

CHAPTER - VI

THE INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND THE PANCHAYATS AT WORK

"The utility of Panchayati Raj institutions is not appreciated by those below the level of Sarpanch - those who may be called the Panchayat incarnate. This has naturally made the Sarpanch a very important and powerful functionary who is tempted to mis-use his position by the sheer docility of other panchayat-members.

- A Case Study in Jaipur District.

CONTENTS

- o Approaches of study
- o Meetings of Gram Panchayats
- o Meetings of Jilla Shikshan Samitis
- o Panchayats at work
- o Evaluation : Achievements and Failures
- o Impact on Expansion of Primary Education
- o The over-all emerging picture

of meetings attended by the Sarpanchs and upa-sarpanchs, the attendance of the members in the meetings of the Gram Panchayats, the proportion of the items related to education on the agenda of the Panchayat Meetings, the leadership role performed by the Sarpanch, the interest displayed by the members in the meetings of the Panchayat, the manner in which the Panchayat's meetings are conducted, and so on. Some of these aspects in relation to Jilla Shikshan Samitis are also covered. The evaluation presented includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

6.2 Meetings of Gram Panchayats

There are wide variations in the number of meetings in the 82 Gram Panchayats studied. This is because no fixed rules seem to govern the calling of the Panchayat meetings. In 1969, in the 82 Gram Panchayats, totally, 655 meetings were held. The average per Gram Panchayat works out at 8 which is rather too small a number. Table XLII shows the number of meetings of the 82 gram Panchayats in South Gujarat and the attendance of Sarpanchs and deputy sarpanchs.

TABLE-XL

The Number of Meetings and the Attendance of
Sarpanchs and Upa-Sarpanchs

	1969	1970	1971
1. Meetings called	655	688	733
2. Number of Meetings per a Gram Panchayat.	8	8.4	8.9
3. No. of meetings where Sarpanchs were present.	513	564	599
4. Average per Sarpach . (or about	5.7 6	6.8 7	7.3 7)
5. No. of meetings where ^{Upa-} Sarpanchs were present.	572	510	604
6. Average per Upa-sarpanch. (or about	7 7	6.2 6	7.3 7)

The Table shows that even the sarpanchs and Upa-sarpanchs do not attend all the meetings of Gram Panchayats.

The field-study further revealed that in 1971 in 234 meetings out of the total 733 meetings held in the 82 Gram Panchayats, 100 percent attendance was there, in 181 meetings, 75 to 99 percent of the panchs were present,

in 91 meetings 74 to 50 percent of the panchs were present and in 15 meetings only 49 to 25 percent of panchs were present. This casts some doubt about the real the sincerity of Sarpanchs, Upa-Sarpanchs and Panchs in serving the village community. At least the leaders, i.e. Sarpanchs and Upa-sarpanchs, can and should, attend all the meetings of Gram Panchayats as it is within their powers to fix up date convenient to them. Of course, physical illness of the leader is a different matter and it can be excused.

One peculiar problem that the Gram Panchayats seem to face usually is the adjournment of meetings due to lack of quorum. Unfortunately, there is no provision in the Panchayat Act for the recall of meetings which are adjourned due to lack of quorum. In the present study, 43 meetings in 1969, 48 in 1970 and 55 in 1971 had to be adjourned owing to lack of quorum. This phenomenon also shows that there is not that intensity of interest in the affairs of the Gram Panchayts among their members which ought to be there in democratically functioning bodies.

The Investigator was told that the agenda is usually prepared by the Gram Panchayat Secretary in consultation with the Sarpanch. It is fixed on the notice board of the Panchayat Office. Usually, it is not individually circulated

to the panchs, unless some of them insist upon for circulation. This practice takes away the focus. The agenda does not receive formal attention on the part of the panchs.

Further, it was found that officials are reluctant to attend the meetings of Gram Panchayats when they are held on Sundays or any other holidays. When the Vikas Adhikari is to be present, the attendance at meetings is pretty good.

In the agenda of Gram Panchayats, items related to education figure not so frequently : In 1971, in 35 meetings of the total 733 meetings held, in the 83 Gram Panchayats 1 to 10 percent items pertained to education in 3 meetings it was to the extent of 10 to 20 percent; in 13 meetings, it was 20 to 30 percent and in 10 cases it was to the extent of 40 to 50 percent. Thus the item 'education' figures very little on the agenda of the Gram Panchayats in South Gujarat.

In one study on Panchayat Raj in Rajasthan, it was observed that "though it is very difficult to hold a Panchayat meeting, yet once a meeting begins, it is seldom a dull event, as all matters from local gossip to government administration are discussed." Though a panchayat is mainly in charge of development work, all types of problems

encountered in the panchayat area are discussed at these meetings. The average villager (panchs and sarpanchs being no exception) considers Panchayat to be an all purpose service station." (1) These observations can be made about the Panchayats in South Gujarat as well.

The extent of participation of panchs in the discussion of the Gram Panchayats is, by and large, below the extent and intensity that is expected of a democratic government unit. The panchs usually await the sarpanch or some other official who is present to initiate discussion.

In the present Field Investigation, in 82 Gram Panchayats as a whole, only in 16 cases the attitude of the Sarpanchs was found to be democratic and encouraging to promote participation among panchs in the proceedings of the Gram Panchayats. In 58 cases, the attitude was found dictatorial and authoritarian. In 8 cases, it was uncertain and vacillating.

