

**Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Governance of the
Gram Panchayats: A Study of the Balangir District, Odisha**

*A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE
POLICY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Sudam Tandi**, hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled **“Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Governance of the Gram Panchayats: A Study of the Balangir District, Odisha”** submitted by me under the supervision of **Dr. J. Rani Ratna Prabha**, is a bonafide research work for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy in Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP)** from the **University of Hyderabad**. I also declare that it has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma to this University or to any other University or institution. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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1. **“Participation as a persistent problem in gram sabha: a study on the women elected representatives in gram panchayat of Odisha”**, Wesleyan Journal of Research, Vol. 14 No. 01(V) January 2021, ISSN:0975-1386(P), pp.57-65
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**Dedication to Creator of the Universe and My
Father and Mother**

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

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List of Abbreviations

BASUDHA- Buxi Jaga Bandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitation

BDO-Block Development Officer

CFC-Central Finance Commission

DRDA-District Rural Development Agency

EWB-Elected Women Representatives

ER-Elected Representative

ETC-Extension Training Centre

FGD-Focus Group Discussion

GPTA-Gram Panchayat Technical Assistant

GPEO-Gram Panchayat Extension Officer

GP-Gram Panchayat

GS-Gram Sabha

GPDP-Gram Panchayat Development Plan

IHHL-Individual Household Latrine Application

JE-Junior Engineer

MSB-Mission Swachha Bharat

NRDWP-National Rural Drinking Water Programme

ODF-Open Defecation Free

PRI-Panchayati Raj Institution

PEO-Panchayat Executive Officer

PS-Panchayat Samiti

PRA-Participatory Rural Appraisal

RWSS- Rural Water Sanitation Supply

SFC-State Finance Commission

SIRD &PR-State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

SBM-(R)- Swachh Bharat Mission – Rural

SIRD and PR- State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

SECC-Socio-Economic Caste Census

UNDP-United Nation Development Programme

VWSC-Village Water and Sanitation Committee

VAW-Village Agriculture Worker

WM-Ward Member

WWM-Women Ward Members

WASH-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

ZP-Zilla Parishad

CHAPTER-1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

India is a multicultural democratic country that prerequisites the broader participation of people in local politics regardless of caste, gender, colour, and creed. In order to provide to the opportunity to the population multicultural, the panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) system has been launched. In the process of democratic decentralisation, participation of the people at the grassroots politics has been realised to make democratic governance more successful. Participation of the people in grassroots politics has been realised to make democratic governance successful. The democratic system relies on people's participation in local governance. It gives legitimacy to the political order; improves people's participation in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; improves the governance system's performance; prepares the decision-making system to reflect the will and needs of the people; increases people's capacity for participatory governance; and ensures the political system's sustainability and stability. Participation generates a psychological atmosphere that brightens a democratic structure; moreover, it is considered a good imperative for governance. It is a compulsive strategy for enhancing the quality of governance. It is also a compromise for balancing good politics and sound administration between proliferating inputs and stipulated output. Moreover, participation is a mechanism for creating institutions rooted in a philosophy of compassion for the people who form the target groups of development administration. Thus, compulsiveness, compromise, and compassion are the three guiding imperatives of participation (Arora and Hooja, 2009). The elected representatives participate in the functioning of the local bodies has become significant change in the local governance. The elected representatives are directly involved in the functioning and administration of the local bodies; thus, they represent the needs of the villages and execute the tasks in order to solve the problem of the villagers.

Although decentralisation has brought representation, representation does not always lead to participation. Reserved categories elected representatives, both men and women, continue to face a number of barriers to participation in political activities, including a lack of financial independence, the burden of productive and reproductive roles, a low level of education, and opposition stemming from patriarchal attitudes. As a result, training has become a crucial priority for ensuring their successful participation. In the

lowest level of democratic government, while representation is adequate (as per the reservation system), participation is inadequate. While it is relatively simple to enact representation, creating conducive conditions for participation is more challenging. Experience suggests that representation does not automatically lead to participation (Basu and Bhaduri, 2015).

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 now visualises a political process of democratic seed drilling in Indian soil; provides an administrative linkage of bureaucrat elite and the rural people; and gives young, vibrant, and modernised leadership, thus helping rural people cultivate the developmental psyche in local bodies (Rewadikar, 2005). This act ensures empowerment to the elected representatives and their leadership on a very expanded scale. It has attempted to bring the weaker section classes of the SCs, STs, OBCs, women of all strata to the mainstream power structure to safeguard their partnership in development. After this act, all state governments passed their Panchayat Act as per the needs of the states. In the panchayat act of the various states, the roles and responsibilities of the elected representatives in the local bodies were stipulated for the functioning and good governance in local bodies. In the local government system of India, there are three types of bodies: gram panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

As the reservation system in local bodies has enhanced the importance of participation in panchayats, the number of SCs, STs, OBCs and women in the rural political institution has inevitably increased. However, unless and until such numerical representation is turned into meaningful involvement, it would not assure the empowerment of underprivileged sectors. Recognising the significance of "participation" in the democratic governance process at the local level. The ventures of entry large number of elected representatives in local bodies may help to achieve the potential of panchayat members as social reformers and of the panchayat as a vehicle of rural development and empowerment (Lieten, 1996). The purpose of this research is to investigate the elected representatives participation in the local governance at the reserved and unreserved local bodies. The study also observe the representatives exercise of their power and their understanding of the governance process of the gram panchayats. In addition to that, this research is to measure "representation" in panchayats by evaluating the participation of gram panchayat elected leaders in their functioning and decision-making at the gram

panchayat level. Furthermore, this study is focused on how the elected representatives have participated in the functioning of the gram panchayats.

1.2 Panchayat System in India and Odisha State with Historical Context

In the constitution of India, the panchayat system was placed in the directive principle of the state policy as a unit of self-government. Various committee was formed to suggest strengthening the panchayat system, like Balwant Mehta Committee and Ashok Mehta Committee. Rajasthan was the first state to establish the new panchayat system in 1959, followed by Andhra Pradesh and other states in India. Eventually, Maharashtra and Gujarat adopted two-tier panchayats, is Zilla Parishad and Block Panchayat. Therefore, Odisha adopted the three-tier panchayat system, is Zilla Parishad, Block Panchayat and Gram Panchayat. In 1993, India launched the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which enabled the various states to formulate economic development and social justice plans. In 1936, Odisha was recognised as a separate province. The Orissa Gram Panchayats Act was passed soon after independence in 1948, marking a significant step forward in the decentralisation process. With the establishment of Anchal Sasan and the formation of the Anchal Fund under the Orissa Estates Abolition Act of 1951, a fresh revolutionary attempt was undertaken during Sri Naba Krushna Choudhury's tenure as Chief Minister. The Anchal Sasan Act (1955) was envisioned to provide full powers to Anchal, a higher-level local authority than the gram panchayat so that villagers' representatives could play a prominent role in the system on functioning agriculture, education, public health, and cottage industries. The Anchal Sasan was established as a body corporate with land income, fees, tolls, cesses, and taxes as sources of income. A provision for an education fund was also made to fund Sasan's educational programmes. The Anchal Sasan Act was not enforced, preventing Odisha from taking the lead in democratic decentralisation even before the Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report. There was not an independent department of panchayat in Odisha (Misra, 2010). Odisha worked out the Balavantrai Mehta Committee scheme on the 26th, January 1961. In the state, the B. R. Mehta recommendations were implemented. In 1961, both Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishads Acts were amended; and the gram panchayat act was passed in 1964 under the leadership of the chief minister Biju Patnaik. Therefore, the three-tier panchayat was established: the Zilla Parishad at the district level, the Panchayat Samiti at the block level, the gram panchayat at the grassroots level. The present study would focus only on the

gram panchayat level regarding its functioning and the role of the elected representatives(Behuria,2012).

During the second term of Biju Patnaik as Chief Minister (1990-95), under his dynamic leadership, Odisha became the first state in India to implement the sound provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 in advance to give women opportunities by making reservations of one-third seats for them and women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Prior to the introduction of the 73rd Amendment Act, women in Odisha were granted 30 percent reservation in the three-tier panchayat raj institution(PRIs) for the first time in independent India's history (Gochhayat,2013).

The significant problems of the panchayat raj institution (PRI) system were: The bureaucracy initially ruled over it. The State Administration and numerous parallel bodies have massively undervalued the importance of the PRIs.They had always been the agent of execution for all major programmes. Inadequate funds, incompatible relationships between the three tiers, the undemocratic composition of various Panchayati Raj Institutions, political agenda, and hostile relations between officials and the general public were among the other issues.

After implementing the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in the state, a number of transformations were brought out in the PRI. Women candidates, including SCs and STs candidates, are reserved for one-third of the total wards. Reservations have been made for disadvantaged and excluded classes. With these changes, the impression has been created that representative democracy has been transformed into participatory democracy, with the historically excluded being included in administration and governance through reservation system in local bodies.

The Panchayati Raj department was created in 1994 in Odisha. It interconnects mainly with two ministries at the central level—the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and the Ministry of Rural Development(MoRD). In 2017, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation and the Panchayati Raj were merged, now called the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Drinking water Department. There are 1,06,483 elected representatives of three-tier in Odisha. It has 6799 Gram Panchayats (GPs), with 593 new Gram Panchayats created in 2017-18, with 52380 sarpanches and ward members and over 106483 elected Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) functionaries who have been entered into the service delivery for the people with a task to plan and implement schemes for holistic development and upliftment of the society in the process of becoming "institutions of self-government" (Outcome Budget, 2018-2019).

1.3 Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Gram Panchayat Functions

The SCs, STs, OBCs, and women are considered marginalised groups who entered the gram panchayat administration through reservation. In Odisha, the power equation in the villages is still in the hands of dominant castes since the most oppressed classes are ignorant and inexperienced. The resistance of the bureaucracy can be seen in a variety of ways. Local bureaucracy has accepted the stereotype and routine mentality that the panchayat would continue to exist indefinitely and that the bureaucracy has to control the new scenario. Political decentralisation means more than just electoral participation. As a result, it calls for the active participation of oppressed communities in the operation of rural local self-government institutions and the promotion of inclusive decision-making and effective governance (Bhuyan, 2012).

In the Balangir district, the Dalits are the untouchable caste; they are prohibited from entering the temple and visiting the household in the villages. They have to work a menial job like cleaning the toilet, scavenging, sweeper, leatherwork, footwear polishing, etc. The tribal people in the Balangir district are backward mainly depend on agriculture and daily wage labour for livelihood. Most of them are living below the poverty line. They are the Hindu by religion and not the untouchable caste. Adivasi also treated the Dalit as an untouchable caste. They felt that they were superior to the Dalit communities. Balangir district is not a scheduled area under the panchayat extension scheduled areas(PESA) so that they do not have special power in the gram panchayat. The other backward castes (OBC) are backwards educationally, economically and politically. There are several castes that are considered as the OBC. They are followers of the dominant caste power structure. They have a rare network in state politics. They consider themselves superior to the SC/ST people in terms of culture, economy, and politics. Their livelihood depends on cultivation and labour. Due to reservation, they are also entering first time in the functioning of the gram panchayat like SC/ST. These are the people who are getting an opportunity to enter the grassroots politic through the reservation policy. Thus, the study looks into their participation in the function or governance process of the gram panchayat.

The participation of the elected representatives was evaluated by examining the way they perform in regular panchayat activities. The activities included attendance in regular attendance in the gram sabha meeting and gram panchayat meetings; participation in the agenda-setting, which includes recognising issues and problems of the gram panchayat; asserting them in gram panchayat meetings and participating in the deliberations; their

participation in the decision-making process, such as taking decisions in planning, budgeting, and selection of beneficiaries in the panchayats and location of developmental projects, and lastly their involvement in delivering drinking water and sanitation programme.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The SCs, STs, OBCs, and women were excluded to entry into the power structure, because of a social hierarchy based on caste and gender that had persisted in Indian culture for centuries. They became the elected representatives in grassroots panchayat through reservation policy. They became sarpanches and ward members at the gram panchayat level. But, there is a difference in performance level by the elected representatives from reserved and unreserved categories due to circumstantial reasons in the functioning of the gram panchayats. Furthermore, the social structure and belief system are biased, patriarchal, and exploitative, excluding these marginalised communities from participating in various community systems, including economic and political ones. The bureaucratic and political classes have failed to empower them by sharing sufficient powers and resources over the last two and a half decades. The ward members had not been consulted before in the decision making and planning; instead, the system of Panchayati Raj was altered into the system of 'sarpanch raj'(Iyer, 2011). The PRI has made a difference by the sheer number of women in the political system. As a result of constitutional changes mandating seats for women in local government, they are being elected to local councils in unprecedented numbers. Affirmative action to secure women's elected empowerment is a crucial step towards democratising and gendering local government. However, as elected women representatives (EWRs), both members and sarpanches, continue to confront many institutional and societal impediments, it has not been adequate to guarantee women's leadership and successful engagement in local government. According to some research, decentralised institutions might become tools of the local elite or dominant caste, who could dominate and control the development agenda to their benefit(Narayan and Petesch, 2002 cited in Bonun et al., 2011).

The gram sabha approves the plan and identify the beneficiaries for the central and state-sponsored schemes. The gram sabha is a forum where the villagers can participate and keep their problems in the villages. Various studies shows that people participation in the gram sabha is low, no quorum has been fulfilled, and no provision was followed to conduct the gram sabha. The gram sabha, notwithstanding its potential to strengthen governance and make it accountable, transparent, participatory, and truly democratic, has

remained underutilised and dormant in the last several years(Hazra,2005). Against this backdrop, the study explores how the elected representatives coordinate with the people and mobilise them to attend the gram sabha and their role in meeting the gram panchayat? Out of 1,06,483, 66,610 elected representatives are from the SCs, STs, and OBCs communities. In the Balangir district, the total gram panchayat is 317, the total 317 sarpanches, and the total 3798 ward members connected with the gram panchayat have a crucial role in supporting the local initiatives to bring about holistic transformation of the rural areas. The majority of the elected representatives are from the SCs, STs, and OBCs categories(Odisha State Election Commission, 2017). Such a large number of the elected representatives are participating in the governance process of the gram panchayat, and their participation fulfils the needs of the people in the villages. They execute the plan for the problems of the villages through the gram panchayat's functioning, which arises in rural areas, so the present study seeks how they are involved in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Further, how did the State and central government facilitate them to work with adequate power without constraint?

The panchayat is a state subject; thus, the state government modified the central panchayat act to suit the state government's needs. The gram panchayat has various roles in rural development such as agriculture, land development, education, health, drinking water and sanitation, employment opportunity, the development of women and children, old age, and disabled people, and solving the social justice problem. The gram panchayat implements central and state-sponsored schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS), rural housing, national rural livelihood mission, etc. The gram panchayat manages the various accounts and budget, social audit, many registers for rural development. In this context, the reserved elected representatives enter and work as functionaries in the panchayat due to the reservation system, and most of them are becoming the first time leaders in their life in the panchayat. The study would look into how the state government and the central government provide the provision for them to work independently in the functioning of the gram panchayat. In addition, the study finds out the issue and problems faced by the elected representatives dealing with day-to-day work in the gram panchayats.

Unfortunately, capacity building in India is not a serious issue for the elected leaders of the people who determine the fate of people. In local government, training is essential even though there is no training policy and no concrete steps have been taken by the

government to build the capacity of the elected representatives of the people at the grassroots institutions. (Palanithuari, 2005). National Capability Building Framework, 2014 strive to develop a common understanding and identify key points of action regarding Capability Building and Training (CB & T) of elected representatives in the local bodies. The state government assign the responsibilities of the training to the State Institute Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SIRD and PR). Ideally, all elected representatives (ERs) should get capacity building and training three times within a term of the election, which is insufficient to understand the governance process of the gram panchayat. The present study looks into what they have learned in the training centres. How does the training enhance the capacity building of the elected representatives in the gram panchayat? Except for sarpanches, most of the ward members of the gram panchayat are not acquainted with the source of the funds for the gram panchayats. Even the sarpanches do not disclose to them the source of the funds. The ward members must know the source of the funds and grants received by the gram panchayat. Without knowledge of the budget and fund details of the gram panchayat, the ward members can not put across views for a better governance process. Therefore, the study explores the knowledge of the elected representatives about the funds' details in the gram panchayats.

The Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution of the PRI lists 29 subjects and their functions to be delivered by the gram panchayats. Gram Panchayats will receive the basic grant recommended by the Fourteenth Finance Commission for the years 2015-16 to 2019-20 to deliver basic services such as drinking water supply, sanitation, including solid waste disposal and sewerage, community asset maintenance, stormwater drainage, maintenance of streets, footpaths, and street lighting, and cremation grounds and burial. In order to utilise the grants, the gram panchayat has to prepare the plan and keep it in the gram sabha for further discussion. The Odisha government developed a guideline for preparing the planning, called the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), as directed by the ministry of the Panchayati Raj Institution of India in 2015. Usually, the plan was prepared by the bureaucrat and sarpanch. As per the GPDP's guideline, the people must be involved in preparing the gram panchayat. People's participation in the planning of the gram panchayat is inadequate. So, this study finds out how the GPDPs are implemented at the gram panchayats level and examines the participation and awareness of the elected representatives on the process of the GPDP. Each GP has their standing committee as per the state panchayat act; the standing committee represents the delegation of power among

elected representatives and recruits officials to deliver tasks like monitoring, planning, budgeting, and implementing the assigned subject. The functioning of the standing committee in PRIs is nothing, but it remains in the paper; however, the elected representatives are reluctant to attend the meeting (Venkatesu, 2016). Therefore, the study looks into the functioning of the standing committee and the involvement of the elected representatives in it.

