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**Chapter 1**

**Introduction**

**Gram Panchayat** (transl. 'village council') is a basic governing institution in [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) villages. It is a political institution, acting as the [cabinet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_(government)) of a village. The Gram Sabha works as the general body of the Gram Panchayat. The members of the gram panchayat are elected directly by the people. The president of a gram panchayat is known as a "[Pradhan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pradhan)" or "[Sarpanch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarpanch" \o "Sarpanch)". There are about 250,000 gram panchayats present in India.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-Chaturvedi-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-scroll-3)

## History:

Established in various states of India, the Panchayat Raj system has three tiers: [Zila Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/District_council_(India)" \o "District council (India)), at the district level; Panchayat Samiti, at the block level; and Gram Panchayat, at the village level. [Rajasthan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajasthan) was the first state to establish Gram Panchayat, Bagdari Village (Nagaur District) being the first village where Gram Panchayat was established, on 2 October 1959.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-4)

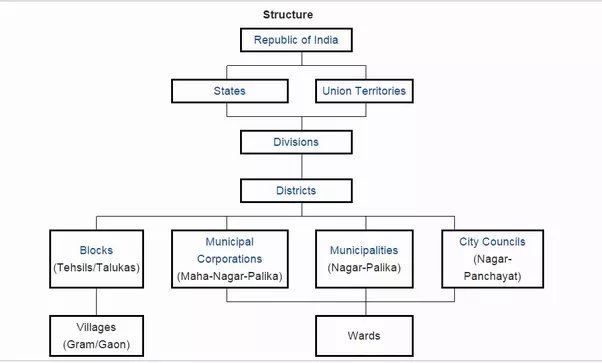
In 1992, the institution of Gram Panchayat was modified in order to deepen democracy. The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution re-introduced panchayats as the institutions of local self-governance, with a basic structure for operations at three administrative levels; villages, groups of villages and districts.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-DC-5)

## Structure

Gram Panchayats are at the lowest level of [Panchayat Raj institutions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchayati_raj) (PRIs), whose legal authority is the [73rd Constitutional Amendment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_self-government_in_India#The_73rd_Constitutional_Amendment_Act) of 1992, which is concerned with rural local governments.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-6)

* *Panchayat at District (or apex) Level*
* *Panchayat at Intermediate Level*
* *Panchayat at Base Level*

The Gram Panchayat is divided into wards and each ward is represented by a Ward Member or Commissioner, also referred to as a Panch or Panchayat Member, who is directly elected by the villagers.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-7) The Panchayat is chaired by the president of the village, known as a [Sarpanch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarpanch" \o "Sarpanch).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-8) The term of the elected representatives is five years. The Secretary of the Panchayat is a non-elected representative, appointed by the state government, to oversee Panchayat activities.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-9)



## Election

Gram Panchayat elections in India occur every five years. The village is divided into wards, and people in each ward vote for their representative. These elected members, along with the president ([sarpanch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarpanch" \o "Sarpanch)) and vice president, form the Gram Panchayat. The president (sarpanch) and vice president (upa-sarpanch) in a gram Panchayat are elected from among the elected ward members. the term of office for elected members in a Gram Panchayat, including the Sarpanch and Upa-Sarpanch, is typically five years. All people over the age of 18 who are residents of the territory of that village's Gram panchayat can vote.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-Toppr_Panchayati_Raj-12)

For [women's empowerment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_empowerment) and to encourage participation of women in the democratic process, the government of India has set some restrictions on [Gram panchayat elections](https://www.nokriwale.in/gujarat-gram-panchayat-election-result-2021/), reserving one-third of the seats for women, as well as reserving seats for [scheduled castes and tribes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheduled_Castes_and_Scheduled_Tribes).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-Toppr_Panchayati_Raj-12)

## Functions[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gram_panchayat&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Functions)]

* **Administrative functions**
  + Public work and welfare functions, such as maintenance, repair and construction of roads, drains, bridges, and wells.
  + Install and maintain street lamps.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-Toppr_Panchayati_Raj-12)
  + Provide primary education.
* **Social and Economic functions** (not obligatory)
  + Construct libraries, marriage halls, etc.
  + Establish and run fair-price shops and cooperative credit societies.
  + Establish gardens, ponds, and orchards.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat#cite_note-Toppr_Panchayati_Raj-12)
* **Judicial functions** (Nyaya Panchayat; the state judicial service decides jurisdiction.)
* Ensure quick and inexpensive justice.
* Can impose fines up to [₹](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rupee)100.

**Chapter 2**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN.**

This chapter describes the procedure adopted and the techniques employed in the collection of data in studying the pattems of rural leadership in the Cooch Behar District of West Bengal. To study the nature of rural development, the mobility of rural leaders in socio-economic parameters and their coiiateral relation between the rural development and rural inequality, a micro level study consisting of field survey has been conducted.

**2.1: Stages of sampling:**

For these purpose, a four stage random sampling procedure has been adopted. The stage-I being the selection of Blocks in the district, stage-II being the selection of Gram Panchayats from the selected Blocks and the stage-Ill being the selection of general people and stage-IV being the selection of leaders from the selected Gram Panchayat area. In the first stage, twelve Blocks in the district were classified into three categories according to the nature of party in po.wer of the block, namely, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) dominated blocks, Forward Bloc dominated blocks and the Congress party dominated blocks. Then one Development Block from each categmy was selected randomly. Dinhata-I Block being the only Congress 24 dominated block of the district, was selected automatically. In other two categories, Tufanganj-I and Mekhliganj were selected from the CPI(M) and Fmward Block dominated blocks of the district respectively. In the second stage, one Gram Panchayat from each of the three selected blocks were selected randDmly. The Gram Panchayats Bhetaguri-1, Andaranfulbari-I and Bagdogra Fulkadabti were selected from Dinhata-I, Tufanganj-I and Mekhliganj blocks respectively. In the third stage, one 'i~louza' 1 or ward was selected in each Gram Panchayat area at random. Then all the households of the particular mouza (revenue block) or ward was enumerated totally by a schedule. Thus, the total households of mouza Khorarpar of Andaranfulbari-1 Gram Panchayat, mouza ll2,Fulkadabri of Bagdogra Fulkadabri Gram Panchayat and ward no-I of Bhetaguri-I Gram Panchayat were enumerated by the survey schedule prepared for the common people. In the fourth sta!!.e, a list of all defeated and informal leaders of the three Gram . '-" Panchayats were prepared on the basis of the infmmation given by the villagers. The list was prepared in addition to the formal elected leaders. In totaL thirty-two leaders were selected from the list. All the formal Panchayat leaders in the three Gram Panchayats (thirty-five) were listed. In total sixty-seven leaders of the three Gram 25 Panchayats were intetviewed inte11sively with a survey schedule specially devised for interviewing leaders. The· two survey schedules (one for the commoners and the other for the leaders) arc given in the appendix.