A rating on some important aspects of their functioning was obtained on a four-point scale. The raters were the sarpanchs, upa-sarpanchs, and Government officials. The results of the ratings embody the pooled judgement of the raters. Table XLIII gives the results of these ratings on the interest and participation of the panchs in the proceedings of the meetings of Gram Panchayats in particular and in the activities and programmes of the Gram Panchayats in general.

TABLE - XLI

Qualitative Analysis of the Participation of Panchs in
the Proceedings of the Meetings of Gram Panchayats

(Figures show percentages)

Quality of Participation:	Comp- letely true.	Partia- lly true.	Some- what true.	Not at all true.
1. Passive listening and absorption.	32.93	24.39	23.17	19.91
2. Toeing the line of the sarpanch.	39.02	25.60	23.17	12.20
3. Well informed discussion.	13.43	9.75	47.56	29.27
4. Intelligent discussion.	15.85	28.05	26.83	29.27
5. Frank expression of views by panchs.	8.54	15.85	23.17	52.44
6. Part in the decision making process.	20.73	19.51	35.37	24.39
7. Pre-designed opposition	28.05	14.62	17.09	40.24
8. Forcing decision making for the benefits of caste groups.	7.41	37.81	30.47	24.31
9. Political affiliations finding expression.	23.17	51.21	12.20	13.42
10. Resultant factors and divisions.	17.09	53.62	12.20	17.09
11. Protest on the ruling of the chair shown by panchs by Staging a walk-out from the meetings.	18.40	13.42	10.93	57.25

From this, one gets a fairly good picture of the institutional behaviour pattern of the members of the Gram Panchayats. The Investigator got a general feel that though the panchs are not very much enthusiastic about their participation in the work of the Gram Panchayats, the situation has been showing signs of improvement. Things in this respect were somewhat better in 1971, than was the case in 1969. Panchs, however, still continue to be inwardly disinterested in the affairs of Gram Panchayats. Even when they attend the meetings, one-third are passive listeners, which is also partially true in the case of other 24.39 percents of the members. Only about one-fifth of the total panchs can be said to be active. About 40 to 60 percent normally prefer to toe the line of thinking adopted by their sarpanch. This is understandable when the Sarpanch and the majority of panchs belong to the same political party. Quite a sizable proportion of panchs often does not participate at all in the proceedings of the Panchayats. The Investigator got a feeling that there were very few occasions when the panchs would take any initiative in ^{the} deliberations of the meetings of Gram Panchayats. In any case, the panchs are by no means active partners to the decision-making process of the gram Panchayats and to that extent the experiment of democratic decentralised pattern in rural communities has not succeeded.

Well informed discussion hardly takes place in Gram Panchayats. Here, the Government officers attending the meetings can play an enlightening and guiding role. The panchs of the Gram Panchayats also need in-position further training and education. They should know what should be their areas of concern and initiative and how their participation can increase and be made more effective. The Field Study shows that indulgence in frank expression of views is true, more or less, about one quarter of the total members, with nearly half of them either not speaking at all or not expressing their views frankly and fearlessly. Only 40 percent or so, more or less take part in the decision-making process of the Gram Panchayats.

The results of the Field-study further show that there are present, but not very much, pre-designed plans of opposition to the decision-making of Sarpanchs/Upa-Sarpanchs. The incidence is to the extent of about 40 percent which is certainly not small.

Equally disturbing is a large measures of attempts (about 40 percent) to force decisions of the Gram Panchayats for the benefits of Caste-groups.

Political affiliations find expression in about 70 cases. The resultant factions and divisions find place also in about 70 percent cases.

The gratifying feature is that the incidence of staging of walk-outs occurs only occasionally.

An attempt was also made in the Field Study to get an overall picture of the functioning of the meetings of the Panchayats in the case of 82 Gram Panchayats. The ratings are given below in Table No. XLII.

TABLE - XLII.

Ratings of the Over-all Functioning of the Panchayat Meetings in 82 Gram Panchayats

	Percentages of cases in which this was true			
	1 - 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100
1. Fully quiet, smooth and productive.	19	13	18	33
2. Partially quiet, smooth and productive	16	16	4	20
3. Turbulent and hardly productive.	4	-	--	-
4. Routine, mechanical and non-productive.	31	4	3	1

The results of the Field Study point out to a very distressing conclusion, viz. the utility of Panchayat Raj is not appreciated as much as it was expected when this challenging experiment in decentralised democratisation of government and administration was planned, by those below the level of Sarpanch- those whom Mathur calls

'the Panchayat incarnate'. This has naturally made the Sarpanch, and to some extent the Upa-Sarpanch, a very important and powerful functionary. With the large scale passivity on the part of the panchs, it is possible for the sarpanchs and upa-sarpanchs to misuse their position and office. The Investigator got a feeling that this largely happens in many Gram Panchayats.

The percentages show the number of villages in which this opinion was held by prominent members of the local rural community.

