

CHAPTER - II

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Functional literacy programs usually provide an occasion for women to meet for two hours a day, five days a week for three to six months. If proper attention is given to materials and especially methods of teaching, the time spent in functional literacy programs can be used to initiate a number of desired changes in attitudes and behaviour. One desired change, of course, is the development of reading and writing skills; but others might be the development of skills necessary to participate in groups. The development of a spirit of cooperation, the development of the ability to share and analyze problems like child health and family planning; ways of increasing income, the development of a spirit of self-reliance along with awareness of how to demand and get necessary services.

- Sondra and Laura Zeidenstein
(in 'World Education Issues')

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter will be devoted to a review of related research on the theme of the present investigation. As in the previous chapter, the focal points here also will be the 'Panchayati Raj', 'leadership' and 'education'. Attempts will be made to find out what research studies done in these areas have to say. The central concern will be to identify such researches which can throw meaningful light on the composition, equipment and functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions in the country, the type of leadership that emerges from these institutions, and the possible role that they have played or they can be assumed to

play in the sphere of primary education. The Panchayati Raj is for democracy and development, and the latter, besides other programmes of community welfare and economic growth, includes education, particularly universal, compulsory and free primary education in rural areas for children of the age-group 6-14. The approach that will be used here will be largely inter-disciplinary, as that alone can yield a better, comprehensive, related, valid and meaningful picture of the role of the Panchayati Raj in the development of universal primary education in the rural communities where the inter play of several socio-economic, cultural and political factors shape the variegated matrix of social life.

Unfortunately, not much research data and findings are available on the impact of the Panchayati Raj in education. Only a few researches, and that too in Rajasthan and Gujarat are reported in this field. Therefore, the review of research on the contribution of the Panchayati Raj system that can be presented here will be only a few. But then it serves^{to} accentuate the need for further and more research efforts to be directed towards in this sphere. It is imperative to undertake the assessment of the impact of the Panchayati Raj system on education, since more than a decade has

elapsed since its introduction in several states in the early sixties. In Gujarat State, Joshi's doctoral research work on the Panchayati Raj system in education in the South Gujarat region, also done at the M.S. University of Baroda in the Department of Educational Administration, is a pioneer attempt, and is a monumental work.

As leadership in the Panchayati Raj in rural areas in Gujarat constitutes the Central theme of the present research, the bulk of the researches reviewed here are on the emergent rural leadership under the Panchayati Raj system. But other aspects are also covered to the extent they are relevant to the theme of this study and to the extent research work thereon is reported.

The present Chapter will be organised under the following main sections, besides the sections on Introduction and Conclusion.

- (1) Emergent concept about the Panchayati Raj and People's Reaction Thereto.
- (2) Rural Panchayat Leadership : Background Characteristics and Traits.
- (3) Successful Panchayats and Gram Sabha
- (4) Democracy and Development
- (5) Official- Non official Relationship in the

Panchayati Raj Institutions.

- (6) Impact of the Panchayati Raj on Education.
- (7) Wastage and Stagnation.
- (8) Improvement of opportunities for Educational Equality for weaker Sections of the Society.

2.2 Emergent Concept of Panchayati Raj and People's Reactions Thereto.

Some empirical studies on Panchayati Raj institutions have been reported. Sen of National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad (A.P.) is credited with the preparation of summaries of research findings on Panchayati Raj institutions.

Narain (1963) has clarified that terms 'decentralisation' and 'devolution' have been interchangeably used by most authors meaning thereby a real and total transfer of power from government agencies to local self government bodies. The concept of 'delegation' has been used to mean 'assignment of duties without a concomitant transfer of power.' Chaudhari (1961), Iyer (1966), Sen and Verma (1967), Abraham (1967) and others' have pointed out that, with a few exceptions powers have been delegated, instead of devolved, to the Panchayat bodies.

Are the Panchayat bodies agencies of State or units of self-government is a question that has been also posed by some researchers. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957) has linked up the Panchayati Raj with the community development programmes. Potter (1969)

has shown that the Panchayati Raj was considered as the solution to the sagging community development. Jathan^x (1964) has further elaborated this linkage of the Panchayati Raj with community development and has concluded that the linkage has been unfortunately one of the major mis^sunderstandings created among people about the real role of the Panchayati Raj bodies. Jain (1967) observes on this point that "if the functions of the Panchayat Bodies are limited to development only, then they are nothing more than glorified government agencies. In such a case, the ultimate power to make decisions and to execute them remains with the State. Even when the local bodies are allowed to make independent decisions, these are good only at the pleasure of government officials." (page 26.)

Namboodripad (1962) has reviewed the thinking of some writers on the Panchayati Raj. He stresses the point that the Panchayati Raj should be the units of self-government instead of agencies of the State. The review focuses the point that the decisions made by the Panchayati Raj bodies should be final provided they do not violate the Indian Cons^titution. Shast^ry and Ramswamy (1963) have, however, pointed out that the confusion starts with Article 40 of the Constitution itself, which

has vested the authority with the States and has left to them to delegate power in any form that is deemed fit to lower forms of government.

Some researchers like Jathar (1964), Abraham (1967) and others have concluded their findings to the effect that the present system of decentralisation is an unhappy mixture of devolution and delegation. Jathar has revealed that ambiguities and the resultant tensions are inherent in a system in which popular bodies are built up on a traditional administrative structure. The resultant dissatisfaction is instrumental in creating more problems than solving them. Abraham has shown how critics have condemned both the government officials and the Panchayati Raj leaders alike. He observes that the problem lies in the hybrid system itself and not in the functionaries.

Recent thinking on the Panchayati Raj favours these institutions to function as units of self-government. For instance J.P. (1962) has recommended complete transfer of power to the Panchayats without delay, giving them complete authority over local matters in administration and in development planning. However, some workers in the field of the Panchayati Raj seem to be more cautious

in the complete devolution of power of self-government and decision-making to the Panchayati Raj institutions. They maintain that a few pre-conditions should be met before such a devolution of complete authority could fruitfully take place. Gupta (1963), for instance, lists the following five major pre-conditions:

- (1) That the interference of the government should be as little as possible;
- (2) That there should be early spread of education on the village side;
- (3) That the Panchayati Raj institutions should be free from the influence and conflicts of the political parties;
- (4) That delegation of power is not mistaken for decentralisation;
- (5) That the functions to be performed at any level would be related to the resources that can be commanded at that level.

Appelby (1962) who carefully studied the growth and development of the Panchayati Raj system and institutions in India put forward two tests or criteria for any further extension of decentralisation, viz., the efficiency of administration and national integration. He stressed the point that decentralisation and democracy are not synonymous.

Chatur Vedi (1964) expressed a doubt about the wisdom of continuing with weak Panchayat Samitis and weak Gram Sabhas. He upheld the view that the strong Zilla Parishads would alone effectively contribute to the economic development of rural India.

The results of three pioneering surveys by Hoffsomer and Dubey (1961), Singh (1963) and Sen et al (1967) and also one critical study done by Jadeja (1965) to determine people's reactions to the Panchayati Raj system have been reported. The Sen Survey covered the entire nation and used a random stratified sample of 365 villages involving about 7,000 respondents. The sample used in the Hoffsomer and Dubey's survey consisted of one block in the State of Rajasthan and one block in Andhra Pradesh. Singh's sample covered 318 randomly selected Panchayats, from Bihar State.

The main findings of these surveys seem to converge on several points. The common findings are as under :

- (1) People seem not to be clear about what they really understand by the Panchayati Raj. The Panchayat bodies are considered more as extensions of the regular administration rather than as people's organisations.

- (2) There also seems to be lack of understanding of the Panchayati Raj Organization from the village level to the Zilla Parishad level.
- (3) Despite this hazy notion and blurred understanding about the Panchayati Raj institutions at all the three tiers, the system has been favoured by the overwhelming majority of the people as a permanent institution.
- (4) The overall reaction of the people to the Panchayati Raj institution is not only favourable, but also the people in general feel that the Panchayati Raj institutions should be strengthened.
- (5) The popular reasons for their acceptance of the Panchayati Raj are mainly three I (i) It is a government supported programme ; (ii) it provides an agency to solve petty differences of opinions or disputes at the village level and (iii) it constitutes self government.

Jadeja's findings are equally supportive conclusions of the aforementioned surveys. They, however, pertain to the Village Panchayats :

- "(1) There is general lack of awareness among villagers about their rights and responsibilities towards the Village Panchayat.