**2.2: macro study:**

To test the data gathered so far from the micro level study, in the context of the district as a whole, all the Panchayat functionaries of the district were supplied with a printed Bengali questionnaire to·.be filled up by themselves. In all three hundred sixteen questionnaires were retumed by the Panchayats to the researcher of the study. The data so gathered were tabulated and analysed and used to depict the general leadership pattern of the distt·ict. The main focus of the survey is centred around the study of Panchayati Raj leadership in particular and the members of other elites in general. In West Bengal, especially after 1978 onwards, the reputational elite and elected representatives of the Panchayats constitute\_the rural elites of the area. They were all interviewed keeping in mind the developmental variable as the study centred on the emerging pattern of the rural leaders and development.

**2.3: Collection of Secondary data.**

For the purposes ofthe study, the researcher has to collect some secondary data from the census repmts of Cooch Behar and West Bengal( 195 1 to 1991 ), Annual 26 Repmts, official records and accounts from the Distiict Planning Depmtm~nt, Annual Action Plans of Agticulture Depattment and Annual Action Plans of the Diso·ict Rural Development Agency were used extensively for collection of secondmy data on rural development of the district. Some data were also collected from the four Bank Branches, Uttarbanga Ksheh·iya Gramin Bank-Bhetaguri, Cenh·al Bank of India-Mekhliganj, Uttarbanga Ksheh·iya Gramin Bank-Andaranfulbari and Cenh·al Bank of India-Tufanganj and they were also of immense help for this study. Data were also collected from the interviews of Panchayat officials (like Panchayat Secretmy, Job Assistant, etc.) and the elderly people of the villages. The field-work of the study was spread over eleven months (Februmy I 989 to December, 1990). The completion of the interviews of leaders took more time as the schedule was quite big containing many questions on. many aspects of life and activities of leaders. The Panchayat functionaries interviewed for the present study were elected in 1988 and they were in power until 1993.

**2.4: Nature of the survey schedule and questionnaire.**

As stated in the earlier discussion that there are two types of survey schedules used, one for the leaders and the other for the common men. The survey-schedule for leaders consists of three pmts. In the Part-A of the schedule, the number of family members, literacy and occupational pattern, cropping pattern and as a whole the social 27 and economic position of the family of the leaders were enumerated. In the Part-B, the parameters on political and organisational aspect is devised in details, it also includes question on the migrational aspect of the leaders' life and on the aspect of politics as a process of socialisation of other family members. In the Part-C, the aspects of economic development and equity in distribution were enumerated. In the second schedule, i.e., the schedule devised for interviewing commoners, there were three parts in it. In the first patt, the social and economic life of the respondent was highlighted along with the literacy pattem and occupational pattem of the family. The debt stmcture of the family was also considered. In the second patt, the relationship of the respondent with the leader in particular and the leadership structure in general was focussed. In the third patt, the researcher wanted to find out and measure the comprehension of the respondent regarding the process and structure of the rural development, the benefits accrued from it and benefits of rural development availed by them In the questionnaire, supplied to the Panchayat Members of the District, the researcher tried to find out the number of family members, occupational pattem, literacy pattem, nature of landholding of the household - summation of social and · economic aspect of the family along with their political perspective. The survey schedules and questionnaires were prepared keeping in mind the objectives and 28 hypothesis of the study. Apart fi·om the questionnaires and schedules, the researcher gathered infonnation from the infonnal conversations. By studying in the Gram Panchayat offices and rnaintainjng a good and infonnal relations with the Panchayat members, infmmal and defeated leaders along with the general people, the researcher could gather many valuable insight from the infonnal discussion with them.

**2.5: Major Hypothesis.**

In course of the study, some hypotheses were formulated and tested. The hypotheses are made on the basis of the main research questions 2 • They are listed below. a) The emergmg leadership pattern IS not much different from the traditional leadership pattern, as ( 1) The land continues to be the basis of leadership. (2) Higher socio-economic status continues to be the basis of leadership. (3) Education is still not a decisive factor of making leadership status. b) Compared to tTaditional leadership pattern, the emerging leaders are mainly of younger age. c) Er\_nerging rural leaders of different political ideologies are mainly of same socio-economic status. d) The emerging rural leaders are more interested in politics than rural development 29 and equality in distribution. as ( 1) The emerging rural leaders use their power to strengthen their position and serve their own interest. (2) The emerging leaders exercise power to reward their followers and punish their opponents. (3) The benefits of rural development is not always distributed to the poor and downtrodden people. e) The relationship between vmious institutional bureaucracy and the rural leaders are . not always good. f) The role and functioning of the rural leaders are unsuited to become the catalytic agent of rural development in Cooch Behar district.

**2.6: Approaches fo•· identification of leaders.**

There are three facets ofleadership, so far as the theory ofleadership is concemed. These three facets are: a) leader, b) followers or the led and c) the setting or situation. There is less confusion in comprehending the tenn 'follower' and the 'situation'. But the tenn 'leader' has brought with it much confusion as to who are the leaders. There are three basic approaches for identifying leaders or elites, namely, a) the positional approach, b) the reputationa! approach and c) the decision making approach.

* **The positional approach:** The determination of elites on the basis of position is done by selecting persons who are occupying the top fonnal offices. The persons 30

holding these positions are supposed to wield influence.

* **The reputational approach:**To identify the leaders or elites through the reputational approach, different variables are taken into account. Generally, the nominations are sought from different panels of knowledgeable.
* **The decision-making approach:** This approach is based on the assumption that those who actually patticipate in the decision making process are the elite,s because they have shown their influence in the actual situation.

**Chapter – 3**

**Review of Literature & Research Methodology**

This chapter includes the review of the previous studies conducted on different aspects on the schemes of rural development including NREGS. The need of the study, objectives and methodology have also been discussed in the second part of this chapter. Review of literature: Sharma et al (1977:14)20 are convinced that Rural Development as a concept and a reality has suffered intellectual importations, heavily biased by philosophical-methodological assumptions quite unrelated to the actual configuration of problem-situation. Over the years, it has created ambivalence and equivocation among those who regard rural reconstruction as a faith and a mission to the soil. It would be neither charitable nor compatible to blame wholly the lack of policy emphasis or even its clear articulation to account for the inadequate pace of rural development but the very nature of the process is extremely complex, requiring multidimensional approach and interdisciplinary knowledge. The effort also suffered owing both to paucity of resources and lack of commitment, not altogether unexpected in nation-building activities of developing countries having traditional societies. Reddy et al (1985:238)21 in their study of Andhra Pradesh come to the finding that the policy for small farmers‟ development could not create a significant impact on the target groups.

