the past decades. This has now changed with the revival of the Panchayati Raj system. The newly elected Pradhan was a young Scheduled Tribe woman who belonged, as do the majority of Panchayat Samiti members, to the BJP which, from its party manifest and its reputation, could be considered to be a Hindu-fundamentalist party. In the case study area, career prospects and strategic concerns seemed to be more important for party membership than ideology or political attitudes. People in rural areas in the Udaipur district tended to vote rather for personalities with a specific caste, economic or social background than for abstract programmes of political parties.

At the Gram Panchayat level, political parties provided some promising candidates with little party support in cash and kind. However, political affiliations were less pronounced and parties did not carry out an elaborated election campaign.

The case studies recorded positive and negative examples of how political party membership of Panchayat representatives affects approval procedures of development proposals. In Mavli block, the highly educated and assertive Up-Pradhan (BJP) and Pradhan (Congress), both party activists, managed to get development proposals easily approved because of their political connections. The block level bureaucracy in Mavli was otherwise rather slow and ineffective in approving proposals and riddled with corruption. In the Gram Panchayat Kharkar in Jhadol the women Sarpanch from the Congress Party expressed frustration that she could not access the BJP Pradhan and the majority of Panchayat Samiti members because of her opposite party affiliation.

5.7.7 Local Development Dynamics: The Correlation of Development Indicators at Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level

Understanding 'local development dynamics' means to understand synergy- and non-synergy effects of different development factors and their interdependencies. The correlation exercise between different development indicators for which a ranking has been given at the end of each case study at Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level provides useful hints for synergy- and non-synergy effects of development factors in the case studies. The results are presented in a table format. The correlation between the different development indicators is expressed in absolute figures. The maximum of possible correlation is 3 (*three*) at the Panchayat Samiti level and 6 (*six*) at the Gram Panchayat level. For example, a total of five out of six possible correlation at the Gram Panchayat level means that the assessment of two given development indicators was identical in five Gram Panchayats, but differed in one Gram Panchayat. For the further ranking of correlation, the significance of the differing assessments (i.e. low-medium, low-high) is taken into consideration and expressed by adding (+) or (-) to the figures. If two given indicators, for example, did receive a different assessment in all villages and the level of difference is two steps (i.e. low to high) and not only one step (i.e. low to

medium) in the majority of the cases, then the sign (-) is added to the correlation figure 0.

The results of the correlation exercise should be taken with precautions. First, a selection of Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis, despite best efforts, can never be fully representative for a district, a state, a country, or, and this is probably more important to mention, for an empirical evaluation of a complex development theorem. Second, the period of the case studies, although characterised by intense work, was too short to grasp the full economic, social and political reality at Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level. However, the discussion on the ranking of development indicators may stimulate theoretical reflections on the case study experiences and may relativise and underscore conclusions derived from mere observations on different issues.

Table 45: Comparative Overview of the Development Situation in the Three Blocks (Panchayat Samitis)

	Jhadol	Badgaon	Mavli
1. Overall Welfare Status	low	medium	high
2. Social and Political Harmony	medium	medium	low
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	medium	high	high
4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	high	high
5. Participation of Women	medium	low	low
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat Samiti	medium	medium	medium
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	high	medium	low
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	high	medium	low
9. Co-operation and Harmony Level with Government Officers	low	low	low

number of cases (n) = 3

number of ranking variables (r) = 3

number of indicators (i) = 9

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8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	high	medium	low
9. Co-operation and Harmony Level with Government Officers	low	low	low

number of cases (n) = 3

number of ranking variables (r) = 3

number of indicators (i) = 9

Table 46: Correlation Between Development Indicators for the Three Panchayat Samitis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall Welfare Status	*	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
2. Social and Political Harmony	1	*	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	1	1	*	3	1	1	0	0	0
4. Political Awareness and Participation	1	1	3	*	1	1	0	0	0
5. Participation of Women	0	2	1	1	*	1	1	1	2
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	0
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	1	2	0	0	1	1	*	3	1
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	1	2	0	0	1	1	3	*	1
9. Co-operation and Harmony Level with Government Officers	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	*

$n = 3; i = 9; r = 3$

Ranking of Correlation at Panchayat Samiti Level

Educational Level of PS members / Political Awareness and Participation 3 correlations

Level of Government Dev. Assistance / Level of NGO Dev. Assistance 3 correlations

.....insignificant results

Political Awareness and Participation / Level of NGO Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations

Development Commitment of PS / Co-operation and Harmony with Gov. Officers 0+ correlations

Educational level of PS members / level of NGO Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations

Overall Welfare Status / Participation of Women 0+ correlations

Educational level of PS members / Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations

Political Awareness and Participation./ Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations

Educational level of PS members/ Co-operation and Harmony with Gov. officers 0- correlations

Political Awareness and Participation / Co-op. and Harmony with Gov. officers 0- correlations

$n = 3; i = 9; r = 3$

Table 46: Correlation Between Development Indicators for the Three Panchayat Samitis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall Welfare Status	*	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
2. Social and Political Harmony	1	*	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	1	1	*	3	1	1	0	0	0
4. Political Awareness and Participation	1	1	3	*	1	1	0	0	0
5. Participation of Women	0	2	1	1	*	1	1	1	2
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	0
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	1	2	0	0	1	1	*	3	1
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	1	2	0	0	1	1	3	*	1
9. Co-operation and Harmony Level with Government Officers	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	*

$n = 3; i = 9; r = 3$

Ranking of Correlation at Panchayat Samiti Level

Educational Level of PS members / Political Awareness and Participation 3 correlations
 Level of Government Dev. Assistance / Level of NGO Dev. Assistance 3 correlations

.....insignificant results

Political Awareness and Participation / Level of NGO Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations
 Development Commitment of PS / Co-operation and Harmony with Gov. Officers 0+ correlations
 Educational level of PS members / level of NGO Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations
 Overall Welfare Status / Participation of Women 0+ correlations
 Educational level of PS members / Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations
 Political Awareness and Participation./ Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance 0+ correlations

Educational level of PS members/ Co-operation and Harmony with Gov. officers 0- correlations
 Political Awareness and Participation / Co-op. and Harmony with Gov. officers 0- correlations

$n = 3; i = 9; r = 3$

Table 47: Comparative Overview of the Development Situation in the Six Gram Panchayats

	Kharkar	Godana	Karia	Dhar	Nurda	Veerdholia
1. Overall Welfare Status	low	medium	high	low	medium	high
2. Social and Political Harmony	low	medium	low	high	low	high
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	low	medium	medium	low	high	medium
4. Political Awareness and Participation	medium	medium	medium	low	high	high
5. Participation of Women	low	medium	low	low	low	low
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	low	medium	high	low	low	high
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	medium	medium	high	medium	low	low
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	low	low	high	high	low ⁴⁸²	medium
9. Level of Co-operation with Gov. Officers	low	medium	medium	high	high	high
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	medium	medium	low	medium	low	medium

$n = 9; i = 10; r = 3$

482 According to information form Nurda people, the Panchayat has never experienced any NGO activities. For reason of correlation, it was given the mark "low".

Table 48: Correlation Between Development Indicators at Gram Panchayat Level

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Overall Welfare Status	*	3	3	3	3	5	2	2	3	1
2. Social and Political Harmony	3	*	2	2	4	4	2	3	4	3
3. Educational Level of Panchayat Members	3	2	*	4	3	3	1	2	4	2
4. Political Awareness and Participation	3	2	4	*	2	3	2	0	4	2
5. Participation of Women.	3	4	3	2	*	4	3	2	2	3
6. Development Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	5	4	3	3	4	*	3	3	3	2
7. Level of Government Development Assistance	2	2	1	2	3	3	*	2	1	4
8. Level of NGO Development Assistance	2	3	2	0	2	3	2	*	2	2
9. Co-operation with Gov. Officers (especially with the Gram Secretary)	3	4	4	4	2	3	1	2	*	1
10. Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	1	3	2	2	3	2	4	2	1	*

$n = 9; i = 10; r = 3$

Ranking of Correlation at Gram Panchayat Level

<u>Overall Welfare Status / Dev. Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat.</u>	<u>5 correlations</u>
Education Level of Panchayat Members/ Political Awareness and Participation	4+ correlation
Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance / Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	4 correlations
Social and Political Harmony / Co-operation with Gov. Officers	4 correlations
Political Awareness and Participation / Co-operation with Gov. Officers	4 correlations
Education Level of Panchayat Members / Co-operation with Gov. Officers	4 correlations
Social and Political Harmony / Participation of Women	4- correlations
Social and Political Harmony/ Dev. Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	4- correlations
Participation of Women / Dev. Commitment and Activities of the Panchayat	4- correlations
.....no significant correlation or non-correlation	
Co-operation With Gov. Officers / Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	1+ correlations
Overall Welfare Status/ Quality of the Gram Sabha Meeting	1+ correlations
Educational level of Panchayat members / Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance	1+ correlations
Level of Gov. Dev. Assistance / Co-operation with Gov. Officers	1 correlations
Political Awareness and Participation / Level of NGO Dev. Assistance	0 correlations

$n = 9; i = 10; r = 3$

Assessment of the Correlation of Development Indicators

The correlation exercise of development indicators at Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level presents four main results:

- (i) The education level of Panchayat members correlates with the level of political awareness and participation at both Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level;
- (ii) The level of NGO activities does not correlate with the level of political awareness and participation at both Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level;
- (iii) The level of development commitment and development activities of a Gram Panchayat correlates with its overall welfare status;
- (vi) The correlation exercise produces in some cases significantly different results at Panchayat Samiti and at Gram Panchayat level, e.g. the level of political awareness and participation of Panchayat members and the co-operation and harmony with government officers.

The correlation of development indicators leads in some cases to similar, in other cases to different results at the Gram Panchayat and at the Panchayat Samiti level. This observation suggests that it is of crucial importance to acknowledge the different development realities at the specific levels before drawing conclusions.

The most striking similarities are:

- (i) the high correlation between the "educational level of Panchayat members" and their "political awareness and participation".
- (ii) the non-correlation between "the level of NGO activities" and "political awareness and participation of the Panchayat members".

The first similarity supports the common argument that more educated people show greater political activity. Participation requires knowledge and communication skills. Correlation existed in the three blocks and in four of the six Gram Panchayats. The two exception are Kharkar and Veerdholia. In Veerdholia, the level of political participation is high, while it was difficult to decide between 'medium' or 'high' for the education level of the Panchayat members. While the overall education level is very high in the villages, in particular among the younger generation, the elderly Sarpanch and few Wardpanchs are only able to make their signature. It was eventually decided to consider the education level of the Panchayat members as 'medium'. In the Gram Panchayat Kharkar, villagers and Panchayat members were quite uneducated (education level: 'low'), but showed 'medium' level participation. Their participation, however, was rather ineffective and consisted mainly of political arguing among each others.

The second similarity appears to be more surprising. As earlier discussed in this study, development and political science literature often consider NGOs as important agents for promoting participatory development and supporting the Panchayati Raj reform. NGOs may have fostered the participation of "their beneficiaries", but did hardly bother about political participation. The field study experiences rather showed the contrary: some of the eloquent NGOs consider politics as a "dirty business" and prefer that their "beneficiaries" (or clients) keep aloof from politics. The defending argument would be that NGOs are mainly working in poorer areas where the level of education and political awareness are low. However, the correlation exercise provides evidence that this argument only applies to the block level where there is indeed a maximum

and the assertive behaviour of its members, in particular its "senior member". The more Panchayat members demonstrate their political awareness and participation at the Panchayat Samiti level, the more they express their feelings of superiority towards the administrators. The most striking example was the Up-Pradhan of Mavli. He has high political ambitions, while at the same time exhibiting a distinguished arrogance towards the block level administration (which was certainly exacerbated by a corrupt and equally arrogant Block Development Officer).

At the Gram Panchayat level, the politically aware and participating Panchayat members co-operated with government officers. Unlike Panchayat Samiti Panchayat members, the Gram Panchayat members had no high career ambitions and did not show arrogance towards the government officers. The government officers in turn did not consider them as rivals but enjoyed their level of awareness.

The second case in which a Panchayat Samiti level correlation contradicts Gram Panchayat correlation can be attributed to similar reasons. At the Panchayat Samiti level, better educated people showed more arrogance towards government officers (the striking example is again the Up-Pradhan of Mavli who holds a Masters degree in English literature). At the Gram Panchayat level, the level of education correlated in four cases with the quality of relations between Gram Panchayat members and the Gram Secretary. In a situation where there is no rivalry, the tendency is that the government officers have better relations with educated Panchayat members than with uneducated members. In Nurda, for example, the well educated Brahmin Gram Secretary enjoyed the company of the educated Sarpanch, his relatives and friends. However, the most striking case of good co-operation, the Gram Panchayat Dhar, escapes this logic. In Dhar, the education level is low, but co-operation with government administration, Gram Secretary and Patwari, is quite good.

The exercise of correlating development indicators at Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti level is certainly useful for highlighting some interdependencies. However, the above mentioned examples also suggest that necessary precautions should be taken before drawing ambitious conclusions.

6 a. Conclusions

The most pertinent theoretical and empirical findings of this study are presented in the form of ten conclusions. The theoretical part of this study develops the significance of the concept of 'participatory development' by elaborating on the character of "the new generation of development concepts" and distinguishing 'participatory development' from the related catchphrases 'people's participation' and 'popular participation'. The problem of the concept of 'participatory development' is its elusive character and its inflationary use in development language (first conclusion). The strongly empirical approach of this study, in retrospect, proved to be highly justified, because specific local development dynamics actually contradicted assessments derived from macro-level observations, e.g. concerning the role of NGOs (second conclusion).

The empirical studies in the Udaipur district reveal that the personal contacts of individual Panchayat members with influential authorities in administration and politics are the most important factors for mobilising development funds for their constituencies (third conclusion), while it was found that the functions and powers of Panchayats were only vaguely prescribed in the legislative documents. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1993) and the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act (1994) lack a guiding principle (i.e. the principle of subsidiarity) behind the assignment of functions to Panchayats at different levels (fourth conclusion). One of the striking findings of this study concerns the positive impact of the local self-government reform on the empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women through the provision of reservation quotas, although the self-controlled and active participation of women remains 'modest'. Elected representatives who belong to underprivileged groups receive respect from bureaucrats and higher castes which they would not have otherwise enjoyed (fifth conclusion).

The local self-government reform faces opposition from state level politicians and bureaucrats because they fear losing powers and authorities if Panchayats become more powerful (sixth conclusion). Panchayats in India do not have a functioning and active lobbying body that has negotiating powers with executive and legislative bodies at the national and state level (seventh conclusion). Panchayats also do not enjoy any substantial co-operation with NGOs at the local level. Findings of the case studies reveal that the work of two respected NGOs is characterised by an inward-looking approach and ignorance towards Panchayat matters (eighth conclusion). Political parties demonstrate a much greater interest in Panchayat issues. Their activities have an ambivalent effect on the development commitment of Panchayats, but they strengthen the negotiating powers of Panchayats with the bureaucracy (ninth conclusion). Construction activities are among the top development priorities of Panchayats, because development expectations of villagers concentrate on short-term employment opportunities (tenth conclusion).

(i) The concept of 'participatory development' belongs to a new generation of development concepts characterised by mutual concordance. 'Participatory development' evolved together along with a miscellany of related concepts, especially 'democratic decentralisation', 'good governance' and 'sustainable development'. It lacks, like the other related concepts, political and definitional significance in many publications, especially in donor agency reports.

Previous prominent development theories (modernisation theory, dependency theory), characterised by their opposition to each other, proved to be rather impractical when applied to actual development projects because of their macro-economical and ideological focus. In comparison, theoretical studies on the new generation of complementary development concepts, among them 'participatory development', enjoy utmost consideration in development co-operation. The term 'participatory development' has actually become a catchphrase in the development jargon.

However, there seems to be little understanding that some of the related fashionable development concepts, especially 'participatory development' and 'sustainable development', do not necessarily have theoretical compatibility. What is deemed to be a 'sustainable development activity', e.g. reforestation, may actually not find the assent of the local population - which does not necessarily think in long-term ecological perspectives - and eliminate its participation. Such incongruences, however, are bound to be revealed when abstract concepts which lack definitional significance are applied to practical conditions.

This study attempted to more clearly define the concept of 'participatory development' and to understand the concept with reference to the framework conditions to which it is applied, and the paradigm shifts which such conditions have undergone as a result of the cessation of the East/West conflict.

The definition of 'participatory development' proposed by this study is the *partaking of a maximum of concerned social and political actors in identifying, designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development activities including control and decision-making over the allocation of financial resources*. Participation is associated with empowerment, because individuals and social groups require the abilities to assert themselves and to gain negotiating powers, in particular underprivileged groups. In its broader political sense, 'participatory development' relates to a democratisation process in societies with respect to the consolidation of civil society, respect for human rights and good governance. As such, 'participatory development' is not only a concept, but an ideal state-of-affairs, and the means for achieving such a state. It is a *tool* as well as a *goal* of development. Such a definition distinguishes 'participatory development' from the simpler idea of 'people's participation' in development activities, and likewise between 'participatory development' and 'popular participation', a term which has a classist connotation.