- (2) Once the Village Panchayat is elected, the villagers feel that their duties have ended and they cease to take interest subsequently.
- (3) There is lack of interest and general unwillingness among villagers to bother about or participate in the programmes of the village Panchayat.
- (4) There is general apathy among the people who are unsure about the Village Panchayat as their own institution and their expectations of it.
- (5) People belonging to higher socio-economic levels have a more favourable image of the panchayat than people belonging to the lower socio-economic strata."

2.3 Rural Panchayat Leadership :
Background Characteristics and Traits

The pattern of treatment presented here will be :

- (a) general characteristics of all types of leadership;
- (b) desired qualities of the Panchayat leadership;
- (c) major findings of a national opinionnaire on the characteristics of the Panchayat leadership;
- (d) some State-wise studies on characteristics of Panchayat leadership;
- (e) Educational leadership; and
- (f) Leadership in Panchayat Shikshan Samitis.

(a) General Characteristics of Leadership.

According to Stogdill (1948), the following leadership traits are supported by uniformly positive evidences from ten or more of the psychological researches reviewed by him.

The average person who occupies a position of leadership exceeds the average number of his group to some degree in the following traits :

- Sociability
- initiative
- persistence
- knowing how to get things done
- self confidence
- alertness to, and insight into, situations.

- cooperativeness
- popularity
- adaptability
- verbal facility

However, it should be noted that the present trend is to emphasise more the 'Situation Theory of Leadership' rather than on the 'Traits Theory of Leadership.'

Further, the following conclusions are supported by uniformly positive evidences from more than fifteen researches :

- (1) The average person who occupies a position of leadership exceeds the average number of his group in the following traits :
 - intelligence
 - scholarship
 - dependability in exercising responsibility
 - activity
 - social participation
 - socio-economic status.
- (2) The qualities, characteristics and skills which form essentials in a leader are brought to focus, to a large extent, by the demands of the situation affecting his behaviour to act as a leader.

In several researches, personal variables of leadership and the analysis of leadership behaviour have been dealt with. The trend seems to be that effective leaders cannot always be identified on the basis of leadership traits.

Weber and Weber (1950), for instance, discusses the Theory of Personal Qualities in terms of research evidences. His conclusion^{is} that the theory is not substantiated. Though personal qualities or traits are important in a leader, yet leadership is more a function requiring certain personal behaviour found in given situation. Gouldnej (1950), too, supports the situational Theory of Leadership by stating that there seems to be little evidence for believing that there are universal leadership traits. However, research evidence does not discount the thesis that when several situations have characteristics in common, apparently some traits of leaders tend to be more effective in each of these groups that have similar characteristics.

(b) Desired Qualities of the Panchayat Leadership.

Inamdar (1967) has summarised some important characteristics associated with 'good' or 'effective' Panchayati Raj leadership. These characteristics are as under :

- (1) Far sightedness - the ability to see the village and its future in a larger context of socio-economic forces.
- (2) The ability to rise above sectional and communal interest.
- (3) The ability to maintain harmony among castes and factions.
- (4) Personal integrity and honesty.
- (5) Some charisma which is partly based on higher social status and partly on personal qualities.

In a paper entitled "Village Democracy in India", Inamdar (1967) has also set forth some essential qualities of the Panchayat leadership. These qualities according to him are : high knowledge, content, liberal or catholic attitude towards village problems and different sections of the village community, constructive outlook, and unity among constituent elements of village community. He further elucidates his point :

"A high knowledge content is the outcome of fairly developed means of communication of knowledge like a library, an inflow of newspapers or even a religious tradition which acquaints the people with the literature concerned... A liberal or catholic attitude towards the submerged sections in the village community like the Harijans and women is acquired through a high knowledge content, an exposure to ideas coming from contact with urban

centres, and even political idealism. The village leadership gains a constructive outlook towards village problems through experience of social work, such as organization of a village fair or participation in national movement or construction activities by Shramdan" (pages .291-2).

Gore(1963) opines that the type of leadership that is required in rural India is of two types - leadership from outside and leadership from within. According to him, the outside leaders are bearers of new ideas and specialised skills. In this case, the skill most called for is that of working with communities, which is hard to acquire and harder to practice.

(c) Major findings of a National Opinionnaire on the Characteristics of Panchayat Leadership.

The Indian Institute of Public Opinion (1964) carried out an opinion survey, almost nation-wide on the characteristics of Panchayat leaders. The major findings are listed in the work entitled "Local Self Government Institutions in India" (pages 90-91)

- "(1) New rural leadership is concentrated in the relatively well-to-do classes;
- (2) The educational background of these leaders looks discouraging, but this must be read with the lack of education generally found in rural areas.

- (3) The outlook, however is not disheartening inasmuch as younger and, on the whole, better educated persons are coming to the fore;
- (4) A majority of the present leaders has received no training to make them conversant with the duties and responsibilities they are called upon to discharge.
- (5) A majority of rural leaders shows an appreciable degree of awareness both of objectives as envisaged by the institutions of the Panchayati Raj in its present form, and community development programmes, as well as of duties and responsibilities associated with the position they held.
- (6) The pre-occupation of a large majority of the leaders is with the development programmes. Other objectives, however, do not receive proportionate emphasis.
- (7) A majority of the rural leaders, according to the opinion they hold about one another, cannot be described as dedicated. Most of them attribute the desire for office in these institutions by their colleagues to reasons of prestige, power or selfish motives.
- (8) The leaders' contact with the general public seems fairly close. People at large depend upon them for help - largely agricultural and financial aid - and guidance and advice.

- (9) A majority of the executives and the leaders of the Panchayati Raj and Cooperative Societies are satisfied with the personal contribution they claim to have made to the welfare of the rural masses. This may suggest undue complacency.

The researcher who has summarised the above qualities about the leaders of the Panchayati Raj institutions on the bases of the responses in the opinion survey that was conducted in 1964, concludes as under :

"Generally speaking, the leaders are more modern than the rest of the village population.

- (i) They hold more progressive ideas and more liberal attitudes; (ii) their contact with extension agents is higher; (iii) they travel more and visit urban centres more frequently; (iv) the proportion of literates and educated among them is higher; (v) they are more exposed to mass media such as radio and cinema; (vi) they participate more often in voluntary organizations; (vii) they are more efficient in the use of labour and other resources in farming; and (viii) they adopt more scientific techniques of agriculture." (page 91)

Dube(1966) in his study entitled "India's Changing Villages" has found that leadership in rural India is of diffused type. His conclusion^{is} that persons occupying positions of prestige and power in kin groups and castes, as well as informal groups and factions, may not be formally recognised as village leaders, but their role as decision-makers in day-to-day life is really vital

and effective. The researcher is of the opinion that persons with recognised abilities in certain fields, such as, good agriculturists, individuals with expertise in law court and those with knowledge of herbs and drugs also function as opinion leaders, and their influence often extends much beyond their speciality. He observes, "Many recognised village leaders are village politicians, with some education and considerable outside contact and function as a link between the world of villages and outside world of cities and the administration." (page 58).

Research findings on the socio-economic background of popular leaders of the Panchayati Raj institutions are available. Studies by Sharma (1963), Mehta (1963), Sharder and Joshi (1963), IIPO (1964), Chaudhari (1964), Shirsikar (1964), Sen and Roy (1967), Robins (1967), Rout (1967), Thorat (1968), Bhattacharjee (1969) and others have shown that a very large proportion of the leaders of the Panchayati Raj bodies come from the upper castes and upper economic strata. The findings also show that the leadership from higher socio-economic strata receive support from persons belonging to lower socio-economic strata.

Group alliances have been in evidence. But the emergent conclusion from these

studies is that the traditional pattern of leadership has been gradually giving way to a more representative leadership. Leaders from lower socio-economic groups are in a much better position to bargain with the upper class leaders than was the case before.

(d) State-wise Studies on the Characteristics of the Panchayat Leadership.

In some studies reported on the Panchayati Raj in some States, like Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Rajasthan, Madras, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat the age-composition, social background, economic status and educational qualifications of the leaders are studied.

Age-structure: Reddy and Sheshadri (1970) in a study, entitled "Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh" have found that the age-group that seemed to be the most preponderant was one that fell between 31 and 50 years constituting 60 percent in the Village Panchayats, 73 percent in Panchayat Samitis and 90 percent in the Zilla Parishads.

Mathur, Iqbal Narain and Sinha (1966) have in their study of the institutional leadership in the Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan have found that there was a positive tendency to elect younger people belonging to the age group 30-40 and 40-50 years, more from the former than

from the latter.

Joshi (1973) in his doctoral study of the Panchayati Raj institutions in South Gujarat noted a positive tendency to elect younger people on the Gram Panchayats. He also showed that more Sarpanchs^a came from the age-group 30 to 50^h. With a mean of 39 years.

