

Chapter - I

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CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Panchayati Raj Institutions during Pre-Independence Era

The history of village level Panchayati Raj Institutions in India goes back to hundreds of years. A feature of these institutions was that they were largely self-governing although their social background was characterized by a rigid social structure. The historical background of the Panchayati Raj system in India has explained through the following phases.

Pre Colonial Period *युग अतीत*

Vedic and post Vedic sources showed that the Indian village was as a self sufficient and autonomous miniature republic. This essential feature has given Indian history a sense of continuity kingdoms and emperies rose and fell but the village has survived. Village social organization can be clearly understood by centering the discussion on the Panchayati Raj system. Indo-Gangetic plains in the south Village Panchayats generally had a village assembly whose executive body consisted of representatives of various groups and castes. Even during the medieval and Mughal periods, this characteristics of the Village Panchayats remained unchanged. Sir Charles Metcafe, the provisional governor general of India (1835-46) had called the Indian village communities "the little republics". This does not mean that these

democratic "republics" were ideal institutions working with the participation of all the people.

Village administration during this period (324 B. C. – 236 B. C.) was closely linked with agriculture. The village was self-governed. The Indian people lived independently in these self-governing village republics. Moreover, village government during Gupta period was in many respects similar to that of the Mauryan period. The village administration was in charge of headman designated as a Grameyaka or as a Gramadhyaksha.

In British colonial period, village Panchayats were replaced by formally constituted institutions of village administration i. e. local self-government. In 1687, Municipal Corporation came to be formed in Madras. In 1870, the Mayo's Resolution provided a significant impetus to the development of local government, both rural and urban. Though its primary object was "to enlarge the powers and responsibilities of the governments of presidencies and provinces in respect of the public expenditure in some of the civil departments.

Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882, proved to be a watershed in the structural evolution of local government in the country. The government resolution of 18 May 1882 during his viceroyalty, providing for local boards consisting of a large majority of elected non-official members and presided over by a non-official chairperson was considered to be the Magna Carta of local democracy in India.

Moreover, in 1907, the Government constituted a Royal Commission on Decentralization, which in its report released in 1909, elaborated further the principles enunciated in the Ripon's Resolution.

The development of local self-government institutions got further fillip with the introduction of Montague Chelmsford Report, which made local self-government a transferred subject under the scheme of Dyarchy. The most significant development of this period was "the establishment of the village panchayat in a number of provinces, no longer a mere ad-hoc judicial, tribunal but a representative institution symbolizing the corporate character of the village and having a wide jurisdiction in respect of civic matters. However, due to organizational and financial constraints, the scheme evolved by the reforms did not make the Panchayats truly democratic and vibrant institutions of local self-government, yet by 1925, eight provinces had passed panchayat acts and by 1926, six native states had also passed Panchayat laws.

A critical assessment of the performance of local self-government institutions was made by D. P. Misra the then Minister of Local Self-Government. Under the Government of India Act of 1935 in Central Provinces and Berer. The Government of India Act 1935 and the inauguration of provincial autonomy under it marked another important stage in the evolution of Panchayats in the country. The period between 1939 and 1946 was looked as a dark period in the history of local government.

1.2 Panchayati Raj Institutions in Post-Independence Era

The post-independence phase of Panchayati Raj institutions is marked with significant developments. In an attempt to usher in socio-economic and cultural transformation in the country side, in 1952, the government of India had launched a comprehensive programme of Community Development Programme (popularly known as CDP) encompassing almost all activities of rural development. However, the programme could not make much headway in fulfilling the dreams of the rural masses. After the Independence, government of India has appointed various committees regarding the panchayati raj institutions. Such committees are as below.

1. Balwantrai Mehta Committee

In order to examine the causes for its failure, the Government of India had constituted a high power study team headed by Balwantrai Mehta, a Member of Parliament. The team observed that the failure of the CDP was due to the conspicuous absence of people's participation. In order to secure participation, the team suggested that 'a set of institutional arrangement' would have to be created to make participation meaningful and effective. This resulted in the creation of a 'three tier' system of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) to organize and manage the rural development activities. Thus, began a new experiment in the sphere of rural development through the participation of people. The recommendation favouring democratic decentralization accelerated

the pace of constituting PRIs in the states. By 1959, all the states have passed Panchayat Acts and by mid 1960s, Panchayats had reached all the parts of the country. The framework of the new institutional arrangement comprised 'Village Panchayats' at the grass root, 'Panchayat Samitee's at the middle taluka level and 'Zilla Parishads' at the apex levels at district level.

The growth of PRIs during the post independence period can be seen in three phases –

1. First Phase - 1959 to 1966
2. Second Phase - 1967 to 1976
3. Third Phase - 1977 to 1986

2. Ashok Mehta Committee (1959-64)

A similar periodisation was made by Ashok Mehta Committee, namely

- 1) The phase of ascendancy – 1959-64
- 2) The phase of stagnation – 1965-69
- 3) The phase of decline – 1969-77

Commenting on the performance of PRIs during these phases. The committee records, "A number of developments in the past have conspired to undermine the panchayati raj structure and made them ineffective."

Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977 brought new thinking in the concepts and practice of Panchayati Raj. The Committee envisaged a role for the Panchayati Raj Institutions, such that they would undertake democratic development management under conditions of rapid changes, continuous growth and sustained innovations in all spheres of rural life. With this objective in the background, the committee recommended a panchayat Raj Institutional structure consisting of a Zilla Parishad, taluka Samitee and Mandal Panchayat.

In order to use planning expertise and to secure administrative support, the district was suggested as the first point of decentralization below the state level. Based on its recommendations, some states have made attempts to incorporate them with a view to strengthening their existing Panchayati Raj structures.