This study attempted to outline the potentials for realising such a state, while bearing in mind the obstacles presented by the peculiarities of the Indian social order, the most obvious of which are widespread poverty, lack of equity, and a prevalent gravitation towards undemocratic leadership. However, the fundamentals of the Indian political infrastructure should be considered to possess relative stability despite the Kashmir conflict, religious tensions, and the rise of Hindu fundamentalism. This is an important condition for planning and implementing development policies and programmes.

Indeed, the strengthening of civil society forces and technological progress in transport and communications today present Indians- in particular those of the middle class - with increased opportunity and options to participate in the political and development process of the country.

(ii) The macro-political focus of 'participatory development' theorists is often characterised by a conceptual overenthusiasm which in its adherence to generalisations does not take into account the possible incompatibility of such generalisations with specific local conditions.

Traditionally, political science research in developing countries has largely focused on macro-political analysis of interactions between major power players in society and developed theories without providing local level empirical evidence for the substantiation of theoretical conclusions. Recommendations of development studies, for the most part, are also chiefly grounded on macro-political analysis and are, for the most part, overly abstracted from the politico-personal relations existing between institutions and decision-makers at the local level. Despite the fact that such relations are difficult - if not impossible - to generalise, they obviously must be taken into consideration. One possible explanation for the macro-political bias in many development studies is the belief among many development decision-makers in a 'trickle-down effect' of macro-economic structural planning on local level dynamics.

The field study provided evidence that political and development dynamics at the local level can and do contradict macro-political assessments and, thus, highly justified the strong empirical approach of this study and its local focus. For example, macro-level analyses often consider NGOs as important agents to promote participatory development and to bring about social change. In the field study area, however, there was no correlation between the development indicators "political awareness and participation of Panchayat members" and "level of NGO development assistance". Instead, inter-personal relations and local political factors proved to be of major importance for development processes at the village level.

(iii) Personal contacts of individual Panchayat members to influential authorities in administration and politics proved to be of extraordinary importance for mobilising development funds. In a hierarchically organised rural society, vertically constituted personal relations are more important than existing institutional structures, rules, regulations and procedures.

Findings of the field study suggest that charismatic local leadership with a network of contacts is often the decisive driving force if village development takes place. Conventional aspects of institutional analysis have largely neglected the role of inter-personal relations and local elites. Subrata K. Mitra has rightly pointed that the "the main trust of development theory avoids mentioning local elites altogether, except to point to them as the enemies of economic development and social change."⁴⁷⁸ Analysing the role of local elites, their social composition and their political character constitutes a major challenge for political science research.

478 Mitra Subrata K. 1991: Room to Manoeuvre in the Middle. Local Elites, Political Action, and the State in India; in: *World Politics* (Princeton); No. 43; April 1991; pp. 390-413; p. 395.

It is certainly more difficult to measure the impact of the 'personal factor', than quantifying the number of meetings or financial resources of institutions and organisation on the basis of objectively verifiable indicators, but this should not discourage the researcher from an assessment of personal relations within and between institutions and individuals, as proposed in the case studies.

(iv) The local self-government reform in India lacks a guiding principle behind the assignment of functions for Panchayat bodies at different levels. The principle of subsidiarity, which would go beyond the listing of development activities of Panchayats without mentioning specific duties of Panchayats at district, block and village levels, does neither apply to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment nor to the conformity legislation of the states.

The lack of consideration given to a differentiated allocation of well defined mandatory responsibilities and the allocation of financial resources to the Panchayats at the time of elaboration of the Panchayati Raj Act is mainly attributable to the character of centre-state relations in India. Centre-state relations are a crucial factor for political stability in the large and diverse Indian federation, but also a permanent source of conflict and tension.

The Congress government had to leave a large scope of manoeuvre for the state governments to design their own Panchayati Raj conformity legislation in order to gain their political goodwill and support for the reform. Nevertheless, non-Congress state governments complained that the Congress governments, through the Panchayati Raj reform, sought to establish a direct link between the central government and the Panchayats bypassing the states. State governments feared that new competencies and more financial resources for a 'third level of governance' would weaken their position, in particular in rural areas where the Congress Party traditionally retains a stronghold.

In the case of Rajasthan, the conformity legislation prepared under the tenure of the BJP state government, remained vague in specifying the functions of Panchayats at different levels. The new Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act testifies the concern of the state government to devolve mandatory powers to a third level of governance in rural areas, which are still considered to be a stronghold of the Congress Party.

(v) Reservation quotas have empowered women, lower castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in conflicts and negotiations with upper castes. They receive, to some extent, acceptance and respect through their position as Panchayat member, even if they are elected on a reserved seat.

In contemporary India, reservation quotas are considered as the key measure to accommodate political, economical and social demands of lower castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and more recently, women.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment provides for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in local self-government bodies on the basis of their proportional representation in their respective constituency. One third of the seats for the elected representatives at all levels, including the chairpersons, are reserved for women. In many villages in the Udaipur district, the prevailing election attitude of people was to strictly think in terms of the reservation quotas just as if the political system they lived

in was characterised by consociational democracy.⁴⁷⁹ The open, non-reserved, seats were regarded as seats for higher caste males.

The reservation, in particular the reservation for chairpersons, provides women with a tremendous opportunity to partake in village, block and district level politics which they would otherwise not have obtained. Currently women play a passive role, but this may change in the course of the next few years when women will have gained more experience. In the near future, probably after the second or third five year Panchayat term, the mere attendance and modest participation of women will no longer be a striking issue in the villages.

While some of the newly elected female Panchayat members have attended training programmes, most still lack knowledge on their rights and responsibilities. They also lack experience in dealing with government officials and local leaders, and most of them are guided by their husbands, brothers or fathers. However, most women, in particular female chairpersons of Panchayat bodies, receive respect from other Panchayat members and villagers through their Panchayat posts. This is true only to a much lesser extent for their contacts with government officers.

The degree of elected women's independent decision-making will most probably increase with growing experience of women in Panchayats. Their attendance of the meetings should be regarded as a first step towards the participation of women in public life and decision-making, in particular in the socially conservative state of Rajasthan, where many rural women still wear the veil. Without the reservation quotas, women would not compete for Panchayat seats. This was at least the observation in the field study area.

Most Panchayat members from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities will also not contest seats which are not reserved for them. However, when elected, male Panchayat members from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities show little more activism than women and are usually not guided by higher castes. Their main difficulties in executing their duties lie in their own lack of knowledge about Panchayat affairs and, in some cases, the lack of acceptance they receive from higher caste government officers.

(vi) Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of the state of Rajasthan and government officers ('bureaucrats') raise the strongest objections against the devolution of powers to local self-government institutions, because they fear losing some of their powers and authorities if Panchayat representatives become more powerful.

In India, the issue of 'devolution of powers' is linked to the control over the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA). The DRDA enjoys significant powers in rural development decision-making and allocation of funds. Currently, the DRDA functions in most states, including Rajasthan, under the chairmanship of the District Collector. The funds for all major development schemes of the central and state government, e.g.

479 Nawas Kabarra uses the term for describing the political system of the Lebanon characterised by proportional representation of different religious groups in the legislative bodies; see: *Kabarra, Niwas* 1991: Critic of the Lebanese Theory of Consociational Democracy; in: *Beyhum, Nabil (ed.)* 1991: *Reconstruire Beirut: les Paris sur le Possible*; Lyon: Collection Etudes sur le Monde Arab; Maison de l'Orient Méditerrané; Diffusion: Sindbad; pp. 345-360.

IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, and Indira Awas Yojana, are channelled through the DRDA which holds the control over the application and implementation of development proposals submitted by Panchayat bodies and channelled through the block level administration.

There might be a possibility that funds for some of the central and state government sponsored schemes will be directly given to the Panchayats, but it is most unlikely that the Zila Parishad will get the control over the entire DRDA. MLAs and government officers object to such transfer of responsibilities to Panchayats, because they fear losing their status and powers. The MLAs consider the Pramuks as their potential political rivals. MLAs are presently given Rs. 100 000 for development investments in their constituency. This provision allows MLAs to fulfil some election promises and provides them, along with their influence on state legislation and personal contacts in politics and business, an important status. In poorer rural areas in particular, decision-making powers over financial resources play an important role. In case the Pradhans had the control over DRDA funds, their decision-making powers over financial resources would surpass the financial powers of the MLAs by far.

Government officers object to the reform because the increase of powers and competencies of elected representatives of Panchayats means that the bureaucrats working with and serving under the elected representatives have to share or give away some of their powers.

The biggest conflicts between government administrators and elected Panchayat representatives in the Udaipur district occurred at the block level. This might have something to do with personalities of the individuals, but there are also important structural reasons for potential conflicts.

First, the division of responsibilities and work between the elected representatives and the state government bureaucrats serving at Panchayat Samiti level is not clear. Conflicts over competencies and authority occur, in particular, between the Pradhan and the BDO. Second, the BDO enjoys more freedom and less supervision than most Chief Executive Officers. The BDOs can afford to ignore the powers of the Pradhan and to misbehave towards her or him more easily than bureaucrats serving at the district level, because they often sit far from the district headquarters. They can be selective in their working areas since they have to cover 20-45 Gram Panchayats.

The work ethic of many BDOs and their willingness to share powers at the block level was, it would seem, spoiled during the period when Panchayats were dissolved between 1991-1994. After years of "autocratic rule", they now find it difficult to share powers with elected Panchayat Samiti representatives, in particular women, who are in many cases less educated and experienced.

(vii) Local self-government institutions in India lack negotiation powers at higher levels because there is no effectively functioning association which represents them to executive and legislative bodies at national and state level. There is also no significant co-operation between neighbouring Panchayats. Political and social relations in India are characterised by vertical rather than horizontal links. This factor and the lack of financial resources will it make difficult to form such lobby associations for Panchayats at state or national level.

Local self-government institutions in India represent their interests towards higher executive and legislative bodies only through personal contacts and occasional

spontaneous initiatives. The All India Panchayat Parishad seems to be dysfunctional. It was not even known by Panchayat members in the area of the case studies.

However, Panchayat members from all over the country approached the former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in October 1995 in order to bring important Panchayat issues to the high command of the Congress Party. With a view to criticise the Panchayat policy of the state governments, the Panchayat members discussed with the Prime Minister (i) the transfer of the DRDA under the Zila Parishad; (ii) the enlargement of the resource basis; (iii) the strengthening of the Gram Sabha, and (iv) the involvement of Panchayat representatives in the preparation of district plans.⁴⁸⁰ In Rajasthan, Sarpanchs demanded at the highest political level their right for membership in the Panchayat Samiti, as it was before the reform. These initiatives were spontaneously organised and did not mark the beginning of regular meetings between Panchayat representatives and state or central government authorities.

(viii) While NGOs play an important role as civil society agents of the educated middle-class, their potential to promote participatory development in rural areas is often overestimated, especially by donor agencies. The case studies provided evidence that NGOs do not co-operate with local self-government institutions, and their work is often characterised by an inward looking approach reflecting the organisations' own attitudes, priorities and day-to-day problems of development management.

The NGO sector has experienced significant growth in the past two decades, and NGOs have received widespread national and international attention through their pronounced idealism and their innovative development approaches. The higher management staff of NGOs (those who meet donor agencies and produce project documents) has good communication skills and cleverly uses development catchphrases. The social and political attitudes of NGOs in particular seem to appeal to the educated middle class and international donor agencies because they are often motivated by moral codes.⁴⁸¹

The paradox is that NGOs gain their ability to represent opinions and values of the educated middle-class, and to play an important role in the strengthening of the civil society at the macro political level, by making use of political leverage which they gain by their claim to represent the poor⁴⁸² who in fact do not share the moral attitudes and development approaches which NGOs claim to have. Government and international donor agencies have increasingly involved NGOs in project management of development activities. NGOs, in some cases, have offered a small section of the village society, 'their people', an option to improve their living standard through

480 See: *The Hindu* (Madras) 11.10.1995: PM Defends Direct Central Funding to Panchayats.

481 For example, the case of child labour: The South Asian Coalition Against Child Servitude (SACC), a conglomerate of more than 150 NGOs, and the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF), for example, have launched a mass awareness campaign for the eradication of child labour and pressured the government to set up a large national programme against the occurrence of child labour in hazardous industries.

482 Hartmut Elsenhans pointed out that the access which NGO have to the poor by means of their development activities enables them to make use of political leverage; *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1995: Marginality, Rent and Non-Governmental Organisations; Reprinted from the *Indian Journal of Public Administration* (Delhi); Vol XLI, No.2, April-June 1995; pp. 139-159.

participation in development activities. However, the contribution of NGOs to the 'emancipation of the poorest' at the local level remains very limited because they select their beneficiaries according to their own priorities which reflect the values of the educated middle-class. This approach does not enable the poorest, who lack bargaining powers vis-à-vis NGOs, to escape from the mechanism of patron-client relationships.

The case studies, in particular the experiences in the Jhadol block, provided evidence that NGOs compete among each other with other development agents instead of encouraging people to make use of a maximum number of opportunities which are available for their partaking in the development process. NGOs tend to have a lack of knowledge and interest in specific local social and political dynamics and, thus, risk to ignoring short-term priorities and concerns of villagers while having fixed ideas on the long-term needs and interests of the poorest people.

Monitoring political evolution is important for NGOs in order to understand social and development dynamics, but direct political involvement runs the risk of antagonising different factions at village or block level, and to tainting the process with party politics.

(ix) Party political activities of Panchayat members have an ambivalent impact on the development performance of the Panchayat institutions. On the one hand, political party activism empowered Panchayat members vis-à-vis the lethargic state government bureaucracy. On the other hand, party politics fostered selfish career ambitions of Panchayat members and negatively affected their development motivation and commitment.

The policy of tolerating, but not officially recognising or promoting the role of political parties in Panchayat affairs is still the official line of the central and most state governments on the issue.⁴⁸³ The 73rd Constitutional Amendment does not deal with the subject at all, nor does the voluminous Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act 1994.

The Panchayati Raj elections in 1995 have provided the political parties in Rajasthan with an opportunity to extend their support basis in rural areas. Traditionally, the Congress Party had a stronghold in rural areas, since it was the only party with an infrastructure there. Veteran freedom fighters had been rewarded with party support for a Sarpanch candidature. Fluctuation in Sarpanchship was low.⁴⁸⁴ The post was in many cases considered to be a life long designation, often held by educated senior high caste

483 The question of whether political parties should officially participate in Panchayat elections basis has always been discussed when Panchayati Raj elections were organised. Mahatma Gandhi believed in the idea of a partyless democracy and pointed out the danger of politicisation of the Panchayats. The liberal democracy school opposed this concept and regarded political participation on the basis of party contests as essential for a liberal democracy. Their slogan was "only dead people do not compete". (Dey, S.K. 1960: Community Development. A Movement is Born, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal; p.173.). The Santhanam Committee report on Panchayati Raj Elections in 1965 recommended that there should be no legal provisions prohibiting political parties from influencing Panchayat elections, but party symbols, entertainment by political parties and official recognition of party candidates should be banned. (Government of India; Ministry of Community Development 1965: Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Elections; New Delhi).

484 Government of India; Ministry of Community Development 1965: Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Elections; New Delhi; p. 55; Mathew, George 1994: From Legislation to Movement; New Delhi; p. 143.

male villagers. The introduction of reservation quotas for women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes in the context of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and additional provisions for reservation of Other Backward Classes by state governments required the recruitment of new, mainly politically inexperienced persons for local leadership. The reservation quotas have brought new candidates, mainly women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, into the Panchayat system.

Political parties in India, however, are characterised by centralised and hierarchic structures. Membership and party support in many cases are not characterised by adherence to programmes or ideologies, but to the purpose of establishing connections to power brokers for personal benefit. Such structures are not an enabling environment for democratic development of an informed political opinion at the local level, and may actually contribute to the spoilage of the genuine motivation of a Panchayat member who originally contested elections with a desire to improve economic development and delivery of social services in his constituency.

Panchayat leadership - following the dominant patterns of leadership in India at central and state government level⁴⁸⁵ - is often characterised by populist and personalised rule and infected with selfish career ambitions, corruption and even muscle power. Some Sarpanchs in Udaipur district have changed their political affiliation many times over the past years, depending on the career and financial support which they could expect from the different parties. In many cases this has not affected their electoral prospects. Political parties consider it important to select powerful and respected candidates to increase their influence.

Elected Panchayat members, however, benefit from the fact that political parties attach importance to the Panchayat elections. The case studies provided evidence that Panchayat members are able to use their party affiliation for political leverage towards the bureaucracy. The party affiliation provides them with powers they would otherwise not enjoy in dealing with the government bureaucracy.