Patel (1974) has studied leadership in the Panchayati Raj institutions at all the three tiers in Mehsana District of North Gujarat. His findings are that the mean age of the Sarpanchas was 39 years, of the Taluka Panchayat President 44 years, of the Zilla Parishad President 49 years and the Chairman of the Shikshan Samiti of the Jilla Parishad 45 years.

The present investigator in the study on Panchayati Raj in Panchmahal District (East Gujarat) found the mean ages of the Sarpanchs^a, the Presidents of the Taluka Panchayats, the President of the Jilla Panchayat and of the Chairman of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti to be 46 years, 47.5 years, 55 years and 45 years respectively.

The Caste Orientation: The Kammas and the Reddis are the two dominant caste groups in Andhra Pradesh. They are described as Titans amongst the caste groups. They compete for political power, and the other castes mostly have to align with one of these two castes depending upon which one is locally more powerful. Reddy and Seshadri found that about 64 percent of the Sarpanchas, 61 percent of the Presidents of the Panchayat Samitis and 100 percent of the Chairmen of the Zilla Parishads hailed from these two castes.

Mathur et al in their Rajasthan study (referred to earlier) concluded that "the percentage of caste population and the percentage of caste representation differed widely from each other and that the numerical strength of a caste in Rajasthan did not always reflect itself at the level of Sarpanchship. The dominant trend in this connection seems to be that the castes which traditionally rank higher in the prevailing social scale usually manage to secure a greater representation than those ranking lower in the social hierarchy. The trend is one of the higher castes securing a larger number of offices at the level of Sarpanchship than at the level of Panchship. Conversely, the trend implies that the representation of lower castes at the level of Sarpanchas is

far less than that at the level of Panchas."(page 28)

Joshi, in the study referred to earlier on South Gujarat, found that the caste or community consciousness in the election of the Sarpanchas was a significant factor.

In the present East Gujarat study by the investigator it is found that both, the chairman and the Vice-chairman of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti come from the Bhil, a tribal community. The Chairman is a science graduate. Excepting two of the total 9 members, 7 come from the lower caste groups and socially backward communities. The woman member of the committee is a 49 year old Bhil community woman., whose education does not go beyond primary fourth class.

As regards the caste of the Sarpanchas, it may be said that 48.8 percent come from advanced communities, 48.8 percent from backward castes and 2.4 percent from religious groups other than Hindus. In the Taluka Panchayats, 50 percent of the presidents are from the higher caste groups as against 45.4 percent from the lower caste groups. In the Jilla Panchayat, the President is from lower caste group but the Vice-President is from higher caste group.

(c) Educational Background : In the Andhra Pradesh study mentioned earlier, a wide disparity was noticed in the educational background possessed by the Panchayata leaders functioning all on the three tiers. For instance, it was found that 82 percent of the Chairmen of the Zilla Parishads and 58 percent of the Presidents of the Panchayati Samitis had educational level upto Matriculation and above. At the Gram Panchayat level, the educational Standard was rather low. Thirty-two percent had middle school education while among the rest, 11 percent had some high school education. Percentage of illiterate executives was found to be negligible.

No data on the educational background of the leaders in the Panchayati Raj institutions in the Rajasthan Study were reported.

The South Gujarat Study by Joshi showed that 26.83 percent of the Gram Panchayat leaders ^{had passed} were primary IV standard, 43.90 percent primary Std. VII passed, 23.17 percent studied upto S.S.C., 3.67 percent upto graduate level and 2.43 percent were holding even post-graduate university degrees.

(d) Economic and Occupational Status : The Andhra Pradesh study revealed that a large number of the Panchayati leaders came from the upper and middle-class families. The investigator observed thus :

"There is a widely-held feeling that the richer sections of the society are controlling these important positions. This belief appears to be valid for Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, but not for Village Panchayats. Those earning Rs.2,500 a year constituted 50 percent of the Sarpanchas, 19 percent of the Presidents of Panchayat Samitis and less than 29 percent of the Zilla Parishads. The political executives of the Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis appear to be economically better off ^{than the Sarpanchas} of the Village Panchayats." (page 228)

In the Rajasthan Study also referred to earlier, it was found that 65 percent of the total Panchayat members were agriculturists and 10 percent belonged to the class of money-lenders.

In the South Gujarat Study, it was found that the members of the Gram Panchayat belonged to all occupational groups, and that the number of Panchas, Sarpanchas and Deputy Sarpanchas belonging to the money-lending class was definitely on decline. Over 76 percent of the Sarpanchas and Deputy Sarpanchas belonged to the annual income group of Rs. 8,000 - Rs. 5,000, 17.1 percent to the income group of Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 3,500 and the remaining to an income group of below Rs. 3,500.

(e) Political Affiliation : The Rajasthan Study cited earlier has shown that the leadership at the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti levels is in close touch with the State level politics. "Each Panchayat Samiti falls, more or less, under the influence zone of one minister or the other. At times the fortunes of the Panchayat Samiti fluctuate with the fortune of the minister concerned" (page 31) . The study further reveals not^{only} merely party alignments but also intra-party functions have percolated down to the local rural levels. Cooption has been used as a political device by the leaders of Panchayat Raj at various levels to reinforce their own position and reward their supporters and helpers. A build-up for political power from the bottom upwards has been in evidence. The Panchayati Raj has brought about a political framework for the development of a pattern of closer contact and State leadership.

Joshi in his study on South Gujarat also found that the Sarpanchas often leaned on political party discipline and indulged in political intriguing to retain their hold and powers over the other members of the Gram Panchayats. Joshi showed that around 13 percent of the Sarpanchas owed their position to their political standing and affiliation. He also showed that in the election of all

the presidents of the Jilla Parishads the political factor loomed larger. He observes :

"All the Presidents of the District Panchayats of South Gujarat are the members of the dominant ruling Congress Party. They are strong individuals as leaders having considerable popular following. Perhaps, they were given the ticket by the Ruling Congress Party on the strength of their strong popular support in their district."
(Page 306).

Il-tiya Khan (1969) in his study on Government in Rural India done at the Faculty of Social Sciences in the Aligadh Muslim University has put forward birth, wealth, age, education, personality and skill as major determinants of Panchayat leadership. The study has reference points to Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh. The researcher has maintained that participation in programmes of community benefit also adds considerably to the leadership ability.

Persons born in high castes have greater opportunity to acquire positions of leadership. Wealth is another important factor. Age is venerated for its own sake. Effective positions of the traditional type go to those who are in the age-group between forty and fifty. Under the Panchayati Raj it is better that the leadership has some degree of education to deal with officials and

also perform its functions well. This, along with the new methods of recruitment, has lowered the age factor to a significant degree and now persons of thirty to forty years in age are coming into the forefront.

"Ideally, a leader should be fair, decisive, firm, intelligent, resourceful and dedicated. But in practice, it bears the evils of factionalism, favour, corruption, etc....

The Panchayat Raj leaders are expected to act as elite serving as a model for the village people and setting the norms of daily life. But, by and large, the new leadership has failed to act as an agent of social change and has not functioned as a modernizing group....

The new leaders attempt to maintain a strict division between their political activity and social life; use caste, kinship and family pre-eminence as bases for leadership, have traditional attitudes towards the participation of women in the Panchayat Raj (page 110).

The Rajasthan study constitutes a precious contribution on the identification and articulation of the emergent neo-traditional leadership in the Panchayats.

- (1) It is difficult to say whether the best persons available in the village came out to lead the Panchayati Raj institutions. Against the average quality of the rural people, the leadership can, however, be considered best,

- (2) "The leadership that is emerging still comes from the affluent and traditional higher echelons of rural society. The backward classes, in spite of their numerical strength, have rarely succeeded in claiming Sarpanchship let alone Pradhanship. They have aligned themselves with one representative or the other of the higher caste and lent him support on the basis of their numerical strength. They have not yet gathered enough courage and initiative to use the numerical strength to claim a higher status for themselves. It may be added, however, that they are at least conscious of their numerical strength and are in a position to bargain on this. Perhaps the day is not far off when they would use their numerical strength to assume leadership" (page 283)
- (3) The emerging leadership is not entirely traditional-bound. It can better be described as "neo-traditional". The reasons are: (a) Higher strata of rural Society cannot exclusively claim authority on the basis of their caste status, family or wealth; (b) the high caste people have to woo the average villager for his support on the basis of equality; (c) resort to democratic

attitudes has become indispensable to one who aspires leadership in villages.

- (4) The new leadership is material-benefit oriented.