The fact that even 40 percent of the local prominent citizens think that the members of Gram Panchayat are not interested in the welfare of the local community is indeed a disturbing fact. This would certainly affect adversely the image of these leaders in their efforts to expand and improve the quality of primary education facilities for local children. It would adversely affect in particular the co-operation of the local community in their efforts to provide student-welfare programmes. Another equally disturbing fact is the perception of local people that the panchs' involvement and participation in the decision-making process is unsatisfactory. This shows that the villagers from whom the panchs come have not yet the real taste of self-government. Without this sense of self-government on the part of the villages, their initiative

interest and involvement in community welfare and development programme, including that of primary education will not fructify. In the wake of authoritarian tradition, the office of the Sarpanch has assumed around it so much of weight. This feeling was expressed to the Investigator by the two-thirds of the respondents.

The Panchas should be helped through proper training to improve the quality of their leadership. The panchas should be helped to come out of their shell of retirement, passivity and dumb obedience. The political parties, too have to play their role in developing political maturity in the electorate and the elected people. This they can do by selecting such of the candidates to represent them in elections as have a good record of public service, a healthy attitude to problems and developmental needs of local community including education, and having the quality of dynamism in their nature and action.

TABLE - XLIII

Opinion of the Reputed Citizens regarding
the working of the Local Gram Panchayats

Opinion Statements	Percentage of those in agreement with the Statement.
1. Members of the Panchayat are least interested in rural community welfare and are the least articulate.	39.02
2. The local rural lack all initiative	43.90
3. Most Gram Panchayats are economically not viable units and are weak in resources.	70.73
4. The office of the Sarpanch has assumed around it so much of weight.	76.6
5. Sarpanchs are interested more in concentrating the powers in their hands rather than sharing them with other panchs.	84.1
6. In the election of Gram Panchayats, the most dominant factor is caste.	70.49
7. Political maturity is lacking in the village people.	80.9
8. There is a positive tendency in the rural community to prefer younger leaders.	66.34
9. Leadership should not be an exclusive prerogative of higher caste groups.	88.05
10. Sarpanch can belong to any occupation group.	74.9

6.3 Meetings of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis

According to the Gujarat Panchayat Act, a Jilla Shikshan Samiti should meet at least four times a year. This requirement is not always fulfilled. This can be seen from the table below.

TABLE - XLIV

Number of Meetings of Jilla Shikshan Samitis
held in the Last three Years (1969-70-1971-72)

Jilla Shikshan Samiti.	No. of Meetings held in		
	1969-70	: 1970-71	: 1971-72
Surat	4	5	6
Valsad	3	2	5
Bharuch	4	3	4

It will be thus seen that the requirements of the Act are not scrupulously met with in South Gujarat.

This sorry state of affairs in most cases can be attributed to lapse on the part of the presidents of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis and a sense of commitment to the cause of primary education on the part of some of the defaulting Presidents of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis.

The Investigator was told that the meetings of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis are usually smooth and non-turbulent affairs. In 80 percent of the cases, the proposals from the chair are accepted. The remaining 20 percent of the items of the agenda are also cleared after minor clarifications or discussion. One is disappointed in find the absence of deep and sustained interest in the items of the agenda on the part of the members. The initiative is taken either by the President or some government officers. Nominated members participate more and more fully than the elected members. It is a pity that elected members are very often do not have - and they do not bother to have- detailed data about items of the agenda and they are satisfied with whatever explanations and clarifications given by the President or the government officers present in the meetings. This means that higher level of the rural community leadership as reflected in the membership of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti are intrinsically not interested in the problems of educational welfare of the people.

Table XLII gives the opinions of reputed local citizens - persons who are connected, in one way or the other, with the work of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti like prominent parents, district development officers, school principals & government inspectors, on the working of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis. The percentages are worked out on the basis of responses in the case of the Shikshan Samities of the district of Surat, Valsad and Broach.

TABLE - XLV

Opinions of the Reputed Local Citizens regarding the
working of Jilla Panchayats of Surat, Bulsar and
Broach Districts

Statements	Percentage of those who are in agreement with the statement.
1. Members of the Jilla Panchayat are least interested in Rural Community welfare and are the least articulate.	37.73
2. The leaders lack the initiative	39.23
3. Jilla Panchayats are economically not viable and are weak in resources.	69.78
4. The office of the president has assumed around it so much of weight.	64.39
5. Presidents are interested more in concentrating the powers in their hands rather than sharing them with other members.	63.28
6. Jilla Panchayat elections are dominated by caste-factor.	71.21
7. Political maturity has not yet been achieved.	81.23
8. There is positive tendency in the rural community to prefer younger leaders.	53.41
9. Leadership should not be an exclusive prerogative of higher caste-groups.	80.63
10. President can belong to any occupation group.	72.61

The analysis of the responses also supports the general conclusion that the Shikshan Samitis are not well motivated, well interested, dynamic type of democratic organisations. About 38 percent of the members of the Samitis are just "passengers" not interested genuinely in the welfare of the rural community and are least articulate. The Samiti seems not to have determined and dynamic leadership. About 39 percent of the opinion indicated that the leadership lacks initiative. A large proportion- about 70 percent - of the respondents attributed the weak functioning of the Shikshan Samitis to their inadequate resources. When the basic resources are inadequate it is understandable that members are less enthusiastic about the work expected of them. The opinion-survey also supports the earlier deduction that the office of the President of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti has assumed around it too much of weight and focus. The story that the factor of caste is a dominant determinant in the panchayat election is echoed here, also. About 71 percent of the respondents have affirmed the operation of the caste factor in the election of Shikshan Samitis.