(x) In the case study area, local self government institutions attached a high priority to construction activities which provide the population (men, women and even children) with short-term employment. Panchayats at all levels were used to thinking and planning in terms of employment and prestigious construction activities. This approach does not correspond with the poverty alleviation strategies which many donor agencies and NGOs develop for their target groups.

However, it needs to be taken into consideration that development priorities of Panchayat members and villagers were not primarily a question of firm beliefs or convictions, but rather of one-sided experiences and habits. Panchayat representatives favour construction activities because they are more familiar with such works. When I discussed problems of water scarcity with them, they also mentioned irrigation and drinking water supply as high priorities. For a long time, villagers have been regarded as (more or less) passive recipients of development activities. Their contribution to the

485 Atul Kohli argues that the populist and personalised leadership patterns in India are attributable to the rise of the backward classes as 'free floating political resource', the lack of organisational mechanism to incorporate the poor and Indira Gandhi's intense desire for personal power and her 'deinstitutionalising' actions; in: *Kohli, Atul* 1991: *Interpreting India's Democracy: A State-Society Framework*; in: *Kohli, Atul (ed.): India's Democracy. An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*, New Delhi: Orient Longman; pp. 3-17; p.15.

design, planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities was very limited. It is too early to assess whether the increased competencies and financial allocations which are theoretically entrusted to local self-government institutions in the context of the ongoing reform will ultimately enable them to act as largely autonomous development agents. Development programmes in India are currently designed and funded at central and state government level and, despite lip services to sustainable development and natural resource policies, still largely concentrate on infrastructure development. In the area of the field study, the work of NGOs focusing more on community management of natural resources had no major impact on Panchayat development priorities.

6 b. **Schlußfolgerungen**

Die wichtigsten theoretischen und empirischen Erkenntnisse der Arbeit werden in diesem abschließenden Kapitel in Form von zehn Schlußfolgerungen zusammengefaßt. Der theoretische Teil der Arbeit entwickelt die begriffliche Genauigkeit und die theoretische Reichweite des Konzeptes der 'partizipativen Entwicklung' ('participatory development'), indem der Charakter der neuen Generation von Entwicklungskonzepten herausgearbeitet wird und 'partizipative Entwicklung' gleichzeitig in Abgrenzung von den verwandten Schlagwörtern 'people's participation' und 'popular participation' definiert wird. Das Problem des Konzeptes der 'partizipativen Entwicklung' ist seine begriffliche Unschärfe und inflationäre Benutzung im entwicklungspolitischen Jargon (erste Schlußfolgerung). Der stark empirische Ansatz der Arbeit erweist sich im nachhinein als gerecht-fertigt, weil spezifische lokale Realitäten tatsächlich allgemeinen Einschätzungen widersprechen, die aus Beobachtungen auf Makroebene zuvor gewonnen wurden, z.B. was die Rolle von Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen (NROs) betrifft (zweite Schlußfolgerung).

Die empirischen Forschungen im Bezirk Udaipur machen deutlich, daß der persönliche Kontakt von Panchayat-Mitgliedern zu einflußreichen Personen in Verwaltung und Politik der entscheidende Faktor für die Mobilisierung von Entwicklungsgeldern ist (dritte Schlußfolgerung). Dagegen sind die Kompetenzen der Panchayats in den Gesetzestexten nur ungenau beschrieben. Der 73. Verfassungsänderung von 1993 und dem Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Gesetz von 1994 fehlt es an einem Leitprinzip. Das Prinzip der Subsidiarität findet bei der Zuteilung von Aufgaben an Panchayats auf unterschiedlicher Ebene keine oder nur eine sehr ungenügende Anwendung (vierte Schlußfolgerung). Ein wichtiges Ergebnis der Forschungen ist, daß die Reform lokaler Selbstverwaltung durch Quotenregelungen die Konfliktfähigkeit von Frauen, Kastenlosen und Ureinwohnern stärkt, obwohl die selbstbestimmte und aktive Partizipation von Frauen 'bescheiden' bleibt. Gewählte Abgeordnete unterprivilegierter sozialer Gruppen erhalten qua ihres Amtes einen gewissen Respekt von Bürokraten und Höherkastigen, der ihnen sonst weitgehend verwehrt geblieben wäre (fünfte Schlußfolgerung).

Die Reform lokaler Selbstverwaltung stößt auf Widerstände bei Landtagsabgeordneten und Bürokraten, die den Verlust von Macht und Autorität befürchten, falls Panchayats zukünftig eine wichtigere Rolle spielen (sechste Schlußfolgerung). Panchayats in Indien besitzen keine funktionierende Interessenvertretung, die sie gegenüber Exekutive und Legislative auf nationaler oder bundesstaatlicher Ebene vertritt und ihnen Verhandlungsmacht verschaffen würde (siebte Schlußfolgerung). Panchayats genießen auf lokaler Ebene keinerlei bedeutende Unterstützung von NROs. Die Fallstudien zeigten, daß zwei angesehene NROs eine sehr auf sich selbst zentrierte Herangehensweise besitzen und gegenüber Panchayat-Angelegenheiten ignorant sind (achte Schlußfolgerung). Politische Parteien zeigen ein weitaus größeres Interesse an Panchayat-Angelegenheiten. Parteipolitische Aktivitäten haben zwar einen ambivalenten Einfluß auf die entwicklungspolitische Motivation von Panchayats, aber stärken immerhin die Verhandlungsmacht der Panchayat gegenüber der Verwaltung (neunte Schlußfolgerung). Baumaßnahmen genießen hohe entwicklungspolitische Priorität bei den Panchayats, weil sich die entwicklungspolitische Erwartungshaltung von Dorfbewohnern vor allem auf kurzfristige Beschäftigungsmaßnahmen konzentriert (zehnte Schlußfolgerung).

(i) Das Konzept der 'partizipativen Entwicklung' gehört einer neuen Generation von konkordanten Entwicklungskonzepten an, die sich gegenseitig ergänzen. Partizipative Entwicklung hat sich aus dem Gebrauch verschiedener verwandter Entwicklungs-konzepte herausgeschält, besonders 'democratic decentralisation' (demokratische Dezentralisierung), 'good governance' (effizientes Verwaltungsmanagement) und 'sustainable development' (nachhaltige Entwicklung). Es fehlt dem Konzept in den meisten Publikationen, wie anderen verwandten Konzepten auch, an Genauigkeit in der Definition und an politischer Aussagekraft. Dies trifft besonders auf entwicklungspolitische Studien und Projektberichte von Geberorganisationen zu.

Die früheren großen Entwicklungstheorien (Modernisierungstheorie, Dependenztheorie), die gegenseitig in Opposition zueinander standen, erwiesen sich aufgrund ihrer makroökonomisch und ideologischen Ausrichtung als praxisfern. Dagegen genießen die theoretischen Arbeiten zu den konkordanten Entwicklungskonzepten der jüngeren Generation, darunter partizipative Entwicklung, große Beachtung in der Praxis der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. 'Partizipative Entwicklung' ist sogar zum Schlagwort in der entwicklungspolitischen Diskussion geworden.

Es herrscht allerdings wenig Einsicht, daß bei der praktischen Anwendung der untereinander kompatiblen modischen Konzepte inhärente Widersprüche zwischen verwandten entwicklungspolitischen Konzepten bestehen können, besonders zwischen 'partizipativer' und 'nachhaltiger Entwicklung'. Was als 'nachhaltige Maßnahme' ökologisch sinnvoll erscheint, z.B. Aufforstung, muß keinesfalls immer die Zustimmung der lokalen Bevölkerung finden, die nicht notwendigerweise langfristig ökologisch denkt, sondern kann ihre Beteiligung sogar ausschließen. Solche Widersprüche werden bei der Übertragung von unzureichend definierten abstrakten Konzepten auf die Praxis deutlich.

Die Arbeit bemüht sich einerseits um Klarheit in der Definition des Begriffs der 'partizipativen Entwicklung', andererseits um eine konzeptionelle Einordnung des Begriffs in den Paradigmawechsel der Entwicklungspolitik nach der Auflösung des Ost-West-Konfliktes.

In der Arbeit wird 'partizipative Entwicklung' als "die Mitwirkung einer maximalen Anzahl von sozialen und politischen Akteuren in der Identifizierung, bei der Konzeption, in der Planung, Durchführung, Fortschrittskontrolle und Evaluierung von entwicklungspolitischen Aktivitäten" definiert. Dazu gehören auch das Mitwirken an Entscheidungen und Kontrolle über finanzielle Mittel. Partizipation steht in engem Zusammenhang mit Konfliktfähigkeit ('empowerment'). Einzelpersonen und soziale Gruppen, besonders unterprivilegierte Gruppen, müssen sich in der Gesellschaft behaupten und Verhandlungsmacht erwerben, um an einem partizipativen Entwicklungsprozeß teilzunehmen. In einer weiterreichenden politischen Bedeutung bringt die Arbeit 'partizipative Entwicklung' mit Demokratisierung einer Gesellschaft in Verbindung, insbesondere mit der Entstehung und Aufwertung zivilgesellschaftlicher Kräfte, der Einhaltung der Menschenrechte und einer bürgernahen Verwaltung, die sich am Prinzip der Rechenschaftspflicht orientiert. 'Partizipative Entwicklung' ist sowohl ein Instrument (eine Strategie, eine Methode) als auch ein Ziel von Entwicklung. 'Partizipative Entwicklung' geht über die bloße 'Beteiligung der Bevölkerung an entwicklungspolitischen Maßnahmen' hinaus, die oftmals mit dem Schlagwort 'people's participation' gemeint ist. Die Arbeit unterscheidet auch zwischen 'partizipativer Entwicklung' ('participatory development') und dem allgemeineren, nicht auf

Entwicklung bezogenen und mehr klassenbewußt benutzen Begriff der 'Mitbestimmung des Volkes' ('popular participation').

Die Arbeit stellt Potentiale, aber auch Schwierigkeiten der indischen Gesellschaft und Politik hinsichtlich der partizipativen Entwicklung heraus, besonders Massenarmut, gravierende soziale Ungleichheiten und ein undemokratischer Führungsstil politischer Eliten. Die nationalen politischen Rahmenbedingungen sollten aber trotz des Kashmir Problems, schwelenden Religionskonflikten und eines anschwellenden Hindu-Fundamentalismus als insgesamt stabil angesehen werden. Dies ist eine positive Voraussetzung für Planung und Durchführung von Entwicklungsvorhaben. Die Stärkung der zivilgesellschaftlichen Kräfte und technologische Entwicklungen im Bereich der Kommunikation und des Transports haben besonders den Angehörigen der Mittelschicht neue Möglichkeiten eröffnet, am politischen und besonders am entwicklungspolitischen Prozeß des Landes teilzunehmen.

(ii) Die makropolitische Ausrichtung von Partizipationstheoretikern geht oftmals mit einem konzeptionellen Enthusiasmus einher, der auf Ableitungen und Verallgemeinerungen basiert und mögliche Widersprüche zwischen der Makro- und der Mikroebene nicht berücksichtigt.

Politikwissenschaftliche Forschung in Entwicklungsländern hat sich bisher vor allem auf makropolitische Analysen und Interaktionen der wichtigsten politischen Akteure auf nationaler Ebene konzentriert, ohne jedoch theoretischen Schlußfolgerungen mit empirischen Forschungen auf lokaler Ebene zu stützen. Auch Empfehlungen entwicklungspolitischer Studien beruhen meistens auf makropolitischen Analysen und abstrahieren zu stark von wichtigen politischen- und sozialen Faktoren der Beziehungen zwischen Institutionen und Entscheidungsträgern auf lokaler Ebene. Obwohl es schwierig, wenn nicht unmöglich ist, zuverlässige allgemeine Aussagen über solche Beziehungen zu treffen, müssen sie dennoch mit der nötigen Sorgfalt in Betracht gezogen werden. Viele entwicklungspolitische Entscheidungsträger gehen jedoch weiterhin von einem "Durchsickerungseffekt" (trickle-down-effect) makropolitischer und makroökonomischer Steuerungsmaßnahmen auf lokale Strukturen aus.

Die Ergebnisse der Feldstudie zeigen auf, daß entwicklungspolitische Dynamiken auf lokaler Ebene Einschätzungen widersprechen können, die vor allem auf einer Analyse nationaler oder regionaler Rahmenbedingungen beruhen, und rechtfertigen damit den empirischen Ansatz der Arbeit und ihren Fokus auf die lokale Ebene. Zum Beispiel betrachten viele makropolitischen Analysen NROs als wichtige Akteure für die Förderung von partizipativer Entwicklung und sozialem Wandel. Die komparative Analyse der Fallstudien ergab jedoch keine, bzw. eine negative Korrelation zwischen dem Niveau "politische Bewußtseinsbildung und Partizipation" und den Aktivitäten von NROs. Statt dessen waren persönliche Beziehungen und lokale politische Faktoren von hoher Wichtigkeit für den Ablauf von Entwicklungsprozessen auf Dorfebene.

(iii) Persönliche Kontakte von individuellen Panchayat-Mitgliedern zu einflußreichen Personen in Politik und Verwaltung waren von herausragender Wichtigkeit für die Mobilisierung von Entwicklungsgeldern für Panchayats. In einer stark hierarchisch organisierten ländlichen Gesellschaft sind vertikal konstituierte persönliche Beziehungen wichtiger als institutionelle Strukturen, etablierte Prozeduren und Regelungen.

Im Laufe der Feldstudien kristallisierte sich der Persönlichkeitsfaktor als entscheidender Erklärungsansatz für die entwicklungspolitische Leistungsfähigkeit von

Institutionen heraus. Die Qualitäten charismatischer und politisch einflußreicher Führungspersönlichkeiten, die über ein Netzwerk von Kontakten verfügen, sind oft entscheidend dafür, ob ein Entwicklungsprozeß in einem Dorf in Gang kommt oder nicht. Konventionelle Analysen von Institutionen vernachlässigten oftmals die Bedeutung von persönlichen Beziehungen und lokalen Eliten. Subrata K. Mitra, hat darauf hingewiesen, daß "die meisten entwicklungstheoretischen Ansätze lokale Eliten ausblenden außer daß sie als Feinde von wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung und sozialem Wandel angesehen werden."⁴⁹² Analysen der Rolle von lokalen Eliten, ihrer soziale Zusammensetzung und ihrem politischen Charakter sind eine besondere Herausforderung für die politikwissenschaftliche Forschungsarbeit. Persönlichkeitsfaktoren lassen sich schwerer mit objektiven Kriterien messen lassen als etwa die Anzahl von Versammlungen und die quantitative Ausstattung der Panchayats mit finanziellen Ressourcen, aber dies sollte die Forschungsarbeit nicht abschrecken, eine Einschätzung über Analyse von persönlichen Beziehungen innerhalb und zwischen Institutionen und Individuen abzugeben, wie es in den Feldstudien dieser Arbeit geleistet wurde.

(iv) Die Reform lokaler Selbstverwaltung in Indien läßt kaum erkennen, daß die Zuteilung von Kompetenzen an die Panchayats Institutionen einem dezidierten Leitprinzip folgt. Das Prinzip der Subsidiarität, welches über die Auflistung von Tätigkeitsbereichen ohne genaue Aufgabendefinierung für Panchayats auf Bezirk, Landkreis- und Dorfebene hinausgehen würde, findet offensichtlich keine Anwendung. Dies trifft auf die 73. Verfassungsänderung ebenso wie auf die neu angeglichenen Panchayat Gesetze der Länder zu.

Die ungenügende Beachtung des Subsidiaritätsprinzips bei der Ausarbeitung der Verfassungsreform ist vor allem auf die politische Sprengkraft des Prinzips im föderativen politischen System Indien zurückzuführen. Der Verfassungstext formuliert wenige verbindliche Richtlinien für die Kompetenzausstattung der Panchayats sowie für ihre finanzielle Ausstattung.

Die Kongreßregierung mußte den Landesregierungen große Spielräume bei der Ausgestaltung der Reform auf Landesebene einräumen, um ihr politisches Wohlwollen und Unterstützung für die Reform zu gewinnen. Dennoch sah sich die Kongreßregierung mit dem Vorwurf konfrontiert, durch die Einführung bzw. Wiederbelebung einer "dritten Regierungsebene" mit verfassungsmäßig festgeschriebenen Kompetenzen die Machtposition der Landesregierung aushebeln zu wollen, insbesondere in den ländlichen Gebieten, wo die Kongreßpartei traditionell einen starken Rückhalt hat.

Im Fall von Rajasthan bleibt die Landesgesetzgebung, verabschiedet unter der amtierenden BJP Landesregierung, ebenfalls vage bei der gesetzlich verbindlichen Zuteilung von Aufgaben an Panchayats, weil die Regierungspartei die starke Basis der Kongreßpartei in den ländlichen Gebieten fürchtet.