The only relevant and meaningful categories for the purpose of providing appropriate capital assistance under IRDP are two categories of rural poor i.e., landless agricultural labourers, artisans and small farmers. In fact, there is every reason to exclude small farmers with more than one hectare of land from the category of poor as they have less constraints, different priorities and more potential to develop independently without any external assistance. The more homogeneous are the poor in their needs and priorities, the more efficient will be the delivery of IRDP inputs to them and the more effective and successful will be the programmes. While the immediate goal of anti-poverty programme is to improve income or financial conditions or viability of the poor, the ultimate goal will have to be to free them from the clutches of the upper caste or class and thereby reduce the degree of their despondence on other exploitative elements of the system in economic, social and political terms. One should not forget that the poor are really poor due to some serious and real constraints which cannot be overcome overnight and there is a cumulative effect of disadvantage leading to deprivation and both of them leading to despondence and perhaps dependence at the end. It may also be essential to organize the identified poor, encourage their own leadership and get them involved in decision-making which ultimately concern them with a view to avoiding the feeling of alienation and powerlessness and create a sense of efficacy which is so crucial for the success of any anti-poverty programme in future. Shekhar (1987:4)26 a journalist states that an evaluation study of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the district of Hamirpur, H.P. has revealed that 49 per cent of the families covered under the programme have crossed the poverty line. The percentage of the scheduled castes families which have crossed the poverty line is 49.1 and for others it is 48.92. Singh and Lal (1987:25)27 in their study came to the conclusion that about 48 per cent of the beneficiary households had crossed the poverty line. In an evaluative study entitled “Financing Under Rural Development Programme”, the State Bank of Patiala (1987:14) concludes that 42 among 100 persons seem to have crossed the poverty line but according to these beneficiaries, the additional income so generated has not improved their living conditions to the desired extent since the market price of essential consumer goods has increased so much that the additional income generated by them has been nullified. However, almost all the beneficiaries have claimed that they have increased their annual income and now they are living in somewhat better conditions than those prevailing before availing loans under IRD programme. Srivastava and Singh (1987)28 have come to the conclusion based upon the Proceedings of Dialogical Session, 1985 that asset creation under NREP and RLEGP should have a long-term income-employment generation effort rather than taking up only short-term projects at ad hoc basis. Creation of durable assets for strengthening economic infrastructure in rural area may provide long-term income-employment generation effect. Similarly, asset creation in terms of a large number of irrigation work will improve agriculture and will „reduce the risk involved in cultivation‟ and will „lead to grater labour absorption‟. Singh (1988:8)29 in his paper entitled “Socio-economic impact of Integrated Rural Development Programme on Weaker Sections in Punjab” has concluded that the Integrated Rural Development Programme is showing its impact on the weaker sections served by it. Those who could take advantage of the facilities (especially credit) were in better position to improve their socio-economic life than those who did not avail themselves of such facilities.

These figures are based on official data released by the Ministry of Rural Development, but they are fully consistent with independent reports, as well as with our own experience from Dungarpur district in April 2006. The inspection team visited three blocks (Bakani, Dag and Sunel), verified job cards and muster rolls in half a dozen villages, and had detailed discussions with labourers, mates, sarpanchs, gram panchayat secretaries, engineers, programme officers and block development officers, among others. In Bakani, three muster rolls at random were checked among these available at the block office, and “verified” them with the laborers concerned, also interviewed about 20 labourers who had worked on these worksites. In each case, the mustor roll details matched with the job card details, and the labourers confirmed that the details were correct. Further, there was no evidence of “fake names” having been entered in the muster rolls. This reinforces the findings of earlier investigations in Dungarpur district, suggestion. hat “fudging” of msuter rolls is rare in Rajasthan today. “Transparency safeguard” The labourers on the job alos confirmed the same. Public awareness has also reached a high level. Instances of less payments in smome blocks werea also found. Aulakh (2007)49, writing about the implementations of NREGS in Nawanshar says that people still prefer low paid government office job rather than manual work under the NREGS, the situation is everywhere in Punjab calling the manual labour aversion as a social stigma, the writer has narrated some of the good works done under the NREGS but educated people generally, even after getting registered avoid the physical labour. The migrant labour which is barred under the act wants to work on the scheme. Similarly women folks also want to work but social stigma stops them alomgwith the relectance of the educated youths to work with their hands. Misra, Neelesh (2007)50 said that funds for the national employment guarantee scheme are being misused in U.P. and, all this is happening because of nexus among village heads, government officials and politicians and he further raises a question as to why can‟t the NREGA workers be integrated into, say the PM‟s roads project, where they can be a force multiplier for machineaided projectos? Otherwise, there will be cases like the one at Arsaliya in Hardoi, where the headman decided to dig a pond though the villagers didn‟t need it. So none of them have job cards with them, and none of them got to work for 100 days. The job cards are with the village officials. I called up the pradhan. He said the truth was that the villagers were lazy and they did not want to work. Then he excused himself. He had an election meeting to organize, he said. Dhuru, Arundhati (2007)51 has been skeptical about the implementation as the muster rolls fabricator cannot be ruld out and the minimum payments are also not guaranteed. According to her the success of the scheme depends more on politics and less on economics. Swaminathan, P. (2007)52 on the other hand has depended the scheme that merely on the basis of corruption reports and poor performance the scheme cannot be outrightly rejected. Economic Times (2007)53 has reported about the adverse impart of the NREGS as the farm activities in states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala and that this scheme should be implemented only in least agricultural sector. Status of NREGS in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh 54 The NREGS faced the following problems in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

• Lack of awareness about the scheme.

• Lack of community participation.

• Lack of planning.

• Quality of assets created not always up to the required standard.

• Reports of false muster rolls.

• Problems in payment: often less than the prescribed wage, and disparities between wages paid to women and those paid to men.

• Use of contractors.

• Diversion of funds.

• Weak monitoring and verification systems.

• No comprehensive database.

• Inadequate capacity of implementing agencies.

• Multiple wage employment programmes running in parallel.

• No public accountability. For panchayati raj institutions (PRI) there is a strong need for:

• Strengthening and augmenting the monitoring and evaluation skills of district and intermediate panchayats.

• Strengthening gram sabhas for supervision and social audit.

• Strengthening the technical skills of implementing agencies.

• Training of functionaries as a continuous process. On the crucial question of equity, there is a need to:

• Give priority to women in the allotment of work. • Give work to at least one-third of women who ask for it. • Ensure parity in wage payments by proper valuation of each

• Ensure parity in wage payments by proper valuation of each task done.

• Provide crèches for children at work sites.