"The material-benefit orientation to the character of emerging leadership is the direct consequence of the fact that Panchayati Raj leadership is closely linked with the community development programme which is the character of material development for the rural people." (page 284).

- (5) The emerging rural leadership is a combination of both power-orientation and development-orientation. Till now, it is felt, that a balanced partnership between these two orientations has not come about and the balance appears to tilt in the direction of power.

"The new leadership understands the language and, to some extent, even the objectives and programmes of planning. The process of development consciousness is expected gradually to percolate from the leaders down to the rural people. This is the earnest of a rich potential, though concrete beginnings in this direction are not yet perceptible." (page 284).

- (6) The new leader is comparatively of young age around 45 years.

- (7) Lesser resistance to social change is

noticed in rural Panchayat leadership. There has been found a greater proneness^e in him to accept the demands of modernisation than was the case in the pre-Panchayat days.

- (8) However, it will be too much to attribute to him a conscious or deliberate role of an agent of change process.

"The new leader may still be suffering in his sub-conscious from a sense of superiority complex as far as the weaker sections of society are concerned, but he cannot afford to treat them as untouchables publicly."c (Page 285).

Bhat (1967) studied emerging pattern of leadership in the Panchayati set-up in Mysore State. For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was issued to all the directly elected members of one Taluka Board (the Mangalore Taluka Board) consisting of nineteen members, and five of its Panchayats. This was followed by personal interviews. The findings of the study are briefly summarised below :

- (1) Age : One of the important factors that determine rural leadership is age. Traditionally, it was the privilege of the elders to occupy leadership positions. However, there is now a perceptible change in this traditional pattern. In 1959 only 20.5 percent of the Panchayat members

belonged ^{to} the age-group 20-30 years as against 4.9 percent in earlier election, and about 55 percent belonged to the age-group 31-45 years from which the leadership emerged.

- (2) Of the 92 members, 46 were agriculturists, 19 businessmen and the remaining 27 were professional men like doctors, and teachers. The leaderships emerged mainly from the agriculturists.
- (3) It is still true that the pattern of village leadership is determined by economic status.
- (4) Majority of the Panchayat members - 65.4 percent had only primary education, and about 24 percent had completed secondary education. Some of the members were also found to be illiterate.
- (5) Participation in Community organization was yet another factor found among the leadership in Mysore State. The four largest community organizations were educational, religious, cultural and youth clubs.

The overall conclusion of the research is :

"Younger members are more often being elected; the Brahmins no longer hold the monopoly of leadership places, although the emerging leaders are

mostly in agriculture, there is a tendency to shift over to business; as the new leaders tend to be economically and educationally better off compared to other villagers; poorer sections of the community are excluded from panchayat activities, membership of political parties, particularly the ruling party, is increasingly a feature of the emerging leaders and finally, the concept of constructive leadership for the public good is becoming more popular"(page 109).

Rao (1964) has a different story to tell about leadership pattern in the Panchayati Raj in Orissa. He observes, "The new system of the Panchayati Raj has not made any change in the nature of leadership, i.e. the Panchayat Sabha members have come from exactly that strata of society from which natural leaders were drawn"(page 39)

In Maharashtra State, Sirsikar (1964) marks a perceptible trend towards concentration of social, economic and political power in higher and middle groups. He observes that the decentralisation of power has not yet reached the poorer sections of the village community like landless labourers and scheduled castes.

In a study by Chaudhari (1964) about Panchayat leadership pattern in West Bengal the findings were as under :

"The sanctity of traditional authority has gone, the influence of religion in day-to-day activities has withered away; and the sanctions behind the caste have disappeared; in their stead political authority has cast its influence over society.... The traditional pluralist society is in the process of breaking down and one 'political society' is rising". (page 644).

(e) Educational Leadership.

Patel's (1974) in his study of educational leadership in school situation had formulated a hypothesis that the relationship of morale with leadership will be quite close. The hypothesis was confirmed. In the determination of morale, it was found that a leader plays a very important and crucial role. It is the leader who creates a highly congenial atmosphere for the members of the group.

Patel also found close and high relationship among variables like institutional climate, leadership, staff morale and innovativeness of institution or organisation.

(f) Leadership in Panchayat Shikshan Samitis

Studies on the Panchayati Raj in some States also provide data on the composition of the Panchayat Shikshan Samities.

In a Rajasthan Study done in 1963 it was found that the Education Committees of the Panchayat Samitis which administer primary schools on behalf of the Samitis

are not able to function efficiently owing to the low competence of their members. Out of 1,192 members of the Standing Committees on Education or social services including education, only 417 (34.9) percent) were below the age of 35 who could be expected to be progressive in their outlook, 714 (59.9 percent) were between 35 and 55 and 47 (5.2 percent) were above 55. Those who were educated below the Middle school standard (might be just literate) were 992 or 83.2 percent. Another 117 (9.9 percent) were non-matriculates. The study observes, "It would be vain to expect from most of these, 1,192 persons any understanding of educational policies and problems" (page 72)

Joshi (1973) has done a monumental study on the role of the Panchayati Raj bodies in the administration of primary education in South Gujarat. His sample was drawn from the Surat, Valsad and Bharuch districts. It consisted of 82 Gram Panchayats, 19 Talukas Panchayats and 3 Jilla Parishads.

The study throws significant light on the composition and equipment of the rural leadership in relation to the administration of primary education. The ratings of the Sarpanchas on some personality traits such as 'self-interestedness' was not much by 58.59 percent, 'active and

and dynamism' not at all' by 36.62 percent 'manoeuvring and scheming nature' much by 63.42 percent, 'sincerity of purpose and dedication to community Services' not at all by 39.02 percent, 'leadership skills' average by 30.5 percent and 'good attitude to public service' much by 47.56 percent.

Belief in enforcement of compulsory education was rated not much by 51.25 percent, favourable attitude toward prosecuting defaulting guardians rated not much by 40.24 per cent, active work done in collecting funds for primary education rated not at all by 47.56 percent active work done in ~~47.56 per cent~~ village adult literacy rated not at all by 37.81 percent and only 31.70 percent of the Sarpanchas were rated as possessing 'very much' or 'much' knowledge and understanding of problems of primary education.

The impact of the leadership of the Sarpanchas and Upa-Sarpanchs were rated as below the average by more than 40 percent respondents on the criterion of interest and zeal in development of primary education and by more than 27 percent on the criterion of 'exercising influence on guardians to send their non-attending boys and girls to schools.

Regarding the leadership at the Jilla Parishad level in South Gujarat, Joshi offers the following comments:

"It should be observed that the leadership at the Jilla Parishad level has been cutting across caste-affiliation. There is more inter-caste alliances, but political affiliation is a stronger cementing force. Persons younger than before - persons in their thirties and forties - are now sitting on Jilla Parishads. They are a slightly more active lot than was the case in the past. But they are not democratically so vocal as to influence positively or negatively the decision-making done by the Jilla Presidents. The members of Jilla Shikshan Samitis are now more knowledgeable persons in education, but a number of them do reveal the natural weakness to abuse their membership of the Panchayats in distributing favour and patronage to primary teachers in the matter of their transfer or promotion. The Administrative Officers and District Development Officers are under great pressures by vested interests in Jilla Shikshan Samitis and Jilla Parishads. Democracy in Jilla Parishads is still growing. It has not taken firm roots. The top leadership is too strong and powerful to allow leadership at members' level to take a firm root in democratic functioning and decision-making".(page 309)

From the several studies done on patterns of leadership emerging from the Panchayat bodies, the following significant trends are evident from researches reviewed in this section.

- (1) Though there is no sudden change in the emerging pattern of rural leadership, the gradual transformation to modernity is remarkably clear. A substantial number of members now ¹⁰belong to the younger age-group. It is

becoming increasingly true that, villagers contrary to the common assumption, are not necessarily wedded to the myth of wisdom being the sole prerogative of the old.

(2) In the past, education and the social status of the Brahmins gained for them the place of leadership in the villages. The situation is changing significantly. The other Hindu castes are gradually strengthening their hold on the pattern of leadership emerging in the new set-up.

(3) Consistent with the agricultural bias of the country, the emerging leaders are mostly occupied in agriculture.

(4) The emerging leadership is economically better off compared to the other villagers—most of them having their own houses and pieces of land. As a consequence, the economically weaker sections of the village community, particularly the scheduled caste members and the landless labourers, are automatically excluded from the activities of the Panchayati Raj bodies.

(5) Better educational background, participation in community activities and membership in political parties are the other characteristics of the new leadership. The traditional leadership is also facing threats from the educated youths who are conversant with more than one language.