3. V. K. R. V. Rao Committee (1985)

In order to consider ways to reinvigorate and revitalize Panchayats, the Government of India had appointed V. K. R. V. Rao committee (1985) and L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986) the V. K. R. V. Rao Committee. They recommended to make 'district' as the basic unit of planning and also favoured holding of regular elections to the Panchayat institutions. The L. M. Singhvi Committee recommended for devolving more financial resources to Panchayats so as to make them more viable. The committee viewed Panchayats as the base for democratic and republican operations of the nation.

4. 64th Amendment Bill, 1989

The Amendment phase began with the 64th Amendment Bill (1989), which was introduced in Parliament for constituting Panchayats in every state at the village, intermediate and district levels. It proposed that the legislature of a state could by law endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. This bill was the brain child of the late Rajiv Gandhi, who strongly believed in strengthening Panchayats by giving them constitutional status. Unfortunately, though the Bill got a two thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, it was struck down in the Rajya Sabha on October 15, 1989 by just two votes. The next government headed by V. P. Singh also made an abortive effort to provide constitutional status through the introduction of 74th Amendment.

Notwithstanding the above developments, the Government declared its commitment to the philosophy of 'power to the people' and for the purpose to provide much needed constitutional status to Panchayats.

5. 73rd Amendment Bill, 1991

The Congress-I government headed by P. V. Narasimha Rao initiated the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1991. 73rd Amendment provides for certain far reaching steps to strengthen Panchayats under article 243 (G) thus recognised Panchayats as institutions of self-government with prime responsibilities of promoting economic

development and ensuring social justice with this feature, Panchayats have come to stay as integral part of our constitutional polity. The amendment envisages the establishment of uniform three-tier system of strong viable and responsive Panchayats at village, intermediate and district levels. The amendment has also laid down necessary guidelines for the structure of Panchayats , composition, powers, functions, devolution of finances regular holding of elections, reservation of seats for the weaker groups including women and authority positions. In favour of weaker sections, an attempt at expanding the social base of the Panchayats , with such a blue print, the Amendment has been hailed as a revolutionary step towards establishing grassroot democracy specifically it has given constitutional guarantee for people's participation and self-governance. In order to translate the above into reality, the state governments have been given necessary freedom to feed 'flesh and blood' to the framework provided by the Amendment.

1.3 Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra

Panchayats have been working in Maharashtra for the last four decades. The three-tier structure was established in the state in May 1962, which brought out a uniform pattern of local self-government. The history of local self-government could be traced back to the 19th century when for the first time District Local Boards were established in 1862 in Bombay presidency. After Independence, the Bombay village Panchayat Act, 1958 was passed to bring about

uniformity in the system of local governance in the various regions. Following the formation of the state of Maharashtra in 1960, the village panchayat Naik Committee was appointed to study the Balwantrao Mehta Committee Report on decentralization and recommend a suitable model of local governance in the state. The committee submitted its report in 1961 and the committee was of the view that resources should largely be devolved upon the local body at the district level i. e. Zilla Parishad as at that level, mature representative leadership and adequate and trained administrative personnel would be available. The Zilla Parishad, according to the committee, should be broad based in composition through providing a majority of its members to be directly elected. All district level development departments would have to be transferred to its control to provide administrative assistance.

The Panchayats would continue to function at the village levels under the overall guidance of the Zilla Parishad. The Panchayat Samiti would act mainly as statutory committee of the Zilla Parishad for implementing programmes assigned to it by the Parishad.

On the basis of the recommendation, the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act, 1961 was passed and it introduced a three tier structure in the state. This act and the 1958 Act have continued to exist even today. Following the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, the State instead of adopting a new Panchayat Act amended

the existing Bombay Village Panchayat Act, 1958 and the Maharashtra Zilla Panchayats and Panchayat Samittee Act, 1961.

The Panchayat Raj Institutions have started with considerable enthusiasm in the early sixties; the performance of these institutions was impressive. The elections of these bodies was a regular feature and they were looked upon with great expectations by the people. The second phase, which began in the seventies, witnessed slow decline of PRIs in the functioning resources and importance. The new thrust on poverty alleviation programmes started by the state as well as central government overshadowed the initiative in the field of rural reconstruction and development, from the Panchayat Raj institutions and reduced them to a level of agencies of the governments to perform functions assigned to them. The importance of Zilla Parishad in Maharashtra was further reduced during the mid seventies, when 'District Planning and Development Council' under the chairmanship of the Liaison Minister of the district became powerful, and Zilla Parishad was kept out of the planning mechanism. The situation deteriorated still further in the eighties. Till 1979, at least elections of the PRIs were regularly held but thereafter, no elections of the Zilla Parishads were held. They were superseded due to the creation of new districts or the expiry of their five year term. During the eighties, the democratic character of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samittees was destroyed and they were dominated by the bureaucracy. The interference of the state government increased and

they became increasingly dependent on the State government for their finances. Thus, the initial enthusiasm and hope in these institutions decreased and gradually their efficiency, autonomy and usefulness was eroded. The 73rd constitutional amendment saw a resurgent interest in these institutions.