In 2017, the Odisha government merged ministry of the drinking water and sanitation with Panchayati Raj. Now, it is called the ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Drinking Water Department. Drinking water is a serious issue for the marginalised section. Balangir district is a drought-prone area; it has a severe lack of drinking water in rural areas. "Scarcity of drinking water has assumed alarming proportions in villages of at least nine blocks of the Balangir district. Water level in the villages is at an all-time low" (17 June 2019, the New Indian Express). The chief engineer of the rural water sanitation supply (RWSS) said that "Gram panchayats have been empowered to deal with the water scarcity situation this year. Everything is being monitored by the block and district level officials who have been instructed to provide technical support to villagers for the repair of dysfunctional tube-wells on a priority basis." The problem is how the gram panchayat deals with drinking water and sanitation in the district. How far are the elected representatives aware of the drinking water and sanitation programme? Whether they play their role effectively in delivering drinking water service in the study areas?

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the role of the elected representatives in the functioning of the gram sabha, and how does this institution perform as a participatory institution at the gram panchayat level?
2. How do the PRIs members execute their duties in the governance process of the gram panchayats, and what are the problems they faced in the functioning of the gram panchayats?
3. What is their role and awareness in the drinking water and sanitation programme in the gram panchayat?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The elected representatives are the sarpanches, naib sarpanches, and ward members of the gram panchayat, who have been elected to grassroots politics; the present study focused on reserved and unreserved categories of the elected representatives in the gram panchayat. The quality of governance is assessed in terms of the functioning of various statutory institutions in the Gram Panchayat, such as Pallis Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings, the constitution and functioning of the Standing committee, and the implementation of the GPDP for the various programmes and policies with the effective participation of the elected representatives. So, these are the following objectives of the study.

1. To examine the performance of the gram sabha as a participatory institution and the involvement of elected representatives in its functioning.
2. To understand the challenges of the elected representatives in the functioning of the gram panchayats.
3. To illustrate the role and awareness of the elected representatives in the drinking water and sanitation programme in the selected study area.
4. To suggest measures to improve the gram panchayat's governance process in the selected study areas.

1.7 Research Design

The study is explorative in nature using a cross-sectional analytical process. It aims to investigate how social, caste and gender dynamics affect participation and influence decision-making processes. Besides, it tries to recognise the cause-effect relationship between the variables and correlate with the other variables. In order to get this correlation, the study has taken into consideration the socio-economic variables such as caste, gender, age, education, religion, occupation, income, housing status, marital status, family size, landholding, social network, access to the resource, and poverty status, and so forth. Since the study is exploratory-descriptive, a survey research design is maintained flexibly using a mixed-method to incorporate all the relevant research information. The term 'mixed methods' refers to "an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or 'mixing', of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry" (Wisdom, 2013). It will also make it possible to correlate data validation and to generalise the study. This study

analysed and collected qualitative (open-ended) data and quantitative (closed-ended) data. It will also enable correlating the validation of the data and arrive at a generalisation of the study.

1.8 Sampling Method

The present study focuses explicitly on the elected representative, i.e. the SCs, STs, OBCs, unreserved (URs) category, including women representatives in the gram panchayat. Covering all category, it will also help to compare all the reserved categories for their performance while discharging their gram panchayat duties. Taking into consideration the time and monetary limitations (aspects), it was decided that the study would only be limited to a district. For sampling purposes, the multi-stage sampling frame was applied for selecting the state, the district, blocks, gram panchayats. In the first stage, in order to get the sampling frame, the researcher visited the district panchayat office and got the sample frame; this is called the primary sample unit. In the second stage, the sampling frame was categorised by the social groups—SC, ST, OBC and UR. In this stage, 40 GPs, each headed by the SCs, STs, OBCs, and URs from 5 blocks, were selected to narrow the research area, and 10 sarpanches were selected for each social group from the selected five blocks; thus, this stage is called secondary sampling unit. In the third stage, 80 elected representatives were selected from each social group from the selected five blocks. This stage is called the ultimate sampling unit. Then, a simple random sampling was used for the selection of an equal number of elected representatives from each social group with a specific interval containing every element of the listed variables like social group and gender in the selected five blocks(<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology>¹).

The subsequent paragraph explained each stage of the multiple sampling from the higher to the lower level to select respondents. In the first stage, the Balangir district was chosen because it falls in KBK(Kalahandi-Balangir-Koraput) districts in Odisha, and it was declared an aspirational district by the Niti Aayog. The planning commission finds Southern and Western Odisha districts are the most backward, and some have been renamed KBK. In 1992-93, the three larger districts were reorganised into eight districts: Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Nuapada, Balangir, and

¹ The multisage sampling was detailed in the website www.scribbr.com and www.statisticshowto.com/multistage-sampling. "Multistage sampling divides large populations into stages to make the sampling process more practical. It is a combination of stratified sampling or cluster sampling and simple random sampling is usually used".

Sonepur. In 1996, the KBK² districts launched a revised long-term action plan (RLTAP). Drought-proofing, poverty alleviation and growth saturation were the targets of the RLTAP and enhanced quality of life for residents. This region is dry, backward, and has a low social indicator. Presently, in 2015-2016, the Odisha government launched Biju KBK yojana³ to improve the socio-economic condition of KBK district; it has a special package for KBK district. Due to the KBK district of Balangir, this district was selected for the study areas.

Balangir is an aspirational district chosen in consultation with state officials based on a composite index of key data sets that included socio-economic caste deprivation, key health and education sector results, and the state of necessary infrastructure. This indicator is low in comparison to other districts. One of the programme's strategies is identifying champions of change at district and regional levels to develop a mass movement. They have to focus on empowering them. The champion changers are elected representatives of district level, sub-divisional, gram panchayat and ward level(Kant, 2018). Balangir district is considered aspirational by the Niti Aayog; thus, it is selected for the study areas. In this stage, the researcher visited the district panchayat to collect the data of all representatives of the gram panchayat at the district level. It is called the primary sampling unit in the stage. To narrow down the research in the district, the researcher selected the five blocks out of 14 blocks based on the parameter of the low and high literacy rate.

Table 1.1: Block wise literacy rate of Balangir District (Census 2011)

SL No	Blocks	Literacy Rate for persons
1	Puintala	69.90
2	Agalpur	69.37
3	Loisinga	69.05
4	Deogaon	67.37
5	Balangir	67.09
6	Gudvella	65.45
7	Patnagarh	64.76
8	Saitala	64.48
9	Titlagarh	59.22
10	Khaprakhol	58.21
11	Belpara	55.96

² See <http://www.kbk.nic.in/org.htm>

³See https://www.worksodisha.gov.in/Biju_KBK_YOZANA.html

12	Muribahal	55.36
13	Bangomunda	53.84
14	Turekela	49.89

Source-District Census Hand Book, Balangir, (Census, 2011)

In the second stage was the selection of the blocks. Above table 1.1 shows the literacy rate of each block of the district. 5 blocks were selected for the study based on the literacy rate formula. Two blocks with the highest literacy rate (Loisinga 69.06 percent and Balangir 67.09 percent) and two blocks with the lowest ranks (Muribahal 55.36 percent and Bangomunda 53.84 percent), and one block (Gudvella 65.45) with middle rank has been selected for the study. Education is the determining factor in understanding the local bodies and functioning of the gram panchayats. Even though the Turekela block has been noted with the lowest literacy rate, it was not selected on account of Maoist dominated areas. Therefore, the literacy rate was considered a parameter for selecting the blocks in the study areas. Another parameter was considered for selection of the blocks was distance-wise from district headquarter that two blocks were selected based on long-distance from district headquarter that is Bangomunda(99 kms), and Muribahal(88kms) and Balangir block (0 Kms) was taken as headquarters, and the nearest block was Loisinga (20 Kms). A middle range block was selected that is Gudvella (48kms).

Table 1.2: The total ward members with their reservation status in five blocks of Balangir District

Name of the Block	Total GP	SC (M)	SC (W)	Total	ST (M)	ST (W)	Total	OBC (M)	OBC (W)	Total	UR (M)	UR (W)	Total	Total WM
Loisinga	20	14	27	41	16	30	46	26	40	66	58	28	86	239
Balangir	25	23	32	55	26	42	68	31	50	81	60	32	92	296
Gudvella	13	12	17	29	21	26	47	17	25	42	21	12	33	151
Muribahal	22	19	27	46	27	36	63	27	45	72	43	26	69	250
Bangomunda	26	25	36	61	24	39	63	38	53	91	59	37	96	311
Total	106	93	139	232	114	173	287	139	213	352	241	135	376	1247
Balangir District	Total GP	SC	SC (W)	Total	ST	ST (W)	Total	OBC	OBC (W)	Total	UR	UR (W)	Total	Total WM
Total	317	344	345	689	435	435	879	512	513	1025	607	607	1214	3798

Source- District Panchayat Office, Balangir, 2019-2020 and Odisha Election Commission, 2017,*M-Male, *W-Women, *GP-Gram Panchayat, SC-Scheduled Caste,

ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Cast, UR-Unreserve, W- Women, *WM-Ward Member

The above table 1.2 presents the total ward members of 3798 categorised according to a social group in 14 blocks of Balangir district. The five blocks were selected; the total number of ward members is 1247. Within the five blocks, the women ward members are 11.1 percent of SCs women, 13.8 percent of ST women, 17 per cent of OBC women, and 10.8 percent of UR women. So, the total women ward members are 52.7 percent of the total. The ward members are elected as a naib sarpanch among themselves. The data above represents the ward members and naib sarpanches of the sample blocks of the Balangir district.

Table 1.3: The total sarpanches with the reservation status in five blocks of Balangir District

Name of the Blocks	Total GP	SC (M)	SC (W)	Total	ST (M)	ST (W)	Total	OBC (M)	OBC (W)	Total	UR (M)	UR (W)	Total	Total GP
Loisinga	20	2	2	4	2	2	4	3	3	6	3	3	6	20
Balangir	25	2	3	5	2	3	5	3	4	7	5	3	8	25
Gudvella	13	1	2	3	2	2	4	2	2	4	1	1	2	13
Muribahal	22	2	2	4	2	3	5	3	3	6	4	3	7	22
Bangomunda	26	2	3	5	2	2	4	4	4	8	5	4	9	26
Total	106	9	12	21	10	12	22	15	16	31	18	14	32	106
Balangir District	317	26	34	60	32	40	72	44	49	93	53	39	92	317

Source- District Panchayat Office, Balangir, 2019-2020 and Odisha Election Commission, 2017, *M-Male, *W-Women *GP-Gram Panchayat, SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Cast, UR-Unreserve, W- Women

The above data in table 1.3 presents the total population of the sarpanches in the selected five blocks of the Balangir district. The total gram panchayat of the district are 317. In the study area, 106 sarpanches and 1247 ward members consist of 1353 elected representatives, which is the target population size from the selected five blocks. The total sample frame of the district, including both sarpanches and ward members, are 4115. (See Table1.2 and Table 1.3) All elected representatives were classified based on the social group—SC, ST, OBC and UR in this stage. Again, 10 sarpanches or GP were selected from each social group in the selected five blocks; and it is called the secondary sampling unit. After that, it will become 40 gram panchayats in the five blocks.

Table 1.4: The select representatives of the GPs from the five blocks in the study areas

Social Categories	SC (M)	SC(W)	ST(M)	ST(W)	OBC(M)	OBC(W)	UR(M)	UR(W)	Total
Total WMs of the Five Blocks	93	139	114	173	139	213	241	135	1247
Selected WM from the Five blocks	29	41	35	35	30	40	30	40	280
Total Sarpanches of the Five Blocks	9	12	10	12	15	16	31	18	106
Selected Sarpanches from the five blocks	4	6	5	5	4	6	4	6	40
Total selected ERs	33	47	40	40	34	46	34	46	320

Source- District Panchayat Office, Balangir (2019-2020) *M-Male, *W-Women *WM- Ward Member, S- Sarpanch, SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Cast, UR-Unreserve,*GP-Gram Panchayat

In the third stage, 40 Gram Panchayats were selected from five blocks headed by the SC, ST, OBC, and UR sarpanches. The respondents are the elected representatives of the gram panchayats—the ward members, naib sarpanch, and sarpanch who have been elected in the gram panchayat election, 2017. The target population size is 1353 in the selected five blocks. Using the sample size calculator on the online website, the researcher decides the sample size from the total population. In order to calculate the sample size, here the formula, the confidence level is 95 percent, the total target population size is 1353, the margin of the error is 5 percent. The formula of the Sample Size = $(Z\text{-score})^2 * StdDev * (1 - StdDev) / (margin\ of\ error)^2$. Using this formula, the researcher applied online calculation and got a 300 ideal sample size. (<https://www.qualtrics.com/sample-size>). But here, the 320 samples had been taken by the researcher, and the total sample size is 320 respondents to get an equal number from social groups; thus, 80 respondents were chosen from each group of the SCs, STs, OBCs and URs. $[SC(80) + ST(80) + OBC(80) + UR(80) = 320]$ As the list of the population was ordered by four social groups, the formula is $320/4=80$, to cover each social group, 80 numbers of respondents were taken from each social groups by using the simple random sampling method. This is called the ultimate sampling unit in this stage.

For selecting the elected representatives in block-wise, the selection criteria of the elected representatives were used; the formula is $sample\ size / target\ population \times 100$ ($320 \div 1353 \times 100 = 23$). So, at least 23 percent of the elected representatives were chosen from the selected five blocks in order to get the decided sample size. 40 gram panchayats were selected for the study areas. From the Loisinga block, 24.3 percent of elected

representatives selected out of 259; from Balangir Block, 23.6 percent of respondents chose out of 321; from Gudvella Block, 25 percent of respondents selected out of the 164; from Muribahal block, 23.2 percent of the elected representatives took out of the 271; from Bangomunda Block, 22.5 percent of the respondents participated in the interview out of the 337. (See Table 1.6) It indicates that at least 23 percent of the elected leaders were chosen from the total leaders in the selected five blocks. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select the elected representatives in the selected five blocks.

Table1.5: The selected representatives and their social categories in the selected five blocks

Selected Blocks of the District	Respondents	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Loisinga Block	Sarpanch	2	2	2	2	8
	Naib Sarpanch	1	1	1	1	4
	Ward Member	13	12	13	13	51
Balangir Block	Sarpanch	2	2	2	3	9
	Naib Sarpanch	2	2	2	2	8
	Ward Member	15	15	15	15	60
Gudvella Block	Sarpanch	2	2	1	1	6
	Naib Sarpanch	1	1	1	1	4
	Ward Member	7	9	8	7	31
Muribahal Block	Sarpanch	2	2	2	2	8
	Naib Sarpanch	2	2	1	2	7
	Ward Member	12	12	12	12	48
Bangomunda Block	Sarpanch	2	2	3	2	9
	Naib Sarpanch	2	1	2	2	7
	Ward Member	15	15	15	15	60
	Total	80	80	80	80	320

Source-Field Survey, 2019-2020, *SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Cast, UR-Unreserve,

The above table 1.5 shows that 63 elected representatives had been selected from the Loisinga block; 76 representatives had chosen from the Balangir block; 42 gram panchayat elected representatives were selected from the Gudvella block; 63 gram panchayat representatives have selected from the Muribahal Block, and 76 elected representatives had selected from the Bangomunda block. In Balangir block and Bangomunda block have a higher number of the GPs, that is, 25 and 26, respectively. Thus, 76 elected representatives were selected from each block. In Losinga block and Muribahal block have the middle number of the GPs, that is, 20 and 22, respectively. Hence, 63 elected representatives had participated in the interview from each block. Similarly, the Gudvella block has a lower number of 13 GPs; thus, 42 elected

representatives participated in the interview. Based on the sample size, at least 23 percent of the elected representatives was selected to the total of each five blocks.