(6) Another significant trend is that the ruling Congress party is increasingly gaining its hold over the village leaders and thereby strengthening its position in rural areas. As these rural institutions are linked with the state, this hold of the ruling party may ultimately result in the dominance of 'politics over Society'. This is particularly true when most of the members are the active members and some of them are the office-bearers of the ruling party.

(7) The emerging pattern of leadership seems to be also an improved pattern as "the idea of constructive leadership in the public interest" is gradually emerging. The grip of caste and religion on the social behaviour and outlook is loosening.

2.4 Successful Panchayats and Gram Sabhas

Researchers have applied their minds in identifying conditions that determine the success and effectiveness of Panchayat bodies. Unfortunately, not enough attempts have been done in this sphere. Some studies have also investigated the conditions of success for a Gram Sabha which is a basic, foundation unit of the superstructure of the Panchayati Raj.

A Study of Jadeja (1965) reported in the Quarterly Journal of Local Self Government (Bombay) shows that in effecting a swing from 'representative democracy to participating democracy' the Gram Sabha has a greater role to play. He found that the success of a Panchayat, depends upon this extent to which it generates and sustains the interest of the village people - the gram sabha in its programmes as well as functioning. Since the panchayat is elected by the Gram Sabha the former is ultimately responsible to the latter. Establishing proper and definite roles and relationships of the Panchayat as well as the Gram Sabha, will, therefore, prove very useful. Gram Sabha, thus has its immediate role of consultation and of having its say in all matters concerning the village. This will require a well organised Gram Sabha, the members of which are aware of their Rights and responsibilities and are willing to participate in and be consulted for the programme of the village panchayat.

The researcher found that the Gram Sabhas are not functioning properly even where they were statutorily established and given a decisive voice in respect of annual budget. He identified four major factors in their disorganisation of the Gram Sabha :

- (1) General lack of awareness on the part of the villagers about their rights and responsibilities towards the Village Panchayat.
- (2) The feeling created among the villagers that having elected the Village Panchayat their duties have ended.
- (3) Unwillingness on the part of the villagers to bother about or participate in the programmes of the Panchayat.
- (4) Apathy among the villagers who are doubtful about the value of the Panchayat as their institution and about the expectation from it.

The investigator, therefore, tried to study how far the villagers, or say the Gram Sabha, had been able to perceive their Village Panchayat, in terms of their role towards their elected democratic institution. He also felt it necessary to study the extent of their involvement in the working of the Panchayat.

For collecting the data for the study a general information scheduled for obtaining certain basic data about the Village Panchayat, its structure, caste structure of the village and the economic condition of the villagers in the Gaon Sabha was used. Another schedule was used for interviewing individual members of the gram Sabha to ascertain their awareness, understanding, expectation etc. in respect of the Panchayat. This interview contained mostly the questions with structured responses. However, it was not^a fully structured schedule and included some open ended questions, too.

The interview schedule was administered on a sample of Gram Sabha members. Information mentioned in the general schedule for the village was obtained from the village records and out of oral inquiry from the Panchayat Secretary. Interview schedules were filled up on the basis of the responses obtained from the villagers forming the sample for this study. Efforts were made to interview these individuals in isolation as far as possible. Data collected were statistically analysed. The study resulted in the identification of the four factors responsible for the ineffective organisation, and operation of the Gram Sabhas quoted earlier. The implication of the study is that if the Gram Sabhas are to be made effective basis of the participating democracy of the village people, it is crucial

to arouse and interest them.

Jacob (1967) analysed the working of some successful Panchayats and has come out with vital findings. For instance, he has identified certain pre-requisites or determinants for the success of the Panchayati Raj institutions. These determinants are : (a) the proximity to an urban centre, (b) good roads, (c) regular bus service, (d) nearness to an important market place, (e) higher proportion of literates in the village, (f) relative prosperity of the population, (g) the presence of able and sympathetic Extension workers. These have been found to be among the principal factors responsible for the success of the Panchayat bodies in the Country.

2.5 Democracy and Development

In a doctoral research Prasad (1971) has studied the Village Panchayats at the Magadh University. The base unit of the Panchayati Raj, the village Panchayat, was set in the study against the twin process of democratisation and development. A fairly typical Village Panchayat called Awa, located in the central part of Bihar, was selected for close and exhaustive study of the various aspects of its functioning as a political-administrative system. The presentation of data was governed by two major concerns of the study viz : (1) the distribution

of the
political power in the village panchayat system; and
(2) the performance capability of the village panchayat,
especially as an agency of rural development.

This study was based on the assumption that while the village panchayat has stimulated the process of political democratization, it has not much accelerated the pace of economic development in the villages. The political democratization of the villages has been stimulated not by any other thing so much as by the mechanism of secret ballot employed for leadership selection in the context of the adult franchise. At the same time, the economic development of the villages has been inhibited by, among other things, the failure of Panchayat to mobilize internal resources. Periodic Panchayat elections have, thus, tended both to bring about greater popular control of the local decision-making apparatuses and to generate greater disinclination to levy and pay local taxes. In consequence, the process of economic development has failed to synchronise with the process of political democratisation. This goes to mean that while the urge for equality and sharing of political power is strong in the people, they have not shown an equally strong urge for sacrifice and for organised effort. It is not the growth of democratisation that has stifled the

performance capability of the Panchayat system; what actually has inhibited its capability is the inadequacy of both the withinputs of leadership, sacrifices and efforts and the inputs of financial and technical assistance. The capability of the Panchayat also hinges on the facilities, physical and otherwise, of communication with the outer world of technology, commerce and administration.

Basically the strains and stresses of the Panchayat System are no different from those of the democratic system at the State or national level. Varying in magnitude along with size, the democratic political system throws up perhaps everywhere almost similar challenges of leadership, resources and development.

This study of Awa Panchayat leads to the following conclusions :

- (1) A combination of several ~~venue~~ villages does not produce an appropriate area for the village panchayat as a unit of local government. The consideration of administration viability conflicts in this respect with the demands of democratic suitability.

(2) The introduction of statutory panchayat results, in the initial stage, in the institutional ~~featuracy~~ of traditional leadership, But a convenient opportunity for leadership change is provided by the Panchayat election held by means of the secret ballot. Although the Panchayat election ~~stirs~~ up the village people, it does not disturb the ritualistic aspect of village social life. Furthermore, in a village dominated by one caste, the competition for leadership is confined to men of dominant castes; and therefore, caste does not operate as a very important factor in panchayat election.

(3) The village assembly is a large, amorphous body and does not function in any significant sense as the highest decision-making body in the village panchayat.

(4) In actual practice, the stipulated methods of work of the various organs of the village panchayat are greatly modified along the traditional lines. Decisions are still arrived at mostly through consensus, at least superficially.

(5) The actual power of the Mukhiya is derived from his personality and the social status of his family.

(6) In a panchayat where the elected personnel are themselves capable and active, the Panchayat Secretary is relegated to the ^{ck}background.

(7) The relationship among Panchayat personnel is determined in the main, by their preexisting social and personal relationships, and only in minor part by the formally designed pattern of relationships.

(8) The scope of Panchayats' activities is determined in the main, by the pattern of external financial assistance. Local initiative is governed by the urgency of a task.

(9) The statutory Panchayat has facilitated communication between the government and the village people, and has tended to reduce the distance between government officials and the people.

The role of village panchayat as an institution of local self-government and as an agency of the higher levels of government have, in actual practice, been inseparable. Even to develop as an effective institution of local self-government the village panchayat has of necessity to rely heavily on the guidance, education and assistance provided by the government. It, thus, appears that the correct nature of government¹ panchayat relationships can be understood only in terms of a concept of partnership² Village Democracy and Village Development.

2.6 Official - Non Official Relationship in the Panchayati Raj Bodies.

In the Panchayati Raj, both the popular leaders and the Government Officers play a vital role. The relationship between the two leaderships should be harmonious and based on the understanding and appreciation of the role and potential contribution of each other. There are often reports that the official-non official relationship in the Panchayati Raj bodies is not often harmonious. Some studies are focused on identifying the areas and the casual factors of the conflict between the two bulwarks of rural democracy. This conflict has seriously hampered the rapid and qualitative progress of all development programmes including education. Some selected studies are reviewed here.

Gaikwad (1969) has studied the relationship patterns between the official and the non-official leadership in the Panchayati Raj bodies. His findings are as under :

- (1) The de-bureaucratisation is being introduced^s rather suddenly disturbing the existing traditional power, authority and administrative structures in the society which could be said to be lacking the essential pre-requisites of democracy such as literacy, secularism and which,

because of certain historical accidents and political deliberations has been accustomed to look towards the officials with awe.