• Design works that are sensitive to the capacities of women and the disabled. Status of NREGS in Uttar Pradesh 55 There is lack of clarity about the role of various agencies responsible for developing perspective plans. The state NREGS council has not been constituted. The council is responsible for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) at the state level. District-level problems Registration forms for job cards are not available in many places. It appears that in a number of cases forms are being deliberately not issued to avoid payment of unemployment allowance, which will be inevitable as work projects have not been identified. In most areas, demand for job cards is greater than supply. District-level officers are uninformed and ignorant about provisions under the scheme. Block development officers (BDO) have been designated as programme officers (PO). The PO is the backbone of the NREGS‟s implementation. However, as a document prepared by the Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Associations Network (UPVAN) notes, about half the posts for BDOs are vacant. Similarly, a majority of posts for officials at the gram panchayat level lie vacant. Hence, there is no information on the development of perspective plans. While these and the prioritisation of work have not been framed, funds have been released. There is a fear that this could lead to misuse of funds. The schedule of rates is another major hurdle. In many NREGS districts, the government‟s minimum wage works out to less than the current market rate. Block- and panchayat-level problems Many gram pradhans are ignorant about provisions under the scheme and, in the absence of village development officers and aware and alert gram sabhas, the NREGS is being implemented in an ad hoc manner. Lists of registered households and people who have got job cards are not displayed; gender bias is visible in the registration process; even children have been registered. Status of NREGS in Jharkhand 56 Non–issuance of job cards and only 30 to 50% of the applicants had been issued job cards. Status of NREGS in Bihar 57.

• There is low awareness about the NREGS, and several misconceptions about it. Some people believe it is only for BPL (below the poverty line) families; women think they need their husbands‟ signatures on application forms; there is no clarity on the amount of unemployment allowance.

• At the block and village level, awareness-building is required not only among beneficiaries but also among teachers, village elders, panchayat members, media reporters and others to whom the villagers look for information.

• Many applicants think that after getting job cards, work will automatically be allotted to them. They do not know that they have to fill in an application for employment.

• A large portion of BPL families have not availed of NREGS benefits, thus defeating the major thrust of the scheme. On the other hand, in some villages, government officials are only registering BPL households, depriving other poor people of the benefits.

• In most places, application forms for job cards are not available with the panchayat or block office. Though applications can be given on plain paper, the format is not known.

• People are made to pay as much as Rs 60-Rs 80 for photographs for their job cards although the rules say photographs must be provided free of cost.

• Incomplete job cards are issued. In Pirri panchayat, Darbhanga district, 1,750 job cards were issued without registration numbers or photographs of the applicants. The date of employment and other details too were not filled in.

• In some instances, villagers are employed on any ongoing government project without adhering to the guidelines. This fraudulently enhances government data on NREGS employment.

• A major weakness is that a proper shelf of projects under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) guidelines has not been created. Issuance of job cards is therefore often delayed, or people are dissuaded from applying for work because there is no work scheme.

• There is no social audit system or grievance redressal cell. General observations regarding the working of NREGS in Maharashtra 58 Awareness of the scheme among villagers is low. There is confusion regarding forms and the registration mechanism. Government officials take advantage of people‟s ignorance by demanding money (Rs 100 and more) to issue identity cards and photographs. People are under the mistaken impression than an identity card will ensure them a job. They do not know that they have to submit a demand form to the gram panchayat to get work. Gram sevaks, talathis and tehsildars do not know enough about the scheme, and do not inform and guide people about their entitlements. As the government‟s campaign for registration was held in the month of February, the names of villagers who had migrated were missing from the lists made by the gram sevaks. Villagers who already have a means of livelihood register with allowance that has to be paid if no work is provided. Women from self-help groups (SHGs) are demanding work under the NREGS instead of taking loans. According to them, working for wages is a more dignified way of financing themselves than taking loans. Landholders are worried that they will have to pay more than Rs 60 a day to their labourers once the NREGS is fully functional. No village micro plans were prepared in the identified villages of all 4 districts. The agriculture department has asked CSOs to help draw up these plans. Substantially, defects in NREGS‟s implementation are the same as those in the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme that has been around for more than 30 years. Several problems in NREGS implementation in Madhya Pradesh 59 • Widows applying for work are told to bring along a man if they want work.

• Women are being given work for just 2-3 days.

• Work is given to those with no job cards.

• In Dharadi, job cards are yet to be made. In Laloni, most of the 250 job cards distributed had no photos, signatures or numbers.

• In a majority of cases, applicants have been bluntly told to get photos taken at their expense.

• People who are „close‟ to the sarpanch demand Rs 200 from potential applicants for „helping‟ them to get their job cards made.

• Women are being paid Rs 55 per day, and Rs 5 is being deducted form their wages every day for „facilities provided‟ at the work site.

Research Methodology Initially National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was implemented in the Chamba and Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh. Employment generation has been a major component of all the rural development programmes and after taking a chronological journey of the rural development programmes and employment components in these programmes, the need for conducting this study is detailed out below: - Need for the Study Himachal Pradesh is predominantly a rural area with more than 90 per cent of its population living in villages. Agriculture/horticulture is the major absorption area for the labour force available in the state. The unemployment scenario in the state has been compounded by the fact that the literacy in the state has jumped past 75 per cent and a majority of those registered on the employment registers of the state of the total unemployed force of 9.00 60 lakhs consists of postgraduate 34950, graduates 82500, under-graduates 1.8, matriculates 5.98 lakh. Of late industrialization has started coming up in a big way in the state and the state government taking into account the grim unemployment scenario has made it mandatory for the industrial establishments in the state to employ at least 70 per cent of the workforce from Himachal. While a detailed study on this has not been conducted so far, the figures released by the concerned department of the government tell a different story. The labour intensive works/projects started, reveal that not many Himachali‟s are working in these projects. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme has been started in the two of the most backward districts of the state i.e. Sirmour and Chamba. District Sirmour which has been selected for this study has an area of 2825 sq. km. and a population of 4,58,593 consisting of 81,441 households. In Himachal Pradesh the minimum wages payable to a casual labourer is higher as compared with other states, notwithstanding this in the rural areas when the harvesting season is there local labour is not available. This is further made out from the number of avenues employing labour from outside the state. This is apparently a very enigmatic situation where local labour force is available in plenty on papers while the labour on actual work is imported from outside! Himachal Pradesh has a total of 2.40 government employees which is 3.88 per cent of the total population, this is a very high percentage, demonstration value and expectation of a government job may have in more than one way contributed to the swelling of unemployment registers while simultaneously resulting in artificial scarcity of hands for manual work. Uptill now no study has been conducted which could figure out the following:

1. Why the local people after a certain level of education don‟t prefer to work with their own hands.

2. What are the reasons for the local educated people for migrating to urban areas in search of jobs.

3. Whether the agricultural practices have diversified and the extent to which these diversifications have absorbed the additional labour force.

4. The number of people engaged in self employment and their preparedness for alternatives in case new economic policy results in some practices adversely affecting them.