State Legislation

Consequent to the Constitution (73rd) Act, 1992 with a view to amend any inconsistent provision, the Maharashtra Legislature enacted a law for amending both the above acts. As a result, Bombay Village Panchayat and Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittees Amendment Act, 1994 came into force from April 24, 1994. The main amendments provided for –

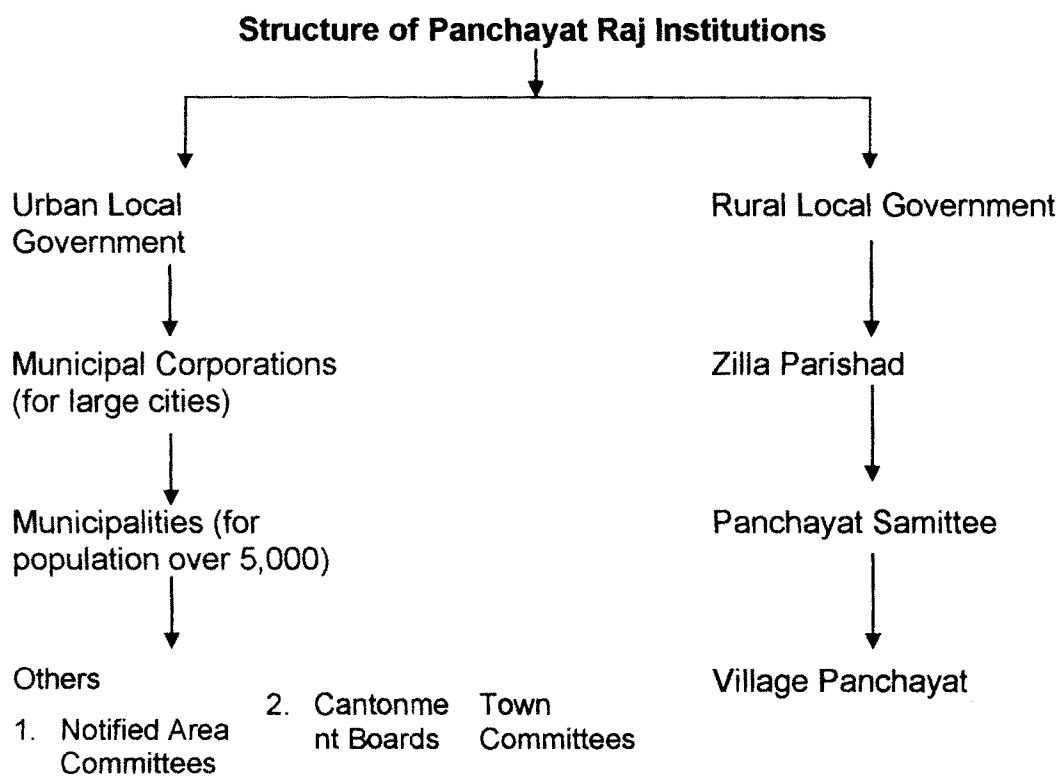
- 1) 33 per cent reservation for women in all categories, and 27 per cent reservation for other backward classes.
- 2) The setting up of a state election commission, which is entrusted with the entire responsibility of conducting elections as well as delimitation and reservation of constituencies and preparation of electoral rolls.
- 3) Establishing a State Finance Commission with five members as per article 243 (i) of the amended Act.

1.3.1 Structure of PRIs in Maharashtra

In Panchayat Raj Institutions two types of local governments are included such as –

- 1. Local Government for Rural Areas
- 2. Local Government for Urban Areas.

Following chart indicate that the structure of Panchayat Raj Institutions.



Rural Local Government

1. Gram Panchayat

The number of members of the Gram Panchayat shall be between 7 and 15 depending on the population of the Gram Panchayat area. The minimum population of a Gram Panchayat area is not specified in the Act. The Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members. The Act provides for one or more secretaries for every Gram Panchayat or a group of Gram Panchayats. The Secretary shall be from the District Service Class (III) Cadre. The salary and allowances of the Secretary shall be paid from the district fund. The functions of the Gram Panchayat is enumerated in schedule I and it contains as many as 79 functions and duties of the Gram Panchayats. The Schedule I indicates that the role of the Panchayat shall be circumscribed by the Panchayat Samittee, Zilla Parishad and the State Government. The Panchayat is also required to perform such functions as are delegated to it by the Zilla Parishad, the Panchayat Samittee and the State Government.

2. Panchayat Samittee

A population of 17,500 shall be represented by a member at the Panchayat Samittee. The Panchayat Samittee shall appoint a committee consisting of either is Sapanchas or of Sarpanches of one fifth of the total number of Gram Panchayats in the Block, whichever is more to be known as the committee of Sarpanches. The Sarpanches will be nominated

by the Panchayat Samittee by rotation every year. This Committee shall be a consultative and advisory body and the Panchayat Samittee shall give the consideration to the advice of this committee. There shall be a Block Development Officer for every Panchayat Samittee who shall be appointed by the State Government.

3. Zilla Parishad

Each Zilla Parishad member shall represent a population of 35,000. The chairpersons of the Panchayat Samittees shall also be members of the Zilla Parishad. It is noteworthy that MPs and MLAs have not been made the members of the Zilla Parishad. Every Zilla Parishad shall have a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and one or more Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) and other supporting staff. The chairperson of the Zilla Parishad has no control over the CEO. The Zilla Parishad performs nearly 129 functions. Certain taxation powers have also been vested in the Panchayats.

Reservation for Weaker Sections

The provisions for reservation for SC/ST and later for women is not a new concept for Maharashtra. Constitutional Reservation for SC/ST was a part of the PRI composition in Maharashtra since its inception. Besides this, there was also a provision to co-opt a women member in the Gram Panchayat if no women member was elected. In Maharashtra 33 per cent elected seats have been reserved for women in Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samittees and Zilla Parishad since 1992 elections. However,

provisions for 27 per cent reservation for other backward classes and 33 per cent reservation for women in all categories and for membership and office both were provided by the amended act of 1994 in the State.

As regards implementation of reservation in Maharashtra in case of SC/ST the population of these categories, the 1991 census is taken into consideration. In case of Gram panchayat the total population of the village is taken into consideration and the case of Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittees, the district is regarded the election and reservation of posts is attached herewith as Annexure – A.