(v) Durch die Quotenregelungen werden Frauen, Kastenlose und Ureinwohner gegenüber den traditionellen Eliten stärker konfliktfähig gemacht, weil sie von den Höherkastigen qua ihrer Ämter eine gewisse Akzeptanz und einen gewissen Respekt erhalten.

492 Mitra Subrata K. 1991: Room to Manoeuvre in the Middle. Local Elites, Political Action, and the State in India; in: *World Politics* (Princeton); Nr. 43; April 1991; 390-413; 395.

Quotenregelungen werden in Indien als eine wichtige Maßnahme betrachtet, um politische, wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Ansprüche von Ureinwohnern und Kastenlosen zu befriedigen, und neuerdings auch von Frauen. Mit der Reform lokaler Selbstverwaltung wurden Quoten für Kastenlose und Ureinwohner gemäß ihrem Bevölkerungsanteil im Wahlbezirk in der Verfassung festgeschrieben. Außerdem bestimmt die Verfassung eine 1/3 Quote für Frauen. Auf allen drei Panchayat Ebenen werden Abgeordnetensitze, einschließlich des Vorsitzes, für Frauen reserviert. Im Bezirk Udaipur wurden vielerorts gleichsam konkordanzdemokratische Vorstellungen von politischer Repräsentation beobachtet, d.h. die Quotenregelungen geben für viele Dorfbewohner weitgehend akzeptierte politische Repräsentationen von bestimmten Kasten und sozialen Gruppen vor.

Die Quotenregelung, besonders die Quotenregelung für die Posten der Vorsitzenden, hat Frauen Möglichkeiten verschafft, an der Dorf-, Landkreis- und Bezirkspolitik teilzunehmen, die sie sonst nicht hätten. Derzeit spielen die Frauen noch eine sehr passive Rolle, aber das könnte sich innerhalb der nächsten Jahre ändern, wenn die Frauen mehr Erfahrung gesammelt haben. So ist z.B. davon auszugehen, daß die bloße Teilnahme und zurückhaltende Beteiligung der Frauen an Panchayat Versammlungen bald, möglicherweise im Laufe der zweiten oder dritten fünfjährigen Amtsperiode, nicht mehr als kleine Sensation gehandelt wird, wie es jetzt noch vorkommt.

Zur Zeit fehlt es den gewählten weiblichen Abgeordneten, obwohl einige an Trainingsprogrammen teilgenommen haben, noch an Wissen und Selbstbewußtsein im Umgang mit ihren Rechten und Pflichten. Ihnen fehlt es auch an Erfahrung in öffentlichen Ämtern, im Umgang mit Regierungsbeamten und lokalen Führern. In den meisten Fällen bestimmten oder beeinflussten die Ehemännern, Väter oder Brüder die Entscheidungen der weiblichen Panchayat-Abgeordneten. Dennoch werden die meisten Frauen, besonders die Vorsitzenden von Panchayat Institutionen, aufgrund ihres Amtes von anderen Panchayat-Abgeordneten respektiert. Von Regierungsbeamten erhalten sie weniger Respekt.

Der Grad der Unabhängigkeit der Entscheidungen von gewählten weiblichen Panchayat-Abgeordneten wird mit ihrer Erfahrung zunehmen. Die marginale Mitwirkung der Frauen an den Panchayat Sitzungen sollte als Anstoß zu ihrer verstärkten Teilnahme am öffentlichen Leben angesehen werden. Dies trifft besonders auf den sozial konservativen Bundesstaat Rajasthan zu, wo noch sehr viele Frauen einen Schleier tragen. Aus den Erfahrungen in den Dörfern Rajasthans ist zu schließen, daß sich Frauen ohne Quotenregelung nicht für Panchayat-Sitze bewerben würden. Das trifft auch auf die Kastenlosen und Ureinwohner zu, aber bei den männlichen Kastenlosen- und Ureinwohnern, die aufgrund von Quotenregelungen in die Panchayats gewählt wurden, konnte im allgemeinen keine so starke Zurückhaltung wie bei den gewählten Frauen beobachtet werden. Ihre Schwierigkeiten ergeben sich mehr aus ihrem eigenen Unwissen über Panchayat-Angelegenheiten, und, in einigen Fällen, aufgrund mangelnder Akzeptanz bei höherkastigen Regierungsbeamten.

(vi) Im Rahmen der Reform lokaler Selbstverwaltung widersetzen sich vor allem Landtagsabgeordnete und Verwaltungsbeamte der Dezentralisierung von Machtbefugnissen, weil sie befürchten an Macht und Status zu verlieren, wenn Panchayat Abgeordnete zu einflußreich werden.

Die Dezentralisierung von Machtbefugnissen macht sich im ländlichen Indien vor allem an der Kontrolle und dem Vorsitz über die Bezirksagentur für ländliche Entwicklung (District Rural Development Agency) fest. Die Bezirksagentur für ländliche Entwicklung verfügt über wichtige Entscheidungsbefugnisse bei ländlichen Entwicklungsvorhaben und der Vergabe von Mitteln dafür. Die Kontrolle über die Bezirksagentur für ländliche Entwicklung liegt derzeit in Rajasthan und den meisten anderen Bundesstaaten beim *District Collector*. Über die Bezirksagentur für ländliche Entwicklung werden die größten entwicklungspolitischen Programme der Zentral- und der Landesregierung abgewickelt, z.B. das Integrierte Ländliche Entwicklungsprogramm (IRDP), das Beschäftigungsprogramm Jawahar Rozgar Yojana und das Ländliche Hausbau-Programm (Indira Awas Yojana). Der Bezirksagentur unterliegt die Genehmigungskontrolle über entwicklungspolitische Anträge der Panchayats, die über die Landkreisverwaltung an sie weitergeleitet werden.

Möglicherweise werden zukünftig den Panchayats mehr Zuständigkeiten für entwicklungspolitische Programme der Landesregierung und der Zentralregierung zugeteilt, aber es scheint unwahrscheinlich, daß die Bezirkspanchayats, die Zila Parishads, die Kontrolle über die gesamte Agentur bekommen werden. Die Abgeordneten des Landtages und die Verwaltungsbeamten widersetzen sich einer solchen Entscheidung, weil sie ihre eigenen einflußreichen Positionen durch mächtige Panchayats gefährdet sehen. Die Landtagsabgeordneten betrachten die gewählten Chefs der Bezirksregierung (Pramuks) als potentielle parteipolitische Konkurrenten.

Landtagsabgeordnete verfügen derzeit über jährlich 100 000 Rs. für entwicklungspolitische Maßnahmen in ihrem Wahlkreis. Diese Summe ermöglicht es ihnen, einige Wahlversprechen zu finanzieren und verleiht ihnen außer ihrem Einfluß auf Gesetzgebungen und persönlichen Kontakten in Politik und Wirtschaft einen gewissen Status. Gerade in ärmeren ländlichen Gebieten spielen Entscheidungsgewalten über finanzielle Investitionen eine vergleichsweise bedeutende Rolle. Falls die *Pramuks* die finanzielle Kontrolle über DRDA-Entwicklungshilfegelder bekämen, würden ihre finanziellen Entscheidungsgewalten die der Landtagsabgeordneten bei weitem übertreffen.

Regierungsangestellte, die formal den gewählten Panchayat-Abgeordneten zuarbeiten sollen, sperren sich gegen die Ausweitung der Machtbefugnisse der Abgeordneten, weil dies eine Beschneidung ihrer eigenen Machtbefugnisse bedeuten würde. Die größten Konflikte zwischen Verwaltungsbeamten und gewählten Panchayat-Abgeordneten gab es im Bezirk Udaipur auf Landkreisebene. Ein wichtiger Erklärungsansatz besteht in den gespannten persönlichen Beziehungen, allerdings gibt es auch einige strukturelle Gründe für potentielle Konflikte.

Erstens besteht keine klare Aufteilung von Zuständigkeiten und keine klare Arbeitsteilung zwischen den gewählten Panchayat Samiti-Abgeordneten und den Verwaltungsbeamten der Landesregierung, die auf Panchayat Samiti Ebene ihren Dienst verrichten. Autoritätskonflikte und Kompetenzkonflikte bestehen besonders zwischen dem *Pradhan* als dem politischen Kopf und dem Landkreisentwicklungsbeamten (*BDO*) als dem Verwaltungschef des Panchayat Samiti. Zweitens verfügt der Landkreisentwicklungsbeamte über mehr Freiheiten und weniger Kontrollen als der Bezirksentwicklungsbeamte. Die Landkreisentwicklungsbeamten können es sich folglich eher als die Beamten auf Bezirksebene erlauben, die Machtbefugnisse der *Pradhans* zu ignorieren und sich entsprechend verhalten, weil ihr Dienstort oftmals weit entfernt von der Bezirkshauptstadt liegt. Auch können sie bei der Auswahl der Dörfer,

in denen sie schwerpunktmäßig arbeiten, wählerisch sein, denn sie sind für etwa 20-45 Gram Panchayats zuständig.

Die Arbeitsmoral der Landkreisentwicklungsbeamten und ihre Bereitschaft, Machtbefugnisse auf Landkreisebene zu teilen, haben während der Zeit als Panchayats zwischen 1991 und 1994 nicht funktionsfähig waren bzw. nicht existierten offensichtlich Schaden genommen. Nach Jahren der "Alleinherrschaft" empfinden sie es als Zumutung, Machtbefugnisse mit gewählten Panchayat Samiti-Abgeordneten, besonders mit weiblichen Abgeordneten, zu teilen, die in den meisten Fällen eine geringere Bildung und Erfahrung als sie besitzen.

(vii) Institutionen lokaler Selbstverwaltung fehlt es an Verhandlungsmacht auf höherer Ebene, weil keine effektiv arbeitenden kommunalen Spitzenverbände existieren, die die Interessen der Panchayats gegenüber Exekutive und Legislative auf der nationalen sowie der bundesstaatlichen Ebene vertreten. Außerdem gibt es keine wirkliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen benachbarten Panchayats. Politische und soziale Beziehungen konstituieren sich in Indien stärker vertikal als horizontal. Deshalb und aufgrund mangelnder finanzieller Mittel wird es schwierig sein, eine Interessenvertretung der Landgemeinden auf nationaler oder bundesstaatlicher Ebene zu bilden.

Institutionen lokaler Selbstverwaltung repräsentieren in Indien ihre Interessen gegenüber höherrangigen exekutiven und legislativen Organen lediglich durch persönliche Kontakte und gelegentliche spontane Initiativen. Der "All India Panchayat Parishad" scheint nicht funktionsfähig zu sein und war Panchayat-Abgeordneten im Einzugsgebiet der Fallstudien nicht einmal bekannt.

Panchayat Abgeordnete aus ganz Indien richteten allerdings bei einem Treffen mit Ex-Premierminister Narasimha Rao im Oktober 1995 Forderungen und Kritikpunkte an die Führung der Kongreßpartei. Mit Blickrichtung auf die Implementierung der Reform auf bundesstaatlicher Ebene, debattierten die Panchayat-Abgeordneten mit dem Premierminister (i) die Übertragung der Kontrolle der Bezirksagentur für ländliche Entwicklung an das Bezirkspanchayat, (ii) die Ausweitung der finanziellen Mittel der Panchayats, (iii) die Stärkung der Gram Sabha und (iv) die Beteiligung der Panchayats an der Ausarbeitung von Bezirksentwicklungsplänen.⁴⁹³

In Rajasthan forderten Sarpanchs auf höchster politischer Ebene ihre Mitgliedschaft in Panchayat Samitis ein. Vor der Reform waren sie qua ihres Amtes als Gemeindevorsitzende bzw. Dorfchefs automatisch Mitglieder im Panchayat Samiti. Diese Initiativen wurden spontan organisiert und deuten nicht auf regelmäßige Treffen zwischen Panchayats und Regierungsautoritäten auf nationaler und bundesstaatlicher Ebene hin.

(viii) NROs spielen eine wichtige Rolle als zivilgesellschaftliche Kräfte der gebildeten Mittelschicht. Die Leistungsfähigkeit von NROs, partizipative Entwicklung in ländlichen Gebieten zu fördern, wird allerdings oftmals überschätzt, besonders von Geberorganisationen. Die Fallstudien zeigten auf, daß NROs nicht mit Panchayats auf Dorfebene kooperierten, und bei ihrer Arbeit zu stark in ihren eigenen Vorstellungen und institutionellen Alltagsproblemen gefangen waren.

493 Vgl. *The Hindu* (Madras) 11.10.1995: PM Defends Direct Central Funding to Panchayats.

Der NRO Sektor hat in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten einen bedeutenden Aufschwung erlebt. Viele indische NROs haben mit innovativen entwicklungspolitischen Ansätzen und großem Idealismus national und international auf sich aufmerksam gemacht. Auf der Ebene des Spitzenmanagements, das Projektberichte konzipiert und Geberorganisationen trifft, besitzen NROs gute Kommunikationsfähigkeiten und gebrauchen geschickt entwicklungspolitische Schlagwörter. Außerdem üben ihre moralisch begründeten politischen und sozialen Einsichten auf gebildete Mittelschichten und Geberorganisationen eine gewisse Anziehungskraft aus.

Das Paradox ist, daß NROs ihre Fähigkeit, die Meinungen und Wertvorstellungen der gebildeten Mittelschicht zu repräsentieren und als wichtige zivilgesellschaftliche Kräfte auf makropolitischen Ebene aufzutreten⁴⁹⁴ durch politischen Einfluß erreichen, den sie ihrem erfolgreich vorgebrachten Anspruch verdanken, die ärmsten Bevölkerungsschichten zu vertreten.⁴⁹⁵ Dabei teilen die Ärmsten in der Regel nicht die moralischen Ansichten und entwicklungspolitischen Vorstellungen der NROs.

Regierungsorganisationen und internationale Geberorganisationen haben NROs zunehmend in das Projektmanagement von Entwicklungsaktivitäten einbezogen. NROs haben in einigen Fällen einer kleinen Gruppe von Dorfbewohnern, "ihrer Zielgruppe", die Möglichkeit gegeben, ihren Lebensstandard durch Teilnahme an Entwicklungsvorhaben zu verbessern. Jedoch bleibt der Beitrag der NROs zur Emanzipation der Armen auf lokaler Ebene sehr gering, weil die NROs ihre Zielgruppen nach subjektiven Kriterien aussuchen, die sich an Vorstellungen der gebildeten Mittelschicht orientieren. Dieser Ansatz macht es den Armen, den es an Verhandlungsmacht fehlt, kaum möglich, sich von dem "patron-client" Verhältnis mit den NROs zu befreien.

Die Feldstudien, besonders die Erfahrungen in Jhadol, haben aufgezeigt, daß NROs sowohl untereinander als auch mit anderen entwicklungspolitischen Trägerinstitutionen konkurrieren, statt ihre Zielgruppe zu ermutigen, möglichst viele Möglichkeiten der entwicklungspolitischen Beteiligung wahrzunehmen. Bei ihrer Arbeit fehlt es NROs an Wissen und an Interesse, politische und soziale Realitäten auf lokaler Ebene verstehen zu wollen, und sie tendieren dazu durch relativ vorgefaßte Vorstellungen über langfristige Interessen der Armen im Einzelfall deren kurzfristige Interessen zu ignorieren.

Beobachtung politischer Entwicklungen sind wichtig für NROs, um soziale und entwicklungspolitische Dynamiken zu verstehen. Daran mangelt es ihnen. Eine direkte politische Involvierung würde allerdings die Gefahr bergen, verschiedene Fraktionen auf Dorf- und Landkreisebene gegeneinander aufzubringen und in parteipolitische Auseinandersetzungen zu geraten.

494 Ein Beispiel ist das Thema Kinderarbeit. Die "South Asian Coalition Against Child Servitude (SACC), ein Konglomerat von mehr als 150 NROs und die "Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF)", starteten eine Kampagne für die Abschaffung von Kinderarbeit und setzten damit die Regierung unter Druck, ein Großprogramm gegen Kinderarbeit in gefährlichen Industrien einzuführen, siehe dazu auch Kapitel 3.1.1.

495 Hartmut Elsenhans weist darauf hin, wie NROs ihren Zugang zu den armen Bevölkerungsschichten nutzen können, um politischen Einfluß zu gewinnen; *Elsenhans, Hartmut* 1995: Marginality, Rent and Non-Governmental Organisations; abgedruckt aus dem *Indian Journal of Public Administration* (Delhi); Vol XLI, Nr.2; April-Juni 1995; 139-159; Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration; in particular Seite 20.

(ix) Die parteipolitischen Aktivitäten der Abgeordneten haben ambivalente Auswirkungen auf die entwicklungspolitische Leistungsfähigkeit von Panchayats. Einerseits ist die Rolle der Parteien positiv, weil politischer Druck auf eine oftmals lethargische Verwaltung ausgeübt werden kann, andererseits leistet die Parteipolitik auch selbstsüchtigen machtpolitischen Interessen Vorschub und ist der entwicklungspolitischen Motivation der Abgeordneten abträglich.