5. The status of the assets created under the previous employment generation programmes. 6. Creation of need based assets/repair of earlier created assets. In addition to these, there are certain other pertinent questions such as, what is the attitude of beneficiaries, government officials, and financial institutions towards the effectiveness of this scheme? What is the success and failure ratio of this scheme? Is this scheme able to fulfill the expectations of the stakeholders and also fulfill the broader objectives of Rural Development Programmes? Keeping in view the above considerations, it is imperative to undertake a study which could examine the effectiveness of these schemes. OBJECTIVES.

* To study the status of unemployment in the rural areas of Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh.
* To evaluate the effectiveness of rural employment schemes before the commencement of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the district.
* To examine the perception of unemployed ruralites implementing agencies and other stakeholders regarding NREGA.
* To analyze the contribution of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in rural development.
* To study the status of those who had been shown to have crossed the threshold of poverty line and whether anyone from those families is again taking the benefit of the scheme.
* To find out the profile of the family members contributing to the 100 days at various occasions under the scheme.
* To examine the extent to which the decentralization in the scheme has helped in the qualitative improvement of the NREGA and also fillip which the IRDP programme has got because of the NREGA.
* To identify the flaws in the previous schemes and recommend suggestions to make the present scheme more result oriented.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sampling** :

The present study related to the investigation of the conditions and consequences of the effectiveness of rural employment schemes in Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh. There are 6 blocks in Sirmour district, at the first stage, 4 blocks out of 6 namely, Rajgarh, Sangrah, Shilai and Paonta Sahib had been selected on the basis of simple random sampling. At the second stage 12 Panchayats in proportion to their numbers in each block had been selected. Further in order to reach the ultimate beneficiaries inhabited in villages, a sample of 50 villages had been chosen from these Panchayats at third stage. At the fourth stage, a sample of 1000 beneficiaries @ 20 beneficiaries per village was selected. While selecting the sample, all social, cultural, political, economical and geographical variations were given due representation. In order to study the effectiveness of this scheme, 50 respondents which include community leaders, executives, administrators, NGOs and other stakeholders had been picked up. Instrument of Data Collection As stated above, the principle instrument of data collection was the schedule. The schedule had essentially been a structured one with very few open-ended questions. The schedule has been in Hindi. This had also been done in order to facilitate better communication with the respondents and also to maintain certain uniformity in administering the schedule. The questions had bben framed under the following broad heads:

* background information about the head of the household (respondent) and the members of the family;
* occupation(s);
* educational qualifications;
* total family income;
* job expectations of each member;
* job preferences of each member;
* work orientation, and development participation;
* Family, caste and social structure. Interview The schedule had been personally administered by the researcher in an interview situation. Normally, the head of the household had been interviewed and the researchers made it a point to interview the respondents in their houses/Panchyat ghars. Each interview normally lasted for about an hour and a half. The researchers had tried to establish good rapport with the respondents and, in achieving this, the researcher, before commencing the interview, explained the purpose of the investigation to the respondents. The respondents had also assured that complete anonymity would be maintained and that the information collected from them would not be divulged to any other person. The heads of the households who were not available at the first instance had been interviewed during the subsequent visits, wherever necessary, the field data collected by the researchers had also been crosschecked with the official records available in the villages. These records had also been used in order to verify the number of inhabited houses and the extent of land owned by the families etc. SECONDARY DATA Certain data collected by different agencies for other than the present purposes has been used. This type of data has been collected from:

1. i) Publications of Government of India, State Governments relating to Rural Development.
2. ii) Publications of Directorate of Economic and Statistics. iii) Publications of Planning Department.
3. iv) Publications of World Bank and CSO. v) Census Reports 1991 and 2001. vi) Information compiled by statistical wing in the Directorate of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Government of Himachal Pradesh.
4. vii) Panchayat registers, revenue papers, assets created registers of the blocks, etc.
5. viii) Information prepared by the District administration. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS The task of analyzing the field data obtained in the present study centers round the stated problem, the objectives and the theoretical framework. It was undertaken through the identification of relevant major variables and their components, and through the testing of appropriate hypotheses formulated for the purpose. Thus, the task of analysis was to provide the necessary empirical support to the problem as defined and the stated objectives under the fabric of a well-articulated theoretical framework. In achieving this purpose, the major variables and their components had been identified, and relevant hypotheses had also been formulated to be tested in terms of the field data obtained. The Major Variables The following are the major variables: I Background Variables 1. Social origins 2. Educational attainment of the respondents 3. Size of household II Structural Variables 1. Household structure (work patterns and dependency)" 2. Caste structure (functional grouping of castes) 3. Economic structure (ownership and control of land) III Development Variables 1. Awareness of development needs 2. Efforts made to achieve development benefits 3. Actual achievement of development benefits MAJOR HYPOTHESES The following are the hypotheses formulated for the present study: 1. Social origins and awareness are related. 2. Educational attainment of the respondents and awareness are related. 3. Size of household and awareness are related. 4. Caste and awareness are related. 5. Economic structure in terms of land-ownership and awareness are related. 6. Awareness and efforts are related. 7. Awareness and achievements are related. 8. Efforts and achievements are related. 9. Education and expectations are related. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED Tools of Analysis The data collected from the different sources has been classified and arranged in tables according to the requirements of analysis. For the analysis of results, the following statistical techniques have been applied. A. Chi-Square Test B. Tabular Analysis C. Simple Statistical Techniques A. Chi-Square Test This test is a non-parametric test. Non-parametric data does not follow the normal curve of the probability and have unequal or un-measurable scale intervals between categories. Chi-square test is a test, which describes the magnitude of difference between observed frequencies and the frequencies expected under certain assumptions. With the help of Chi-square test, it is possible to find out whether such differences are significant or are insignificant. and could have arisen due to fluctuations of sampling. The information gathered through questionnaires from the different categories of voters, media personnel and managers of political parties is in the form of nominal data. Hence Chi-square test is considered more appropriate in the present study. In the chi-square test, the only problem is to decide as to how the expected frequencies have to be arrived at. There is no hard and fast rule of it and the method of arriving at the expected frequencies would depend upon the nature. of the problem. Once the expected value has been arrived at, the calculation of chi-square and its interpretation are very easy and involve the following steps: a) Calculation of the expected frequencies, denote them by E. b) Find out difference between observed frequencies denoted by 0 and expected frequencies. In other words find (O-E). c) Square up the various values of (O-E) or find out (O-E)2 and divided each value of (O-E)2 by the respective value of E or the expected frequency. d) The value of (O-E)2 and this will be the value of X2 . In other words = (OE)2 /E. e) Compare the calculated value of chi-square with the independent value of chi-square (available in tables) for the desired level of significance. f) If the calculated value of Chi-square is more than the relevant table value the difference between observed and expected values is significant. If the calculated value of Chi-square is less than the table value the difference between observed and expected frequencies is not significant and could have arisen due to fluctuations of sampling.