The system of rotation by lots is followed in the state for deciding the nature of the reserved categories of the post of offices. In case of village Panchayat such reservation is for the full term of the Panchayat i. e. five years where as in case of the Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittees, is for a period of one year only, on completion of which the post goes to the other category as per rotation.

The work of drawing lots for reservation in case of Zilla Parishad Presidentship is done at state level by the government. Whereas in case of Gram Panchayats the work is done by the Collector of the respective district. Through this system of drawing lots and allocation of offices is being streamlined over a period of time. The implementation of reservation has always been remained a critical issue. Despite a strong history of reservation in the state, a number of problems were observed in the process of implementation of policy of reservation; both structural

as well as psychological very strong resentment was observed in the rural areas where the principle of reservation for women and OBCs was introduced first in PRIs. The people in the state already had the experience of reservation for SC/ST but the additional reservation for women was viewed as a challenge to their power, influence and positions by the traditional powerful group in the area.

As regards the election of women to office, it was observed that their lack of formal education and their associated unfamiliarity with structures, rules and regulations pertaining to Panchayat institutions worked against them. Moreover other difficulties in the form of men/husbands trying to dominate women leaders without giving due weightage to their opinion, non co-operation of officials, lack of knowledge and training regarding their power posed great problems for women. However, in some recent studies it was observed a positive change in the scenario with women candidates admitting to being recognized by family and society considering their political entry respectable paying way for political empowerment.

The system of rotation is also not free from defects in many cases it has been observed that the posts of Sarpanch have been reserved after the elections were held and in many places, there were also problems of availability of a suitable candidate, sometimes even resulting in communal tensions. It was therefore, suggested that offices where the

principle of reservation is to be implemented be identified before hand so that seats do not go unclaimed due to unavailability of members.

Thus, the post couple of years experience shows that mere change in structure from a composition and representation will not bring the desired change in the field of rural development, what is necessary is a proper orientation of the people, their representatives and bureaucracy made through a planned manner.

Functions of Panchayats

1. In case of the Gram Panchayat, which is the primary functioning unit in Maharashtra, meeting are held regularly and proceeding are recorded in the proceedings book. The Gram Sevak acts as the Secretary and maintains the record of the proceeding. However, it has been observed that the influential group in the village dominates the decision making process. It has also been observed that due to reservations for SC/ST/OBC/women certain tension and frictions are reported.
2. The Panchayat Samittee meets once in a month and the BDO works at its Secretary. The Panchayat Samittees are mere implementing body in Maharashtra. In its meetings, members are informed about the activities and schemes assigned to it and the course of action to be undertaken in its jurisdiction, the work of execution of resolutions of the Zilla Parishad is done by the BDO and extension officers and other subordinates staff. The work

of Panchayat Samittees is generally routine in nature not carrying much of initiative or scope for challenging tasks and not much change is visible even after the 73rd Amendment in respect of working conditions or style of functioning.

3. The general body of the Zilla Parishad meets every three months and it adopts a committee system for performing its functions and responsibilities. The membership of the committee varies from ten to seventeen including not more than two co-opted members. It ensures increased participation of the members in the decision making process. These committees meet regularly to transact business and the members also take active interest in the matter under consideration. These committees are headed by a chairperson also called the Sabhapati. Though decisions are taken by the majority, at times party affiliations group strengths particularly caste, area etc. also play a role in the allocation of funds, deciding priorities, selection of sites, awarding contracts, identifying beneficiaries for various programmes etc. Many a times decisions taken by the most influential get endorsed by the committees as a matter of formality. The proceedings and the decisions of the committee are well recorded and widely published in local media.
4. Over a period of three and half decades the scene in Maharashtra as regards the working of Panchayat Raj can be

said to be well organized and the institutions at their respective level are developed to perform their functions and responsibilities as expected in the pattern.

5. The objective of the PRIs functioning in Maharashtra was to provide for decentralization of powers by virtue of which the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittee Act, 1961 has given elaborate list of powers and functions of these bodies.
6. In compliance with the 11th Schedule, Sec 100 of the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittee Act enumerate 129 subjects, which fall within the purview of the Zilla Parishad, which have been listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, called as the "District List".

Section 101 of the Act list subject in the Schedule II, which fall under the purview of the Panchayat Samittees. In addition to these subject listed in these schedules the state government had transferred many more subjects and schemes to Zilla Parishads under Section 102 and 103 of the Act. Section 45 of the Village Panchayats Act enlists 82 subjects within the purview of the Gram Panchayat mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Act, called as the village list. The major subjects covered under the Amended Act Maharashtra largely cover such as (1) Agriculture (partly with Zilla Parishad – not include Agri/exten), (2) Animal Husbandry, (3) Minor Irrigation Water Management and Watershed

Development, (4) Drinking Water, (5) Roads, (6) Non-conventional Energy Sources, (7) Poverty Alleviation Programmes, (8) Education include Primary and Secondary Schools, (9) Adult and Non-formal Education, (10) Cultural Activities, (11) Markets and Fairs, (12) Health and Sanitation, (13) Family Welfare, (14) Women and Child Development, (15) Social Welfare pertaining to SC/ST (that of handicapped and mentally retarded is retained by the state government), (16) Maintenance of Community Assets.

Since poverty alleviation has been recently handed over to the PRIs, it has been suggested that the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), which has been functioning under the control of District Collector, be shifted to that of the Zilla Parishad.

1. An overall view of the functions performed by the PRIs in Maharashtra indicates the functions assigned to Gram Panchayat are local functions performing to the daily needs of the villagers. The Panchayat Samittee works as a sub-committee of the Zilla Parishad and performs only those functions assigned to it. The Zilla Parishad being the apex body performs functions of co-ordination, control and supervision and serves as a link between the state government and PR structure. The state government at any

given point of time has the full liberty to 'omit' or 'add' any entry in the given schedules.