The findings also support an earlier observation that democratic units of administration in the Panchayati Raj have not yet been able to achieve maturity.

About the other three facets of the working of the Shikshan Samitis, the evaluation is that there is a positive tendency in the rural community to prefer younger leaders, leadership is not an exclusive prerogative of higher caste groups and presidents can belong to any occupational group.

The pulled ratings on the performance of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti on the performance of some of the tasks assigned are given in Table XLVIII.

The results are not encouraging. They do not support the claim of the Zeenabhai Darji Committee (1972) that the members of the Jilla Panchayats and Shikshan Samitis take increased interest in the development of primary education in rural Gujarat. In the tasks assigned to the Jilla Shikshan Samiti, 30 to 40 percent ratings were either very good or good. In the performance of the assigned tasks like the census of illiterates, procuring houses for Harijan teachers, providing land for the school farm, arranging raw materials for craft, organising enrolment drives, conducting campaigns for improvement of school attendance, providing for school uniform to the poor, supplying free mid-day meals, writing materials and ensuring health of the school children, the performance of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis failed to satisfy local rural leaders to the extent of 7 to 45 percent.

TABLE - XLVII

Pulled Ratings of the Performance of Jilla
Shikshan Samitis (Broach, Surat and Valsad)
on some of the Tasks assigned

Assigned Tasks	Ratings			
	Very Good	Good	Not quite good but not bad	not at all
1. Distributing illiterates and organising literacy campaigns.	6.56	18.42	34.62	40.30
2. Providing accommodation to Harijan teachers.	23.00	24.30	29.41	31.29
3. Providing land for a farm.	14.39	18.22	22.41	44.98
4. Arranging raw materials for craft.	16.72	26.78	37.72	18.78
5. Organising enrolment drives.	10.64	21.36	24.39	44.61
6. Conducting campaigns for regular attendance.	10.75	19.25	36.64	33.36
7. Providing school uniform to the poor.	14.73	39.45	38.92	6.90
8. Supplying free mid-day meals.	25.37	35.44	30.42	8.77
9. Supplying free writing material	05.22	27.23	60.15	7.40
10. Providing free and healthy drinking water.	68.75	15.23	8.27	7.75

6.4 The Panchayati Raj Bodies at work :
The Programme

Apart from the programmes of universality of school provision, universality of school enrolment and universality of retention, the Jilla Shikshan Samitis have begun a number of activities to improve the qualitative improvement of primary education. In 1964, the State Institute of Education, had formulated an inservice programme of school improvement at the primary stage to be introduced all throughout the State. The State Institute of Education had selected Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Sabarkantha and Broach districts as pilot districts for the preliminary try-out of the intensive school improvement programme.

Bharuch Jilla Shikshan Samiti

From South Gujarat, Bharuch District was included in the programme of intensive improvement of primary education because educationally, the district was the most backward district in the region excepting the Dangs District. In 1970-71 there were 1073 primary schools in Broach District. These schools were distributed in 120 group centres. Under this programme, the primary schools situated within a radius of 5 miles were grouped together under a centre. The principal of a training college or the head of a high school or failing both the head of a full-fledged primary school was made the Chairman of

the group centre. To this Chairman was entrusted the task of developing the primary schools constituting the centre through guidance, assistance and joint planning. The idea of the group centre was a modified idea of a school complex set forth by the Kothari Education Commission. It is claimed that the group centres have been able to create a stimulating effect on the otherwise dull and drab primary school teachers. A kind of enthusiasm is generated among the local community to strengthen equipment, aids, instructional materials and teaching in primary schools. An element of pre-planned instructional activities has found a place in teaching in these schools. No objective and comprehensive data on the evaluation of the functioning of these Group Centres are available at present and, therefore, nothing definite can be said about the achievements of this programme. But it has definitely improved the tone and climate in the primary schools and to some extent in the Jilla Shikshan Samiti.

In 1968-69, the Government began the implementation of the New Primary School Syllabus. This new Syllabus was introduced in classes I and II in 1968-69 and in classes III and IV in 1969-70. The Jilla Shikshan Samiti, under the leadership and guidance of the State Institute of Education, began developing clear detailed outlines of the syllabus and for its implementation several seminars

and refresher courses were organised for teachers and headmasters of primary schools. Because of this democratic involvement of the Panchayati Raj members, administrators and teachers in the inservice training programme the new purposeful syllabus received a much better acceptance at the hands of primary schools and the public in Bharuch District. Some of the items of the programmes of the Bharuch Jilla Shikshan Samiti in 1970-71 and 1971-72 were as under :

- Organisation of Best School Shield Competition and Best Teacher Medal Competition. In the Shield competition, in 1969-70 18 schools and 18 best taluka teachers had participated;
- Organisation of group meetings of teachers at the Taluka or Beat level;
- Enrichment of Science teaching in primary schools;
- Provision of a number of educational journals in Gujarati to each group centre;
- Provision of maps, charts and pictures worth Rs. 250/- to three schools recommended by the S.I.E.,
- Organisation of essay-writing competition for primary school teachers;
- Holding of convention of primary teachers to discuss their problems. (In 1970-71, 2000 teachers had participated in the Convention.)