Die Politik der Tolerierung, aber nicht der offiziellen Anerkennung oder Förderung der Rolle von politischen Parteien in Panchayat-Angelegenheiten ist immer noch die offizielle Linie von der Zentral- und den meisten Landesregierungen.⁴⁹⁶ Die 73. Verfassungsänderung erwähnt diesen Aspekt ebenso wenig wie das im übrigen sehr detaillierte voluminöse Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Gesetz von 1994.

Die Panchayat Wahlen im Jahre 1995 haben den politischen Parteien in Rajasthan die günstige Gelegenheit verschafft, ihre Anhängerschaft in ländlichen Gebieten auszuweiten. Traditionell war die Kongreßpartei in ländlichen Gebieten besonders stark, weil sie als einzige Partei über eine Infrastruktur in ländlichen Gebieten verfügte. Ehemalige Friedenskämpfer sind mit einer Parteiunterstützung für eine *Sarpanch* Kandidatur belohnt worden. Der Posten des Sarpanch wurde in vielen Fällen als lebenslanges Amt betrachtet, das häufig von gebildeten älteren Männern aus höheren Kasten besetzt wurde.⁴⁹⁷ Die Einführung von Quoten für Frauen, Scheduled Castes und Scheduled Tribes im Zusammenhang mit der 73. Verfassungsänderung und den zusätzlichen von Landesregierungen eingeführten Quoten für Unterkasten verlangte eine Rekrutierung von neuen, politisch meistens unerfahrenen Personen für lokale Führungspositionen. Die Einführung der Quotenregelungen hat es möglich gemacht, daß Neuankömmlinge Panchayat Posten erhielten, weil sich viele altgediente 'Berufspolitiker' nicht zur Wahl stellen konnten.

Parteien zeigen in Indien zentralistisch-autoritäre Strukturen. Parteimitgliedschaft und Wahlverhalten sind in den meisten Fällen nicht durch programmatische oder ideologische Überzeugungen gekennzeichnet, sondern verfolgen das Ziel, politische Kontakte herzustellen, die zu persönlichen Vorteilen genutzt werden können. Solche Strukturen sind der demokratischen Willensbildung und Entwicklung auf lokaler Ebene nicht unbedingt förderlich, sondern tragen eher dazu bei, ursprünglich vorhandene entwicklungspolitische Motivationen von Kandidaten abzubauen.

Panchayat Politik, besonders auf höherer Ebene, ist - entsprechend der Bundes- und Landespolitik in Indien - häufig durch populistische und personalisierte Herrschaftsformen gekennzeichnet und oftmals mit Korruption, selbstsüchtigem

496 Die Frage, ob politische Parteien offiziell an Panchayat Wahlen teilnehmen sollen ist regelmäßig diskutiert worden, wenn Panchayat Wahlen abgehalten wurden. Mahatma Gandhi glaubte an die Idee einer parteilosen Demokratie und warnte vor der Politisierung der Panchayats. Die liberal-demokratische Schule wandte sich dagegen und betrachtete politische Partizipation auf der Basis von Parteienkonkurrenz als wichtiges Element einer liberalen Demokratie. Ihr Slogan war "nur tote Menschen konkurrieren nicht." (Dey, S.K. 1960: *Community Development. A Movement is Born*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal; S. 173.) Der Bericht des Santhanam Komitee über Panchayati Raj Wahlen empfahl, daß politische Parteien die Einmischung in Panchayat Wahlen nicht per Gesetz verboten werden sollte, aber daß Parteisymbole, Veranstaltungen und offizielle Anerkennung von Parteikandidaten nicht erlaubt sein sollen. (*Government of India: Ministry of Community Development 1965: Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Elections*; Neu Delhi).

497 *Government of India 1965; Ministry of Community Development: Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Elections*. Neu Delhi; S. 55; Mathew, George 1994: *From Legislation to Movement*; Neu Delhi; S. 143.

Karrieredenken und sogar Gewalt verbunden.⁴⁹⁸ Einige *Sarpanchs* im Bezirk Udaipur haben im Laufe der Jahre ihre Parteizugehörigkeit mehrmals gewechselt, abhängig von der jeweiligen finanziellen Unterstützung oder der Karriereförderung, die sie von den verschiedenen Parteien erwarten konnten. In vielen Fällen hat dieser Opportunismus ihre Wahlaussichten nicht beeinträchtigt. Die politischen Parteien sehen es als wichtig an, mächtige und respektierte Kandidaten auszuwählen, um ihren Einfluß zu vergrößern.

Die gewählten Panchayat-Abgeordneten profitierten davon, daß die politischen Parteien den Panchayat Wahlen große Aufmerksamkeit schenkten. Die Fallstudien zeigten auf, daß Panchayat Abgeordnete ihre parteipolitischen Zugehörigkeiten als politisches Druckmittel gegenüber der Verwaltung einsetzen können. Parteipolitik hat den Panchayats Macht und politischen Einfluß verschafft, den die Panchayats andernfalls im Umgang mit der Bürokratie nicht hätten.

(x) Baumaßnahmen, die der Bevölkerung (Männern, Frauen und auch Kindern) kurzfristige Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten bieten, waren die entwicklungspolitischen Prioritäten von Panchayats im Einzugsgebiet der Fallstudien. Panchayats auf allen Ebenen waren es gewohnt in den Kategorien 'kurzfristige Beschäftigung und 'prestigeträchtige Bauvorhaben' zu denken und zu planen. Dieser Ansatz entspricht nicht den Strategien der Armutsbekämpfung, die Geberorganisationen und NROs für ihre Zielgruppen entwickeln.

Jedoch muß berücksichtigt werden, daß entwicklungspolitische Prioritäten von Panchayat-Abgeordneten weniger eine Frage von Überzeugungen sind, sondern eher von einseitigen Erfahrungen und Gewohnheiten. Panchayat-Mitglieder bevorzugen Bauvorhaben, weil sie damit am ehesten vertraut sind. Wenn ich mit Panchayat-Mitgliedern Probleme der Wasserversorgung diskutierte, wurden auch Trinkwasserversorgung und Bewässerung als Prioritäten genannt. Über einen langen Zeitraum wurden Dorfbewohner als mehr oder weniger passive Empfänger von entwicklungspolitischen Aktivitäten angesehen. Ihr Beitrag zum Entwurf, der Planung, Durchführung und Evaluierung von entwicklungspolitischen Aktivitäten war sehr begrenzt. Es ist noch zu früh, um einzuschätzen, ob die verstärkten Kompetenzen und erhöhten Finanzmittel, die den Panchayats im Zuge der Reform theoretisch zugeteilt werden sollen, letztendlich die Panchayats befähigen, als weitgehend autonome entwicklungspolitische Akteure zu handeln. In Indien werden derzeit entwicklungspolitische Programme auf nationaler- und bundesstaatlicher Ebene entworfen und finanziert. Die Programme konzentrieren sich, trotz Lippenbekenntnissen zu nachhaltiger Entwicklung und Ressourcenschutz, vor allem auf Infrastrukturmaßnahmen. Im Einzugsgebiet der Fallstudien hatten auch die Aktivitäten von NROs, die sich mehr der gemeinschaftlichen Bewirtschaftung natürlicher Ressourcen widmen, keinen größeren Einfluß auf die entwicklungspolitischen Schwerpunkte der Panchayats.

498 Atul Kohli argumentiert, daß populistische und personalisierte Führerschaft hauptsächlich auf drei Faktoren zurückzuführen ist: (i) der politische Aufschwung der frei schwebenden politischen Manövriermasse der Unterkasten; (ii) das Fehlen institutioneller Mechanismen, um die Armen in politische Strukturen einzubinden und (iii) Indira Gandhi's intensives Streben nach persönlicher Macht bei gleichzeitiger Destabilisierung wichtiger Institutionen. (Kohli, Atul 1991: *Interpreting India's Democracy: A State-Society Framework*; in: Kohli, Atul (Hg.): *India's Democracy. An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*; Neu Delhi: Orient Longman; 3-17; 15).

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Glossary

A:

<i>Additional District Magistrate</i>	District level government officer, assistant of the <i>District Collector</i> with specific responsibilities (e.g. District Rural Development Agency, law and order, or revenue collection)
<i>Adivasis</i>	Common Hindi word for tribal people
<i>Adivasi Vikas Manch</i>	Tribal Development Forum
<i>Anganwadi</i>	Mother and child care centre
<i>Anicut</i>	Small dam
<i>Apna Gao Apna Kam</i>	"Our village, our work" - government development programme
<i>Avarna</i>	Group of people at the bottom of the hierarchy in the Indian society, since they are outside the caste system ("untouchables"; Scheduled Castes); see also <i>varna</i>

B:

<i>Balwar Bhawan</i>	Child care centre
<i>Bhil</i>	Tribe in the Udaipur district
<i>Block Development Officer (BDO)</i>	Government officer; administrative head of the Panchayat Samiti (PS); in charge of the implementation of various government development schemes at the block level
<i>Brahmin caste</i>	Priestly caste, the religiously most privileged group in the hierarchy. Brahmins are usually well educated.

C:

<i>Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</i>	Government officer; administrative head of the Zila Parish in charge of the implementation of various government development schemes at the district level
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Collectorate Administrative unit at district level, see *District Collector*

Commissionerate Administrative unit at sub-state level, see *Division Commissioner*

D:

Dalits backward The term provides a classist identity for economically people and is particularly used by Scheduled Castes who reject the term *Harijan*

Damor Tribe in the Udaipur district

Dharamsala Lodging place to stay

District Local self-government and administrative unit at the sub-state level

District Collector (DC) or *District Magistrate (DM)* or *Collector*; government officer from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS); Head of the Collectorate, Head of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA); in charge of the implementation of various government development schemes at district level, law and order in rural and city areas, and revenue collection

District Magistrate see *District Collector*

Division Administrative unit at sub-state level

Division Commissioner Head of the *Division* supervising the implementation of state government policies including various development programmes

Dhobi Scheduled Caste community (washers)

G:

Gaon Village

Gayari Other Backward Classes (OBC) community

<i>Gram Panchayat (GP)</i>	Institution of local self- government comprising a cluster of villages; in Udaipur district, the GP usually consists of 3-8 village and covers a population of 3000-5000 people
<i>Gram Sabha</i>	Electorate of the Gram Panchayat; in colloquial language "village assembly"
<i>Gram Secretary (GS)</i>	Previously called Gram Sevak. Government officer (Panchayat Samiti extension officer) working at village level. In charge of Panchayat affairs and implementation of the various government development schemes. One Gram Sevak usually covers 1-2 Gram Panchayats
<i>Gunghat (ka Janjhat)</i>	Veil
<i>Gurjar</i>	Backward Class community in Rajasthan
<u>H:</u>	
<i>Hamlet</i>	Part of a village
<i>Harijans</i> Gandhi to	Literally, children of God; term coined by Mahatma give respectability to the former 'untouchables'; The use of the
	term 'untouchable' is prohibited by Indian law
<u>I:</u>	
<i>Indira Awas Yojana</i>	Rural housing programme, important government development scheme in India
<u>J:</u>	
<i>Jan Jagaran Abhiyan</i>	Mass awareness programme on Panchayati Raj organised by the Rajasthan State Government
<i>Janpad Panchayat</i>	Name of the middle-tier Panchayat at block level under the Central Provinces and Berar scheme
<i>Jains</i>	Religious community with strict practises, often including total vegetarinism. Most of the approx. 4 million Jains live in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bombay; many of them are economically influential and commercially successful. Traditionally involved in money lending

<i>Jati</i>	Localised caste
<i>Jats</i>	Caste of agricultural land owners and money lenders
<i>Jawahar Rozgna Yoyana</i>	Employment generation programme
<i>Jiwan Dhara</i>	Million wells scheme
<u>K:</u>	
<i>Kam</i>	Work
<i>Kayna</i>	House for cattle
<i>Kharif</i>	Summer crop season (harvest time around October)
<i>Krishi</i>	Agriculture
<i>Kumhar</i>	Other Backward Classes (OBC) community
<u>L:</u>	
<i>Lok Jumbish</i>	Education programme in Rajasthan based on a campaign approach with involvement of NGOs
<i>Lok Sabha</i>	National Legislative Assembly; Lower House or (literally) "House of the People"
<i>Luhar</i>	Other Backward Classes (OBC) community
<u>M:</u>	
<i>Mahila</i>	Women
<i>Mahila Mandals</i>	Women's society
<i>Mandal</i>	Block (group)
<i>Mandir</i>	Temple
<i>Meghwal</i>	Scheduled Caste community
<i>Mewari</i>	Local dialect in Udaipur district
<i>Mina</i>	Tribe in the Udaipur district

<i>Mritu Bhoj</i>	Custom where the family of a death spends a 'small fortune' giving meals to others
<u>P:</u>	
<i>Panchayat</i>	Panchayat originally means "assembly of five". It is now commonly used for rural local self-government; The study refers to Panchayats as institutions of local self-government with constitutional status since April 1993 (73rd Constitutional Amendment)
<i>Panchayati Bhawan</i>	Office building of a Panchayat; The Panchayat Bhawan is normally a simple hall without tables or chairs which accommodates approx. 50-70 people
<i>Panchayati Raj Act</i>	Act of Rural Local Self-Government
<i>Panchayati Raj Institutions</i>	Institutions of local self-government with constitutional status since April 1993 (73rd Constitutional Amendment)
<i>Panchayat Samiti (PS)</i>	Local self-government institution at block level; In Udaipur district, the PS are comprising 20-45 Gram Panchayats and a total population of 85 000 to 200 000
<i>Patwari</i>	Government officer in charge of land records and revenue collection at village level
<i>Pradhan</i>	Head (chairperson) of the Panchayat Samiti (PS), the block level local-self government institution; the Pradhan is elected by the members of the PS
<i>Pramuk</i>	Head (chairperson) of the Zila Parishad (ZP), the district level local self-government institution; the Pramuk is elected by the members of the ZP
<u>R:</u>	
<i>Rabi</i>	Winter crop season (harvest time around March)
<i>Raj</i>	Literally, rule; hence, British Raj or Panchayati Raj
<i>Rajya Sabha</i>	National Legislative Assembly; Upper House or Council of States
<i>Rajput</i>	Kschatria (warrior) - caste. Many Rajputs have retained large land holdings

S:

<i>Sadhu</i>	Name for Hindu renunciants, rejecting attachment to material possessions, some go as far as to refuse clothing
<i>Sahariya</i>	Tribe in the Udaipur district
<i>Sanstha</i>	Organisation
<i>Sargara</i>	Scheduled Caste community in Rajasthan
<i>Sarpanch</i>	Head (chairperson) of the Gram Panchayat(GP), the village level local self government institution; the Sarpanch is directly elected by the electorate of the GP
<i>Scheduled Castes</i>	The term Scheduled Castes refers to such castes or parts thereof under the Article 341 of the Constitution of India. The term is part of a broader taxonomy created within the context of an affirmative action policy, aiming to reserve positions within the Public Service, the education system, etc. for the underprivileged people. Scheduled Castes are sometimes referred to <i>Dalis</i> or <i>Harijans</i>
<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>	The term "Scheduled Tribes" refers to such tribal communities or parts thereof under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. The term is part of a broader taxonomy created within the context of an affirmative action policy, aiming to reserve positions within the Public Service, the education system, etc. for underprivileged people
<i>Seva</i>	Service
<i>Son</i>	Other Backward Classes (OBC) community
<i>Sub-Division Magistrate (SDM)</i>	Head of the Sub-Division, in charge of law and order, revenue collection, co-ordinating of development activities

T:

<i>Tehsil</i>	Revenue sub-division of an administrative district, containing around 100 000-200 000 people
<i>Tehsildar</i>	Administrative head of the <i>tehsil</i> . <i>Tehsildars</i> only have a marginal involvement in the co-ordination of government development activities

U:

Up-Pradhan	Deputy <i>Pradhan</i> (head of the block level <i>Panchayat Samiti</i>)
Up-Pramuk	Deputy <i>Pramuk</i> (head of the district level <i>Zila Parishad</i>)
Up-Sarpanch	Deputy <i>Sarpanch</i> (head of the village level <i>Gram Panchayat</i>)

V:

<i>Varna</i>	Literally, 'colour'; the Indian caste system consists of three twice-born <i>varnas</i> (Brahmins, Rajputs and Vaishyas)
<i>Vidhan Sabha</i>	Rajasthan State Legislative Assembly
<i>Vikas</i>	Development
<i>Vikas Adhikari</i>	Block Development Officer (BDO)

W:

<i>Wardpanch</i>	Elected member of the Gram Panchayat (GP), the village level local self-government institution; the Wardpanchs are directly elected from a constituency within the Gram Panchayat area (sometimes synonymous with a <i>hamlet</i>)
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Z:

<i>Zila Parishad (ZP)</i>	Institution of rural local self- government at district level. Udaipur district has a population of approx. 2.1 million people, with 1.7 million living in rural areas. Rajasthan has 31 Zila Parishads
<i>Zila Pramuk</i>	Head of the Zila Parishad, the district Panchayat body. The Zila Pramuk is elected by the Zila Parishad members; see also <i>Pramuk</i>

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THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992

Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Constitution (Seventy-second Amendment) Bill, 1991 which was enacted as the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Though the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been in existence for a long time, it has been observed that these institutions have not been able to acquire the status and dignity of viable and responsive people's bodies due to a number of reasons including absence of regular elections, prolonged supersessions, insufficient representation of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources.