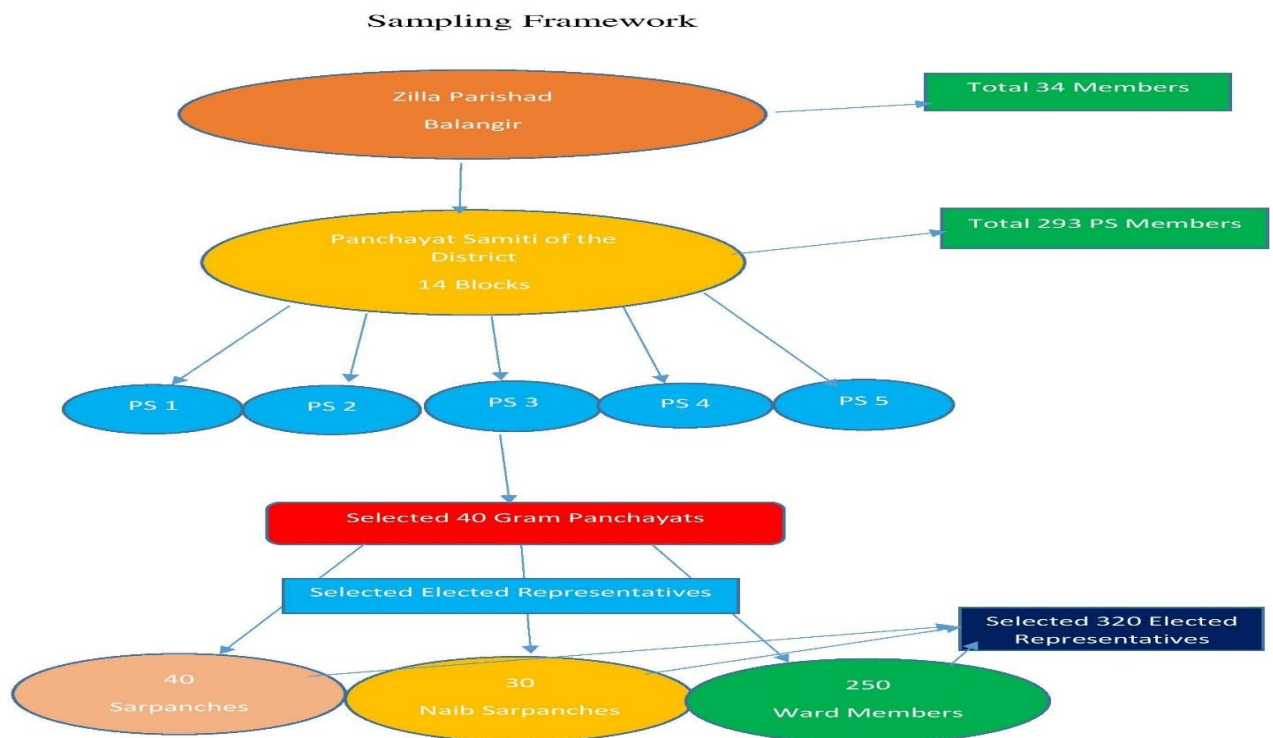
Table 1.6: The selected gram panchayat and elected representatives in the study areas

Selected Block	Selected Gram Panchayat	Total elected representatives(WM and S)	Selected ERs
Loisinga	Mugurbada, Taliuddar, Banipali, Kusmel, Kandajuri, Rengalia, G.S. Dunguripali and Badibahal	259	63(24.3)
Balangir	Barapudugia, Bhundimuhan, Bidighat, Sakma, Kudasinga, Madhiapali, Mirdhapali, Sibatala, Jhakaripali	321	76(23.6)
Gudevella	Tentulikhunti, Jammur, Madhekela, Ghuna, Chinchad, Gambhariguda	164	42(25.6)
Muribahal	Bandupala, Malisira, PatrapaliKha, Badsaimara, Gargadbahal, Muribahal, Ichhapada, Goimunda	271	63(23.2)
Bangmunda	Tureikela, , Mundpadar, JamKhunta, Bhursaguda, Arsatula, Jharial, Bhalumunda, Bhuslad and Sindhekela	337	76(22.5)
Total		1352	320(23)

Source-Field Survey, 2019-2020,* ER- Elected Representative, *S-Sarpanch,*WM- Ward Member, the figures in parentheses indicate percentage to row

Above table 1.6 shows the name of the gram panchayat had given. Based on the sample size, the gram panchayats had selected by an equal number of the social group that is SC, ST, OBC and UR. Then, a simple random sampling method was used to select the elected representatives from gram panchayats.

Figure 1.1: Sampling Framework



15 Focus Group Discussions (FDG) were organised in the five blocks with the participation of the 150 villagers to explore their views on the functioning of the gram panchayat. This was purposively selected as a method of qualitative inquiry to crosscheck the view of the elected representatives regarding the implementation of various programmes by the gram panchayats.

1.9 Data Collection Method

Cross-sectional research design is a type of observational research. In a cross-sectional analysis, the investigator simultaneously tests the outcome and while also observing the field's varying phenomena (Setia, 2016). It also aimed at finding the prevailing attitudes, situations and contexts that emerge in the field. In cross-sectional studies, participants are chosen solely based on the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria. A cross-sectional study⁴ is a sort of observational research that examines at variable and data at a single point in time across a sample population or a pre-defined subset of the population. Hence, a cross-sectional research design was used in the study; this study is a cross-sectional analysis based on survey design.

The interview method was the most suitable data collection method in this analysis, and a cross-sectional investigation was used based on survey design. Semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect information about the Gram Panchayats elected representatives, the extent of their self-perceived role in planning and decision making, power-sharing, the role and responsibilities of the gram sabha and functioning of the panchayat and awareness of different programmes and policies, which is running in the gram panchayat. The semi-structured interview schedules were pre-tested among respondents of similar types in two gram panchayats (Loisinga Block) in the Balangir district to determine the feasibility and consistency of the schedules, nature of questions in relation to the objectives, data quality, and to address any unforeseen ethical concerns about the research. The interview schedule had been changed based on the pre-testing and was used for the final data collection.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to know about people's perspectives on various local social problems, scheme implementation, power dynamics, the function of the gram sabha, perception of caste and reservation in the functioning of the gram panchayat, and opinion on the role of women and elected representatives, and

⁴ <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/cross-sectional-study/>

satisfaction on the water and sanitation programme in their villages, and other related issues of the panchayat. PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) method was used to map out the resource of the gram panchayat. Besides, the observation method (non-participatory) field notes were used to understand the intrinsic dynamics of involvement and leadership in political decision-making processes, their role and responsibilities for the gram panchayat's work, and their understanding of various social, economic, political factors and cultural activities that determine social networks and relationships. The observation method is used as a supportive and supplementary method to get external and internal factors that impact the gram panchayat's functioning. Hence, the primary data collection method is the direct interview with the respondent carrying the interview schedule.

1.10 Tools of Data Collection

To carry out the systematic investigation into a specific objective, the researcher used structured interview schedules to obtain the primary data from the respondents. The focus group discussion guide, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques, and observation methods were used to map out the respondents and gram panchayat's resources and get opinions and supporting data. Hence, the primary data collection tool was structured for the interview scheduled in the field study. "The Likert scale is based on the assumption that each statement/item on the scale has an equal 'attitudinal value.' 'Importance' and 'weight' in terms of reflecting an attitude towards the issue in question" (Kumar, 2009). Likert scale was used to analyse the qualitative data such as opinion, attitude, and awareness. In the Likert scale, the attitude or awareness measured to some extent, to a large extent, strongly agree, disagree, agree, good, bad, moderate, and so on. In this study, the Likert scale was used to analyse the data. The Likert scale was incorporated in the semi-structured interview scheduled, and further, it was an analysis through argument and interpretation. Moreover, the variables were measured using the ordinal scale to know how one value is greater than the other. For instance, the respondents responded to the answer like the word: frequently, always, sometimes, agree, strongly agree, and disagree.

1.11 The Universe and the Unit

The study's universe comprised the elected representatives of the election in 2017, in Odisha. The study primarily focuses on the category-wise reserve and unreserved elected representatives; hence the concentration of their literacy rate in the Balangir district has been the main consideration for the purpose of selecting the sample blocks. The district

was selected based on the KBK region and aspirational district as the parameter. The research study covered 40 gram panchayats from 5 blocks of the study area. The gram panchayat (GP) is listed in such a way that 10 GPs headed by SCs, STs, OBCs, and UR category and in each category. Thus, 10 numbers of sarpanches were taken from each social group SC, ST, OBC, and UR categories to include political, cultural diversities and possible socio-economic, and to have broader commonalities between these panchayats to facilitate reasonable comparative changing governance and power relations with them. Of the total strength of 320 respondents responded, 40 of them are sarpanches, 250 GP ward members, and 30 naib-sarpanches.

1.12 The Process of Data Collection

The data for the study was gathered in four types of tools such as interview schedules, a focus group discussion guide, observation method and PRA methods. The information was gathered through informal conversation and discussion with gram panchayat's representatives gram sabha's members, which was used to analyse and argument. Except for a few cases where interviews were performed at the gram panchayat's office, the researcher conducted most of the interviews at the respondents' homes. The researcher began his fieldwork in the study area in February 2019-September 2019 and again did fieldwork in January 2020-March 2020. The primary profile of the elected representatives and contact details were obtained from the district panchayat office and concerned BDO of the respective five blocks. During the first phase of research, the data was collected from the elected representatives; the process was initiated in February, during which the Focus Group Discussion followed. Concurrently, the preparation of GP profiles, community resource mapping, and FGDs were conducted. The interviews were conducted at a convenient place and time for the respondents. It took about eleven months to complete this task as various festivals, sowing, and harvest seasons paused their own constraints for the people to be available. The researcher frequently visited Gram Panchayat, BDO office, and even after that to rectify and collect the supporting data as required from time to time. The interview schedule was prepared based on the quantitative and qualitative data. The questions were developed in the interview schedule includes both the open and close-ended questions. All qualitative and quantitative data were put in table form to measure the data in descriptive and analytic ways.

1.13 Types and Sources of the Data

The primary data was collected from the elected representatives of the gram panchayats; the information was also sought from members of the gram sabha and district panchayat

office and BDO from Panchayat Samiti and staff of the district rural development agency (DRDA). Moreover, the data was collected from GPEO, panchayat executive officer (PEO), and Gram Rozgar Sevak. The researcher collected the data on the reservation of all elected representatives from the district panchayat office, Balangir. Subsequently, the researcher adopted multi-stage sampling by focusing on the social group.

The secondary data was collected from gram panchayat records such as proceeding books, attendance register of meeting and gram sabha, annual reports of the government, audit reports, various journals, websites and books. In order to make accurate data, the gram panchayat activity report approved the action plan, pending action report, activity-wise expenditure details report were checked from the website of the plan plus, and PRIAssoft. In addition, various books, reports, the website of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj of India, and research articles were also used for the data analysis. The researcher has collected and used both types of data that is quantitative and qualitative. Most of the research objectives and questions have been addressed with the help of the quantitative method. Hence, the qualitative data has also been used to interpret, explain, and demonstrate social phenomena arising from the quantitative method. In addition to that, the qualitative data was interpreted using an inductive framework approach, and the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics like cross-tabulation, percentage and frequency. In order to collect the qualitative data, focus group discussions, interviews, observation method, participatory learning and action tools such as transect walks to identify the resource of the villages were used in the study. Hereafter, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by interview schedule, including open and close-ended questions, FGD and observation method. Hence, information on households composition of the elected representatives, socio-economic profile, assets, practices related to gram sabha, governance process of the gram panchayat, the role and awareness of the elected leader in providing safe drinking water and sanitation were gathered in this survey.

1.14 Data Analysis Techniques

The raw data were tabulated and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistical tools. The data were also analysed using frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and other approaches. Also, the data was mostly analysed and evaluated in view of the study's study objectives and questions. The triangulation method was used to understand a phenomenon or discoveries and give supporting evidence for the arguments after the qualitative and quantitative data

were scrutinised independently. Triangulation is an effective technique for validating data by integrating information from two or more sources. In order to make an adequate understanding, triangulation entails using several data sources in an investigation. Triangulation is a technique that combines the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Johnson Honorene, 2017). Triangulation is more about deepening and broadening one's understanding than it is about confirmation, and it favours interdisciplinary study over a narrowly defined discipline like sociology or anthropology. 'Triangulation' is a form of verification that incorporates several views and approaches to maximise validity. (Sabina and Khan, 2012) Therefore, based on understanding, the Triangulation technique was used for the data analysis.

1.15 Ethical concerns

At the outset, the research objectives were clearly explained to the stakeholder of the gram panchayat. First, the researcher approached the district panchayat office Balangir and informed him of the study by writing a letter. The same procedures were followed before visiting the gram panchayat that contacted the BDOs and then the gram panchayat's sarpanch in the study areas. All the research study stakeholders, such as panchayat staff who have helped in the field arrangements, elected representatives and officials of the GP, were also specifically and personally elucidated the purpose of the researcher's study and intention. Significantly, the villagers were also very cooperative in the focus group discussion. Before interacting with all participants, an informal conversation was conducted to gain their permission to participate in the study. Thus, primary data was obtained from respondents after they gave their informed consent. The chosen respondent's identity was kept entirely secret. Legal, ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, safety, and future research implications were maintained throughout the study. The chosen respondent's identity was kept secret in the study.

The respondents were told in advance of their right to refuse to answer questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. Throughout the field study, the researcher was frank, unbiased, and practised a nonjudgmental approach. The data obtained in the field was only used for research and academic purposes. All potential for misrepresentation has been carefully avoided, deliberate and cautious attempts have been made in the study to ensure that the research is not influenced in any way. As a result, the possibility of data manipulation was purposefully avoided.

1.16 Significance of the Study

This study is a sincere endeavour to comprehend the role of the elected representatives of the governance process in the gram panchayat. It aims to examine the gram panchayat's governance process, including the participation of marginalised groups in power handling, resource sharing, and functioning of the programmes at the village level. The gram panchayat process contains the elected representatives' participation in decision-making, awareness building, monitoring, planning, executing, and implementing developmental policies and programmes in a transparent and accountable manner. The researcher is an optimist about the status of participation of the elected representatives, decision-making structures, resource and power politics, changing patterns of rural leadership, functioning level in the gram panchayat, empowerment of marginalised group, and, more precisely, humanisation and democratisation processes of local self-government.

The study will be noteworthy with the following: this is primarily an empirical study focused on the first time the gram panchayat development plan (GPDP) programme and its implementation. In 2017, the panchayat department and the drinking water were merged; thus, a special role was given to the panchayat. In this background, the study looks into the role of the PRIs members in drinking water and sanitation programmes. The study's perspective of the governance process explores whether the Odisha Gram Panchayat Acts and Rules were followed or not at the gram panchayat level. The study looks into the mechanism and government's support for the gram panchayat for adequately functioning and delivering service to rural areas.

The interdisciplinary nature of the study will give useful information on current socio-economic trends and political events in governance processes. The variables about the socio-economic status of elected representatives, participation, decision-making dynamics, empowerment, social exclusion, and other associated political structure make it more social anthropological and sociological. Representation, political participation, training programmes, governance processes, and the gram panchayat's functioning make it relevant for political science and public administration scholars. The panchayat acts and rules, social justice, right based aspects make it the subject of law and human rights. Besides, someone can also link it to the economy's perspective as well. In the broader sense, the study is interdisciplinary, and it would help social science and humanities researchers who want to conduct studies on this topic for other academic purposes. In

addition, the study may be helpful to policymakers and panchayat raj institutions (PRI) administrators, as well as civil society organisations (CSO) working on issues such as empowerment of women, leadership, and marginalised groups, awareness of the elected representatives about mechanisms of the governance process, addressing inequality and deprivation, focusing on participatory and inclusive development, good governance of the panchayat, training PRI members, panchayat's functionaries and other stakeholders.

1.17 Limitations of the Study

The current study seeks to investigate and comprehend the essence of the elected representatives' participation, people's participation, decision-making processes, functioning process, resource allocation system, and power-sharing with hitherto socially excluded groups to empower them socially and politically. The opportunities shaped by reservation will prove detrimental if the active and meaningful participation of the elected representatives is proxy and inadequate. The study looks into the governance process of the gram panchayat where the elected representatives participate to discharge their duties for rural development. Furthermore, elected representatives' inadequate participation is attributed to their socio-economic status and social structure. Therefore, they are unable to influence decision-making at PRI functioning. The researcher gathered primary and secondary data in this context, but the study has some limitations. The following are some possible research limitations.

1.17.1 Focus on the Gram Panchayat Level

The study focuses on the gram panchayat level elected representatives, excluding the elected representatives of the panchayat Samiti and Zilla panchayat. Only 150 villagers have participated in the focus group discussion, which is not adequate to generalise their view, which is a limitation of the study. Another limitation is that the interview did not conduct all government officials of the gram panchayats, so the finding of the particular conclusion may not be appropriate.

1.17.2 Lack of Erstwhile Studies on the Topic

Even after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, very few studies on social exclusion, participation, and reservation in the Panchayati Raj Institution were conducted. There have been several studies on the participation and empowerment of ST, SC, OBC, and women on their own, but few have addressed the deprivation, discrimination, participation, and exclusion linked with the governance process of these communities and comparing the performance of the reserve and unreserve categories among the elected

leaders at the gram panchayat level. Thus, this study had adopted these concepts by using descriptive and analytic in nature.

1.17.3 Self-Reported Data

The data collection processes in survey research require respondents to react suddenly, which does not allow them to reflect thoroughly. Their responses were rather raw and basic because of the respondents' low literacy levels and lack of knowledge about GP's functioning. Since the panchayat topic is such a political and sensitive issue, the respondents' responses may be very political or given under the influence of social dynamics. As a result, distinguishing between false or incorrect information is difficult, and in the absence of any effort to validate the data obtained, the researcher is left with no choice but to accept it.