2. Despite a confirmed list of subjects being earmarked and handed over to the different tiers, over a period of time it has noted the state government by using power given to it has amended schedule 11 with a view to withdraw 24 items in the years 1973 and 1975. Apparently, it was noted that instead of decentralization and devolution of powers and functions, the trend that was indicated towards strong centralization and increasing control of the state government, which was not a welcome trend in any way. Almost all development schemes are managed by the state government. The programmes to be handed over to the Zilla Parishad on agency basis are also decided by the state government. Though it provides funds for the purpose but total monitoring of the programmes is done by the state government and its bureaucracy leading to establishment of a parallel machinery.
3. Despite amendments in the Act, in accordance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, there is no visible change in this field. The Act has neither altered sections 100 and 101 nor the two schedules dealing with the subjects within the preview of the Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samittees.

The power to amend the schedules also remains with the state government. It is also to be noted that Section 45 of the Bombay Village Panchayat Act, 1958 has not been amended in consistency with the spirit of 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

4. It can thus be inferred that the Maharashtra Model envisages a strong superior, supervisory and controlling role of Zilla Parishad. The District level unit is regarded as the apex unit in this three-tier structure. Apart from the operational areas of the PRIs at all three levels of the powers pertaining to these institutions at different levels, which indicates their position and status vis-a-vis one another has also remained unchanged. There exists no ambiguity about their respective roles nor is there any overlapping of functions or subjects assigned to them. Thus, it can be confirmed that despite the Amended Act of 1994, a large part of the eleventh schedule has not been touched, there is no marked departure in respect of power, and function of PRIs from what was existing prior to the Amendment.

1.3.3 Financial System of PRIS

To enable the PRIs to exercise their powers effectively, the Acts of 1958 and 1961 have provided for certain financial powers to mobilise

the necessary funds. The sources of income of PRIs in Maharashtra are broadly divided into two groups viz. (1) taxes, fees and other receipts, and (2) Government Grants, Section 124 of the Village Panchayat Act of 1958 gives power to Village Panchayats to levy taxes on a number of items, subject to the rules of the state government and maximum and minimum rates prescribed by it. Section 127 provides for the power of the state government to levy cess on land revenue paid to the state government. Section 128 empowers Panchayat Samittee to direct the Village Panchayat to increase the taxes and fees. Section 129 provides for mode of recovery of taxes and other dues. Besides, the Village Panchayat is entitled to receive the grants of different kinds from the state government; loan granted by the Zilla Parishad and establish various funds for the purpose of raising money to perform its functions. The taxes and government grants are the main sources of income for it.

The Panchayat Samittee at the Taluka level do not have an independent source of income and performs its functions with the help of yearly block grants from the Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad being the apex body and since it has to perform supervisory and controlling functions, has been given powers to raise money by imposing taxes and fees. It is also provided with different types of grants from the state government and specific grants to perform development programmes on agency basis. The Zilla Parishad is heavily dependent on the grants for its revenue. All the grants of the government are routed through the

Department of Rural Development and Watershed Development. Moreover, the Village Panchayats expenditure is largely on items like health, sanitation and public works has considerable importance along with administration. Whereas in the case of Zilla Parishads, considerable expenditure is incurred on education, both primary and secondary. The changes in the 73rd Amendment has had little impact on the expenditure patterns of the PRIS.

Moreover, the Finance Commission was appointed in 1994. The report of the Commission was submitted to the Governor in January 1997 and it was tabled along with the Action Taken Report in the budget session of the State Assembly in March 1999. The Commission made 129 recommendations, in all and of the 27 recommendations regarding distribution of taxes and grants-in-aid, the state government has accepted 12 recommendations fully, 11 partially and four were rejected totally. The inordinate delay by the state government in taking a decision on the recommendations of the State Finance Commission indicate the causal manner in which this subject is treated at the political level.

1.3.4 Planning and Implementation of Development Programmes

Real devolution of power is possible when there is chance for a large number of people to participate in the decision making process. Planning from below has been constructed to be the most realistic approach in this regards. Article 243 a of 73rd Constitutional Amendment

Act envisages devolution of powers and responsibilities in case of PRIS with respect to –

1. Preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and
2. The implementation of schemes in this regards entrusted to them.

The provision for planning at district level was already there in the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samittee Act, 1961 Section 100 (4) and Section 108 of the Act deal with the planning process and district and block levels respectively. Initially the planning at district level was also the chairman of the District Planning and Development Council (DPDC) however, in 1972 this function withdrawn from the preview of the Zilla Parishad and the Liaison Minister of the district concerned was made chairman of DPDC. The President and other members of the Zilla Parishad are the members that DPDC and the District Collector is its Secretary. The District Planning Officer is not an officer of the Zilla Parishad and the whole work of planning is now clearly outside the preview of the Zilla Parishad.

The annual plan and perspective plans are prepared by each DPDC through the concerned government department at district level and hence, it is observed that, they do not reflect will of the people at grass root level.

Regarding development schemes, it is observed that most of them operate from outside the Zilla Parishad viz. IRDP, NEP, DPAP, Social

Forestry etc. The P. B. Patil Committee mentioned that during 1973-75 the state government had withdrawn 24 items from the preview of Zilla Parishad and suggested that they be returned back to PRIS. However, nothing has been done in this regard. At least at present there is no planning from below. The 73rd Amendment specifically envisages planning at Gram Panchayat/Taluka levels. For this, adequate administrative, technical and financial powers need to be transferred to local bodies at various level.