2. Article 40 of the Constitution which enshrines one of the Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that 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-government. In the light of the experience in the last forty years and in view of the short-comings which have been observed, it is considered that there is an imperative need to enshrine in the Constitution certain basic and essential features of Panchayati Raj Institutions to impart certainty, continuity and strength to them.

3. Accordingly, it is proposed to add a new Part relating to Panchayats in the Constitution to provide for among other things, Gram Sabha in a village or group of villages; constitution of Panchayats at village and other level or levels; direct elections to all seats in Panchayats at the village and intermediate level, if any, and to the offices of Chairpersons of Panchayats at such levels; reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population for membership of Panchayats and office of Chairpersons in Panchayats at each level; reservation of not less than one-third of the seats for women; fixing tenure of 5 years for Panchayats and holding elections within a period of 6 months in the event of supersession of any Panchayat; disqualifications for membership of Panchayats; devolution by the State Legislature of powers and responsibilities upon the Panchayats with respect to the preparation of plans for economic developments and social justice and for the implementation of development schemes; sound finance of the Panchayats by securing authorisation from State Legislatures for grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State, as also assignment to, or appropriation by, the Panchayats of the revenues of designated taxes, duties, tolls and fees; setting up of a Finance Commission within one year of the proposed amendment and thereafter every 5 years to review the financial position of Panchayats; auditing of accounts of the Panchayats; powers of State Legislatures to make provisions with respect to elections to Panchayats under the superintendence, direction and control of the chief electoral officer of the State; application of the provisions of the said Part to Union territories; excluding certain States and areas from the application of the provisions of the said Part; continuance of existing laws and Panchayats until one year from the commencement of the proposed amendment and barring interference by

courts in electoral matters relating to Panchayats.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

NEW DELHI;

G. VENKAT SWAMY.

The 10th September, 1991.

THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992

[20th April, 1993.]

An Act further to amend the Constitution of India.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-third Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Insertion of new Part IX.- After Part VIII of the Constitution, the following Part shall be inserted, namely:-

**PART IX
THE PANCHAYATS**

243. Definitions.- In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(a) "district" means a district in a State;

(b) "Gram Sabha" means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level;

(c) "Intermediate level" means a level between the village and district levels specified by the Governor of a State by public notification to be the intermediate level for the purposes of this Part;

(d) "Panchayat" means an institution (by whatever name called) of self-government constituted under article 243B, for the rural areas;

(e) "Panchayat area" means the territorial area of a Panchayat;

(f) "population" means the population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published;

(g) "village" means a village specified by the Governor by public notification to be a village for the purposes of this Part and includes a group of villages so specified.

243A. Gram Sabha.- A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a

State may, by law, provide.

243B. Constitution of Panchayats.- (1) There shall be constituted in every State, Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels in accordance with the provisions of this Part.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), Panchayats at the intermediate level may not be constituted in a State having a population not exceeding twenty lakhs.

243C. Composition of Panchayats.- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the composition of Panchayats:

Provided that the ratio between the population of the territorial area of a Panchayat at any level and the number of seats in such Panchayat to be filled by election shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the State.

(2) All the seats in a Panchayat shall be filled by persons chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area and; for this purpose, each Panchayat area shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the Panchayat area.

(3) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the representation-

(a) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the village level, in the Panchayats at the intermediate level or, in the case of a State not having Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;

(b) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;

(c) of the members of the House of the People and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State representing constituencies which comprise wholly or partly a Panchayat area at a level other than the village level, in such Panchayat;

(d) of the members of the Council of States and the members of the Legislative Council of the State, where they are registered as electors within-

(i) a Panchayat area at the intermediate level, in Panchayat at the intermediate level;

(ii) a Panchayat area at the district level, in Panchayat at the district level.

(4) The Chairperson of a Panchayat and other members of a Panchayat whether or not chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area shall have the right to vote in the meetings of the Panchayats.

(5) The Chairperson of -

(a) a Panchayat at the village level shall be elected in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide; and

(b) a Panchayat at the intermediate level or district level shall be elected by, and from amongst, the elected members thereof.

243D. Reservation of seats.- (1) Seats shall be reserved for-

(a) the Scheduled Castes; and

(b) the Scheduled Tribes,

in every Panchayat and the number of seats of reserved shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat as the population of the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat area or of the Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat area bears to the total population of that area and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(2) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, the Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(4) The offices of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide:

Provided that the number of offices of Chairpersons reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Panchayats at each level in any State shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of such offices in the Panchayats at each level as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State bears to the total population of the State:

Provided further that not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women:

Provided also that the number of offices reserved under this clause shall be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats at each level.

(5) The reservation of seats under clauses (1) and (2) and the reservation of offices of Chairpersons (other than the reservation for women) under clause (4) shall cease to have effect on the expiration of the period specified in article 334.

(6) Nothing in this Part shall prevent the Legislature of a State from

making any provision for reservation of seats in any Panchayat or offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at any level in favour of backward class of citizens.

243E. Duration of Panchayats, etc.- (1) Every Panchayat, unless sooner dissolved under any law for the time being in force, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer.

(2) No amendment of any law for the time being in force shall have the effect of causing dissolution of a Panchayat at any level, which is functioning immediately before such amendment, till the expiration of its duration specified in clause (1).

(3) An election to constitute a Panchayat shall be completed-

(a) before the expiry of its duration specified in clause (1);

(b) before the expiration of a period of six months from the date of its dissolution:

Provided that where the remainder of the period for which the dissolved Panchayat would have continued is less than six months, it shall not be necessary to hold any election under this clause for constituting the Panchayat for such period.

(4) A Panchayat constituted upon the dissolution of a Panchayat before the expiration of its duration shall continue only for the remainder of the period for which the dissolved Panchayat would have continued under clause (1) had it not been so dissolved.

243F. Disqualifications for membership.-(1) A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of a Panchayat-

(a) if he is so disqualified by or under any law for the time being in force for the purposes of elections to the Legislature of the State concerned:

Provided that no person shall be disqualified on the ground that he is less than twenty-five years of age, if he has attained the age of twenty-one years;

(b) if he is so disqualified by or under any law made by the Legislature of the State.

(2) If any question arises as to whether a member of a Panchayat has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (1), the question shall be referred for the decision of such authority and in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide.

243G. Powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats.- Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with

respect to-

(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;

(b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

243H. Powers to impose taxes by, and Funds of, the Panchayats.-The Legislature of a State may, by law,-

(a) authorise a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate such taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with such procedure and subject to such limits;

(b) assign to a Panchayat such taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government for such purposes and subject to such conditions and limits;

(c) provide for making such grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State; and

(d) provide for Constitution of such Funds for crediting all moneys received, respectively, by or on behalf of the Panchayats and also for the withdrawal of such moneys therefrom,

as may be specified in the law.

243-I. Constitution of Finance Commission to review financial position.-(1) The Governor of a State shall, as soon as may be within one year from the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year, constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make recommendations to the Governor as to-

(a) the principles which should govern-

(i) the distribution between the State and the Panchayats of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State, which may be divided between them under this Part and the allocation between the Panchayats at all levels of their respective shares of such proceeds;

(ii) the determination of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees which may be assigned to, or appropriated by, the Panchayat;

(iii) the grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State;

(b) the measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats;

(c) any other matter referred to the Finance Commission by the Governor in the interests of sound finance of the Panchayats.

(2) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the composition of the commission, the qualifications which shall be

requisite for appointment as members thereof and the manner in which they shall be selected.

(3) The Commission shall determine their procedure and shall have such powers in the performance of their functions as the Legislature of the State may, by law, confer on them.

(4) The Governor shall cause every recommendation made by the Commission under this article together with an explanatory memorandum as to the action taken thereon to be laid before the Legislature of the State.

243J. Audit of accounts of Panchayats.- The Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the maintenance of accounts by the Panchayats and the auditing of such accounts.

243K. Elections to the Panchayats.-(1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor.

(2) Subject to the provisions of any law made by the Legislature of a State, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine:

Provided that the State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of a High Court and the conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

(3) The Governor of a State shall, when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the State Election Commission by clause (1).

(4) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, elections to the Panchayats.

243L. Application to Union territories.-The provisions of this Part shall apply to the Union territories and shall, in their application to a Union territory, have effect as if the references to the Governor of a State were references to the Administrator of the Union territory appointed under article 239 and references to the Legislature or the Legislative Assembly of a State were references, in relation to a Union territory having a Legislative Assembly, to that Legislative Assembly:

Provided that the President may, by public notification, direct that the provisions of this Part shall apply to any Union territory or part thereof subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification.

243M. Part not to apply to certain areas.-(1) Nothing in this Part shall apply to the Scheduled Areas referred to in clause (1), and the

tribal areas referred to in clause (2), of article 244.

(2) Nothing in this Part shall apply to-

(a) the States of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram;

(b) the Hill Areas in the State of Manipur for which District Councils exist under any law for the time being in force.

(3) Nothing in this Part-

(a) relating to Panchayats at the district level shall apply to the hill areas of the District of Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists under any law for the time being in force;

(b) shall be construed to affect the functions and powers of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council constituted under such law.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

(a) the Legislature of a State referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (2) may, by law, extend this Part to that State, except the areas, if any, referred to in clause (1), if the Legislative Assembly of that State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting;

(b) Parliament may, by law, extend the provisions of this Part to the Scheduled Areas and the tribal areas referred to in clause (1) subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in such law, and no such law shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

243N. Continuance of existing laws and Panchayats.-Notwithstanding anything in this Part, any provision of any law relating to Panchayats in force in a State immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, which is inconsistent with the provisions of this Part, shall continue to be in force until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority or until the expiration of one year from such commencement, whichever is earlier:

Provided that all the Panchayats existing immediately before such commencement shall continue till the expiration of their duration, unless sooner dissolved by a resolution passed to that effect by the Legislative Assembly of that State or, in the case of a State having a Legislative Council, by each House of the Legislature of that State.

243-O. Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.-Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

(a) the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made under article 243K, shall not be called in question in any court;

(b) no election to any Panchayat shall be called in question except by

an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the Legislature of a State.'

Constitution, after sub-clause (b), the following sub-clause shall be inserted, namely:-

"(bb) the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State;"

Constitution, the following Schedule shall be added, namely:-

"ELEVENTH SCHEDULE

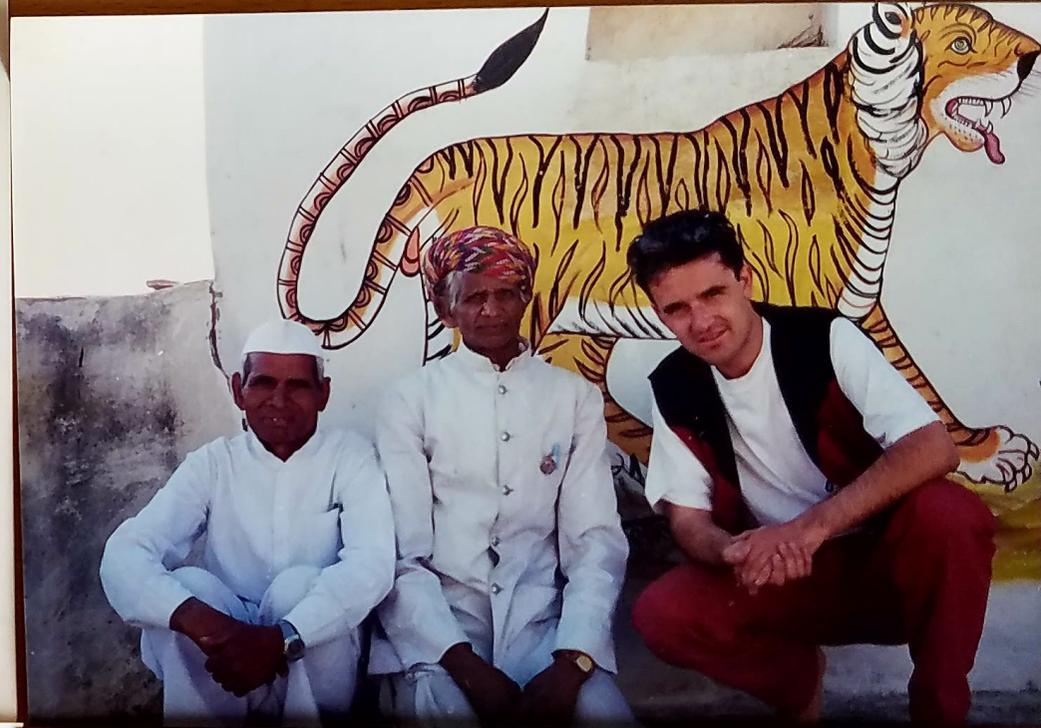
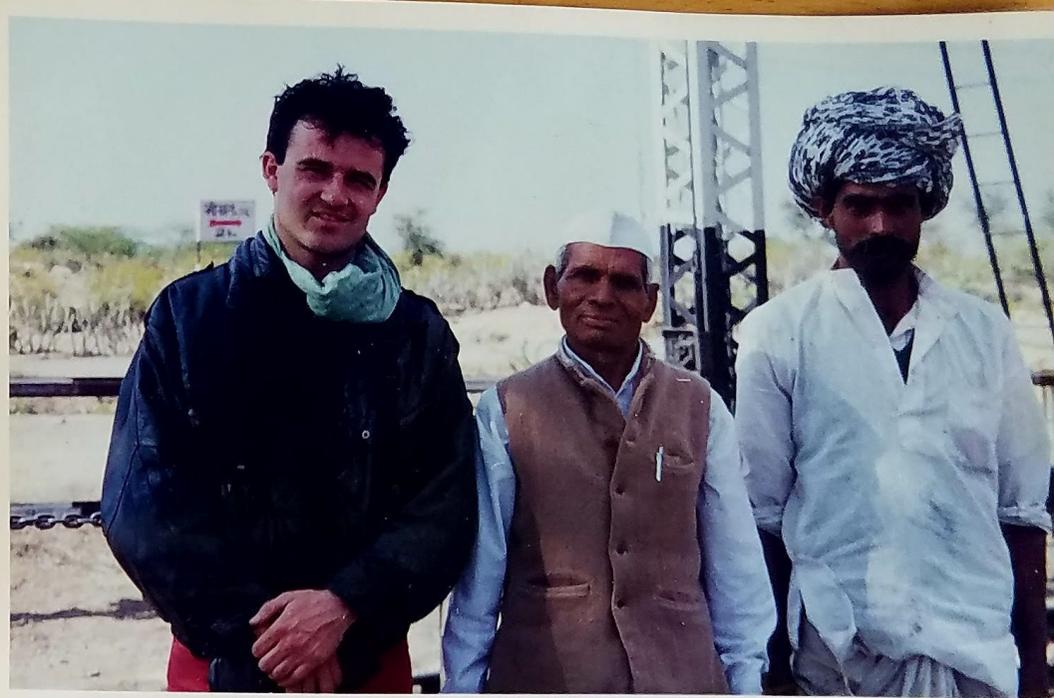
(Article 243G)