1.17.4 Lack of the Reliable Data

The data used for sampling was government data, viz, Election Commission Department data and Census data. It is a usual supposition that the government's data is flawless and genuine, but the researcher often faces inaccurate or outdated data. For example, the elected representative was reserved for the general category, but an ST candidate was elected in that seat. In many cases, ward member seats of the SC/ST were lying vacant in the village; later, the villager and sarpanch selected the candidate with the help of the lottery method. In the case of another gram panchayat, the sarpanch seat was reserved for the ST; due to the non-available of the ST candidate, the villagers decided to elect an OBC candidate. Data from the Election Commission may not be updated. The study only focuses on the Odisha gram panchayat election, 2017. These shortcomings have contributed to some sampling errors.

1.17.5 Difficulty in Accessing Respondents

In any short term studies, quick access to respondents is a big problem. Sometimes, the panchayat's elected representatives were unavailable in the village, but tracing and finding them was not easy. When the researcher approached the women elected representatives for the survey, they hesitated to talk and waited for their husbands' coming. Since most of the research studies on PRIs are evaluation studies, most officials and sarpanches at the PRIs doubted this study's procedural inquiry or departmental action. As a result, obtaining their approval and assistance for data collection and access to PRI records was difficult.

1.17.6 Measures Used for Data Collection

The interview schedule is used for primary data collection since the study used a survey research design. The validity and reliability of the data depend upon the degree of honesty with the answers. The interview flaw in not exploring the complexities of the different causes that need further investigation, but this method limits the interviewer to the confines of questions and answers.

1.17.7 Use of Various Theories and Concepts

The study's main limitation is that it uses several core terms: participation, representation, governance, decentralisation, development, deprivation, and exclusion. These concepts are alone capable of a separate study and further investigation. However, the scholar attempts his best to give justice to these theories and concepts.

1.18 Chapterisation

The present study is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter - 1: Introduction

The introduction chapter covers the evaluation of the panchayat in Odisha and discusses its elected representatives, the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study, and the study's question. The research methodology section outlines the research design, objectives of the study, sampling framework, methods and tools of data collection, the universe of the study, study areas, data analysis method and source of data. Further, it provides an overview of the fieldwork setting, the study's significance and limitations, and characterisation arrangement.

Chapter - 2: The Theoretical Framework and Review of the Literature

This chapter deals with the review of the literature and the theoretical outline of the study. It involves a broader understanding of the basic concept of representation, participation, governance, decision-making, decentralisation, social justice, the philosophy of the Panchayati Raj System etc. In addition to that, review the various empirical study relating to the participation of the elected representatives in the governance of the gram panchayat.

Chapter - 3: The Field Context and Study Areas

Chapter 3 is divided into three sections. The first section gives a brief overview of Odisha, as well as Balangir district and discusses the Panchayati Raj system in the state. The second section elaborates the selected 40 gram panchayats in a brief profile of the five blocks. Finally, the third section describes the socio-economic profile of the respondents in the study areas.

Chapter - 4: Role and Awareness of the Elected Representatives in the Functional Process of the Gram Sabha

Chapter 4 deals with the function and process of the gram sabha organising in the gram panchayat, where the elected representatives participated and mobilised people to succeed in the meeting. It includes how the elected representatives open the voice for the village's development by criticising, keeping different views, and solving the problem. Further, it checks whether the Odisha Gram Panchayat Acts and Rules were followed or not in conducting the gram sabha.

Chapter-5: Participation, Awareness and Challenges Faced by the Elected Representatives in the Governance Process of the Gram Panchayat

This chapter deals with the governing process of the gram panchayat viz, the awareness of the elected representatives on the 14th Central Finance Commission, 4th State Finance Commission, the process of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan, and programmes and policies of the gram panchayat. In addition, this includes the participation of elected members in the training programmes, aware of their role and responsibilities in the gram panchayat, whether their demanded work has been fulfilled or not in the gram panchayat, the role of the standing committee, and the planning process of the gram panchayat.

Chapter - 6: Role and Awareness of the Elected Representatives in Drinking Water and Sanitation Programme in the Gram Panchayat

This chapter describes the coverage of the toilet facilities in the village, the practice of open defecation free(ODF), the role of the sarpanches and ward members in providing safe drinking water in the gram panchayat. Besides, this section analyses the village water sanitation committee's role, the awareness of the elected leaders on the source and supply of drinking water, water source sustainability plan, water budgeting, and different programmes and policies on drinking water and sanitation in the gram panchayat.

Chapter-7: The Report of the Focus Group Discussion(FGD)

This chapter explains the finding of the FGD on the view of the villagers about the functioning of the gram sabha and its consequences. The villagers criticise how the elected representatives perform in the functioning of the drinking water and sanitation programme and other gram panchayat activities. They opinion what the gram panchayat had been completed the various activities in their villages.

Chapter - 8: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter summarises the study's major findings, contribute recommendations, and analyses theoretical concerns of conclusion emerging from the findings.

CHAPTER-2

Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework and the literature review on the empirical work related to India's panchayat system. The idea of the participation theory of local government involves the functioning of the gram panchayat where the elected representatives mobilise, raise questions, execute the policies, implement, monitor the project and solve the problem of people. Similarly, this chapter describes the representation theory of how the elected representatives stand for the people and act for the people in their constituency. In addition to that, this chapter elaborates on the concept of good governance, decentralization, various form of democracy, and social exclusion concerning the functioning of the gram panchayat. Social exclusion occurs in the gram panchayats, where the elected leaders could not use the resource, participate in decision making, and implement its day-to-day activities. Furthermore, it elucidates the empirical works of the governance of the panchayats system in India through the review of the existing works of literature.

2.2 Evaluation of the Panchayati Raj Institution(PRI) in India

Local self-units are mentioned in the Rigveda as 'Sabha,' 'Samiti,' and 'Vidath.' In the Vedic era, the panchayat evolved a group of five selected persons from the villages to settle local problems. In ancient times, the notion of 'Pancha parameswar' or 'Pancha'—GODs existed. The administration was divided into 'Pur' and 'Janpad' or towns and villages in the Epic era. Villages were referred to as 'Janpad,' while the people of the villages were referred to as 'Janapada,' as recorded in the *Ramayana*. Kautilya advised the king to establish villages of 100-500 families during the Ancient Age. There would also be centres for 10 villages, 200 villages, 400 villages, and so on. The policy of decentralisation of power was implemented during Chandragupta Maurya's regime. Villages were the smallest administrative unit. The ruler split the kingdom into provinces named 'Vilayat' during the mediaeval period. The province was headed by 'Amir' and 'Vali'. Collection of the tax, management of the finance and sometimes judiciary was under his control. Other officials were Mukkadam for administration, Patwari for tax collection, Choudharies to settle the disputes, and Chowkidari for the security(Joshi and Narwani, 2002, p.20-31).

Again, Josh and Narwani (2002) of the same chapter explained in the same chapter that in the British period in India, various acts were developed, and the Corporation was created. In 1687, there began local government in India as the Madras City Corporation was formed. In 1882-1919: the local government was seen as local self-government. Lord Rippon as the Viceroy passed the local self resolution in 1892 and later the local government has become the local self government where the local bodies, , municipal bodies, districts and tehsils were formed. The Local self-government resolution in 1882 was the most important act passed by Lord Ripon as the Viceroy. In this act, the local bodies, municipal bodies, districts and tehsils were formed. The members themselves elected the chairmen for the local boards. In 1909, the Royal Commission reported that lack of funds, religion, caste disputes were the main hindrances in the local bodies' effective functioning and suggested to develop Villages panchayat for the administration of local villages affairs. In 1918, according to the Montague-Chelmsford report, local boards should be constituted representative bodies. State intervention should be limited, and panchayats should be recognized as legal bodies. Between 1920 and 1937, provincial governments were established, with people's representatives responsible for the administration. The Simon Commission conducted an evaluation on self-government implementation in 1930. According to this report, it increased the control of the state over these local bodies. The elected bodies were created, and chairpersons were non-official persons. Many provinces passed the panchayat act in this period, for example, the Bengal Self-Government Act, 1920, Assam Self-Government Act(1925-1926), Uttar Pradesh Panchayat Act, 1920. 1938-1947: The Government of India Act of 1935 granted power to the provincial governments with autonomy, and they were required to enact legislation to further democratize local self-government institutions, including the villages panchayat. The villages panchayat imposed the tax collection, and more power was given to them. In this period, the local bodies were appropriately organised. Post-independent period: After India's independence (1947-1957), Gandhi's concept of the village panchayat as the primary democratic level at the grassroots prevailed, and people's participation was indispensable for the welfare state. According to the Gandhiji, "the greater the power of the panchayat, the better for the people as true democracy". The Etawah Project was headed by American expert Albert Mayer, inspired the beginning of the community development program in 1952, and the National Education Service was established in 1953.

For the proper execution of the development programme, **the Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team Report (1957)** recommended appropriate administrative decentralization. It should put the decentralised administrative system under the direct control of the people's elected representatives. The team recommended a three-tier panchayat system, devolution of the power and funds to local bodies, the Panchayat Samiti should be given more power, effective training to the PRIs members, etc. In this report, no special mention regarding the power of the gram sabha. As a result, Rajasthan was the first state where the Panchayat Raj Act was launched on the 2nd of October 1959. Later, the Andhra Pradesh, the Tamil Nadu followed it in 1959, Orissa, Assam, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka in 1960-61. In 1959, Orissa passed the Panchayat Samiti Act and Zilla Parishad Act. These states were devolved more power to Panchayat Samiti as per the recommendation of the Mehta report. In the beginning, it was more enthusiastic, but it declined the power, and only the state government controlled everything in the administration. Therefore, the various committee was formed to improve the panchayat system by the central government in India(deSouza, 2000). Also, deSouza, describes that **Ashok Mehta Committee (1977)** suggested devolution of power to the PRIs; the primary unit would be Zilla Parishad, the village committee for the weaker section, Mandal Panchayat should be formed with 15,000-20,000 population, ensure coordination of all panchayats like urban and rural. Moreover, the panchayat finance commission should be set up. Panchayat should develop its own resource and training for all elected representatives. The Nyaya Panchayat should be delinked with the Village Panchayat. Furthermore, the Zilla Panchayat should formulate a district plan that the Mandal Panchayat will implement. **C.H.Hanumanth Rao Team (1982)** suggested that strengthening the decentralisation planning should occur, and people's participation was lacking. Thus, people should be associated right from the plan formulation stage—the **G.V.K.Rao Committee (1985)** recommended there should be regular PRI elections and the formulation of a plan at the district level, and the implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes. **Laxmi Mal Singhvi Committee(1986)** recommended constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The PRIs must be considered as the local self-government.

The P.K.Thungan Committee recommended that the Panchayat bodies should be constitutionally recognised, based on the Constitution (64th Amendment) Bill drafted and introduced in parliament in 1988. The Constitution (64th Amendment) Bill was

presented in the parliament in 1989 in order to make the PRIs powerful bodies, but Rajiv Gandhi's effort failed due to the lack of a majority in Rajya Sabha in May 1989. After that, the Constitution (72nd Amendment) Bill was introduced in September 1991 by the Narasimha Rao government and referred to a Joint Select Committee of the Parliament, passed in both houses of parliament in 1992 (Bala Vikasa, 2009). The 73rd Constitution Amendment, which came into effect on the 24th of April, 1993, is a landmark law in the history of the Panchayati Raj Institution. It gives Panchayati Raj a firm constitutional foundation. This amendment aims to give PRIs across the country a uniform framework while at the same time allowing for state-level variance (Hooja and Hooja, 2007).

2.3 Silent Features of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993

Kamble and Salunkhe (2012) argued that the 73rd Amendment Act was viewed as “a revolutionary step” (Sawhney, 1994) and “having revolutionary implication” (Thakkar and Gawankar, 1997). According to Sahay (2012), the 73rd amendment act contains many provisions that protect and cultivate human rights in general, as well as the rights of poor and marginalised groups (SCs, STs, OBCs) and women in particular, by counterbalancing India's current structural trends of inequality and discrimination. that the 73rd amendment.

The amendment's more important features or provisions are the following: (1) In every state, a three-tier Panchayat Raj system will be implemented, with elected bodies at the village, block, and district levels. If a state has a population of less than 2 million people, it is not expected to implement block-level panchayats. (2) Gram Sabha will be a deliberative body comprising all registered voters in village areas. It was intended to serve as a primary mechanism for transparency and accountability by reviewing the annual statement of account, reports from previous fiscal years, and insights on development programmes for the upcoming year, as well as participating in the selection of beneficiaries for specific government schemes. (3) All members at three levels of the panchayats will be directly elected for the five-year term. The chairperson will be elected through an indirect election at the intermediate and district panchayat levels. In case of dissolution, an election will be held within six months of the dissolution date. (4) Women will be given one-third of all seats at three levels, and reservations for SCs and STs will be proportional to their population at each level. This clause would also apply to the office of the chairperson of the panchayats. (5) At all

three levels of the panchayat, states would have the option of reserving seats for other backward castes (OBC) groups. (6) A state election commission will be formed with responsibility for supervising, organising, and managing elections at all levels. (7) A State Finance Commission will review and update the panchayat's financial status every five years and make recommendations to the state government concerning fund's utilisation. (8) The state government will allow panchayats to make plans for economic growth and social justice in their respective areas, as well as charge and collect some local taxes to improve their credibility as self-governing institutions. (9) The "Eleventh Schedule," which specifies 29 areas where panchayats can legally have jurisdiction, was inserted as part of the 73rd amendment. These are agriculture, animal husbandry, minor irrigation, fisheries, social forestry, small-scale businesses, and implementation of land reform, and all livelihood sectors in the rural economy and so on. Furthermore, the 73rd amendment covers a wide range of issues that would enable the panchayat to improve the well-being of the disadvantaged, the poor, and marginalised. It also comprises relevant provisions that guarantee the representation of historically marginalised groups like women, SCs, and STs, as well as accountability for local institutions like gram panchayats and gram sabhas.

2.4 The Philosophy of the Gram Panchayats

Gram Swaraj, according to Mahatma Gandhi, was the only way to ensure democracy through people's participation. Gram Swaraj refers to the governance and administration of a village under which the people are the leaders and administrators of the village as a republic. The villagers would elect their representative, and the Gram Sabha of the village would make a unanimous decision. Gandhi views that Gram Swaraj defines that "every village should be democracy in which they will not depend even on a neighbour for major needs". There should be self-sufficiency mutual cooperation among village people. Then it will be swaraj for the poor. Food, shelter and income are the basic needs the panchayat can fulfil through the participation of people and taking their own decision at the village level. Gandhi argued that "true Swarajya" can not be achieved by the power of a few people. People should have the ability to avoid power abuse. People should be able to gain control of power and regulate it (Joshi and Narwani, 2002, p.13-15). Further, they elaborate that "how to give power to the people" is a central question for the debate in India. India is a welfare state that has been discharging various functions and duties across states. Performance cannot be assured if the state and central

governments perform all of these activities on their own. Consequently, it is essential to decentralise powers and obligations to local bodies, which can plan programmes based on local needs and aspirations and effectively implement them with the support of local people. The late Lal Bahadur Shastri (Former Prime Minister of India) said that “only the panchayat knows the needs of the villages and hence the development of the villages should be done only by the panchayats. Villagers who are prosperous should ensure that the panchayats' power is used to benefit the poor. The panchayat is the foundation of democracy, and if that foundation is built on sound leadership and social justice, democracy in this country cannot be jeopardised.”

In a democracy, policymakers should exercise power responsibly, and then they should consent and understand all parties involved. People must become more active in local politics and administration as a result of the Panchayati Raj. The key to democracy's success is to give more power to the elected bodies at the three-tier panchayat. Even the disadvantaged community members, including SCs, STs, OBCs, women, and other minorities, should participate in village administration at the village level. As a result, Panchayat Raj is a mechanism that ensures people's participation at the grassroots level. It is a democracy at the starting level. Since villagers become well-versed with the local issue and how to deal with the problem, PRIs become a training ground for improving the leadership of the rural people at the lowest level. It was also prescribed in Article 40 of the Constitution that the “state shall endow such powers and responsibilities to the panchayats so as to make them the institution of self-government.” In pursuance of the Directive Principles State Policy, too, it was considered to decentralise power and function to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2.5 Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi Debate on the Panchayati Raj System in India

Kumar (2007) explains that Gandhiji saw the village's structure as self-sufficient, with critical needs met independently of its neighbours while being interdependent on many others. He trusts the villagers' innate ability to run the community's affairs through shared goodness, harmony, and understanding. The panchayat should decentralise the authority of three responsible for the villages' legislative, executive, and judicial functions, make fast decisions, and implement any initiative or programme. As far as the judiciary is concerned, Gandhiji advocated for the redistribution of judicial authority to the panchayat in order to provide immediate access to justice for the citizens.