- Introducing planned and improved examination by constituting Taluka Pariksha Samitis, each one of which plans and conducts annual examinations of all the primary schools situated in the taluka on a uniform pattern;
- Provision of special grant for schools of backward talukas. (In Broach District, 7 of the Talukas are backward. In 1970-71, the schools in these talukas were given a grant of Rs. 71,160 of which Rs. 53,160 were used for strengthening the instructional aids and materials of the schools. From this grant, Rs. 18000/- were spent on providing free writing materials and books to poor and needy children. This grant came from Government funds.)

Other programmes of the Broach Jilla Shikshan Samiti include the construction of 13 classrooms and residential quarters for women teachers of the backward areas. The State Government has provided a grant of Rs. 47,880, but the people have to contribute 30 percent of the total cost. The popular contribution leaves much to be desired. The Samiti has also a scheme of erecting every year 130 residential quarters. Efforts are being made to get a loan of Rs. 78,42,000 from the L.I.C. through the recommendations of the State Government. Celebration of festivals, parents' day, national days are the usual items of the programmes. The Samiti had organised an intensive literacy drive in the Dadiapada Taluka for

which it has got the shield from the State Social Education Samiti. There are 390 village libraries in the district. The Samiti helped these libraries in 1970-71 with a grant of Rs. 14,582.

Surat Jilla Shikshan Samiti

Of all the Jilla Shikshan Samitis in South Gujarat, the Shikshan Samiti of Surat District has a better organised and better planned programme. Its programme seeks to bring about improvement in various aspects of facets of primary education in the district.

For supervision and inspection of the work of the 1339 primary schools in the district, the Samiti has provided for 28 Beat Supervisors. Thus, the average number of primary schools per Beat Supervisor is 47.9, which is quite satisfactory.

The Surat Samiti has also tried to provide ^{an} Education Supervisor (administration) in each taluka. Out of the 13 Talukas, there is only one taluka where the office bearer is not trained.

The Samiti has also a planned programme for increasing the number of trained primary school teachers. Of the total 5009 teachers in position in 1970-71, only 52 or 1.03 percent were untrained. These untrained 52 primary

teachers (49 men and 3 women) were planned to be deputed for training in June 1972, so that these would not be a single untrained primary teacher left in the whole of the district in 1973. In any case, from 1974-75, all teachers in primary schools of the (South Gujarat) Surat district are expected to be trained ones.

In the district, there is considerable stress on Basic Education at the primary stage. Of the total 1382 primary schools in the district, 363 or 24.1 percent are of the Basic pattern. The Samiti has launched a plan of providing schools a Craft Director Teacher. The Samiti has also a programme of developing about 40 Basic schools each year into Model Basic Schools. For this programme, it spends additional Rs. 1000 per school. The State Government supports this Model Basic School programme of the Samiti by giving it a grant of Rs. 40,000 per year.

The Samiti has also a programme of undertaking special repairs to school buildings in villages. In 1970-71, a building loan of Rs. 1.22 lakhs was sanctioned to construct 37 classrooms in 29 villages.

The Samiti is also quite active in improving the school buildings of the primary schools. In 1970-71, of the total 1382 primary schools 69.9 percent had their own school buildings, 12.3 assembled in rented buildings and,

the remaining 17.8 percent met in rent-free buildings. The Samiti has been making efforts to secure people's contribution for erecting new school buildings. It has been also making efforts to build residential quarters for women teachers in backward and small sized villages. It sanctioned a grant of Rs. 6,900 to build simple living quarters in two villages in 1970-71. But the progress in this programme is on the whole, not at all satisfactory.

Among the other programmes of the Surat Jilla Shikshan Samiti are included the following :

- grant to private recognised primary schools;
- grant to village libraries;
- grant to 15 Balmandirs at the rate of 1/3 of their approved expenditure;
- implementation of the scheme of mid-day meals in 7 out of total 13 talukas with the cooperation of CARE;
- small income saving schemes for teacher and non-teacher personnel of the Samiti;
- administration of about 106 prize funds for the schools of the Surat and Valsad districts;
- Ukai Sarvodaya Yojana and Fulwadi Sarvodaya Yojana.
- Organisation of school complexes in 25 villages;
- conduct of 11 hostels for 572 school pupils;
- Kisan Literacy Scheme in Valod, Mangrol and Songadh talukas. (60 literacy classes, for which a grant of Rs.30,600 was sanctioned by the Central Government in 1970-71);

- planning of four-months school programme;
- organisation of competitions in Ras-Garba, vocal music, painting, drama, etc. for which a grant of Rs.2500/- was provided in the budget of 1971-72.

In 1971-72, the Samiti had a large budget of Rs.140/- lakhs. The Surat Jilla Panchayat Samiti is very well organised. Its annual reports are also among the few best in the State.

Valsad Jilla Shikshan Samiti

For many years, Valsad District was an integral part of the Surat District. It has, therefore, the advantage of the best traditions of the Surat District passed on to it in regard to progressive programmes of primary education. Many of its programmes follow the Surat pattern.

There are 1190 primary schools in the district. Of these, 287 are Basic Schools, 16 Ashram Schools and 22 Sarvodaya Schools. Of the total 5,163 primary teachers only 47 or less than one percent are untrained.