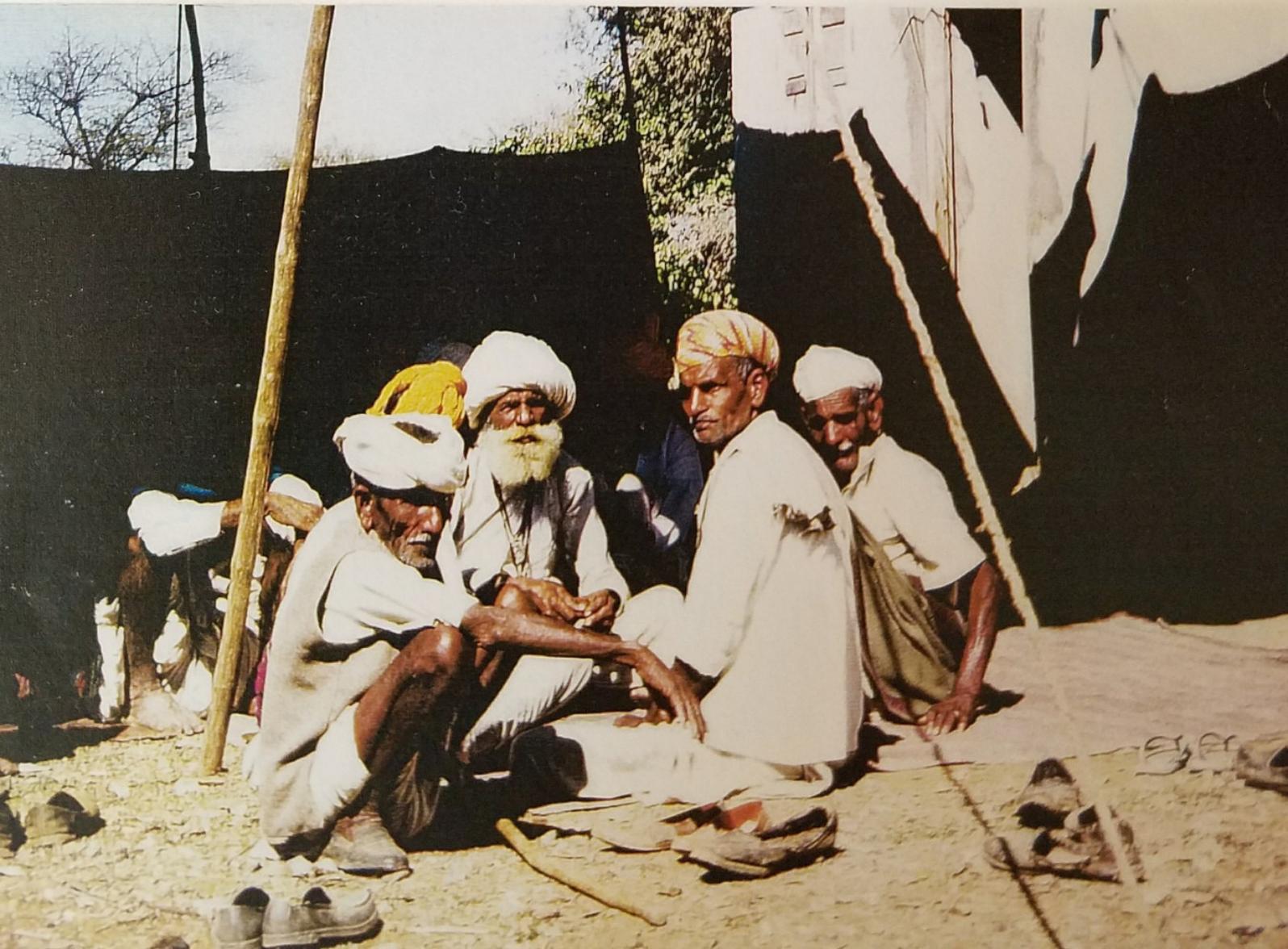
1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension.
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development.
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forestry.
7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries.
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries.
10. Rural housing.
11. Drinking water.
12. Fuel and fodder.
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity.
15. Non-conventional energy sources.
16. Poverty alleviation programme.
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools.
18. Technical training and vocational education.

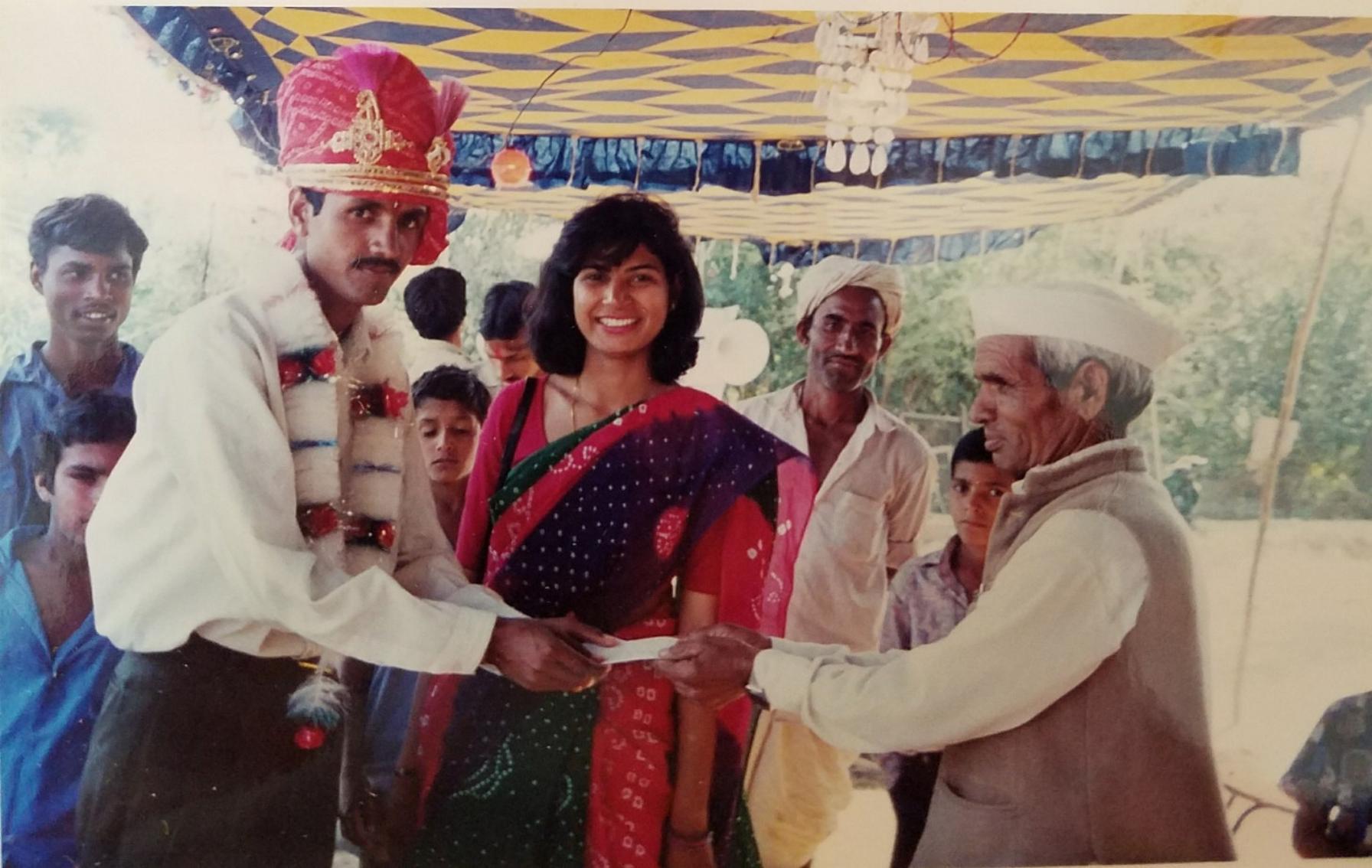
19. **Adult and non-formal education.**
20. **Libraries.**
21. **Cultural activities.**
22. **Markets and fairs.**
23. **Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries.**
24. **Family welfare.**
25. **Women and child development.**
26. **Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.**
27. **Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.**
28. **Public distribution system.**
29. **Maintenance of community assets."**

Photographs

The pictures on the next pages show my research colleague Ms. Sharmata Seth, the Sarpanch of Veerdholia, village council members, local government officials, other people living in the villages and myself.







**Erklärung nach
§ 6 (1) der Promotionsordnung
der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie,
Universität Leipzig**

Ich erkläre hiermit, daß mir die Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie der Universität Leipzig bekannt ist. Ich erkenne die Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie der Universität Leipzig an.

Leipzig, den 1. April 1997

Berthold Kuhn

THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992

Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Constitution (Seventy-second Amendment) Bill, 1991 which was enacted as the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Though the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been in existence for a long time, it has been observed that these institutions have not been able to acquire the status and dignity of viable and responsive people's bodies due to a number of reasons including absence of regular elections, prolonged supersessions, insufficient representation of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources.

2. Article 40 of the Constitution which enshrines one of the Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that 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-government. In the light of the experience in the last forty years and in view of the short-comings which have been observed, it is considered that there is an imperative need to enshrine in the Constitution certain basic and essential features of Panchayati Raj Institutions to impart certainty, continuity and strength to them.

3. Accordingly, it is proposed to add a new Part relating to Panchayats in the Constitution to provide for among other things, Gram Sabha in a village or group of villages; constitution of Panchayats at village and other level or levels; direct elections to all seats in Panchayats at the village and intermediate level, if any, and to the offices of Chairpersons of Panchayats at such levels; reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population for membership of Panchayats and office of Chairpersons in Panchayats at each level; reservation of not less than one-third of the seats for women; fixing tenure of 5 years for Panchayats and holding elections within a period of 6 months in the event of supersession of any Panchayat; disqualifications for membership of Panchayats; devolution by the State Legislature of powers and responsibilities upon the Panchayats with respect to the preparation of plans for economic developments and social justice and for the implementation of development schemes; sound finance of the Panchayats by securing authorisation from State Legislatures for grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State, as also assignment to, or appropriation by, the Panchayats of the revenues of designated taxes, duties, tolls and fees; setting up of a Finance Commission within one year of the proposed amendment and thereafter every 5 years to review the financial position of Panchayats; auditing of accounts of the Panchayats; powers of State Legislatures to make provisions with respect to elections to Panchayats under the superintendence, direction and control of the chief electoral officer of the State; application of the provisions of the said Part to Union territories; excluding certain States and areas from the application of the provisions of the said Part; continuance of existing laws and Panchayats until one year from the commencement of the proposed amendment and barring interference by

courts in electoral matters relating to Panchayats.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

NEW DELHI;

G. VENKAT SWAMY.

The 10th September, 1991.

THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992

[20th April, 1993.]

An Act further to amend the Constitution of India.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-third Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Insertion of new Part IX.- After Part VIII of the Constitution, the following Part shall be inserted, namely:-

**PART IX
THE PANCHAYATS**

243. Definitions.- In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(a) "district" means a district in a State;

(b) "Gram Sabha" means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level;

(c) "Intermediate level" means a level between the village and district levels specified by the Governor of a State by public notification to be the intermediate level for the purposes of this Part;

(d) "Panchayat" means an institution (by whatever name called) of self-government constituted under article 243B, for the rural areas;

(e) "Panchayat area" means the territorial area of a Panchayat;

(f) "population" means the population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published;

(g) "village" means a village specified by the Governor by public notification to be a village for the purposes of this Part and includes a group of villages so specified.

243A. Gram Sabha.- A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a

State may, by law, provide.

243B. Constitution of Panchayats.- (1) There shall be constituted in every State, Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels in accordance with the provisions of this Part.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), Panchayats at the intermediate level may not be constituted in a State having a population not exceeding twenty lakhs.

243C. Composition of Panchayats.- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the composition of Panchayats:

Provided that the ratio between the population of the territorial area of a Panchayat at any level and the number of seats in such Panchayat to be filled by election shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the State.

(2) All the seats in a Panchayat shall be filled by persons chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area and; for this purpose, each Panchayat area shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the Panchayat area.

(3) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the representation-

(a) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the village level, in the Panchayats at the intermediate level or, in the case of a State not having Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;

(b) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;

(c) of the members of the House of the People and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State representing constituencies which comprise wholly or partly a Panchayat area at a level other than the village level, in such Panchayat;

(d) of the members of the Council of States and the members of the Legislative Council of the State, where they are registered as electors within-

(i) a Panchayat area at the intermediate level, in Panchayat at the intermediate level;

(ii) a Panchayat area at the district level, in Panchayat at the district level.

(4) The Chairperson of a Panchayat and other members of a Panchayat whether or not chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area shall have the right to vote in the meetings of the Panchayats.

(5) The Chairperson of -

(a) a Panchayat at the village level shall be elected in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide; and

(b) a Panchayat at the intermediate level or district level shall be elected by, and from amongst, the elected members thereof.

243D. Reservation of seats.- (1) Seats shall be reserved for-

(a) the Scheduled Castes; and

(b) the Scheduled Tribes,

in every Panchayat and the number of seats of reserved shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat as the population of the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat area or of the Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat area bears to the total population of that area and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(2) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, the Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(4) The offices of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide:

Provided that the number of offices of Chairpersons reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Panchayats at each level in any State shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of such offices in the Panchayats at each level as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State bears to the total population of the State:

Provided further that not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women:

Provided also that the number of offices reserved under this clause shall be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats at each level.

(5) The reservation of seats under clauses (1) and (2) and the reservation of offices of Chairpersons (other than the reservation for women) under clause (4) shall cease to have effect on the expiration of the period specified in article 334.

(6) Nothing in this Part shall prevent the Legislature of a State from

making any provision for reservation of seats in any Panchayat or offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at any level in favour of backward class of citizens.

243E. Duration of Panchayats, etc.- (1) Every Panchayat, unless sooner dissolved under any law for the time being in force, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer.

(2) No amendment of any law for the time being in force shall have the effect of causing dissolution of a Panchayat at any level, which is functioning immediately before such amendment, till the expiration of its duration specified in clause (1).

(3) An election to constitute a Panchayat shall be completed-

(a) before the expiry of its duration specified in clause (1);

(b) before the expiration of a period of six months from the date of its dissolution:

Provided that where the remainder of the period for which the dissolved Panchayat would have continued is less than six months, it shall not be necessary to hold any election under this clause for constituting the Panchayat for such period.

(4) A Panchayat constituted upon the dissolution of a Panchayat before the expiration of its duration shall continue only for the remainder of the period for which the dissolved Panchayat would have continued under clause (1) had it not been so dissolved.

243F. Disqualifications for membership.-(1) A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of a Panchayat-

(a) if he is so disqualified by or under any law for the time being in force for the purposes of elections to the Legislature of the State concerned:

Provided that no person shall be disqualified on the ground that he is less than twenty-five years of age, if he has attained the age of twenty-one years;

(b) if he is so disqualified by or under any law made by the Legislature of the State.

(2) If any question arises as to whether a member of a Panchayat has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (1), the question shall be referred for the decision of such authority and in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide.

243G. Powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats.- Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with

respect to-

(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;

(b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

243H. Powers to impose taxes by, and Funds of, the Panchayats.-The Legislature of a State may, by law,-

(a) authorise a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate such taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with such procedure and subject to such limits;

(b) assign to a Panchayat such taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government for such purposes and subject to such conditions and limits;

(c) provide for making such grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State; and

(d) provide for Constitution of such Funds for crediting all moneys received, respectively, by or on behalf of the Panchayats and also for the withdrawal of such moneys therefrom,

as may be specified in the law.

243-I. Constitution of Finance Commission to review financial position.- (1) The Governor of a State shall, as soon as may be within one year from the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year, constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make recommendations to the Governor as to-

(a) the principles which should govern-

(i) the distribution between the State and the Panchayats of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State, which may be divided between them under this Part and the allocation between the Panchayats at all levels of their respective shares of such proceeds;

(ii) the determination of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees which may be assigned to, or appropriated by, the Panchayat;

(iii) the grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State;

(b) the measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats;

(c) any other matter referred to the Finance Commission by the Governor in the interests of sound finance of the Panchayats.

(2) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the composition of the commission, the qualifications which shall be

requisite for appointment as members thereof and the manner in which they shall be selected.

(3) The Commission shall determine their procedure and shall have such powers in the performance of their functions as the Legislature of the State may, by law, confer on them.

(4) The Governor shall cause every recommendation made by the Commission under this article together with an explanatory memorandum as to the action taken thereon to be laid before the Legislature of the State.

243J. Audit of accounts of Panchayats.- The Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the maintenance of accounts by the Panchayats and the auditing of such accounts.

243K. Elections to the Panchayats.-(1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor.

(2) Subject to the provisions of any law made by the Legislature of a State, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine:

Provided that the State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of a High Court and the conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

(3) The Governor of a State shall, when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the State Election Commission by clause (1).

(4) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, elections to the Panchayats.

243L. Application to Union territories.-The provisions of this Part shall apply to the Union territories and shall, in their application to a Union territory, have effect as if the references to the Governor of a State were references to the Administrator of the Union territory appointed under article 239 and references to the Legislature or the Legislative Assembly of a State were references, in relation to a Union territory having a Legislative Assembly, to that Legislative Assembly:

Provided that the President may, by public notification, direct that the provisions of this Part shall apply to any Union territory or part thereof subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification.

243M. Part not to apply to certain areas.-(1) Nothing in this Part shall apply to the Scheduled Areas referred to in clause (1), and the

tribal areas referred to in clause (2), of article 244.

(2) Nothing in this Part shall apply to-

(a) the States of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram;

(b) the Hill Areas in the State of Manipur for which District Councils exist under any law for the time being in force.