Despite various impediments, it has been observed that during the last twenty five years of Panchayati Raj a large number of plan and agency schemes have been transferred by government to Zilla Parishads for execution and maintenance. The state has adopted the principle of District Level Planning and plans duly prepared and financed by the Zilla Parishad after their adoption by the District Planning and Development Council are included in the District Plan. The Zilla Parishads have been playing an important role in the execution of various extension programme viz. Agricultural Extension, Animal Husbandry, Family Planning, Biogas Development.

Smokeless Chullahas, Rural Employment Programmes etc. are the programme, which are now being implemented through the Zilla Parishads with the involvement of various agencies, including voluntary organization in the District. The involvement of co-operative institutions is also very important. The Zilla Parishads are responsible for successful

implementation of kharif and rabi campaign, minor irrigation works which irrigates less than 100 hectares and lift irrigation schemes costing upto Rs. 5 lakh have been transferred to them. In addition, there are many state level schemes like Special Nutrition Programmes, School Feeding Programmes and Special programmes like IRDP, ITDP, DPAP, NREP, Biogas etc. which are either implemented by the state government through the PR bodies. In addition to the above Rural Development schemes, there is direct involvement of PRIs in implementing schemes and development works etc. under other developmental department of Mantralaya.

Though the DPDC at districts level have been formed by government, the Zilla Parishads do play an important role in implementation of 20 point programmes like family planning, IRDP, DPAP, Biogas, Minor Irrigation, Potable Drinking Water Supply in addition to other extension programmes and full advantage of Zilla Parishad machinery is taken for achieving the target and for successful implementation of various development programmes.

Though not in the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act the 74th Act makes explicit provisions for District Planning Committees to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and Municipalities in the district and to prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole. The present district planning councils do not have municipal representatives and more over it is dominated by state government

functionaries from district bureaucracy. Hence, the provisions of Article 243-D of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act are significant. The preponderance of elected members from Zilla Parishad and Municipalities is likely to give a boost the process of district planning and would give additional status to PRIs. In this regards the state government has not done anything. No legislation in this regard is enacted yet and the old system of District Planning is still in operation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Keeping in view the importance of Panchayat Raj in the process of rural development, the following objectives are set.

- 1) To study the revenue and expenditure pattern of the Kolhapur Zilla Parishad and Shirol Panchayat Samittee during 1990-2001.
- 2) To examine the progress of various developmental schemes being implemented through the Panchayat Samittee.
- 3) To examine the impact of schemes on the socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries.
- 4) To examine the problems relating to schemes and to suggest appropriate policies.

1.5 Research Methodology and Sample Design

In order to examine the objectives of the study, the Shirol Panchayat Samittee is selected out of 12 Panchayat Samittees of the Kolhapur Zilla Parishad for intensive study. Shirol Panchayat Samittee has been working since 1956 for the development of Shirol taluka. Shirol taluka has 50,327 hectares geographical area and as per 2001 census, population of Shirol taluka was 3.05 lakh, of which majority of the population lives in rural area. Moreover, of the total cultivated area (31500 hectares) 15675 hectares brought under irrigation, which accounted for 49.76 percent. Moreover, tehsil receives 500 mm annual rainfall. Sugarcane, Soyabean, Jowar, Groundnut are main crops being produced in the tehsil. Moreover, Shirol tehsil consisted 52 villages.

The Shirol Panchayat Samittee is located at Shirol and implementing various schemes for the overall development of the villages through Gram Panchayats. These schemes are IRDP, Indira Gandhi Housing Scheme, Social Welfare Schemes, Biogas, Drip and Sprinkle Irrigation, Agricultural Schemes Health, PWD, Transport, Construction, Dairy and Animal husbandry, Forestry, Education and Special Component plan etc. Thus, Panchayat Samittee tries to promote the overall growth prospect of rural area through implementing various schemes.

1.5.1 Statistical Data

In order to evaluate the performance of the Shirol Panchayat Samittee in the process of economic development of Shirol taluka,

secondary statistical data was collected from annual reports, published by Kolhapur Zilla Parishad and Shirol Panchayat Samittee. Moreover, statistical data on revenue and actual expenditure made on various schemes and other relevant items was collected for the period of 1990-2001. Moreover, the progress of socio-economic development schemes were evaluated during 1990-2001.

1.5.2 Sample Design

In order to examine the actual impact of the socio-economic development schemes on the socio-economic condition of beneficiaries particularly weaker community, primary data was collected through field survey. For this purpose, out of total 52 villages under the jurisdiction of the Shirol Panchayat Samittee, five villages namely 1) Shedshal, 2) Shirol, 3) Takwade, 4) Sainik Takali and 5) Kothali were selected, which accounted nearly 10 per cent to total. Moreover, 130 families were selected from these five villages. While selecting families from each villages, social strata of the families was taken into account. For this purpose, stratified random sampling technique was made use of. Moreover, primary information about the village and schemes was collected from Sarpanch of the village. For this purpose scheduled was prepared to collect primary statistical data from the sample families and Sarpanchs, from these villages under study.