Like the Bharuch District, this District has also introduced the scheme of Group Centres . There were 112 Group Centres working in 1971-72. The main objective of these centres is to raise the standards of primary

education and to reduce the rate of wastage and stagnation. It has also succeeded in organising 41 school Complexes, each involving a secondary school a number of primary schools and upper primary (middle) schools.

Efforts have been particularly directed towards strengthening the teaching of science in primary schools with the help of science teachers of some high schools in each taluka. The primary teachers are helped to revise their knowledge of the contents of science, develop confidence in doing laboratory experiments and get acquainted with better techniques of teaching the subject.

In 5 talukas of the district - Gandevi, Dharampur, Vansda, Pardi and Umargam- the Scheme of Mid-Day Meals has been in operation for some time. Around 600 schools involving 28,426 children usually take the benefit of the Mid-day Meal Scheme.

A special programme of the Samiti is the scientific study of wastage and stagnation with the assistance of the officials of the S.I.E. and taking measures to reduce the vigour of these twin evils. This will be discussed in the next Chapter.

In rest of the programmes, Valsad follows, more or less, the Surat pattern. Ofcourse, the organisation and

implementation are not¹⁷⁾ equal magnitude and efficiency. Such is broadly the programme in operation in the Jilla Shikshan Samitis of Bharuch, Surat, and Valsad.

6.5 Evaluation of the Accomplishment of the Panchayati Raj in Primary Education

An attempt will now be made to present the achievements of the 82 Gram Panchayats of South Gujarat as perceived by local rural community leaders and Government officials connected with the work of the Panchayats. The results are in the form of qualitative ratings.

One of the tasks performed by some of the Gram Panchayats was to participate in educational planning at the grassroots. Unfortunately, this task-expectation was not done by all the Gram Panchayats included in the sample. However, the Investigator was told that about 30 to 40 percent Panchayats participated in one way or the other in the planning process. They mostly helped the Government officials in projecting the population. Ofcourse, it was in a crude way. This happened quite well in 19.5 percent of cases; it was somewhat good in the case of 20.7 percent; in the remaining 59.8 percent cases the participation was superfluous, casual and irregular. In the case of 30.5 percent cases, good help was provided in estimating additional classrooms required because of the

increased drive for compulsion and increase in population. This help was so,so in the case of 15.6 percent Panchayats; in the remaining 53.9 percent cases their involvement was in name only.

It was expected that Gram Panchayats would help in procuring land for the school play-ground and for procuring additional land where play ground area was found inadequate. In 39.02 percent cases very good help came forth from the Gram Panchayats. In 31.7 percent cases, help came forth from the Panchayats in expanding play fields and play facilities. In another 29 to 31 percent cases some efforts were made in this direction. But the remaining 40 percent cases were almost apathetic to this need of local primary schools.

The Gram Panchayats are also expected to undertake minor repairs in the school buildings and in making provision for not very expensive instructional aids and materials. The achievements of the Gram Panchayats in the matter of school repairs were rated as excellent by 31.7 percent respondents, good by 20.7 percent, not quite good by 23.2 percent and not of any consequence by 24.4 percent. The ratings in the case of their efforts to make provision for instructional aids and materials were : 24.4 percent excellent, 30.5 percent good, 24.4 percent not quite good and 20.7 percent no provision at all.

The Gram Panchayats performed some other functions also, as shown earlier, viz.,

- listing the illiterate adults
- persuading local community to provide residence
- providing land for the school farm
- providing raw material for the craft taught in the school
- organising enrolment drives;
- conducting campaigns for regular attendance of children already enrolled;
- procuring uniform for school children;
- supplying free mid-day meals;
- obtaining prizes for the gifted children;
- getting writing materials and textbooks for the poor;
- arranging for pure healthy drinking water;

Table VI summarises the evaluative ratings on a four point scale of the performances of the 82 gram panchayats of South Gujarat constituting the sample. The four-point rating scale used here is as follows.

A (excellent) denotes the position where the task is performed in a distinctly very good way. B (good) also denotes a position where the task-performance is quite good; C category denotes a situation which is not quite good, but it is not very bad also; and the last category D indicates the percentage of Gram Panchayats where

this task is not performed at all. The figures in the Table are in percentages. They denote the proportion of Gram Panchayats to which the rating applies.

It will be seen from the Table XLVII that in 40 to 50 percent of cases, the allotted tasks are pretty well done by the Gram Panchayats. But in one-third cases they are not done at all. To this extent, the experiment of decentralised democratic administration has not succeeded - it has failed. In the duration of a decade of the functioning of the Panchayati Raj in South Gujarat, the Panchayat bodies are making their impact to the extent of 40 percent. This should be considered, though a slow process, yet nevertheless it is gaining in effectiveness. One is, therefore, constrained to observe that the Panchayati Raj at the grass roots is not such a big disappointment in South Gujarat as it is usually alleged.

6.6. Expansion of Primary Education in South Gujarat

One of the hypotheses formulated in this study and the one which is to be tested in this Section - is whether the introduction of the Panchayati Raj has helped the quantitative expansion of primary education. This can be broadly tested by comparing the progress of education in primary education in the districts of South Gujarat before the introduction of the Panchayat Raj and after its implementation, i.e. the progress achieved in 1971.