(3) Nothing in this Part-

(a) relating to Panchayats at the district level shall apply to the hill areas of the District of Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists under any law for the time being in force;

(b) shall be construed to affect the functions and powers of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council constituted under such law.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

(a) the Legislature of a State referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (2) may, by law, extend this Part to that State, except the areas, if any, referred to in clause (1), if the Legislative Assembly of that State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting;

(b) Parliament may, by law, extend the provisions of this Part to the Scheduled Areas and the tribal areas referred to in clause (1) subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in such law, and no such law shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

243N. Continuance of existing laws and Panchayats.-Notwithstanding anything in this Part, any provision of any law relating to Panchayats in force in a State immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, which is inconsistent with the provisions of this Part, shall continue to be in force until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority or until the expiration of one year from such commencement, whichever is earlier:

Provided that all the Panchayats existing immediately before such commencement shall continue till the expiration of their duration, unless sooner dissolved by a resolution passed to that effect by the Legislative Assembly of that State or, in the case of a State having a Legislative Council, by each House of the Legislature of that State.

243-O. Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.-Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

(a) the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made under article 243K, shall not be called in question in any court;

(b) no election to any Panchayat shall be called in question except by

an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the Legislature of a State.'

Constitution, after sub-clause (b), the following sub-clause shall be inserted, namely:-

"(bb) the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State;"

Constitution, the following Schedule shall be added, namely:-

"ELEVENTH SCHEDULE

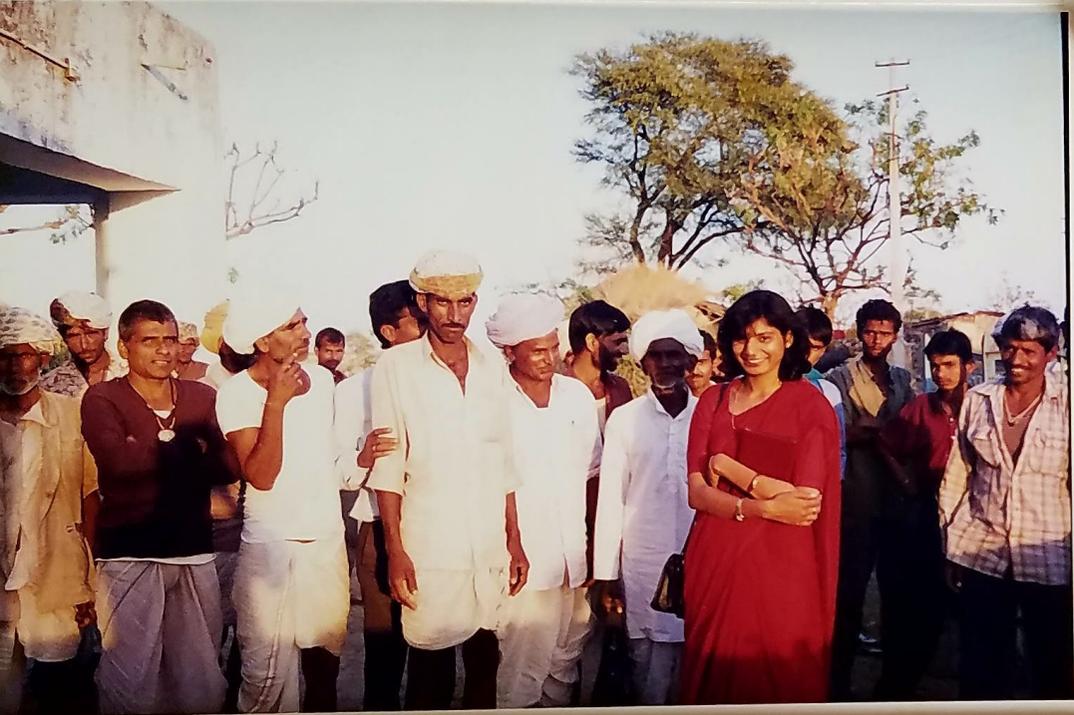
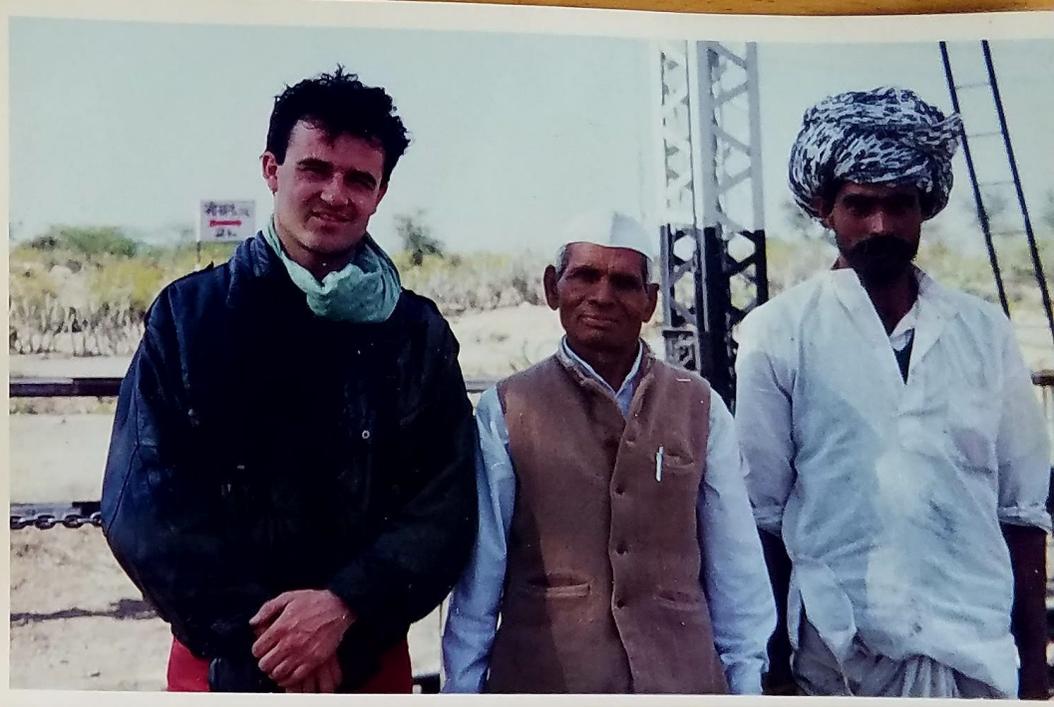
(Article 243G)

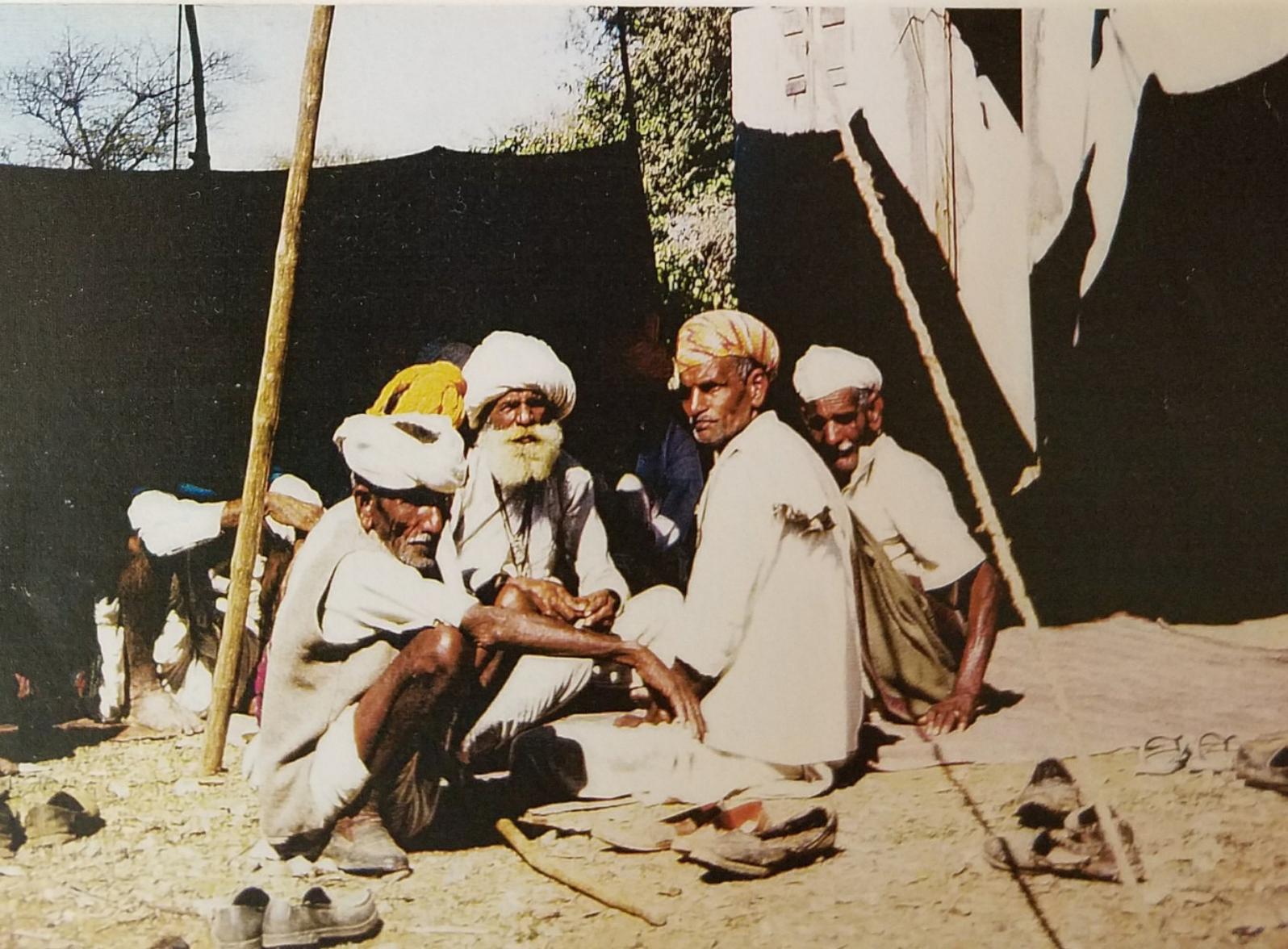
1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension.
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development.
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forestry.
7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries.
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries.
10. Rural housing.
11. Drinking water.
12. Fuel and fodder.
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity.
15. Non-conventional energy sources.
16. Poverty alleviation programme.
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools.
18. Technical training and vocational education.

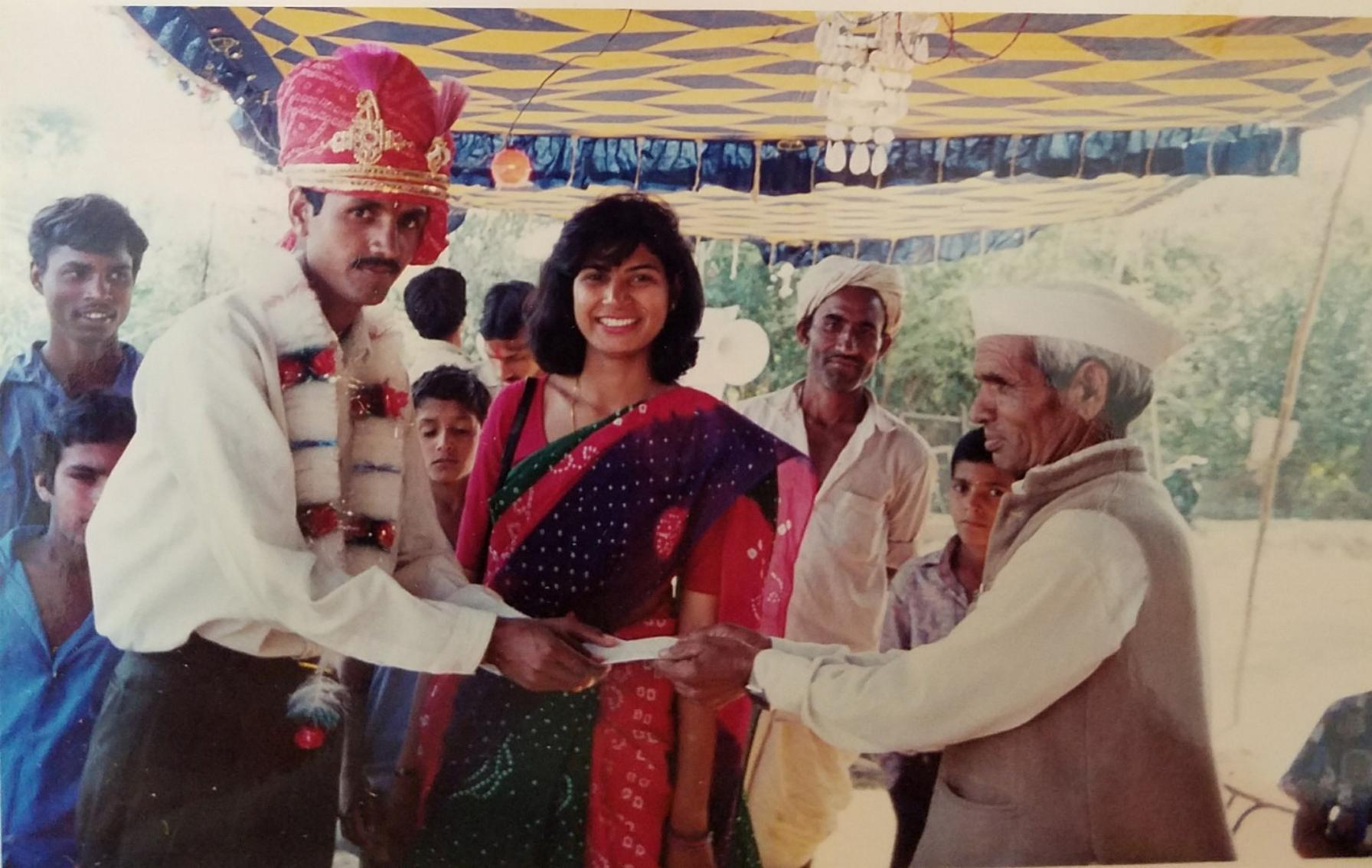
- 19. Adult and non-formal education.**
- 20. Libraries.**
- 21. Cultural activities.**
- 22. Markets and fairs.**
- 23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries.**
- 24. Family welfare.**
- 25. Women and child development.**
- 26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.**
- 27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.**
- 28. Public distribution system.**
- 29. Maintenance of community assets."**

Photographs

The pictures on the next pages show my research colleague Ms. Shamata Seth, the Sarpanch of Veerdholia (for text see p. 240), village council members, local government officials, other people living in the selected villages and myself.







**Erklärung nach § 6 (2) der Promotionsordnung
der Fakultät der Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie, Universität Leipzig**

1. Hiermit versichere ich, daß ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne unzulässige Hilfe und Benutzung anderer als der in der Arbeit erwähnten Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe.

2. Die folgenden Personen leisteten mir bei meinen Feldforschungen, bei der Besorgung, Auswahl und Auswertung des Materials sowie bei der Herstellung und Durchsicht des Manuskripts Unterstützung.

Prof. Dr. Hartmut Elsenhans, Universität Leipzig
Prof. Dr. Subrata K. Mitra, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Prof. Dr. R.B. Jain, Delhi University
Prof. Dr. Arun Chaturvedi, Mohanlal Sukaria University Udaipur,
Prof. Dr. Veedhan Sudhir, Vidhya Bhavan Rural Institute, Udaipur
Frau Shamata Seth, Mohanlal Sukaria University Udaipur
Herr Mahesh Achariya, Mohanlal Sukaria University Udaipur
Herr Karkade, Seva Mandir, Udaipur
Herr Manohar Singh, Seva Mandir, Udaipur
Herr Ranjit Singh, Udaipur
Dr. George Mathew, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi
Herr Olaf Handloegten, GTZ Project Administration Office in Manila
Dr. Justus Richter, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, New Delhi
Dr. Klaus Voll, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi
Herr Manuel Schiffler, Dr. Thomas Kampffmeyer, Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik, Berlin
Frau Katja Roeken, Doktorandin Universität Leipzig
Herr Kenneth Price, Ph.D. candidate, Austin University in Texas,
Herr Jonathan Dash, Yardley
Herr John Faulk, Berlin
Frau Meera Nathwani, Calgary
Frau Viola Mittag, Sekretariat Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Universität Leipzig

3. Die oben genannten Personen waren bei der geistigen Herstellung der vorliegenden Dissertation nicht beteiligt. Die Hilfe eines Promotionsberaters wurde nicht in Anspruch genommen und Dritte haben von mir weder unmittelbar noch mittelbar geldwerte Leistungen erhalten, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Inhalt der vorliegenden Dissertation stehen.

4. Ich habe keine früheren Promotionsversuche unternommen.

Leipzig, den 1. April 1997

Berthold Kuhn

**Erklärung nach
§ 6 (1) der Promotionsordnung
der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie, Universität Leipzig**

Ich erkläre hiermit, daß mir die Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie der Universität Leipzig bekannt ist. Ich erkenne die Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie der Universität Leipzig an.

Leipzig, den 1. April 1997

Berthold Kuhn