Panchayat's representation by Panch Parmeshwar (the five Gods) reflected divine sacredness to him. He called for making justice more affordable by reducing the number of judges and establishing a simple process. In his opinion, village-level disputes were relatively straightforward, and there was no need for complicated legal provisions to manage the village's affairs. Except in cases of corruption or blatant misinterpretation of the rules, the panchayat voted to be final.

On the other hand, the view of Dr. Ambedkar, Kumar (2007) of the same chapter, he elaborates that the view of Dr. Ambedkar differed in his view on the matter of local government. Caste being a principal factor in the affair of villages, he said, "the village republic spelt ruination for the country and played no part in its affairs and destiny. He describes the village's panchayats as a sink of localism and den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism"; because of its village structure, which ingrained local particularism and patriotism in the people, India could not develop a national spirit. Also, members favouring the Panchayat Raj system failed to include it in the Constitution because he was unambiguous in his views in the constituent assembly. To deliver effective and correct decisions, an individual had to be educated in the law, have an unbiased perspective, and his position had to be autonomous and impartial, according to Dr. Ambedkar's view on the judiciary power in the panchayat system. As an elected body, the panchayat can have illiterate or literate members but not necessarily the qualifications to adjudicate. He has formed an elected judiciary and says no to anything in the world. In villages, the upper caste socially boycotts the Dalit because they make a silly entrance to a pond or temple. As a result, these kinds of habits are popular in the village. Consequently, he could not trust that justice could be shared between men of different castes and creeds.

Several questions arose, who should represent the people in the panchayat? How many members ought to be elected? Should the election process be direct or indirect? Gandhiji argued that there should be an election of five persons with required authority and jurisdiction in response to the question. "These members should have the prescribed qualification like selflessness, ability, and integrity. The direct election of panchayat would be held. These elected members, in turn, would represent at the taluq level. The taluq level elected member would elect a member of the district panchayat. The district panchayats would elect the prant (provincial) panchayat, and provincial panchayat would constitute the Rashtriya (national) panchayat". There were no special

arrangements to include the poor, women, or other oppressed classes in Gandhi's scheme. The adult's qualification to vote in the panchayat would be in the form of manual labour and listener rather than a place of property ownership and decision-making. On the other hand, Dr.Ambedkar opposed the traditional panchayat village system; he did not talk much about panchayat in the constituent assembly debates. He expressed his views earlier during the Bombay Legislative council debates in 1932-33. His primary concern is the status of the depressed class in the new panchayat legislation. He recommended that the marginalised sections of society be represented in panchayats and adult franchises for the entire village community. He replies to a charge that the call for a separate representative for minorities (the depressed classes) led to communalism, claiming, "There can be no self-government in India without communalism." Their representatives in the proceedings were insufficient. They should be aware of who their representative is for the protection of the depressed class's interests. He asserted, "Communal representation is not a vicious proposition, but a need for the safety and security of various classes in the country." Before implementing the decentralisation of power, Dr.Ambedkar argued that there is needed to change society fundamentally. He observes that "villages community had sharp social, economic, cultural and political differences marked by a division between touchable-untouchable caste Hindu minorities, landlord-landless labours, higher caste-lower caste, a great tradition-little tradition, etc." He said it was impractical to expect caste Hindus to accept the untouchable as their leader and carry out their decision.

Gandhi and other members pushed for village panchayats to be included in the new constituent assembly. However, Dr.Ambedkar opposed the Panchayat Raj System because he believed that village democracy would be highly conservative, oppressive, and illiberal in the existing social system, where rural society was conservative and dominated by the traditional class and upper caste. Brahmins and other upper-class people have historically used the political institution of panchayat raj to maintain their dominant status in the villages. He believed that unless power was concentrated in the hands of a socially suppressed section of society, it would be impossible to eliminate the society's socio-economic, legal, and cultural disabilities. In the Bombay legislature, he said that "I should like to say at once that I have no objection in principle to the policy of devolution; if it is found that local boards of this presidency are overburdened by the functions which are placed upon them by Local Board Act". According to this

argument, he did not entirely reject the village panchayat and replied to the ministry of the local government of Bombay Legislation that of adult suffrage, both male and female. Whatever Dr Ambedkar expected regarding village panchayats, it continues to occur after nearly three decades of adopting the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, which mandates mandatory reservation of SCs, STs, and Women in proportion to their population. We will even find caste-based discrimination; upper caste people are not permitted to operate Gram Panchayat's activities. So, what kind of constitutional policy is needed to address the Dalit's historical denial of political rights?

Gandhi envisioned total democratic and administrative decentralisation at the village level, with a top-down, indirectly elected administration. He expressed his views on the fundamental substance of Panchayati Raj, which he described as people's democracy and sovereignty at the grassroots level. The Gandhian approach was ideal, whereas Dr. Ambedkar was realistic and reasonable.

2.6 Social Justice through the Panchayat System in India

“Social justice signifies making good to each member or section of the society what is ‘due’ unto the member or the section. Social Justice is social betterment”. Bentham (1748-1832), in England, who pleaded “the greatest happiness of the greater number” by addition greater happiness of the greater number with minimum friction and waste.”(cited in Joshi and Narwani 2002 pp.165).

Dr. Ambedkar presented the concept of social justice that one of the aspects of the philosophy of justice is social justice, which is defined as the organisation of society based on the values of equality, liberty, and fraternity. It emphasises the ideals of social and economic equality, as well as a fraternity, in order to create human social circumstances that allow everyone to flourish equally and fairly. As a result, the idea of social justice necessitates unequal or preferential treatment for some groups of people who have been denied certain values for long periods of time in order to bring them on par with other groups of people. Dr. Ambedkar's concept of “social justice stands for the liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. Moreover, he advocated for a social system based on good human-to-human connections in all aspects of life. As a rationalist and humanist, he did not approve of any form of hypocrisy, injustice, or exploitation of man by man in the guise of religion as a rationalist and humanist.” (Raghavendra, 2016). The Constituent Assembly was formed under the chairmanship of

Dr B.R.Ambedkar to lay down the principle of governance of the country. As a result, on January 26, 1950, India's Constitution has adopted it. Social justice directly links with the “Preamble to the Constitution of India promises to secure to all its citizens social, political justice and economical; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and to provide them all fraternity, assuring the dignity of life and nation.”

Joshi and Narwani (2002, p.173) argued that the marginalised sections of society (SCs, STs, and OBCs) had not reaped India's planning and development benefits for a long time. It is primarily due to their ineffective and inadequate participation in decentralised governance, planning, and development. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act attempted to correct the flaws by providing these groups with reservations for positions such as members, sarpanch, and chairpersons at all three levels of panchayats. After the 73rd Amendment, every state was aware of the constitutional provisions relating to social justice and gave the opportunity to the marginalised and weaker members of rural India. Women were provided maximum reservation in Odisha, Bihar, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, with 33 percent, 30 percent, 25 percent, and 9 percent, respectively. Odisha was the country's first state to make a 33 percent seat reservation for women; presently, it is 50 percent for women's reservation in the state. Besides women, the other section of the society that received an opportunity to participate in governance for the first time is the socio-economically backward SC/ST/OBC section.

2.7 Theories of the Participation

In social science and politics, participation is a broader term and encompasses much more than voting and campaigning. The participation theory can have undesirable consequences, such as challenges, risks, and issues that cannot be solved by simple exhortation. Advocating for participation is simple; putting it into practice is a far more challenging task. And the various forms of participation outcome in ambiguity and dispute. Whether bureaucrats or demagogues, the elite utilise the participation mechanism to conceal their own manipulative rule. Participation is a phenomenon that may be found and applied in all aspects of society. Nagel, Jack H. (1987) defines "participation refers to actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence the outcome".

The question is, “what kind of acts constitutes participation?” and the answer is many activities such as writing the letter, contributing money, demonstrating, canvassing,

attending the meeting, voting, representing, signing a petition and joining the organisation in order to make more active participation, incentives, the participatory action, time and information which encourages the participants to involve in the political process. Participation is about bottom-up influence, not top-down influence. In India, the Panchayati Raj Institution is a political system where a broadly organised structure of power, influence and authority. Keeping view of Panchayat Raj Institution, it includes not only government but also other organisations that control, through sanctions or legitimacy, the behaviour or the resource of the members through participation. Thus, participation is a concept and theory to fit in the panchayat system in India.

2.7.1 Dimensions of the Participation

Nagel, Jack H(1987, p.4) explores the concept of participation within three class of behaviour that falls on the borderline of participation. The three types are (1) psychological involvement, (2) mobilisation and (3) private goal, which we will discuss in the following paragraph for understanding. Psychological involvement is defined as simply viewing and following a political event without taking any action. It collects information on various situations that have little impact on anything that makes people vulnerable to outside influence. Thus, we cannot call that it is active participation, but the individual acquires' attitude and knowledge can be a precondition for effective action. Or rather, knowledge without action is not the same as active participation. Participation and mobilisation are not the same thing, but they are both ways to influence the best participants by giving them a choice. "The definition of participation requires that members influence outcome-- that is, they cause the outcome they prefer. The free choice sets up the potential for influence. However, sometimes citizens influence what happens without any obvious choice among policies". Thus, the mobilisation only influences the members to participate in any activity, either formal or voluntary choice. The private goal is termed as "particularised contacting; the theory presented that the participants who pursue goals and share at least some fellow citizen about complaining, missing, and requirement, which influences an individual's life".

Participation has two main dimensions: (1) extent and (2) intensity. Simply, the extent of participation augments more people engaged in any phenomenon. For example, in India, we may call adult suffrage for voting right. On the other hand, participation is more intensive as it costs the individual's time, money and effort, either increase or

decrease. Indeed, "the intensity is a dimension of participation required sequential acts, such as debate and discussion, must always be especially intensive". Therefore, the intensity of participation can be assessed by a different action.

2.7.2 Benefits of the Participation

Nagel, Jack. H explains that the benefits of participation fall into three categories: instrumental, developmental¹ and intrinsic. (1) Instrumental benefit argues that "for most people, political participation is simply a means to other goals". This is linked to the utilitarian concept that participants want everything they cannot have according to their own efforts. For most people, the concept of participation as a source of influence is self-evident. People who take action will have more power than those who do nothing. As a result, they will obtain more of what they desire. For example, the government delivers social services to the public while also the government attempts to determine whether its policies are effective. As a result, communication is essential between the government and citizens in order to comprehend the impact on people's lives. In terms of instrumental value, communication is a way of participation—one of the major flaws of instrumental advantages is that pursuing an individual objective is not worth it in order to attain the collective goals. Another problem is opportunist calculation, in which the system prioritises the centre rather than the periphery of the local primaries. The sharing of value through participation fosters equality and liberty while also protecting freedom. Those who are active in participation receive only rewards or benefits rather than others. When the involvement is regarded solely as a means to achieve other objectives, commitment will be unstable and subject to change.

(2) Nagel, Jack H. argued that "participation has development, or educative, effect to the extent that the process of participation itself changes participants by developing in the new value, attitudes, skill, knowledge and belief". After participation, the educative effect will develop. Participants may improve their democratic efficacy by understanding how the system works and improving the skills needed to influence its decisions. Participants can also strengthen their democratic citizenship by interacting with people who hold opposing viewpoints. They will have to put up with people who are not precisely like them. This develops one's comprehension of various needs, making it more likely, in Rousseau's phrase, to "will the general will" rather than a one-

¹ The development benefit of participation may be called as educative benefits (Jack H. Nagel, 1987)

sided narrow interest. Participants' behaviour might alter as a result of their involvement in the political system.

(3)The intrinsic value of participation is “inner gratification and internal satisfaction that the person has a sense of one's own individual worth and an intensified identification with own community”. Individual worth in community issues is developed through participation, and the person feels a sense of belonging to the community's betterment. Intrinsic benefits participation attempts to act quickly, and it fosters a sense of purpose, of belonging to a community or movement, and it develops the citizen's self-dignity in sequence. For example, in India, the sarpanches from the marginalised groups had been elected who sat the block level meeting first time for his/her area development, he/she would feel pride and dignity from the political activity. After executing the project, they would feel an inner reward, nobody can see; only the citizen who participates can know its taste. Another side of participation is "pseudo-participation", here the upper-level authority exploit the participation level for decision making. The term "pseudo-participation is tricking people into feeling that they have chosen for something that was actually predetermined by higher authority."

2.7.3 Costs of the Participation

Participation enhances the development of the individual as well as the community. However, those who participate in the political system would cost some value such as time, competence, economic losses, system strains and diseducative effect. Time is important for participation, and participation takes time in every activity. When time is wasted due to participation, that time can be employed for something else. The argument and discussion take longer when there is intensive participation. In order to adjust to the situation, the resource is required to fix it. As a result, whatever resource is required to maintain participation in order to achieve the intended result. Participation can result in financial losses; for example, many people protest against the government for anti-policies. As a result, participation leads to increased production.

Nagel argued that “combining knowledge with power and competence with correct motivation remains ever-present problems not only for the advocate of participation but also for their critic”. The competence value raises the question of whether or not common citizens can use competence to attain their objectives. Participation can be detrimental to society's education system. For example, it brings awareness of effectiveness, and some activists become cynical and exhausted after participation.

Some participants learn diverse tolerances and views parallel, while others wish to kill their opponents and demolish different points of view. When they come upon an opponent who is working against their interests, some campaigners feel enraged. The conflict happens when people disagree with one other's points of view, and it escalates into violence. Although participation is expected to legitimise the system, highly politicised people will sometimes abandon legal procedures in order to influence the channels for their own gain. The legal system becomes violent and disruptive in this way.

Excessive participation argued that extensive and intensive participation damages politics in various ways, imposing system strain. When people participate in overindulge, they make unreasonable demands and complaints to the authorities. As a result of many pressures from a mobilised public, authorities are overburdened with too many decisions to make and too many competing demands to reconcile. As a result, the system's legitimacy is eroded, and political resources become scarce (Nagel, 1987, p.17).

2.7.4 Concept of the Participatory Development

Participatory development allows people who are marginalised to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Stakeholders gain actual knowledge and knowledge accumulation in participatory research, and participants are empowered due to their participation in the process. Uma Kothari (2002) argued that “participatory methodologies require the formulation and adoption of a framework in which the micro is set against the macro, the margin against the centre, the local against the elites and powerless against powerful”. The development project focuses on the micro-level; here, people are helpless and marginalised, especially women in rural villages who are marginalised and powerless in a patriarchal system. Aside from that, power and control are only seen at the highest levels of government. What is power in the context participatory approach? “Power is everywhere and can be particularly analysis by creating social norms or customs that are practised through society”. This system disorder the dichotomies of macro/micro, powerful/ powerless, central/local, the central always retain power and holder of power, and the local people are the subject of power. At all levels, power is found in the establishment of norms and social and cultural traditions. Power and knowledge manifest in material realities within participatory discourse. The marginalised group's voice should be heard in this process, and they

should be given a platform to learn from them and share their thoughts in the implementation process.

The participatory approach empowers the disempowered, hitherto excluded group and focuses on the local people's local knowledge to empower. This was accomplished through the act of inclusion. How to make inclusion drawn from the participants? The inclusion of the excluded group in a decision symbolises an exercise of power and control over the individual. According to Geof Wood termed(1999),² there is adverse incorporation where the act or process of inclusion does not always benefit from those previously excluded. U.Kothari argued that "the participatory approach to development is about the identification, collection, interpretation, analysis and representation of a particular form of the local knowledge. Production and representation of the knowledge are inseparable from the exercise of power". The participatory method identifies the subjugated knowledge, those that have been hitherto disqualified and insignificant and historically constructed socially norm where the participant became powerless. The participatory approach brings them into the process of empowerment and decision-making at the operational level of the development project.

2.7.5 Participation in the Development

Cleavers(2002) argued that participation in a development project became an act of faith in development. This act of faith is grounded on three tenets: participation is "good things" for the participants; the getting technique right; power and politic should be avoided as divisive and obstructive. These three tenets of participation in a development project are not applicable in local politics. From an efficiency point of view, "participation is a tool for achieving better project outcome and equity". From the empowerment point of view, "participation is a process that enhances the individuals' capacity to improve or change their own lives". According to F Cleavers, individual and collective of the social transformation is a fashion in development. Participation as a vehicle leads to right and empowerment, but the action with the social system of subordination became personalised and depoliticised. The concept of social inclusion emphasises involvement in the structure and institution of the society, "most necessarily, the participatory and communicative structures, including new forms of

² Uma Kothari use this phrase from Wood.G (1999) 'concept and themes: landscaping social development.DFID,London.

social partnership through which a shared sense of the public good is produced and debated”(IILS/UNDP,1997)³.

Since the mid-1980s, the word "participation" has "tyrannised" development debates due to a lack of evidence of the achievements that have resulted from mobilisation and transformation. Without social reform, the marginalised people stay marginalised. However, only a few contributions to development practice suggest that participatory development has a promising future(Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Thus, participation has a different approach to the different contexts. One approach to participation is 'participation in development, and it is elaborated in detail in the theory and practice of participation. Within participatory development, representation sheds light on the expectation that decentralisation will bring social change to the downtrodden. "Representation may mean speaking of ' – advocating and mediating – or it can mean speaking for' – building accounts and writing text." When it relates to the subaltern experience, representatives have the power to shift the close alliance in their favour. The elected representatives from the gram panchayat in India are a marginal and diverse group. They have experience of the subaltern, and in theory, they are speaking for and of at the gram sabha or panchayat meeting, which needs to explore their effectiveness in social transformation at the village level.