TABLE - XLVII

Ratings of the Performance of 82 Gram Panchayats
on some of the Tasks Assigned

Task	Ratings			
	Very Good	Good	Not quite good, at all but not bad.	Not agreed
1. Listing illiterates and organising literacy classes.	15.8	24.5	21.9	37.8
2. Providing accommodation to Harijan teachers.	24.4	14.6	26.8	34.2
3. Providing land for a farm.	17.1	24.4	26.8	31.7
4. Providing raw materials for craft.	18.3	18.3	29.2	34.2
5. Organising enrolment drives.	15.8	21.9	24.5	37.8
6. Conducting campaigns for regular attendance.	21.9	24.4	24.5	29.2
7. Providing school uniforms for the poor.	19.8	25.8	24.5	29.9
8. Supplying free-day meals.	19.6	21.9	12.2	46.3
9. Supplying free writing materials & textbooks to poor children.	17.1	21.9	23.1	37.9
10. Providing pure and healthy drinking water.	43.9	17.1	15.8	23.2

In 1961, the South Gujarat region consisted of only three districts - the Dangs, Surat and Broach.

Literacy

Surat District comprised 16 talukas and 5 mahals. According to 1951 Census, the percentage of literacy in Surat District as constituted then was 29.1 (39.0 percent for men and 19.1 for women). In 1961, the percentage of literacy rose to 34.38 percent (44.36 percent for men and 24.26 percent for women). In 1971, the percentage of literacy has grown to 39.28 percent in Surat District and 37.47 percent in Valsad District, both of which formed part of Surat District in 1961. Thus, between 1951 and 1961, the rise in literacy in Surat District was about 5.3 percent, but in the decade 1961-1971, the rise in literacy was about 5 percent in the old Surat District talukas and about 4 percent in the Valsad District which constituted the old Surat District. The general broad conclusion is that the introduction of the Panchayati Raj has not improved upon the rate of literacy in the district.- it has not accelerated the rate. It is possible that during 1961-1971 decade more persons much have been made literate. The fall in the decennial rate of literacy growth in the district may be due to an increase in the population. In 1971, 46.59 percent men and 28.32 percent women in Valsad district and 47.95 percent men and 30.03 percent women were found

literate. This was against 44.36 percent of literacy for men and 19.1 percent for women in 1961. The Panchayati Raj has at least succeeded in increasing adult literacy among women.

In Broach District, according to the Census of 1951, 27.52 percent of persons (40.46 percent men and 13.61 percent women) were literates. In 1961, the percentage of literacy had risen to 34.26 percent (46.39 percent for men and 21.44 percent for women). Between 1951 and 1961, the increase in literacy was 6.74 percent. In the decade 1961-71, the literacy percentage has become 35.82. This clearly shows that the rate of literacy growth has slumped down during the period when the Panchayati Raj was introduced. One does not know for definite whether the slower rate of growth of literacy in the decade 1961-1971 is due to the introduction of the Panchayati Raj. But one fact seems to be fairly certain that the programme of democratic decentralisation has not reaped as rich^a dividend in literacy improvement as it was thought that it would do when the experiment was launched in Gujarat in 1963.

In Dangs District as constituted in 1951, the literacy percentage was only 5.45. (8.96 percent men and 1.38 percent women). In 1961, it improved to 9.26 (14.26 percent for men and 3.78 percent for women.) In 1971, the improvement had been remarkable. The literacy figure rose to 14.38 percent (20.66 percent for men and 7.74 percent for women) This achievement cannot be attributed to Panchayati Raj as the Panchayati bodies in Dangs District started functioning only from July, 1972.

Table XLVIII shows comparative statistics of literacy percentages of men and women in the talukas of the four districts of the South Gujarat Region in 1971.

TABLE - XLVIII

Comparative Figures of Literacy of Men and Women percents in Talukas of South Gujarat - 1971

	1971	
	Men	Women
<u>Surat District</u>		
1. Olpad	60.15	39.87
2. Mangrol	37.45	20.55
3. Kamrej	48.94	33.09
4. Choryasi	63.15	45.53
5. Plasana	32.51	20.80
6. Mandvi	32.34	15.45
7. Songadh	26.93	10.39
8. Vyara	32.77	16.62
9. Bardoli	23.98	28.28
10. Mahuva	29.37	22.70
11. Nizar	32.58	11.41
12. Valod	24.93	21.87
13. Uchhal	32.58	11.41
<u>Valsad District</u>		
1. Navsari	59.72	43.67
2. Gandevi	61.52	44.70
		contd.....

Table *VIII contd...

	1971	
	Men	Women
3. Bansada	29.10	11.95
4. Valsad	57.51	36.58
5. Chikhli	44.30	25.14
6. Dharampur	17.85	6.73
7. Pardi	48.17	26.76
8. Umbergam	39.37	18.07
<u>Dangs District</u>	20.80	7.13
<u>Broach District</u>		
1. Broach	59.78	37.22
2. Vagra	50.89	24.48
3. Jambushar	53.03	26.30
4. Amod	54.52	31.98
5. Ankleshwar	50.16	30.43
6. Hansot	55.44	34.02
7. Nandod	41.06	19.05
8. Valia	35.11	15.98
9. Dediapada	20.64	5.45
10. Sagbara	28.35	5.91
11. Jhagadia	38.42	17.93

In all the Talukas, the gap between the literacy of men and women is very wide. The Talukas where literacy of men is over 60 percent are Choryasi and Olpad in Surat District; the Talukas where literacy of men is about 60 percent are Navsari and Valsad Talukas. In Broach District, Broach, Vagra, Jambusar, Amod, Ankleshwar and Hansot have over 50 percent men's literacy.