**B. Tabular Analysis:**

In tabular analysis, percentages are calculated to draw the inferences, it is very scientific and perfect analysis. In the present study, it is used to support the inferences drawn from the above statistical analysis as nonparametric analysis is not that powerful as parametric test.

**C. Simple Statistical Techniques:** For analysis of the data collected, simple statistical techniques such as diagrams, graphical presentation, percentages and averages have been used. Significance of study.

1. Apart from bringing out the execution of the scheme in a vivid manner, the gaping holes with the spirit of the scheme and the actual executions, raises the question about the preparedness and the training of those officials who are engaged in the execution of the scheme.
2. The selection of the schemes may be improved.
3. Dove – tailing of the programme with the ongoing schemes would result in better utilization of the resources.
4. The publicity of the scheme as for as quality content is concerned needs to be improved.
5. On going Government programmes/activities can be better executed if the NERGS clusteres are properly tapped.
6. NERGS appears to be a pale substitute for the jobs seekers.
7. A large number of persons from outside the State are working on a number of works/projects in the district and these persons are not eligible under the scheme, the publicity of the scheme and a knowledge that the scheme is available at their native places may in the longer run prompt them to look for jobs in their own areas.

**Chapter 4**

**Data Analysis,interpretation and presentation.**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the main features of a dataset. In the context of Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra, descriptive statistics can offer insights into population distribution, infrastructure, and financial aspects.

**Population Distribution**

Population distributionanalysis involves examining the demographic composition of different Gram Panchayats within Maharashtra. This analysis typically includes:

Total population in each Gram Panchayat

Age distribution (e.g., percentage of population in different age groups)

Gender distribution

Population density

6.1.2 Infrastructure Analysis

Infrastructure analysis assesses the availability and condition of essential facilities within Gram Panchayats. This may include:

1. Access to clean water sources
2. Availability of electricity
3. Road connectivity
4. Health facilities
5. Educational institutions
6. Public transportation

**Financial Data Analysis**

Financial data analysis involves examining the revenue and expenditure patterns of Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra. Key aspects to analyze include:

Total revenue generated by each Gram Panchayat (e.g., through taxes, grants)

Allocation of funds to different development projects

Expenditure on infrastructure development, social welfare programs, etc.

Financial sustainability and budgetary constraints

**Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics allow us to draw conclusions and make predictions about a population based on a sample of data. In the context of Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra, two commonly used inferential techniques are correlation analysis and regression analysis.

**Correlation Analysis**

Correlation analysis assesses the relationship between two or more variables. In the context of Gram Panchayats, we can explore correlations such as:

Correlation between population density and demand for infrastructure

Correlation between financial resources and quality of public services

Correlation between demographic factors (e.g., age, gender) and socioeconomic indicators

**Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis allows us to predict the value of one variable based on the values of other variables. In the context of Gram Panchayats, regression analysis can be used to:

Predict the impact of population growth on infrastructure needs

Estimate the relationship between financial investments and development outcomes

Identify factors influencing revenue generation or expenditure patterns

Regression models can help policymakers and administrators make informed decisions regarding resource allocation, policy formulation, and infrastructure planning.

**Conclusion**

Effective data analysis is crucial for understanding the dynamics of Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra and guiding policy interventions. By employing descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, we can gain valuable insights into population dynamics, infrastructure needs, financial management, and development outcomes. This analysis lays the foundation for evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions to improve the well-being of communities across Maharashtra..

**CHAPTER-5**

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Democratic Government is an important form of Government since ancient time to modern time. A democratic government is a government is which the majority of the people hold political power and has the right and opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In India, Gram Sabha has been one of the essential institutions of village administration since ancient time. In Rig-Vedic period, an association or council of elder of village called ‘Gram Sangthan’. In Ramayana and Mahabharata also there were references of ‘Gram Sagha’ or ‘Gram Sunsad’. In Athens and Greek direct democracy was there decentralization of power from upper to lower level. According to Kautilya’s and Panini ‘Sabha’ was known as ‘Sangh’.

In India Maurya Emperors built up Gram Sabha consisting a headman and few other members. The main function of Gram Sabha was to take decision about any discussion related to them. During British rule all Administrative Policy of Gram Sabha and local government in India was demolished which were centuries old. They actually centralized the entire administrative system of India. Company rules were not in favor of Panchayat Raj system.

India was ruled by a centralized administrative system during colonial period, at the top was Governor General and under him governors ruled the provinces and the districts were ruled by Collector/Deputy Commissioners. After independence Political map of India has changed completely. The scheme of distribution of powers in our Constitution and centralized planning has made centerstrong. The stats have also centralized powers in their own jurisdiction. Thus a trend of decentralization started.

In recent years, decentralization the transfer of political, administrative and financial powers to local government bodies - has received singular attention all over the world. The term ‘decentralization’ has generally been used to a variety of institutional reforms which have been evolved and practiced in a number of countries with varying degrees of success. It means reassigning responsibilities, authority and resources from higher level government organization to local government bodies along with sufficient autonomy and accountability so as to enable them to provide efficient

In democracy, the empowerment of people and the grassroots democracy ensures genuine participatory development process at local. This change in the Indian political System is the result of a growing conviction that big government cannot achieve growth and development without people direct participation and initiative. The objective of decentralization are to execute and implement schemes and programs to meet local needs, to mobilize people, to channelize their energies towards socio-economic reconstruction and to involve them in all activities of the communities and also reduce the work of higher levels of government.

Gram Sabha is the basic institution of decentralized governance because decentralization is a key to better performance by the local institutions. It is the first modern political institution that seeks to place direct political power in hands of the people, without the mediation of elected representatives. The genesis of the concept of the Gram Sabha starts again from independence and Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of Gram Swaraj came in light which means governance of the villages by the people of village themselves.