1.5.3 Period of the Study

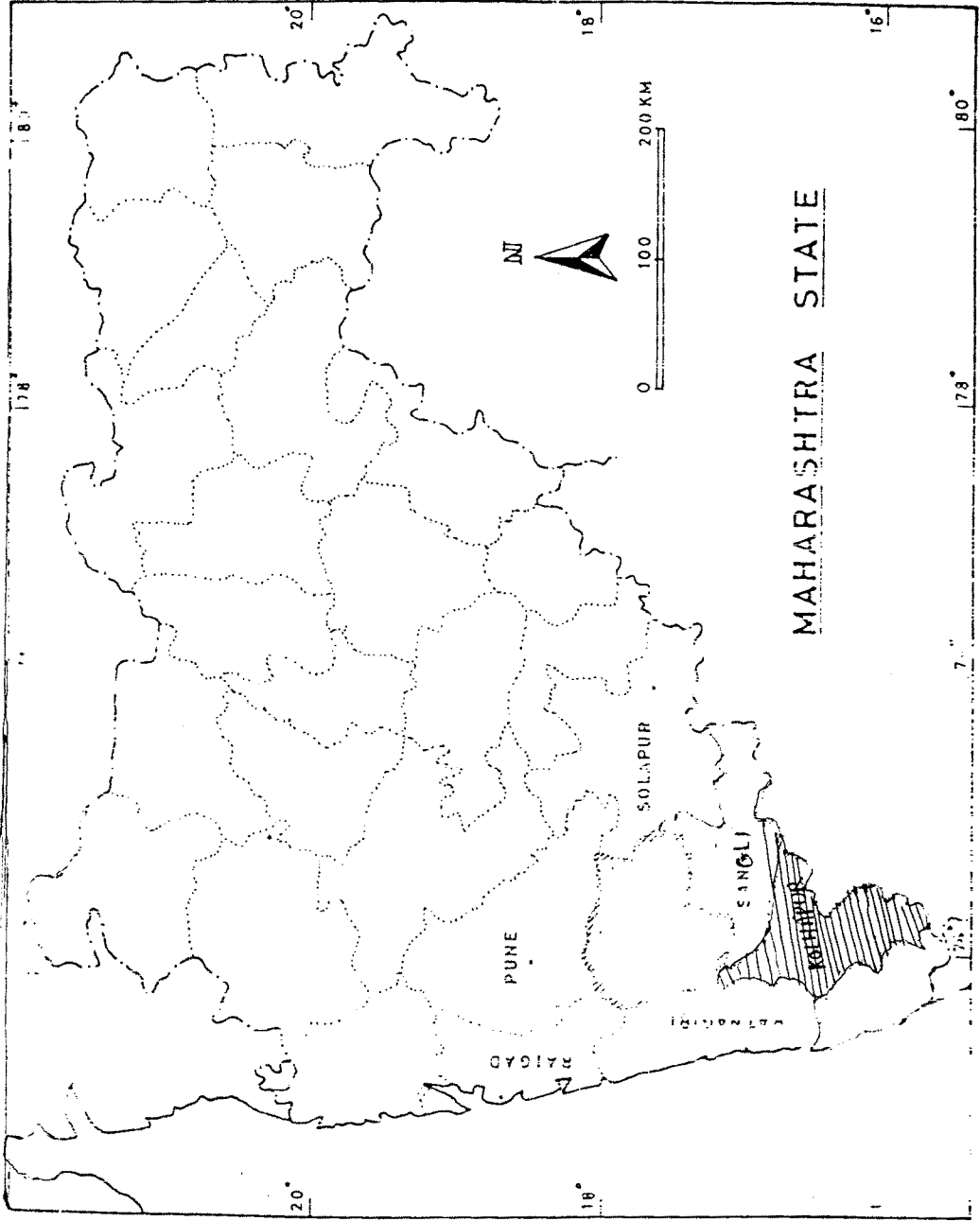
In order to examine the progress of various socio-economic schemes implemented through Shirol Panchayat Samittee, secondary data on relevant social and economic variables was collected from 1990-91 to 2000-2001. Moreover, for the field survey, 2001-2002 reference year was selected in view to know actual impact of schemes on economic condition of beneficiaries.