Like the panchayat raj institution, the institution had three-tier, namely the Zilla Parishad, the Panchayat Samiti, and the gram panchayat. In order to influential representatives within the participatory development, resources such as time, education, and financial resources require a relatively small group of participants representing the large numbers of people. Representation has been made concerning the cost of participation. For example, in India, people elected a leader among them, and the leader represents and talks at the meeting on behalf of their people in local politics. In Odisha, there are 92027 ward members, 6801 sarpanches and 6800 panchayat Samiti members in the Panchayat Raj Institution (Odisha Election Commission, 2017). It noted that each ward of Odisha represented an elected representative to participate in the functioning of the gram panchayat. So the research on representation with participatory governance is very much essential in order to know whether the social transformation in the ward of the villages has occurred or not. In the term of participatory governance, “it is apparent

³ F. Cleavers has taken from the IILS/UNDP(1997) social exclusion and anti poverty strategies: project on the pattern and case of social exclusion and design of policies to promote integration a synthesis of finding,IILS/UNDP,Geneva.

that for reforms such as decentralisation to be transformative, they need to be promoted by a political party that represents both a substantial section of the disadvantaged and excluded citizenry, within a broader project of social justice” (Heller,2001; Schneider and Goldfrank,2002 cited in Hickey and Mohan, 2004).

2.8 Theories of Representation

Representation is based on a set of binary distinctions. The most fundamental is the contrast between "substantive" and "formal" representation, which leads to the dichotomy between representation as acting for and representation as standing for. It also distinguishes between "independent" and "mandated" ways of acting for others, as well as between "symbolic" and "descriptive" ways of standing for others. "Enactive, interpretative, and stimulative" is the three-way distinction of representation, or to put it another way, "instruction, interpretation, and reproduction". (Pettit,2006, as cited in Vieira and Runciman 2008).

Further, Vieira and Runciman (2008, p.2) classified three types of “representation: (1) Representation where the representatives are told what to do. (2) Representation where the representation decide what to do. (3) Representation where the representative copies what to do. Representation is everywhere in the state of society”. (Pettit,2006, as cited in Vieira and Runciman 2008, pp.1) Before the representative system, there was nothing but usurpation, superstition, and foolishness. In a representative democracy, the elected representative makes the decision, which is then carried out by appointed officials to whom the representatives delegate some governing responsibilities. Representatives make choices on what citizens must and cannot do, and they compel citizens to follow their orders. They determine how long children must attend school, how much individuals should pay in taxes, establish rules that residents must follow, offer welfare services, and ensure that citizens are informed about government actions. They also enforce such a rule, even if the individual concerned disagrees. They are in charge in this regard. (Manin, Przeworski, Stockes, and Susan 1999).

The Latin word “*repraesentare*” means “to make present or manifest or to present again”. The question of what representation means. Local governments are governed by representatives; every political party seeks representation, and every administration claims to represent. Likewise, the representative governs from the ward to the village and from the village to the centre level. Without a doubt, the representatives are associated with democratic, as well as liberty and justice of the principles.

Representatives, especially human representatives, represent other humans rather than the representative government. (Pitkin 1972, pp-2). The concept of representation is linked with the idea of self-government and every man's right to have a say in what happens to him. This is how it ended up in our founding documents. It has been maintained that no government truly represents the people and that there is no such thing as a truly representative government. Are all or some leaders of government representatives in local government? "Representation means making a present again. Representation is a human idea; it may be asserted or assumed by some and questioned by others" (Pitkin 1972, p.8-9).

When should the person feel that they are represented? When is it appropriate to say that they are represented? What constitutes evidence that they are represented? It seems likely that men who are, in fact, represented will feel represented? These are the psychological questions that must be answered in order to understand the meaning of the representation. The modern critic asserted that "representation" is vague or "ambiguous," meaning that it "may sometimes be one thing, sometimes the other." According to Pitkin (1972), there are four types of representation: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive.

2.8.1 Formalistic Views of Representation

Leviathan, a work by Hobbes, in which the representation is introduced. Hobbes defines the "authorisation view" as having the following essential features: A representative is a person who has been granted the power to act on behalf of another person. It signifies that a hitherto unrecognised right to act has been granted. His right has been enlarged. He/she has given authorizations within the limits of his/her authority, but they are always coextensive with those restrictions. "By'representation,' Max Weber meant a state of events in which the actions of a few members of a group are assigned to the rest; the remainder are supposed to, and do, in reality, accept the action as "legitimate" for themselves and binding on them". He further comments on "these ideas that a social relationship can be such that each member's activity is ascribed to all other members, or that the action of certain defined members is ascribed to the others so that the benefit accrues to them and the consequences fall upon them"(Pitkin, 1972, p.39-40). This is a show of solidarity, not of representation. Only a true representative can act on behalf of the entire group because only selected members have the authority to do so. Hans Wolff defines a representative as a person "from whose behaviour rights and duties accrues to

the groups. A representative acts for the group with results that his behaviour is ascribed to the group."Here, certain members can act for the group. "The concept of *Organschaft* developed by German theorist means to start from the group rather than from the isolated individual; instead of being the agent of an individual, the representatives become an organ of the group." He/she works as authorised representatives in accordance with his/her group's basic directive ideas, which he/she refers to as the nation's spirit. A formalistic perspective emphasises just the representative's ability to bind others, rather than his responsibility to follow any external rule or function with specific regard. According to Pitkin, "accountability theory is usually interested with separating 'true' or 'genuine' or real representatives from something that has simply the outward trapping, which appears like representation in a formal way but is not". The key objective of this theory is not to give the representative more power or responsibility. In the case of a true representative, the representative must be held responsible and accountable in order to respond to the concerns and claims of his people, as well as the obligations that come with his position. According to these theorists, what is missing from the viewpoint of authorisation? The formalistic view does not indicate how a representative should act, what he should do, or how to judge if he did a good or weak job representing.

2.8.2 Descriptive Representation: Standing For the Constituency

Descriptive representation refers to "the way in which the individual representative is portrayed by sharing similar characteristics such as race, age, sex, occupation, class, gender, ethnicity or geographical area with the represented representative" (Kurebwa, 2015). The idea of descriptive representation is championed by many states, social justice activists, political officials, and scholars in order to minimise representational disparity. Advocates of descriptive representation argue that elected representatives who have the same demographic and knowledge traits as their people have enough empathy to assess, evaluate, and formulate representative policies.(Young, 1990; Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999 cited in Kurebwa, 2015).

Descriptive representative applies to political life. Insisting on something might be a good idea that a "man who can make the commitment in your name should resemble you, but aside from that practical consideration, his authority to make those commitments has nothing to do with representing. So, the descriptive view has no room for representation as accountability". This theory prohibits any kind of representing

activity other than "making representation" and "giving information" in a very specific and limited meaning. It has no room for any kind of representative to act for or on behalf of others, which intends there is no room for the representative legislature's creative activities in the political sphere, such as forging consensus and formulating policy, which is essentially the function they designate by governing. In a descriptive view of the representative, the activity of "representation making" and "information giving" appears to have a duty to portray his constituent as exactly as feasible. It is unable to describe how a ruling executive is represented in this case(Pitkin 1972,p-90).

2.8.3 Symbolic Representation: Standing For the Constituency

Symbolic representatives represent “something, to make it present by their present—all representation kind of symbolisation—for instance, a national flag representing a nation. Repraesentare is the Latin word for "to make present" something that isn't actually present. The symbol is a matter of concern and feeling, attitude, unity, religious belief, respect, statehood, and moral value evoked by this representation. According to Pitkin's symbolic portrayal, the king or chief represented "humanity and divinity" among the people in primitive society. It is important to recognize in the political sector that the symbolic painter's goal is to signify ideas rather than reflect a factual object's form or feature. Symbolic representation is not concerned with how representatives express their opinions and assess themselves, who they are or what they do. Symbolic representations are not exact replicas of their preferences, nor do they resemble them in any way; instead, they indicate or convey them. On the other hand, symbols appear to share certain features with the objects they represent. This representation lacks a reasonable, objective, and justifiable relationship between what represents and what is represented and seems to rely only on people's beliefs or acceptance.

The idea of political leaders as fundamentally passive figures who symbolically represent others must be complemented by the idea that he or she is a symbol-maker and establishes himself as a recognised leader through his or her actions. According to this theory, symbolic making does not have to entail working on the symbol itself; rather, it entails working on the minds of people who are to be represented. These representatives emphasise the necessity of satisfying one's constituents and the role of one's irrational ideas.

2.8.4 Substantive Representation: “Acting For” the Constituency

The relationship between representatives and people for whom they act is described as standing for others. It is a human link, connection, correspondence, and communication chain. His or her behaviour or opinion is consistent with the wishes, needs, or interests of those for whom he or she acts; therefore, he must put himself in their place, play their role, and act as they would. This type of representation is denoted to as "substantive activity" or "representing action." In political science literature, the legislature represents the people, the nation, or whether it "really" represents their unique interests. It does not refer to political party affiliation or a symbolical mark, but rather to the interests he represents and the people to whom he delivers commands. What the representatives do and how they do it must be described in terms of representing as acting for others. Substantive representation is defined as "acting in a manner according to them in the interest of the represented (Pitkin,1972,p.143).

Wangnerud (2009) claimed that the essential problem in research on substantive representatives is the extent to which the number of women (elected representatives) influences the interests of women, rather than "what women(representatives) do in parliament." The substantive research focuses on the barriers to change and the preconditions for change. It deals with appointed rather than elected representatives in substantive representatives. Further, the representatives' role is “to speak for, act for, and look after their respective group's interests”. Here, the specialisation of function involves the ideas of the representation. Three activities in substantive representatives are three types: (1) "actor", (2)"factor", and (3) "agent". The meaning of three actions is “considered: To act, do; to do, make; someone who acts for another”.

2.8.5 The Mandate and the Independent Representation Controversy

What distinguishes good from bad political representation, or how should a political representative perform? Pitkin distinguishes two types of representatives: mandate and independence. Any act of discretion is a departure from the concept of a true representative, and it only occurs when the representative acts in accordance with the declared wishes of his constituents. Before continuing, he must first contact the constituent to receive their instructions and commands. In independent representation, on the other hand, where constituents have no right to compel representatives to keep campaign promises, once someone is elected, he or she must be allowed to use his or her judgement.

The mandate theorist contains the representatives as “a mere agent, delegates, a servant, a subordinate substitute for those who sent him. They sent him to perform something for them that they could have done for themselves, something that they are fully capable of accomplishing and comprehending”. Henceforth, the representatives have obeyed to follow his constituents, not his own wishes. According to independence theorists, the representatives are allowed to be free agent, a trustee, and an specialist who is best left alone to do his business. Delegates participate in crucial tasks such as policy formation, deliberation, and consensus-building, all of which are necessary for decision-making. Despite being locally elected, the independence theorist maintains that representatives must work in the national interest and be free of orders on how to do so. The question is whether the representative should follow his or her own wishes or those of the constituents. He must realise that he is not required to accept their wishes or to dismiss the implications of their intentions; rather, the question must be focused on why they disagree. He must act independently; his constituents are capable of acting and making decisions, and there is no disagreement about decision making.

2.9 Politics of Presence

Sharma (2004) argued that the “decentralisation of democracy had been part of the liberal democratic tradition. The value of decentralisation is well-argued as expected to provide greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and opportunities for people’s participation”. Decentralisation is often promoted because of economic dynamics, socio-cultural diversity, and the need for the state to pay attention to and adapt to the varied demands of the region and social groups who demanded a “voice from below” and opposed uniformity. “The notion of plurality and diversity, based on class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender, which is central to liberal democracy, also reflects problems of inclusion and exclusion, and unequal citizenship rights, and demand political representation is seen as a legitimate means of protecting interests of socially disadvantaged groups”. At the heart of the demand for political representation is the demand for the political participation of people that we perceive as marginalised, excluded, or silenced.

“The interest group’s political demanding representation in elected bodies on the basis of class, ethnicity, religion and gender identities has been interpreted” as a shift from the ‘politic of ideas’ to the ‘politics of presence’(Phillips,1998 cited in Sharma 2004). The ‘politics of presence’ focuses the question as to who represents whom? The

‘politics of presence’ implies “something other than pursuing party politics and their genders as it is argued that our “interests are better protected if we are represented by those who share our experience and interest.” (J. Burnheim,1985 cited in Sharma 2004). A man cannot represent women, no matter how honest he is, just as a nobleman cannot represent a plebian, and the latter cannot represent a nobleman. There must be an absolute identity of interests between the representative and the represented(A group of French women in 1789, cited in Anne Phillips,1998 cited in Sharma 2004).

It is challenging to assess the validity of representation since it obscures multiple identities, desires, and experiences of women and marginalised communities. However, there are ties between representation, participation, and deliberative democracy that must be needed. “The arguments for fair representation of women or quotas derive their legitimacy from the ‘Politics of Ideas’. In contrast, the opposition to reservation ideas comes from those who emphasise other identities(caste, communities, etc.) against an essentialist category of ‘women’. Political representation is not a goal in itself as the broader understanding of the processes of political structures and power and the state's ideology, the interrelationship between class, caste, and gender is essential. Those arguing for affirmative action believe that the ‘institutionalised inequalities’ need institutionalised counter-measures”(Mazumdar, 1997 cited in Sharma 2004). Others suggested that "reservation" is "at best a selective intervention in a broad range of affirmative action policies designed in particular contexts," and that "reservation" is "not a question of principle" (Singh,1997 cited in Sharma 2004).

2.10 Dr.B.R. Ambedkar’s View on Representation

Dr.Ambedkar’s view on representatives that “beyond electoral representation, Dr.Ambedkar theorised that representation in the office of the state that is in the administrative service also formed an inalienable right of the citizens.” For him, “representation in all forms is not a gift; rather it is ‘self-determination’ of the groups and cultures determined by the individual's rights”. Dr. Ambedkar’s representation is to represent the oppressed class in the structure of the state of emerging India. Why did Dr.Ambedkar argue for them? Because the Dalits, who were denied even fundamental civic rights, such as drinking water from any source, heading down every street like anybody else, wearing ornament and cloth-like everybody else, and in every way like everybody else, by caste Hindus, did not allow the depressed class to believe that in evolving historical empirical circumstances. They are untouchable and living in a

dehumanised condition in Hindu society. For Dr. Ambedkar, representation means: representing opinion and representation a persons. In multi-cultural societies, representation of the opinion would not adequately fulfil the need of diverse people. The government is not merely for the people; it should be a government by the people. Then the only representation of the person is possible. Reserved constituencies, especially for minorities in a society with more or less congruity, and communal electorates, for a society with diverse communities, were the two possible modes for personal representation (Gajendran, 2007).

2.11 The Concept of Good Governance

The core of democracy is people's participation and power over governance. Governance as a philosophy is as ancient as civilisation; it has been grown and evolved over time and space (UNESCAP). "Good governance is to assess and measure the quality of governing institutions in developing countries regarding their stability, interaction, transparency, responsiveness, procedural fairness, effectiveness and adherence to the rule of law". World Bank (2007 cited in Ansell and Torfing 2016) defines "governance in terms of the process of selecting those capable of making authoritative political decisions; the capacity of the government to efficiently manage its resources and implement comprehensive policies; and the respect that citizens and governments have for the institutions governing their interactions"(Ansell and Torfing 2016). UNDP(1997) states that governance is "viewed as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all level. It includes processes, mechanisms, and institutions through which citizens and groups can articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligation, and mediate their differences". Good governance has eight substantial aspects: participation, the rule of law, responsiveness, transparency, equity and inclusiveness, consensus-oriented, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability(Rao 2008). "Good governance should mean a dependable delivery system of services(agriculture inputs, water supply for drinking and irrigation, health facilities, infrastructure, education, etc.) Insufficient resources, inadequate personnel are only partly responsible." Good governance is often dependent on whether or not the administrative structure is supported. Corruption is rampant; in this background, mobilising people to participate in developmental activities becomes difficult (Baghel and Kumar, 2006).

Good governance is essential for safeguarding social inclusion through panchayats, which are constitutionally authorised local democratic institutions and ensure

accountability, participation, and transparency. Many countries have provided enough consideration to decentralising governance in order to institutionalise participatory democracy and decentralised planning. In India, governance in the gram panchayat has to organise the gram sabha meeting, Palli Sabha meeting and monthly meeting of the gram panchayat. Governance in the panchayat are such as conducting the social audit in the MGNREGS, PMAY-G, SBM-G, etc., by the gram panchayat, managing the budget and account and different register in the gram panchayat, strengthening the standing committee, implementing the programme and policies, the gram panchayat shall follow the government's plan, and the gram panchayat regulates the bye-law and power to make the bye-law.