The task was naturally to be managed by Gram Panchayat with the consent of Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha was to be organically linked with the representative bodies at the village, Mandal, State and National levels. Gandhi ji aimed at making the Individual the center of the local administration. People are expected to take personal interest in common interest like village industries, agricultural productions, irrigation and planning etc. During the drafting of the Constitution of India, Panchayati Raj institutions were placed in non-justifiable part of constitution, the Directive Principle of State Policy, as Article 40. According to the article, The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as unit of self-government. The concept Gram Sabha was endorsed by the conference of the ministers of local self-government held at Shimla in 1954. The conference recommended that the meetings of Gram Sabha be convened by the Gram Panchayat more frequently and there should be at least two such meetings in each year. However the reviews of National Extension Service Programs have shown that people’s participation was not forthcoming. Ultimately the National Development Council constituted a committee on plan projects under the chairmanship of Balwant Rai Mehta. It recommended three tier structures of the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samitia and Zila Parishad. For democratic decentralization but it made no mention of the Gram Sabha in its report submitted in 1959. Diwakar Committee recommended that to strengthen the Gram Sabha, it is necessary to strengthen the Panchayat itself and to enable the two to work out a proper relationship between them. Since the Panchayat is executive of the Gram Sabha, strengthening the executive and defining the life and relationship of Panchayat and Gram Sabha, will strengthen the Gram Sabha itself. Ashok Mehta Committee in 1978 proposed village committees which were assigned the duty of organizing two Gram Sabha meeting every year to explain the people what programs the Mandal Panchayat are executing in their area. In 1986, L.M. Singhania Committee considered Gram Sabha as the base of a decentralized democracy and recommended for making village Panchayats more viable. In 1992, The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act came into force which included the Gram Sabha as the basis of the three tier Panchayati Raj. According to 73rd Amendment the Gram Sabha or village Assembly as a deliberative body to decentralized governance along with a three - tier structure of Panchayats from village to district. Article 243 (B) defines Gram Sabha as a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral roles related to a village comprised with in the area of the Panchayat at village level. Article 243 (A) the constitution introduced by the 73rd Amendment and which is concerned with this institution says that (A Sabha may exercise such power and performs such functions the village level as the legislature of state may, by law provide. According to 73rd Amendment, all State Governments have provided for the institutions of Gram Sabha in their respective Panchayat Raj Act. In all these Acts the scope and functions of Gram Sabha along with the methodology of their working have been outlined. There are considerable variations across states in matters like structure, jurisdiction, and frequency of meetings, powers and functions of Gram Sabha. The present study deals with the functioning of Gram Sabha in one of the smaller but progressive states of the Indian Union, i.e. Haryana. Haryana, emerged on the political map of India, as the 17th State of the Indian Union on November 1st 1966 as a result of bifurcation of bilingual state of Punjab under the Punjab State Reorganization Act, passed by the Indian Parliament Geographically, the state is located in the North Western part of India. It is one of the smaller states of India with an area of 44, 212 Sq. K.M. The population of the state constitutes 2% of total population of India. The climate of state is one of the sub-tropical continental monsoon types. Though agriculture is the main stay of the economy of the state yet it has also made rapid strides the industrial sector. Haryana Panchayat Raj Act came into force in 1994, according to which ‘Gram Sabha’ means a body consisting of persons registered as voters in the electoral rolls a village comprised with in the area of the Panchayat at village level. According to Haryana Panchayat Raj Act the meetings and quorum of Gram Sabha, general meetings, extraordinary meeting, and role of Sarpanch, Block Development and Panchayat Officer (BIPO), Gram Sabha was decided. According to Haryana Panchayati Raj Act the functions and powers of Gram Sabha are review of general progress of the development plans, considering the budget prepared by the Gram Panchayat, Social audit, scrutinize the existing schemes completed works, questioning to Sarpanch and Panch, locate the places of schemes and other works etc. Administration in Indian village is considered one of the most scientifically structured administrative systems of all time. The ancient concept of Gram Sabha is still in existence in the name of Panchayat in the Indian villages. Panchayat Raj System is more democratic in nature compared to that the Gram Sabha System, as the common elect the members of Gram panchayat in modern India. The year 1999- 2000 was declared as the year of the Gram Sabha by the Union Finance Minister. This has helped to focus attention on this vital institution as a mechanism for consultation in the process of direct democracy at the village level. To evaluate the role of Gram Sabha in rural area the study has been focused upon the district Jhajjar. Jhajjar District which consists of five blocks- Bahadurgarh, Beri, Jhajjar, Matanhail and Salawas. The present study is an empirical study in which selection of the universe is based on multistage sampling. Block wise number of Gram Panchayats are - Block Bahadurgarh (62), Beri (36), Jhajjar (71), Matanhail (43) and Salhawas (36). From each block 10% of total villages i.e. 25 villages have been taken by using random sampling method. The reservation policy for women, schedule caste and other Backward Class categories in PRI’s is followed for selection of respondents. Total 250 respondents are taken. Both primary a secondary data is used in the study. The information’s provided by the respondents have been classified, tabulated and analyzed and on their basis conclusions have been drawn. 5.1) Findings of the study: The main findings of the study are as underAwareness level of Respondents: For the working of an organization to be successful, it is highly important for all the members to be fully aware about the basis of organization. The desirable level of awareness results into maximum output. In this regard the study shows a poor level of awareness of the respondents about Gram Sabha as an organization. Only 20% respondents are aware about the membership of Gram Sabha. Though mostly respondents know about age and respondents of Gram Sabha members but this is partially right. They are less aware abbot the name of Gram Sabha members in voter list of village as a compulsion. 57.2% respondents know about the number of meetings of Gram Sabha but only 27.6% respondents know about its time that means less awareness and less participation in Gram Sabha meetings. Although people know that only Sarpanch has the authority to call the Gram Sabha meetings which is partially right. People are not aware about minimum number of Gram Sabha members during meetings. This shows that people are about some facts but they are partially aware. Information level of Respondents:- Although awareness, information level of the respondents is also important for success of Gram Sabha as an organization. The respondents know about the place of Gram Sabha meetings and they get information before meetings at appropriate time. Mostly respondents have information about the medium of information and writing in proceeding. Knowledge of Respondents: The Respondents have knowledge deficit regarding agenda of Sawani and Hari meeting’s agenda and video conferencing during Gram Sabha meetings either due to lack of interest or facility. 58.4% respondents agree about being the member of Gram Sabha. Though they are less aware about work and power of Gram Sabha according to Haryana Panchayti Raj Act, 1994. But they have less knowledge about the venue of Gram Sabha meetings as mostly replied that house of Sarpanch is the place for Gram Sabha meetings. Participation of Respondents;- Mostly respondents are theoretically aware about Gram Sabha meetings but their participation level is low. Only 22.8% respondents take part in Gram Sabha meetings. Participation level of women and schedule caste members is very low because of persona matter, lack of time, lack of information and mostly due to social bindings. There is less participation of Government Officers in Gram Sabha meetings. Involvement in Gram Sabha meetings:- Involvement in Gram Sabha meetings means active participation in Gram Sabha meetings by respondents. People know about signature and thumb impression formality during Gram Sabha meetings on any proposal. Though people are less involved in priorities decided during Gram Sabha meetings. They know about amendment in proposal and in presented annual budget but less respondents answer about their involvement in raising question and giving proposal during such meetings they have lack of involvement regarding discussion on proposal in Gram Sabha meetings. They involve in decision of Gram Sabha by raising hands.