In Surat District Olpad and Choryasi have about 40 percent literacy among women. The ~~Two~~ talukas of the Valsad District that have over 40 percent women literates are Navsari & Gandevi. In the Broach district 4 talukas have over 30 percent literate women. They are Broach, Amod, Ankleshwar and Hansot.

Very backward Talukas in literacy in Surat District are Songadh, Mandvi, Vyara, Nizar and Uchhal (women's literacy); Bansada, Dharampur (men and women), and Umbergam in Valsad District and Nandod, Valia, Dadiapada, Sagbara and Jhagadia (women's literacy), in Broach District. The Dangs District has poor literacy for both the sexes.

The results of the above analysis shows that the Panchayati Raj bodies should particularly apply themselves to the work of spreading literacy work in backward Talukas.

(b) Expansion

In 1961, in the South Gujarat region there were 3,369 primary schools with a total of 849 villages without primary schools. In 1969, the number of primary schools has increased to 3959. There are about 2 percent rural areas left without having a primary school in it or in immediate neighbourhood. These schoolless villages are in the backward Talukas of Valsad and Bharuch districts. Though it will be too much to attribute this good achievement to the Panchayati Raj alone, ^{It created} a favourable climate for expanding the school facilities. The more decisive determinant is, perhaps, the State Government's determined policy to push ahead the expansion of primary education under its second and Third Five Year Plans and then under its Annual Plans.

In 1961, in Surat District 42.81 percent children in the age-group 5-14 were found to have completed their primary education. The sex-wise break-up was 43.71 percent boys and 36.59 percent girls. The position in Bharuch District was slightly better. There 45.38 percent of the children in the age group 5-14 had completed their primary education. Among them 53.48 percent were boys and 36.65 girls. In Dangs District, the achievement was on a much lower scale. Only 13.18 percent children in the age-group 5-14 (18.47 percent boys and 7.19 percent girls) could

complete primary education. In 1969, the situation improved to a remarkable extent. In Bharuch District 109.4 percent children in the age-group 6-10 and 60.3 percent children in the age-group 10-13 were enrolled.

The Valsad District had reached 100.1 percent enrolment in the age-group 6-10 and 48.5 percent enrolment in the age-group 10-13 years. The Surat District was a little behind Valsad District. It ^{had} 88.9 percent enrolment in the age-group 6-10 years and 43.4 percent in the age-group 10-13 years.

Even the Dangs District had achieved spectacular success. It had 109.7 percent enrolment in the age group 6-10 but it had low enrolment of 14.1 percent in the age group 10-13 years.

Here also, in the spectacular expansion of lower primary education one cannot say to what extent the Panchayati Raj has accelerated the pace of the growth of enrolment. But certainly it must have atleast some impact if the whole credit for the educational growth cannot be assigned to it.

In 1961, there were 10,975 primary school teachers in the South Gujarat Districts. The percentage of trained teachers was 51 percent. In 1969, the number of primary teachers grew to 15,415. The percentage of trained primary teachers for the region was 87.1

Thus during the Panchayati Raj administration considerable expansion in primary education has taken place in south Gujarat. In lower primary education, the position of universal primary education is practically achieved in Dangs, Bharuch and Valsad districts. In Surat District it may be reached even earlier than 1980-81.

6.7 Conclusion

The study of institutional behaviour of the Panchayats in Gujarat corroborates the popular beliefs about their undemocratic and not quite effective functioning. The average number of meetings of Gram Panchayats in South Gujarat worked out at 6. Even the Sarpanchs and Upa-Sarpanchs do not attend all meetings. There is not that intensity of interest among the members in the proceedings of the Panchayats that is expected in democracy. On the agenda of the Gram Panchayats, the items on education do figure not very frequently. All types of discussions take place in the meetings of the Panchayats. The average villager considers the Panchayat as all purpose service station. The participation of the panchs lacks initiative, sustained interest and firm and clear thinking. Most of their thinking and decisionmaking is influenced by the Sarpanch. Political affiliation plays a dominate role. The members are not able to take the village community with them. Their image in the eye of the local community gives them or the democratic

institutions no credit. The meetings of Jilla Shikshan Samitis are also smooth and non-turbulent proceedings signifying all tame affairs and passivity on the part of the members.

The educational programme of the Jilla Shikshan Samitis is ordinarily directed towards improvement of primary education centres, school complexes, inservice teacher education programmes, preparing teachers to implement the new Primary school Syllabus, improvement of organisation of examinations, construction of school meals, supplying mid-day meals, school uniforms, writing materials, etc. to poor children.

Primary education and literacy have fairly well expanded during the period when the Panchayati Raj bodies have been at work, but the good rate of expansion cannot be specifically attributed to the effective working of the Panchayati Raj in South Gujarat. It is very largely due to the determined policy and sincerity of the State Government to achieve universal primary education.

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