Decision-making and decision-implementation are two processes that make up good governance. Decisions without implementation are self-defeating; therefore, governance is more than just making decisions. The governance process includes in the gram panchayat: to coordinate with block-panchayat and district panchayat; participation of all elected representatives and government officials in executing the developmental work in the villages; organising the gram sabha with people's participation; the fund's details for the different schemes and programme should be accountable; the panchayat should address the grievance of the people; straightforwardly access of the people in the panchayat in order to get social welfare benefits; and solve the issue of the social justice for the marginalised people.

2.12 Meaning of the Decentralisation

Decentralisation refers to “transferring authority to the field level or the devolution of power to local governments or local bodies”. It is the transition of judicial or administrative power from a higher level of government to a lower level. Decentralisation is also a tool that encompasses both deconcentration and devolution processes. As a consequence, decentralisation is a symbol of democratic value. It is a power-sharing decision-making process founded on the premise that most decisions are made by people they would influence. “Decentralisation of power aims for a better and faster communication, people's participation and involvement in development, mobilisation of support and better resource utilisation for national development, decision-making delays being reduced, greater equality in resource distribution and expenditure, and administrative apathy towards clients being reduced. Institutional

machinery should be efficient in this case, and an individual should not monopolise power”(Prasad and Lalneihzovi,2003).

2.12.1 Types of the Decentralisation

(1) Political decentralisation refers to “the transition of political decision-making power and some roles from a higher to a lower level of government”. (2) The transition of various duties and roles from central departments to lower levels of the government is known as administrative decentralisation. This can take a variety of forms. It may basically mean giving more responsibilities to the lower department of the same department. (3) The effort to transfer industrial and other economic activities to the lower regions is known as economic decentralisation(Bevir,2007).

Decentralisation is a power-sharing process that can range from centralization to complete autonomy among decision-making authorities. The key decision must be taken regarding the system's task or the resource required to complete the task. Hence, “decentralisation is a continuum of control of three variables: organisational task, finance and human resource. Tasks of control or autonomy may relate to policymaking, strategy formulation, planning, priority-setting and implementation of programmes. In financial and human resources, the concern of autonomy can relate to the generation and procurement of resources, controlling and owning them and their utilisation” (Pareek 1989:2 cited in Meenakshisundaram 1999).

As Rondinelli et al. (1983) defined, there are four types of decentralisation: delegation, devolution, deconcentration, and privatisation. Any administrative power or responsibility within central government ministries or agencies is delegated to lower levels is a process of deconcentration. Delegation denotes to the transfer of "managerial responsibilities for clearly specified functions" to organisations that are not part of the regular bureaucracy and are only partially supervised by the central government. The establishment of subnational government units, as well as their financial and legal support, is referred to as devolution. Subnational government units, which are autonomous, independent, and have their own legal status, would be primarily outside of the direct control of the central government. The term "privatisation" refers to a situation in which governments have “divested themselves of responsibility for functions and have either delegated them to charitable organisations or enabled private companies to execute them” (Rajasekhar, Devendra & Manjula,2018).

2.12.2 Decentralised Governance

Planning is the core of all development processes, whether they are social, economic, or cultural, and whether they are at the macro or micro level. For the effective functioning of economic development, planning is always a necessary condition for the free flow of information and flawless resource mobility. Planning is of two types: centralised planning and decentralised planning. The former is required for income and national growth, and people are in the background. People are at the centre of decentralised planning; thus, they are the centre of everything, and everything revolves around them. It is the people, not their representatives or government authorities, who prepare for their overall advancement, implement these plans and take remedial action if real outcomes differ from the projected level of performance under decentralised planning (Das, 2001). The objectives of the decentralised planning are more realistic projects and programmes, more balanced development, more efficient integration of development activities at different spatial levels through disaggregation of planning functions, strengthening local democratic institutions, improving mobilisation of local resources and increasing people's involvement in development. Balanced development entails poverty alleviation, wealth redistribution, and economic growth, as well as the development of different localities (Maetz, M. and Quieti, M.G., 1987 cited in Khan, 1993).

Vayunandan, E and Mathew, Dolly (2003) argued that decentralisation addresses the challenge of long-term, successful, and equitable development by focusing on the beneficiaries, recognising their needs, facilitating their participation, and delivering and satisfying those requirements. Decentralisation is a development theory that advocates for a diverse set of structures to empower and uplift the underprivileged. In decentralised governance, the PRI plays an important role. In addition, decentralised governance is used to frame specific measures. (1) Providing people with opportunities and a forum to share their opinions and perceptions can then be reflected in future legislation, allowing them to participate in policy-making. (2) Bringing service delivery points closer to the people. (3) Strengthening local authorities as self-governing units.

The locality has been the organising principle in this case. The gram panchayat is entrusted with the planning duties that the people carry out. In addition, the gram panchayat is responsible for monitoring, controlling, and regulating those market taxes.

The eleventh schedule of the Constitution grants the same types of roles to all three-tier panchayat levels, one of the issues of decentralised government or panchayat. As a result, there is jurisdictional overlap. There is no distinction between the degree of responsibility in terms of the bodies' organisation and finances. Local planning is ineffective since the state's planning priorities and sectoral allocations hold the majority of the determining power. Local planning must be tied to local resource mobilisation and must seek the advice of the community. At the local level, decentralisation does not solve the caste and gender issues. "Decentralised Planning can generally be defined as a type of planning where local organisations and institutions formulate, adopt, execute actions and supervise the plan without interference by the central body" (Mohapatra,2003). Decentralised planning refers to the participation of institutions below the state level, which is necessary by administrative, developmental demands as well as the local institution's constitutional status after the 73rd Amendment. The Gandhian ideals of the village community, i.e., planning from below, inspired the demand for decentralised planning through the freedom movement. The enormous area of social, cultural, administrative, and agro-climate specificities, which require special consideration, has been another significant requirement for decentralised planning (Jha 1999). Amendment Act 1993 provides "Powers, Authority and Responsibilities of Panchayats to include preparation plans for economic development and social justice" (Article 243G).

For the purpose of more effective resource allocation and equitable distribution of development benefits, decentralisation through the participation of local-level representative bodies in the formulation and implementation of development plans recommend. Political and bureaucratic opposition at the state level to sharing resources and authority with local bodies for planning from below is sometimes blamed for the failure of decentralised planning. The workings of Panchayati Raj Institutions have shown that, given the current social system, the rural elite, traditional norms and property relations have often come to control these institutions and appropriated a large share of development gains, resulting in negligible improvements in the living standards of the vulnerable and underprivileged people. As a result, many people who believe decentralised planning will help the socio-economic situation of the poorer sections are sceptical of its success unless systemic changes or social changes are implemented to assure the rural poor's rise to a position of dominance in these institutions. They are

primarily to blame for the inability of decentralised planning to materialise the non-fulfilment of its stated objectives, in most circumstances where decentralised planning failed due to a lack of political will at the state level and the domination of the rural elite at the grassroots level (Rao,1989).

2.13 Local Democracy

Local democracy has been taking place under the auspices of the 73rd constitutional amendment act, which mandates that all state governments enhance local representative democracy. Local democracy is one form of participation in the larger democratic system that is relatively accessible to the disadvantaged and can serve as a stepping stone to other forms of democratic participation. Local democracy has a direct impact on social transformation. Local democracy is also necessary for public accountability, particularly given the need for effective and equitable local government services such as School education, drinking water and sanitation, health, and other amenities are among them. The responsiveness of the concerned authorities to popular demands is critical to their successful functioning. Local democracy's importance extends beyond the instrumental responsibilities of participatory politics. Participation can also be viewed as a source of intrinsic value for improving one's quality of life. As a result, decentralisation's impact is very situation-specific and context-dependent, and it depends on decentralisation's integration with other aspects of local democracy. It also promotes corruption and conceals a new form of dominance. People learn to organise, question established patterns of power, demand their rights, reject corruption, and so on through local democracy (Dreze and Sen, 2005).

2.14 Participatory Democracy

Democracy as a form of government symbolises people's empowerment, and grassroots democracy enables an accurate participatory development process at the local level. A grassroots democracy is essentially a decentralised democracy in which public affairs administration does not begin or end at the highest(top) level but instead operates through a vast network of people's participation structure in local areas. A local government, an agent of the central or state government, executes only the agency role and functions, so it does not enjoy financial autonomy and decision-making power. "Local self-government means a decentralised government and democratic in the sense that it is elected and responsive to the felt needs of the people of a limited geographical area and endowed with autonomy—legal, political, functional, financial and

administrative”(Prasad and Lalneihzovi,2003). "Participatory democracy strives to create opportunities for all members of a political group to make a meaningful contribution to the decision-making and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities" (Rao, 2008).

At the village level, the Panchayati Raj attempts to develop a participatory democracy. All village voters are included in the Gram Sabha, which deliberates and participates in the Gram Panchayat's planning, budgeting, and implementation of different economic development and social justice programmes and projects. To broaden the scope of politics, participatory democracy is a kind of social action and political involvement that goes beyond the representational frameworks of elections and political parties. In its broadest definition, participatory democracy provides citizens of a municipality, province, or nation with the tools they need to fully control their social and political future. Citizens use this process to enshrine and change their constitutions, create legislation, and shape legislation and goals. As a result, people have total and unchallengeable influence over policy (Trivedi, 2010,p.48-50).

2.15 Deliberative Democracy

The term "deliberative democracy" was coined by political theorists to describe any framework decision achieved through a dialogue between consensus decision-making and representative democracy. It recognises a conflict of interest among participants, those who were affected, and the decision-making party entity. Consequently, it typically entails a broad mobilisation effort to incorporate the oppressed, excluded, and marginalised in decision-making, as well as thorough documentation of dissent, reasons for dissent, and future predictions of action consequences. Deliberative democracy is effective in the Gram Sabha of the panchayat, where marginalised groups such as SCs, STs, and women are included in decision-making(Vinod, 2010).

2.16 Grassroots Democracy

The term "grassroots democracy" refers to a definition that is similar to participatory democracy. People's interest in defining development goals and objectives to achieve them is at the essence of grassroots democracy. It is defined and understood as people's empowerment through daily struggles for their rights and the harnessing of their collective efforts to produce local resources for communal well-being. It attempts to strengthen Gram Sabhas by giving them self-government and developing participatory

decision-making bodies to manage the affairs of their communities (Trivedi,2010, p.46-48).

2.17 Representatives Democracy

Proponents of representative democracy argue that the power of elected representatives must be strictly limited by the legal-rational institutions of bureaucracy and judiciary in order to preserve representative democracy's democratic traditions. Bellini, Paolo (2019) argued that *"one of the most important aspects of any representative democracy lies, therefore, not only in the fact that voting and ensuing operations take on a sacred character, so that there is the renunciation of death as an instrument of decision (Canetti 1984, 190), but also in the possibility, for the minoriti(es), of being represented, through the constitution of parliamentary groups and parties capable of expressing dissent against the majority, of which they control the actions and influence the decisions."* Further, In a representative democracy, Bellin. P said that political power is legitimised by the citizens, who are the sole owners of sovereignty, but it is then passed to a political class who will exercise it(Trivedi. 2010,p.51-53).

2.18 Social Exclusion and Inclusiveness in the Panchayat System in India

The concept of social exclusion emerged in France during the 1960s. Although social exclusion can express itself in a lack of resources, the concept of social exclusion encompasses more than just poverty. It also encompasses the concept of multidimensional deprivation, which includes the 'housing poor,' 'transport poor,' and 'access poor,' as well as its combinations, as opposed to the more traditional notion of absolute poverty as just not having enough money to live. "The notion of social exclusion, then, appears to incorporate the lack of opportunity to participate in the structures and institutions of society. Social exclusion, according to Room, is the process of becoming detached from this moral order"(Rees,1998). The term "social exclusion" is used to describe a diverse set of social and economic issues. It is far more serious than simply being poor, and it is a clear violation of basic human rights. Social exclusion (also known as marginalisation) is a social disadvantage and demotion to society's periphery, a social phenomenon in which a minority or sub--group is excluded. Social exclusion, according to Kabeer (2000), is "an important dimension of the experience of some groups of being somehow set apart or locked out of participation in social life". What social exclusion does, arguably, is help us understand how "the various institutional mechanisms through which resources are allocated which operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and

recognition that would allow them to fully participate in the life of that society" (Kabeer, 2000).

Active exclusion, according to Sen, is the result of a deliberate policy that excludes certain people from certain opportunities. Passive exclusion, on the other hand, happens when "there is no deliberate attempt to exclude". Deprivation is the unintentional consequence of social processes or governmental decisions, such as when economic restructuring causes increases in unemployment among specific groups of people. He argues that adverse incorporation to certain groups results in poverty without being given the social and spatial formations of power. The idea of social exclusion, according to Sen (2000: 8), is useful because it emphasises the significance of relational concerns in deprivation. The term "social exclusion" refers to the processes that lead to a loss of competence. Exclusion from the labour market, the credit market, or health care; gender-related exclusions and inequality; and food-market poverty are all examples of factors that may rob people of their capabilities. Poor households are excluded from political participation, with no representation in local or national decision-making, which is term as political exclusion. "Social exclusion is multidimensional and is a process that keeps poor out from the public goods and services on the other hand and denies their access to the social-economic and political institution on the other". Social exclusion define the "process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live" (Nevile,2007). In India, social exclusion is defined as the denial of basic rights that allow citizens to participate freely in social and economic life; gender inequities, caste discrimination, religious fundamentalism, and cultural misunderstandings are examples of social exclusion markers.

Hilary Silver(1994) identified three paradigms of social exclusion, each with its own set of 'theoretical and ideological baggage,' based on how social integration has been conceptualised. They are 1. solidarity paradigm, 2. Specialization paradigm, and 3. Monopoly paradigm. Exclusion, according to the solidarity paradigm, is the cultural and moral rupture of social bonding between the individual and society. Outsiders are classified as the destitute, jobless, and ethnic minorities. Individual liberalism determines the specialization paradigm, which emphasises the contractual exchange of rights and duties. Individuals can migrate beyond the borders of social distinction and economic divisions of labour, according to liberal-individualistic theories. Exclusion, in

this paradigm, refers to discrimination or the making of group differences that prevent individuals from fully participating in interaction or exchange. The monopoly paradigm considers social order to be coercive and enforced through hierarchical power relations. The emergence of group monopolies is defined as a cause of exclusion" (Silver, 1994). Many structures exist in Indian society that causes social exclusion, which is referred to as structural causes of social exclusion. In India, the caste system patriarchy, religion, economic structure, culture, and political system are some instances of the age-old structures that segregate and discriminate people. Social inclusive society or social inclusion is a process that brings together the diverse communities living in the village panchayat to participate in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres in order to generate an atmosphere of equality in the social system, irrespective of caste, religion, class, language, regional, gender, ethnicity or individual differences(Lalitha et al., 2017).

2.19 Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Functioning of the Odisha Gram Panchayats

Barik (2020) offered a study conducted in Jagatsingpur and Tirtol Block under Odisha state Jagatsingpur District; the respondents were villagers who provided their opinion on the performance of the role of women ward members in gram panchayat. The research showed that the women ward members were very well acquainted with the citizens' needs and ward concerns. These women representatives engaged in solving various local problems before the panchayat meetings, including women's issues. They took an active role in the debate, addressing women's issues, helping those in need, and having strong public contact. They regularly attended the panchayat meetings and discussed local problems and issues related to women. They concentrated heavily on the topic of ration cards, widows and old age, Aid, and violence against women. Furthermore, women ward members excelled in maintaining good relationships and communication with their fellow ward members, sarpanches, members of the Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad members, and local government officials. It also clarifies that the women ward members were active in controlling local wards. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that the family's male individuals did not bias the women ward members. The women ward members made their own decisions and did not allow the male individuals to attend any meeting or present any views in their place. The women ward members have concentrated on a suggestive measure for wards' development

under the gram panchayat. They raised different approaches to progress, such as countering violence against women, strengthening members of the self-help community, non-intervention of political force, working for the vulnerable and deserving people.

The study of **Pattnaik (2016)** was conducted in the Dhenkanal district in Odisha. other focus on the role and participation of the elite in rural village affair. Regarding the respondents, 40 elites of the district participated in the study. It is evident from the study that the elites often attended panchayat meetings and voiced their views, which were then finalised. The major stumbling block for woman representatives from marginalised communities was that local elite has their controlled over the women representatives families members(Spouse) and influence the village affair. As a result, de jure power structure from weaker sections became worthless.

Mahanty (2009) conducted a study in Kendrapara district, Odisha, at three levels: gram panchayat, block-level, and district level, to examine the different aspects of the influence the women SCs, and STs in the panchayat raj institution in Orissa. The research focused on the dynamics of inclusion and involvement of SCs, STs, and women in local government, as well as the extent of mobilisation of these disadvantaged people. Lower caste women also try to engage in Gram Sabha, but dominant castes assault them and tell them that opinions are worthless. One interesting observation is that when Dalit women Sarpanch was given a reservation, she came forward to the open space of the meeting and expressed an interest in participating in decision-making. A Dalit woman sarpanch raised her political consciousness and connected her to national and regional issues. She learned about the right to freedom and expressed an interest in politics in the future. She successfully acted in panchayat activities without the help of her husband. The study found that Dalit representatives are interested in becoming involved in local government.