(2) The reorganisation of power and authority structure under the principle of democratic decentralisation which has a tremendous potential for effecting ~~for~~ reaching social change, is not without its teething troubles.

(3) Democratic decentralisation has raised expectations in people's minds of radical change in the roles of government servants and their attitudes and behaviours, but the change has not taken place as desired.

(4) Both officials and non-officials are bewildered by the suddenness of change.

(5) The maintenance of good working relations between the official and non-official leaders has not been always happy. The mutual sense of regard and understanding among them ^{is} leaves much to be desired.

(6) Some of the apparent causes of tension between the officials are : (a) lack of demarcation of spheres of action and powers of the two; (b) interference of non-officials in administration; (c) poor quality of officials.

Some studies have been reported on the official and non-official relationship in the Panchayati Raj. There has been growing realization that the Panchayati Raj mechanism will have a smooth running if the relationship between the key official and non-official functionaries is harmonious.

The Jaipur study (1966) in Rajasthan (by Mathur et al) has shown that in most cases, however, the two have failed to adjust with each other and this has had serious repercussions not merely on the working of the Panchayati Raj institutions but on the implementation of the development programmes.

In another study done in Rajasthan in 1964, it was found that the Praśhans of Panchayat Samitis, Block Development Officers and other Panchayat officials complained strongly about the indifference of the officers of the Education Department to them and to their scheme and mode of work.

Among the reasons which have been assigned for this indifference are

- (1) that their (officials') responsibility has ceased.
- (2) that they are pre-occupied with their Departmental activities to which they give priority; and

(3) that their advice and guidance are not honoured.

The study on Andhra Pradesh by Reddy and Seshadri referred to earlier has the following observation on the conflict between the official and non-official leadership in the Panchayat bodies.

"As a result of these conflicts arising out of the temperamental incompatibilities and the lack of adjustments, the officials come in for a great deal of drubbing from the non-officials during their initial intoxication with political power. Frequent transfers and adverse remarks on confidential rolls and involving the officials in the village politics have often been resorted to as methods of punishing the inconvenient officials" (page 229).

2.7 Impact of the Panchayati Raj System on Administration of Primary Education

A fairly good Volume of literature has appeared in India on the Panchayati Raj system, organization, leaderships, relationships and functioning. Most of the studies attempted on the Panchayati Raj have predominantly a political focus. Social and economic bases of the Panchayati Raj have also been adequately investigated. But very little research seems to have been planned on the impact of the Panchayati Raj on education, though the latter constitutes a vital function of the Panchayat bodies. Only some scattered researches are reported in journals and in some scholarly

treatises. The available researches are briefly reviewed here.

The presentation of the reviews will be under the following sub-heads :

- (a) General assessment of the impact.
- (b) Abuse of power by the Panchayat leaders.
- (c) Active participation of members in decision-making.
- (d) Community participation.
- (e) Impact on school improvement.

(a) General Assessment of the Impact

Dharmpal (1972) has made a general assessment of the Madras Panchayat system. The study uses a sample of 36 Panchayats, 3 in each of the Panchayat Unions. As regards the methods employed in the Study, the researcher has laid emphasis on (a) interviews of randomly selected villagers, elected representatives and officials in the selected Panchayat Unions and Panchayats, (b) observations of the working of these bodies for a period of about six months by trained research assistants and (c) on the critical study of the pertinent records of these bodies. The general tone of the interview results in the Madras Study was found to be one of the relative acceptances of what prevails. The respondents did not show any marked variation

in terms of factual information or opinion on most questions which were asked. It shows that people at the village level seem to place a higher significance and show a greater interest in general election than election for Panchayats.

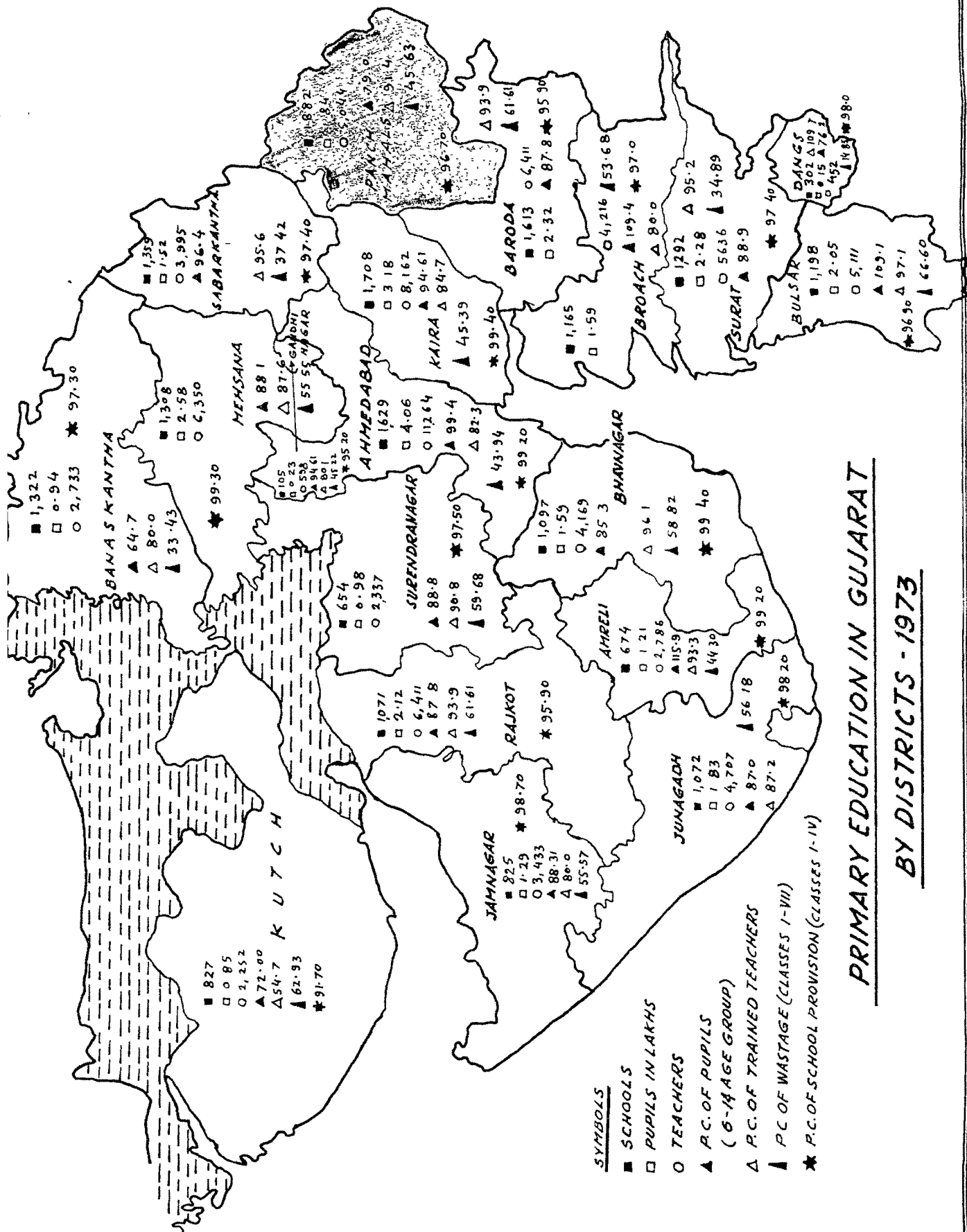
About the management of the schools by the Panchayat Union Council, most villagers and even officials and teachers felt that attendance in schools had considerably improved. Very few mentioned any decline in the quality of management and standards of schools under the Panchayat Councils.

The school meals programme was found to be known to most village respondents. Very few thought that it was not going well; most of them affirmed that public contributions were being received for the programme.

The village panchayats in the sample showed quite some variations in the periodicity of their recorded meetings. Some met practically every month or even more frequently while others only four or five times a year. Normally, a Panchayat had three to five items on its agenda, and two of them were invariably passing of the accounts and passing of the minutes of the previous meeting. The minute books in most Panchayats did not

contain any formal reporting of what had happened to the decisions taken earlier. This at times resulted in the adoption of the same resolutions in successive meetings of Panchayats. The recorded attendance was fairly good, normally two thirds of the members attended, though the solitary woman members seldom seemed to attend any meetings. Sometimes circulation of the agenda was substituted for formal meetings of the Panchayat. This perhaps was no undesirable way out when it was difficult either to assemble the members or there was little to transact.