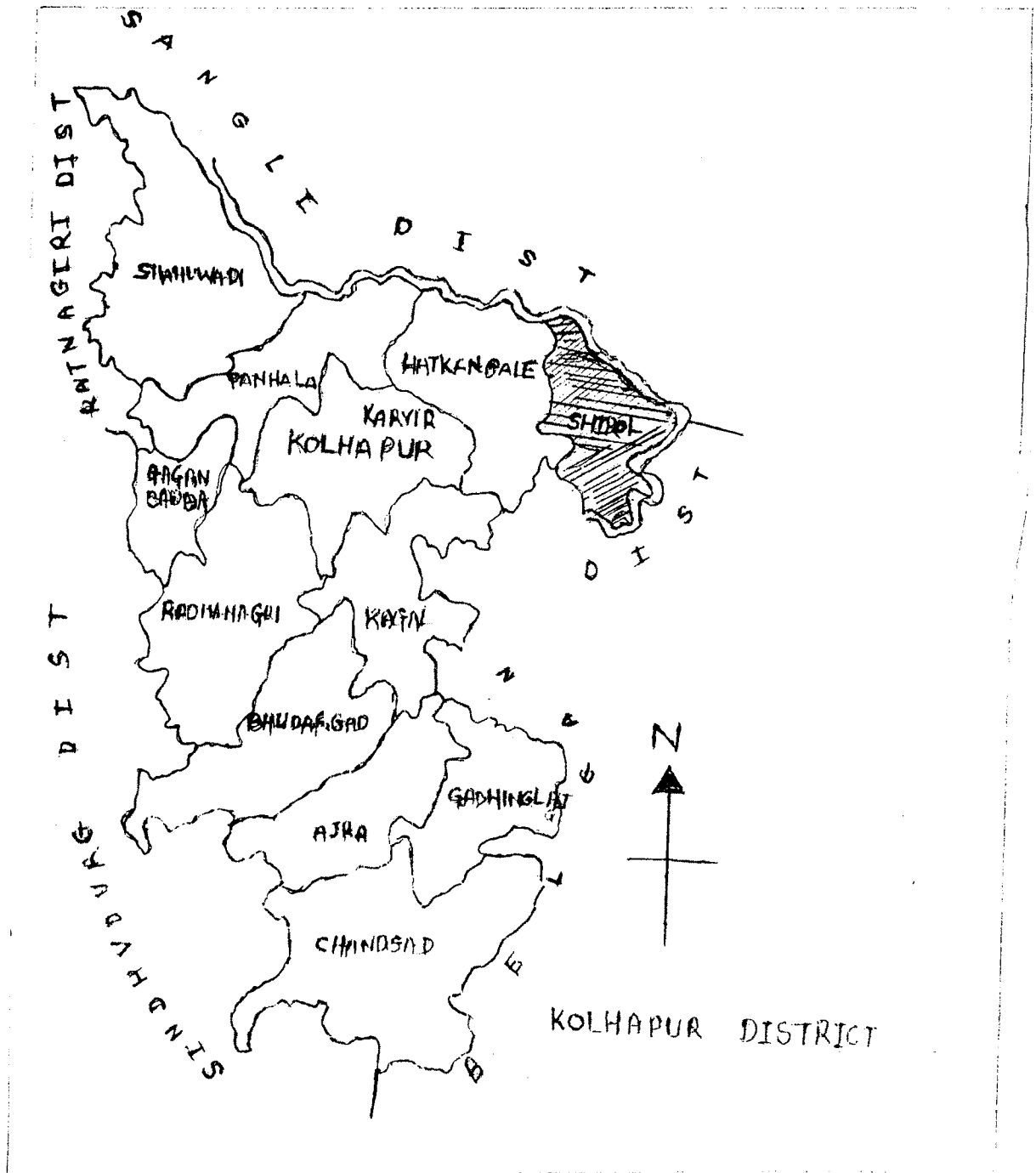
1.5.4 Statistical Techniques Used

In order to evaluate the progress of Kolhapur Zilla Parishad and Shirol Panchayat Samittee in respect of collection of revenue, expenditure made on various socio-economic schemes during 1990-2001, percentage change and compound growth rate were calculated. Moreover, some appropriate statistical techniques were used. Besides these, some cartographic devices were used.

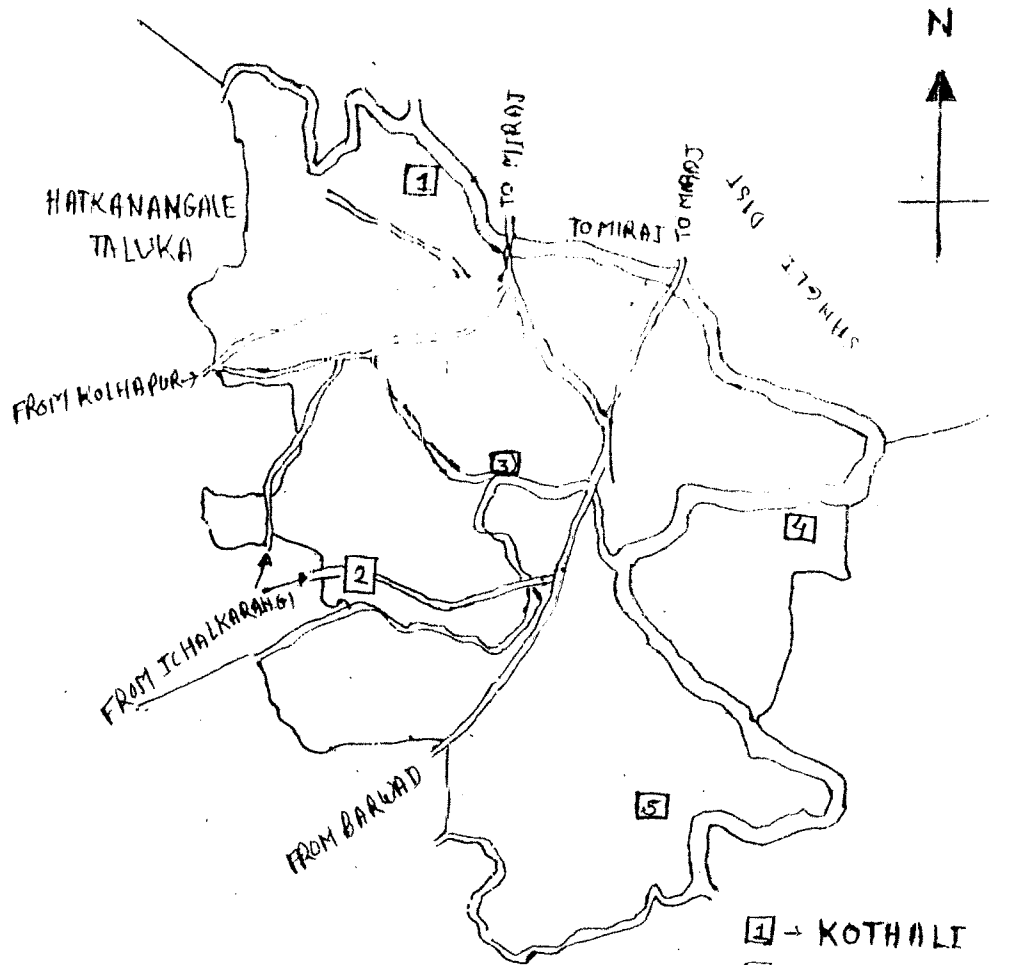
1.6 Chapter Scheme

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Trends in Revenue and Expenditure Pattern of Kolhapur Zilla Parishad
- 3) Performance of the Shirol Panchayat Samittee
- 4) Developmental Schemes
- 5) Benefits of Developmental Schemes
- 6) Summary of the findings and Policy Guidelines





SHIROL TALUKA



BELGAUM DISTRICT

- [1] → KOTHALI
- [2] → TAKWADE
- [3] → SHIROL
- [4] → SHEDSHAL
- [5] → TAKALI /
SAJNIK TAKALI