**Interest of Respondents:-**

Mostly respondents are aware about the formation of committee for development works and members of committees and the implementation but they have less interest due to discrimination during development work and misuse of money by the Sarpanch. A few respondents know about their role in Gram Sabha meetings and 55.6% respondents are not satisfied from work and power of Gram Sabha. The reason for less interest are monopoly of Sarpanch and Panchyat Members, improper organization of Gram Sabha meetings and lack of participation and aware.

**Effectiveness:-**

The effectiveness of Gram Sabha as an organization is accepted by 60% respondents. All the respondents know about the number of female Panch and Schedule caste Panch and name of Sarpanch in their respective areas. As a whole it can be said that people are aware about the effectiveness of Gram Sabha as decentralized governance.

**Testing of Hypothesis:-**

The very first objective of the study was ‘To know whether the institute of Gram Sabha is discharging its responsibilities effectively in Jhajjar District.’ In this regard the finding of the study show that awareness level of people about Gram Sabha is not satisfactory. The Gram Sabha has to play a key role in rendering the Gram Panchayat transparent and directly accountable to the people. The Gram Sabha is a mean to solve people’s problems and felt needs and to decide how to use the available resources optimally in ways desired by them, to benefit the poorest in the village through direct democratic and participatory planning, budgeting, social audit, monitoring and evaluation. But due to lack of awareness, improper information, sparse attendance in Gram Sabha meetings, lack of clear understanding amongst the people about Gram Sabha working lead to poor discharging of its responsibility as an institute by ‘Gram Sabha’. Hence the first hypothesis- “The institute of ‘Gram Sabha ‘is not discharging its responsibilities in Jhajjar District stands proved. The second objective of the study was to examine whether the Gram Sabha members are aware about the powers and functions of Gram Sabha.’ In this regard the study shows that Gram Sabha plays a crucial role in ensuring a transparent and accountable administration by Gram Panchayat, its functions are planning, implementation monitoring the functions of Gram Panchayat, social audit, annual budgeting and evaluation. But the concept of Gram Sabha has been conceived of as ultimate source of power of Panchayats has not yet been understood by its members. The members of Gram Sabha are not much aware about the dates, purpose of Gram Sabha meetings and their roles in it. Hence the second hypothesis -‘Mostly Gram Sabha members are aware about power and functions of Gram Sabha’ stands disproved. The third objective of the study was ‘To examine whether the meetings of Gram Sabha held properly on time, the members of Gram Sabha attend the meetings and use their liabilities according to Haryana Pachayati Raj Act 1994.’ In this context the study highlights that about one fourth of respondents have knowledge regarding the time of meeting. Yet people are aware about medium of information but a few people have knowledge regarding venue and time of Gram Sabha meetings that means Gram Sabha meetings are not held properly on time. Mostly people do not know about the quorum and venue of Gram Sabha meeting’s agenda of Sawani and Hari meetings and only one fourth respondents have interest in Gram Sabha meetings and they don’t know about proposal discussion in Gram Sabha meetings. Hence the fourth hypothesis- ‘Gram Sabha members actively attend and participate in Gram Sabha meetings stands disproved.The meetings of Gram Sabha are held properly on time’ stands disproved. The fourth objective of the study was ‘To examine whether the weaker section schedule castes, women and other Backward Class of the society participation actively in Gram Sabha meetings’. In this regard the study makes it clear that more than half respondents know about the members of Gram Sabha but due to lack of interest women don’t participate in Gram Sabha meetings while people from schedule castes and other backward castes less participate in Gram Sabha meetings due to lack of awareness and discrimination. Hence the fifth hypothesis -‘the weaker section i.e. women, schedule caste, other backward class do not attend and participate actively on effective role through planning, budgeting and monitoring stands proved. The Last objective of the study was ‘to examine whether the Gram Sabha members play an effective role in planning, budgeting and monitoring’. In this context the study reveals that half of the respondents agree that Sarpanch has the power and his monopoly make them less interested in participating in Gram Sabha meetings, mostly respondents do not know about the functions of Gram Sabha meetings regarding village development and les aware abut priorities decided during Gram Sabha meetings, lack of awareness regarding budgeting and discussion on proposal in Gram Sabha. More than half respondents agree that there is groupism during budget approval and misuse of money done by Sarpanch, discrimination during development program. Hence the seventh hypothesis- ‘Gram Sabha play an effective role through Social Audit’ stands disproved. Hence this hypothesis- ‘Gram Sabha members are not playing an effective role through planning, budgeting and monitoring’ stands proved.

**Suggestions:-**

Following are the main suggestions for improving role of the Gram Sabha:

• The study shows a poor level of awareness about Gram Sabha quorum, meeting time, venue and their participation in Gram Sabha meetings. For this awareness training program, “Nukkad Natak” should be conducted to Panch and Gram Sabha members. The attendance during Gram Sabha, should be strictly done and the Panch should hold the responsibility for their members of their areas to attend the Gram Sabha meetings.

• The time, venue and place for holding Gram Sabha meeting must be intimated through a notice giving at least two days prior information an effective medium like display of wall posters, house to house canvassing, and public address system at various places. The information can also be spread widely by village level official functionaries like Aanganwadi worker, health Department Staff, School teacher etc.

• Gram Sabha meetings must be called at a time convenient to majority of members. It should be fixed at a time when male members are free from economic activities and female members are free from domestic and other obligations.

• It was observed that the Government Officials attitude toward organizing Gram Sabha meetings was indifferent. They should take initiative for making Gram Sabha vibrant body. Strict actions should be taken against them for their negligence regarding this.

• Government should also organize training awareness program not only for Sarpanch and Panches but also for common people to ensure effective participation in Gram Sabha meetings.

• Social issues like opening schools, programs for adult education, opening of sewing center for women, ensuring Doctors in Primary Health Centre (PHC), Crime against women, youth unemployment should be discussed in Gram Sabha meetings.

• A sub-quorum of female attendance should be fixed in order to ensure adequate participation of women in the meetings of Gram Sabha. It should be made compulsory for the members of Mahila Mandals to attend the Gram Sabha meetings.

• The weaker sections of the society such as women, schedule caste members and other backward classes, self-help groups are be organized so that they can empower themselves economically as well as socially in a better manner.

• Help of any NGO should be taken to pressurize the Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat to organize and to encourage the members of participates in Gram Sabha meetings.

• The transparency by ensured by displaying all relevant information on a board regarding the estimates, availability of funds and the works done by the Panchayats during the specific time period. This kind of activity will curb corruption andmisuse of funds to a great extent.

• Every Gram Sabha should obtain from the Gram Sabha, a certification of utilization of funds by that Panchayat for the plans, programs and projects. To conclude the Gram Sabha has very important role to play in strengthening of the Panchayati Raj System. It has the potential for involving the entire village community in preparation and implementation of planning for their development. It is therefore desirable to activate this body on sustainable basis so that the goal of Haryana Panchayati Raj System can be achieved.