Meetings of the Council of the Panchayat Union were found to have been held every two months or more frequently as ordinary or urgent or special meetings. The urgent or special meetings were conveyed to consider just one or sometimes a few more items but in the ordinary meetings usually 30 or 40 items were considered. The time taken was seldom more than two or three hours. Two essential items were the passing of the contingency expenditure and the approval of the minutes of the previous meetings. At times, there were two or three questions to be answered. As in the Panchayats, there was no formal reporting made to the Panchayat Union Council on how matters stood with regard to previous decision. Practically all decisions were of agreement, though at times an item might be



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deferred for later consideration.

Joshi's (1973) over all conclusion of the impact of the Panchayati Raj system on the administration of primary education in South Gujarat is that several assumptions made by the Balwantrao Mehta Study Group while launching a programme of decentralised democracy in rural areas have not been fully borne out by the facts of his investigation.

- (1) The local community is not closer to the task of spreading primary education on the one hand, and improving the quality of education on the other hand. In this respect, the tall claims being made by Government become a tool of propaganda to boost up the Panchayati Raj programme.
- (2) Very few leaders of the Panchayats are really trained or oriented in development needs of rural communities. This is particularly the case at the grassroots level.
- (3) The Gram Shikshan Samitis, wherever they exist, are merely in name.
- (4) The mal-bap mentality still continues in the backward class communities. The educated youth may be happy exceptions.
- (5) Women, Harijan members and Adivasi Members of the Gram Panchayats hardly participate in the proceedings of the Gram Panchayats.

(6) The administration of primary education has not improved to any significant extent. The administrators continue to be bureaucratic in their attitude to popular leaders.

(7) The officials adopt largely a detached attitude while working with Panchayat leaders or they create obstacles and hurdles.

(8) The Panchayati Raj experiment has little succeeded in Civic training, development orientation and in an urge for social change and better education.

Sane (1960) investigated the condition of primary education in the educationally backward parts of the Poona Municipal Corporation area with special reference to (a) non-attendance of pupils coming under the provision of the State Primary Education Act of 1947 and (b) irregular attendance of pupils actually under instruction. The study was a Ph.D. thesis in education submitted to the Poona University. The main findings of the Study were as under:

- (1) Girls' education was neglected due to age-long antagonistic tradition and social prejudices.
- (2) There was inadequate appreciation of the fruits that would accrue to families if boys and girls receive school education regularly.

- (3) There was imperceptible slow social change.
 - (4) Orphans and children of disrupted families received practically little help from local bodies to enable them to continue their schooling .
 - (5) Enforcement of the provisions of the compulsory Education Act was superfluous and halting.
 - (6) The leaders of local bodies did very little to push ahead the progress of primary education.
 - (7) The teachers as well as students needed more disciplinary measures. The school leadership was rather slack.
 - (8) Instruction imparted in schools was not perceived as useful or important. by parents of the school-going children.
 - (9) Children avoided classes as they could not adjust to the crowded classes and school discipline.
 - (10) Teachers failed to motivate children and create in them an urge for education.
 - (11) Supervision and inspection needed improvement.
 - (12) Domestic difficulties and lack of hygienic facilities were also responsible largely for irregular attendance.
- (b) Abuse of Power by Panchayat Leaders

How the Panchayati Raj leaders abuse their powers in relation to the administration of primary education can be seen from the results of a study that forms a part of the Report of the Rajasthan State Primary Education Committee (1963)

"In the 184 Panchayat Samitis which furnished data to the Committee, 1,554 teachers were transferred within a year and 1,511 within two years during 1960-61. In 1962-63, as many as 5,516 teachers, constituting 27 percent of the total were transferred, of those 3,008 within one year of their last posting and 1,599 within two years. One teacher was found to be transferred ten times within a year" (Pages 75-76).

Two things seem to facilitate the misuse of the power of transfer of primary teachers by the Panchayat leaders, viz., one, there are no guidelines or conventions regarding transfer and two, the Panchayat Samitis unfortunately regard transfer as a kind of punishment to be meted out to indisciplined teachers.

(c) Active Participation of Members in Decision-Making

A report of the Evaluation Organization set up by the Government of Rajasthan during 1961-62 reveals that so far as the role of the Standing Committees of the Panchayat Samities in respect of primary education is concerned, there was not much achievement. Only 12.1 percent of the members participated in the meetings and as many as 20.7 percent did not participate at all. Further, a fairly large number of meetings on education lasted for only 15 minutes - in the case of the Committee on Social Services it was 30 minutes. "Hardly, any business could have been

transacted in such meetings and they were probably called to complete the formality of doing so." (p.60). The study further revealed that the Standing Committees on Primary Education at Block level did not seek the guidance of technical experts in 40 percent cases.

(d) Community Participation

Patel (1972) has studied community participation in the development of education in Gujarat for the period 1966-67 to 1969-70. He has shown how economic and other barriers throttle the efforts in the enforcement of primary education in backward areas. Gujarat State has moved in the direction of securing community efforts, through the Panchayati Raj bodies, in overcoming the economic barriers by creating facilities of providing books and slates free of cost, uniforms free of cost or at cheaper rates, free mid-day meals, part-time education etc. In 1966-67 the money spent on mid-day meals, sanitation, drinking water uniforms, books and slates, reading rooms, miscellaneous activities like cultural programmes, sports, festivals etc. collect^{ed} from community support was amount Rs. 1.35 lakhs. It rose to Rs.2.51 lakhs in 1969-70, The total popular contribution towards land and school buildings, teaching aids and miscellaneous services was about Rs. 21.24 lakhs in 1966-67 and it improved to about Rs.31.17

lakhs in 1969-70. Patel concludes that the trend in the increasing public contribution for primary education reflects the aroused consciousness of the people, and incidentally the Panchayati Raj bodies, towards the basic requirements of the rural primary schools and their keen interest in primary education.

(e) Impact on School Improvement

The State Institute of Education, Gujarat State undertook a study (1968) involving evaluation of the school improvement programme launched by it some years back. This study covered four districts of Gujarat. The sample consisted of the Group Centres set up by the SIE in the districts. The tools used were questionnaires and rating scales. The tools were administered to supervisors, conveners of Group Centres, the School Inspectors and the Administration Officers of the districts. The following were the four major findings :

- (1) There was a lot of community cooperation as a result of which the school buildings, rooms teaching aids and other physical as well as educational facilities were given by the rural community to the local primary schools. The Panchayat leadership at the gram level also played a useful role in this.

- (2) Group meetings were very effective in bringing home the ideas about new trends to the teachers.
- (3) Demonstration of science experiments proved to be very helpful to the teachers.
- (4) The ~~P~~Primary Teachers Training institutions and the neighbouring secondary schools helped the primary teachers in their academic growth.

2.8 Wastage and Stagnation

One of the basic assumptions in decentralising administration of primary education to the Panchayati Raj institutions, particularly at the Gram level, was that its leaders would have a close day-to-day contact with the members of the local community, and they will not only create in them more and sustained interest in sending their sons and daughters to school, but will keep them in schools till they complete successfully primary education of seven years' duration. This assumption seems not to have been borne out in actual practice. The retention of primary school children in Gujarat, as elsewhere in the country is very poor, resulting in colossal wastage of time, money and efforts being spent on educating children of the compulsory age.

The review of selected researches is presented here which throws significant light on the problem of wastage and stagnation and on their various dimensions and determinant factors.

A study (1973) of Group of Gujarat's Draft Fifth Plan surveyed the problem of wastage in most of the regions of Gujarat State. It found a low rate of continuing

studies by children. Of the every 100 children who get admitted in primary school class ~~only one~~ out of 40 reaches upto class four and in the primary course of seven years only 22 complete successfully class seventh. The rates of both stagnation and wastage were found to be quite high in class one and two. The Study Group further found that of the total non-attending children of the school age, 80 percent were from three main groups, viz. (1) girls, (2) children ~~of~~ landless labourers and (3) Scheduled Castes and tribes. Girls drop out more than boys before completing their primary education. Children from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes drop out at a faster and higher rate.

A comparative study (1971) of district-wise dropouts of boys and girls of school-going age was made by the State Institute of Education in classes I to VII covering a period between 1963-64 and 1969-70. The drop-out rate was slightly higher in the case of boys than in the case of girls - it was 48.42 percent for boys ~~and~~ against 48.36 percent for girls. There were district-wise variations both in the case of boys and girls. In Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Mehsana, Valsad, Surat, Rajkot, Gandhinagar and Dangs, the drop-out rate was higher in boys than in girls - the range of variation was 1.20 percent in Rajkot District to 10.0 percent in Gandhinagar with a mean variation of

6.73 percent. The drop-out among girls was lowest in Dangs District (11.61 percent) and the highest in Kutch District (73.29 percent). The districts that had drop-out percentage for girls below 40 percent and between 40 and 50 percent were Ahmedabad (40.12 percent), Amreli (47.33 percent), Kheda (46.50 percent), Panchamahals (49.57 percent), Banaskantha (36.36 percent), Valsad (42.16 percent), Surat (33.00 p.c.), Gandhinagar (40.33 percent) and Dangs (11.51 percent).

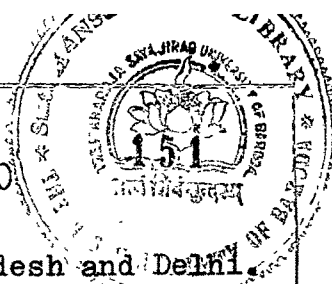
Joshi (1973) studied the rate of wastage and stagnation in classes I to IV in Surat District. He made taluka-wise analysis of the percentages of wastage and stagnation. It ranged from 90.16 percent in Uchhal taluka to 58.88 percent in Choryasi taluka, with a mean of 72.38 percent. The rate was quite high in all the talukas of the district, but particularly in the talukas of Palsana, Vyara, Valod, Mahuva, Mandvi, Songadh, and Uchhal. Of these talukas Mandvi, Vyara, Uchhal and Songadh are resided predominantly by backward communities. Wastage rate is comparatively lower in Choryasi, Kamrej, Olpad, Bardoli and Mangrol talukas as they have better socio-economic conditions and have more urban influences.

Panigrahi, Das and Das (1972) of the State Institute of Education in Orissa State Studied Stagnation in elementary education. Five educational districts in Orissa representing five linguistic zones of the State were selected for collection of the data. The cases studied included 280 students in Class II and 276 students of Class III. In order to draw a dividing line between students who were below par and those who could make up the deficiency in higher classes, the 'passable limit' was computed.

The significant findings of the study were four, viz.,

- (1) There was little improvement in the performance of 50 percent students inspite of spending one more year in the same grade; and
- (2) Most of the pupils in 'low group' did not have books and other instructional materials and their mother tongue was different from the regional language.
- (3) The educational causes were coupled with economic backwardness.
- (4) The Panchayat leaders did not interest themselves with such problems of wastage and stagnation.

Sharma and Sapra (1969) surveyed the problems of wastage and stagnation in primary and middle schools. A sample of cases of 790 drop-outs and 485 stay-in-cases was selected from 92 schools selected from the States of



Punjab, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

Pupil information sheets were used for collecting data about the students contributing to wastage and stagnation in the schools covered Under the study. Interviews were also conducted in the case of some drop outs as well as their parents. The data were subjected to statistical treatment and interpretation. Eighteen important findings emerged from the research. They were as under :

- (1) Wastage and stagnation is 65 percent by the time children reach Class V and rises upto 78 percent in Class VIII.
- (2) About 50 percent of wastage is noticed in Class I itself. This gets reduced as the child moves up the ladder.
- (3) Incidence of wastage and stagnation is more in the case of girls than in the case of boys.
- (4) Wastage and stagnation remained constant at both primary and middle levels during the past decade despite the fact that the per capita expenditure in primary school has considerably increased.
- (5) Wastage is more in the Shift system schools and it is higher in double shift system schools than in single Shift system schools.
- (6) The rate of dropout is negatively related, to the qualifications and the per capita income of teachers.

- (7) The number of dropout is negatively correlated with the cocurricular activities in the school.
- (8) Distance of the teachers' residence from the school and teacher-pupil ratio are positively correlated with wastage.
- (9) Academic achievement is superior for the stay-ins than for the dropouts.
- (10) Higher age levels and lower attendance are noticeable among dropouts.
- (11) Stay-in hold leadership assignments in schools and perceive that their parents attach higher significance to education.
- (12) More dropouts are reported from small size families.
- (13) Dropouts are from nuclear families whon have suffered death of one or both the parents.
- (14) Dropouts^{are} usually older in age and come from families of low income group.
- (15) Some of the parents of drop-outs are insensible to the physical facilities available of the school and perceive no need for the education of their children.
- (16) 43 percent of dropouts are from rural area.

(17) Illness, mental retardation, economic backwardness, social mal-adjustment, home problems etc. are some of the factors responsible for the dropouts of some children from schools.

(18) Attendance, parents' view of children's performance, motivation for learning at home, caste and age at the time of admission are some of the discriminating factors between the dropouts and stay-ins.

2.9 Equality of Educational Opportunity for Weaker Sections of Society.

Another assumption in the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system in the country was to improve the equality of opportunity for weaker sections and backward classes of the society. Kothari Commission (1964-66) has described this as 'social objectives of education' (para 6.01). It is an important and vital objective of education because only by working towards its achievement, backward communities and weaker sections of the society ~~are~~ enabled to use education as a lever for the improvement of their social, economic, political and cultural condition.

Desai (1965) has shown that gross inequality of educational opportunity exists in different districts of Gujarat in backward and women sections of the society.

In another study piloted by the Department of Education on behalf of the Gujarat Planning Committee (1972) it was found that from the weaker sections of the society, viz., women, landless labourers and aboriginal ~~types~~, 80 percent of the total non-enrolled or the non-attending children are drawn.

In a study sponsored by the Working Group of the Gujarat Perspective Planning Committee for Education (1974-1984) the factors of lower enrolment of girls and lower enrolment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were identified as hurdles to the achievement of the Constitutional directive for universal education in the age-group 6-14 in Gujarat, implying thereby that equality of educational opportunity has not been established in Gujarat, is equally true of several other States in India.

The Gujarat Perspective Plan : 1974-1984 (1972) showed that the percentage of enrolment of girls to the total girls population of the corresponding age-groups was very low in Gujarat in the districts of Banaskantha (25.6 percent) Panchamahals (39.2 percent), Kutch (43.9 percent), Surendranagar (51.5 percent), Bhavnagar (51.7 percent), Junagadh (55.3 percent) and in Jamnagar (55.6 percent). The study showed that in the Saurashtra-Kutch Region and Northern and Eastern Gujarat Districts, the inequality of educational

opportunities prevail.

Rajan (1964) has identified five-six States - Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu-Kashmir from where nearly 47.8 percent of the non-attending girls come. This shows that girls have unequal educational opportunities in these States.

In certain districts like the Panchamahals, Bhaach and Surat, the population of the aboriginal tribes is of significant size. In these districts, the literacy percentages do not rise up far despite the corresponding substantial rise in the literacy figures of other sections of the society. This is because the educational opportunities for these people continue to be still inadequate.

The progress of primary education had always been comparatively slower among the school-going children of the scheduled castes and of the scheduled tribes. But after the attainment of independence, the scheduled castes seem to be catching up. Srikant (1964) in a study on the elementary education of the backward classes concludes that advance made by the scheduled castes in primary education exceeds that of the total population in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra; the gap in the enrolment of the scheduled castes and the total population is not wide in

Tamil Nadu or West Bengal; but it is wide enough in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and particularly in Rajasthan. This shows that though in some parts the educational opportunities for the scheduled castes are improving, in some it still continues to be unsatisfactory and inadequate. It accentuates the need for directing more planned efforts of the Panchayat bodies to reduce the gap and improve the educational opportunities.

In India, as in Africa, the concentration of the tribal population has ^{been} the highest. Over seven percent of the population of the country is tribal. Gujarat is the second best State, after Madhya Pradesh (20.6 percent), where the tribal population is concentrated most (i.e. 13.3 percent). Srikant's study also showed that the percentage of scheduled tribe children enrolled in primary schools to the total enrolment ranged from 0.1 percent in the Punjab to 12.4 percent in Gujarat at the lower primary stage and from 0.1 percent in Punjab and Tamil Nadu to 7.5 percent in Gujarat. However, Srikant's conclusion is revealing and throws flood of light on the inequality of educational opportunities prevailing among the scheduled tribes :

"At the primary stage, the enrolment of scheduled tribes is generally lower than that of the total population. The difference between the two is not wide in Bihar, Gujarat, Madras, (Tamil Nadu), and Mysore (Karnatak); and in Maharashtra, the ~~population~~ of the enrolment of scheduled tribal children is a little higher than the proportion of scheduled tribes population to the total. In the remaining States, the gap between the education of scheduled tribes and the total population is wide and the position appears to be serious in Rajasthan." (pages 187-8)

The findings of this study provide a pointer to the Panchayati Raj bodies to strengthen their efforts to expand the facilities for education among scheduled tribes. ✓

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