Patnaik (2007) argued that in Odisha, elected representatives, who are entrusted with legal, political, and constitutional powers and are tasked with making concrete decisions in panchayats by reservation policies and as authorised persons, were found to play a limited role in the decision-making process in gram panchayat. Persons outside the panchayat became engaged in and supervised the panchayat's activities. Locally influential people from the upper caste, the local elites, who owned many lands and had

many political connections and were respected in their community, are outside the panchayat's legislative authority who make decisions in their favour. The research found that caste, political contact, money, personal charisma, family history and education are all factors that influence the exercise of power. The wealth and caste system was found that anyone who had all or much of these resources had much control over how power in rural society. Upper castes have always hierarchically possessed land resources, and they control all sectors in rural villages in terms of village decision-making. In the deal, the Dalit and tribals are the lowest castes in the caste system, are economically weak, and lack resources; they are less involved and take politics less seriously.

Ray (2016) conducted a study in Odisha of Khurdha District on empowering women and gender sensitivity in local governance. Considering SCs and STs women, 20 women sarpanch and 80 ward members were taken as the respondent in the interview. Most of the respondent age group is between 35-50. The educational status of most of the respondents was less than a 10th class. Most women leaders agree that becoming the woman sarpanch in their village without reservation would not be possible. 62 percent of women replied that government official was not supportive, and while making a decision, 82 percent took the consultation from their husband and others. Regarding the training programme, 66 percent of women leaders did not attend any training programme. Women sarpanch were salient during the gram sabha meeting, and their husband is taking all decisions regarding the planning and functioning of the gram panchayat.

2.20 Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats across the Country

Bonu, Sekhar et al. (2009) conducted a study in the northwestern Indian state of Rajasthan. To get insight into the decision-making process of local governments, this study collects data from official proceedings of village assemblies meetings. The study's primary objective was to examine the proceedings of meetings held at the lowest level of the PRIs; it also looked into how female of the non-forward caste chairpersons influenced the development agenda. The study covers the districts of Ajmer and Jaipur and includes a record of the most recent village assembly meeting. A total of 155 gram panchayats from seven development blocks participated in the study. They provided

photocopies of the proceedings of village assemblies held between January and May 2001.

In gram sabha, non-forward castes and women were not assertive, and the human development issue is central to the paper. The study investigates why panchayat raj leadership is less concerned with crucial human development issues. The reason for this was because in India's villages, class, caste, and other distinctions are substantial barriers to establishing alliances for human capacity development. However, this research shows that simply establishing institutional frameworks is insufficient. To fully utilize the promise of decentralisation for improved development results, the Panchayat Raj Institutions must modify their institutional culture of dependence. The findings of the study show little evidence to support the hypothesis that rural local governments led by women are more likely to address gender issues. In terms of influence and decision-making, the lack of adequate articulation of women's issues even in village assemblies guided by women chairpersons, as well as the better articulation of non-forward caste issues by village assemblies with a non-forward caste chairperson, highlight the limitations of institutional interventions for better social equity. As a result, non-forward castes and women in gram sabha decision-making had little impact on human development or caste issues.

In Karnataka state, **Bryld (2001)** conducted a study that caste, the elite and older person of the village, decided to meet the gram panchayat. Further, in that study, reservations from women representatives are proxy candidates; their family members ensured their roles in the gram panchayat. It was still the elders and upper caste who had the de facto power in the villages. The following data collection took place in the rural Kolar district in Karnataka in southern India. 150 elected representatives and villagers who cover SCs, STs and women are taken as respondents in the study. The effect of the weaker section after the 73rd constitutional amendment is the primary concern for the study.

The Scheduled Castes in Karnataka state have seen less prejudice, even though their colony is situated separately in villages. There were no signs of caste restrictions among the Panchayat members, according to the respondent, for both men and women. With few exceptions, both female and male Panchayat members from Scheduled Castes thought caste had no significance within the Panchayat system. Reservation is also needed, however, to ensure that lower castes have access to local political decision-

making. In either case, reservations are needed to ensure full equality among the different caste groups. The most obvious result of these experiments is that no women, Scheduled Caste, or Tribe members were elected outside the reservation. As a result, reservation only achieves social, physical, political, and resource equity, which is highly beneficial to the leaders of SCs and STs. The majority of panchayat elected members under reservation faced several challenges, including a lack of ability due to illiteracy, inexperience, language barriers, and a lack of respect among their fellow villagers. Many panchayat members, especially women, lack the basic skills needed to function in this structure. Because of their illiteracy, lack of experience, and language differences, women leaders were often neglected by their male counterparts in the panchayat.

Nicolas (2015) found out in Punjab, Patiala District of the Malwa, the leader from the SCs may not be capturing political power, after elected they had regularly demonstrated their cultural distinctiveness in a number of ways and challenging Jat dominance in panchayats and gurdwara management committees, which is a new change. This is an ethnographic study to know caste impact in the panchayat. In Punjab, most of the time, the election of panchayat if SCs were reserved in those candidates was nominated through consensus because once the SCs were their labour and controlled by them. Despite the SC population being the highest percentage (29%) across the Indian state, the jats control the panchayat raj institution by virtue of wealth, education, and network system. Jats take the all-important decision, the SCs representatives were only rubber stamps. Gradually, rural elites may no longer control SC livelihoods; they had reproduced their power through state-connected networks of influence, and they were continuing to control provincial politics. Despite this, Jat continues to dominate panchayats, pressing issues in education and healthcare and capturing village commons. Few SCs, on the other hand, had the time or resources to create networks, and many believed that because they lacked resources, they would never be successful sarpanches. As a result, even though SCs make up most of the village population, they rarely controlled panchayat. They only became the Sarpanch in the panchayat because of reservation; however, the law and reservation allow them to be elected representatives, and the cycle continues; even then, they continued to serve as proxies and rubber stamps for Jat patrons.

Palanithurai (2013) discussed a study in Tamil Nadu that 171 Gram Panchayat Dalit President has been covered in ten districts. The survey found that 96 percent of Dalit leaders did not know those thirty-seven departments working in a rural area and are in contact with rural masses. However, the leader was not aware of all the departments working in the communities with what scheme. They neither contacted them nor did the official contact them. In election time, the Dalit leader spent money for election; it was not their own money. It was the capture of the elite to the rural village election. The Dalit leader said that the map from the village administration officer, which helps map out the plan, was not received from a government official. 54 per cent of Dalit leaders replied that the vice president was a caste Hindu who is a hurdle in functioning simply because he is Hindu. The Hindu clerk, like the panchayat secretary who created a problem for them, was in the same panchayat. Moreover, 61 percent of the Dalit panchayat president replied that they were insulted not only in panchayat but in the community also. 82 percent of Dalit leaders replied that they admitted that they were unable to function independently. The social justice issues were not taken to discuss, and Dalit leaders could not solve these issues. Moreover, 96 percent of the respondents said that people in the village were against taking up social justices issues for discussion in Gram Sabha or a panchayat council meeting. 88 percent of the respondent replied that the government offices were not cooperative. The most crucial highlighting finding is that 84 percent of respondents revealed that all village issues were decided based on caste. Caste Hindus, either organised way or individually, always obstruct the independent functioning of the Dalit panchayat leader. There was no equality in the village. Furthermore, 88 percent of the respondent said that the caste Hindu never supports the panchayat's development activities towards Dalits.

Sharma (2009) argued that after adopting the panchayat system, many states, including Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, have found that hierarchical power relations in society have a significant effect on panchayat raj institutions. According to a Maharashtra study, Zilla Parishad leadership was characterised by single caste domination and wealthy class orientation and belonged to the overwhelming middle-class peasantry. (Inamdar, 1977, quoted in shama 2009) The reservation scheme for SCs/STs and women has become the most effective legally legitimate tactic in the combat against elite dominance. Recent studies in various states have shown that, despite the availing of a reservation, elite social dominance remains a significant aspect

of Panchayat Raj Institutions. Dominant caste and elites continue to dominate in the rural society, and they easily exploit the resource for their own gain; in effect, the panchayat raj institutions provides them with more resources for dominance. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, where caste and feudal social relations are powerful, village elites support proxy candidates from the lower caste and women during panchayat elections. (Srivastava, 2006, pp. 204 cited in Sharma, 2009)

In recent years, a new word for women's reservation has been coined: Pati Sarpanch. If a woman from OBCs, STs, STs, or the unreserved is elected as the panchayat chairman, her husband will serve as the village panchayat head, attend meetings, and make decisions about the gram panchayat's function. Both Kerala and West Bengal have an uneven power structure, and proxy candidates continue to be used in both states. In Kerala, a slight variation was evident, in which members of the reserved group were considered weak and unable. Similarly, several studies in West Bengal suggests that Dalits and women representatives in Panchayat meetings cannot assert themselves. (Crook and Manor,1998; Nair,1987; quoted in Sharma, 2009)

Chandra and Annamalai (2002) described a social barrier to participation as the ground truth and the rule of the village's socially superior castes and economically superior castes, who are now the dominant caste in the village. As members of the marginalised community, such as Dalits and women, challenge the upper caste's socioeconomic superiority, they face humiliation and are victimised. They argued that the caste system in the village is not melting as a social barrier. The dominant social power is derived from their control over livelihood assets, political affiliation with one political party or another, and control over development programmes that have not enabled the disadvantaged community to realise their legal right and continue to do so. They claim caste discrimination and prejudice against weaker sections in the gram sabha context, particularly SCs, STs, and women in the gram sabha. Discrimination takes place to prevent them from entering gram Sabha and attacks and abuse against them. As a result, the plan refuses them access to a relatively democratic space, refusing them to communicate their demands and share in the decision-making process. Reservations for weaker sections at the gram panchayat level incorporated into the framework can only become operational when there is a positive environment and solidarity among the people. Despite the drawbacks, the reservation system would assist vulnerable groups in rural areas to advance their capacity to govern their own affairs.

Fernandes(2008) found in a study that women elected representatives in Goa could not be able to participate adequately because of the non-devolution of powers by the state government. The women ward members did not aware of the budget details because the sarpanch and the panchayat secretary did not place before any meeting of the gram panchayats like monthly meetings and gram sabha meetings. The women elected representatives would not mobilise the people to attend the gram sabha meeting. Another finding is that caste, gender, class and personal fractures lead to disruptive behaviour at the gram sabha. After attending the training programmes, the women elected representatives can able discharge their duties effectively. This study primarily focuses on the empowerment of the women elected representatives that the reservation helps them to enter into local politics. In this study, no comparison was found among the reserved and unreserved men and women.

Inbanathan (2003) argued that Dalit leaders in gramme panchayats have members who are new to politics, many of whom are serving in the public sphere for the first time, and they may not be able to work with adequate ability in a political institution at first. This is an opportunity for a first-time elected official from a marginalised group to demonstrate their ability to serve as a local administrative and decision-maker for local issues, as well as their commitment to becoming a self-dignified person in their community. Karnataka and Kerala's schedule caste members possess low influence or power in the gram panchayat. The members of the SCs who constitute the majority of Karnataka panchayat members are in a much worse financial condition than the members of the other categories. Dalit elected women were only nominal representatives; male members or local elites ran the gram panchayat administration.

2.21 Issues and Challenges of the Elected Representatives in the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats

Kumari et al. (2017) conducted a study in the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state from 2015-2016. Out of the 645-gram panchayat of Bilaspur district, 336-gram panchayat had women sarpanch, from which one-third panchayats are 112 (56 tribal and 56 non-tribal) were taken randomly from respective lists. All women sarpanch possess a small land area and have a moderate income for their families. The study finds the economic constraints are lack of funds from govt. For development work, lack of honorarium to women sarpanch working at village level and no work is initiated without bribes. This paper shows that 53 percent of the non-tribal women sarpanch have

problems with bribing for work accomplished, whereas 67 percent of tribal women sarpanch faced the same problem. By interpreting the difference between tribal and non-tribal women, the tribal women sarpanch were facing more seriously than non-tribal. Technical constraints are lack of regular training to women sarpanches, lack of knowledge regarding panchayat raj institutions and development programmes, lack of timely information regarding different rural development programmes. The study says that 35.71 percent of non-tribal women agree that they need regular training and 53.57 percent of tribal women sarpanch argue that they need a regular training programme. It revealed that the training programme is undoubtedly essential as a regular part of women sarpanch in the panchayat. Consequently, it further leads toward women empowerment.

Regarding the administrative constraints, a delay in sanctions of permission for development work from the upper level (71.42 percent) was highest among the significant constraints faced by tribal women sarpanch, followed by groups in gram sabha restricts the village (69.64 percent), lack of administrative and financial power to women sarpanches (60.71 percent), lack of co-operation from society/other institutes and lack of discipline in gents members at gram panchayat and lack of qualified staff in village panchayat office (49.10 percent), the other constraints are lack communication media at the village level, women sarpanch could not work freely, she has to work what her husband says and lack of any type of protection to women sarpanch. This study shows that tribal women sarpanch were confronting more constraints than non-tribal women sarpanch. The social circumstances of tribal women are different from non-tribal women; therefore, there is a need for a particular focus in policy formulation.

Pal (2004) elicited information about Dalit women elected representatives who participated in the Haryana Institution of Rural Development in collaboration with the National Commission of Women organized one-day state level workshop for understanding the problems being faced by women leaders in carrying out their public/officials duties and for eliciting suggestions from them so as to what sort of supporting system is required for their effective functioning. The study's methodology was that 188 Dalit elected representatives (ERs) of panchayat raj institutions from all 19 districts of Haryana participated in the workshop. Of them, 76 percent were sarpanches, 13 percent were panches, and the rest were chairpersons and members of the Panchayat Samiti

The gram panchayat meeting and grama sabha meetings were held regularly, and Dalit women elected representatives attended them. The only subject in this meeting was the construction of roads and houses, ponds but the important issues like adverse sex ratio, anaemia among women and children, sanitation, and other welfare scheme were not comes under any discussion as the patriarchal society is not interested to know or discuss it in the open platform. The study found that they were unaware of the significant functions and powers pertaining to the 16 departments devoted to panchayats in 1995 and 2001 by the state government. This is the scenario of the awareness of their role in the functioning of the gram panchayat activities. Consequently, for all the activities of the panchayat, they were dependent on the gram sachiv. They were not aware of the provision of the gram panchayat act, social justice, amenities of the subcommittee and a local committee of punches for effective handling function of the gram panchayat. Moreover, they only knew two schemes Anaaj Scheme(SGRY) and the Housing scheme (IAY), in Haryana. All other schemes are also not aware of the other schemes like welfare, education, and economic development of the Dalits.

In Rajasthan, **SCMSPRI (2011)** conducted a study of 150 elected sarpanch taken in the sample study, including male and female sarpanch from the five districts Shri Ganganagar Alwar, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur. The study illustrates how many women representatives did not reply to questions and left their husbands/relatives to answer on their behalf. This happened to Zila Pramukh level. In Udaipur, 50 percent of Sarpanch replied to their own questions. No one from Jodhpur replied to their own questions. Regarding problems and hurdles in achieving their targets, 23 out of 50 Sarpanch believed they could not achieve their goal because of lack of administrative cooperation, inadequate budget provision, and coordination. Their primary goal was to develop the village's infrastructure social and economic development, but they could not fulfil it. Despite their low education qualification, they know that the various developmental work needs holistic development. Factors like socio-cultural inhibitions, fear of making mistakes, and speaking less in meetings make them less assertive in gram panchayat. Besides, women are emotional and trust others easily, making them vulnerable to being cheated was another problem found in the study. In order to alleviate the problem, it needs to enhance their knowledge & skill, need for promoting economic independence and education, equal opportunity required to sit and speak at

par with men in Gram Sabha or Ward Sabha of the panchayat. Furthermore, the most important is that the patriarchy system in the gram panchayat is a major hurdle for women leaders in the gram panchayat.

Malik and Shrivastava (2011) conducted a field study as a micro-study of two districts in Uttar Pradesh, Ghazipur and Mau, to investigate the extent to which 130 Dalit women elected representatives (DWERs), who were pradhan participate in decision-making at the grassroots level. They work as proxy pradhan. As a result of economic reliance, the higher-caste persons meddle with Pradhans' work and try to govern them according to their own preferences. People from the upper caste would sometimes pressure them to work in a specific way. However, when the DWERs refused to obey, people from higher castes used to cause them problems. They also attempt to form a plot to remove DWERs from the position of Pradhan. In the planning process of the gram panchayats, it found that they enthusiastically participate in this process, but some of their husbands, sons, and privileged caste take the decision on their behalf. Importantly, in many cases, the government official prepared the decision of the gram panchayat without their knowledge. Therefore, after they become a Pradhan, they are not respected. This finding illustrates caste as a form of discrimination, and the issue of contempt is still very much alive in India. The barriers are a poor socioeconomic background and a lack of education and information about the system, which needs to strengthen to become an effective Pradhan for Dalit women.

Kumari, Dubey and Gautam (2016) conducted a study of 75 women representatives randomly selected from Pusa and Kalyanpur block Samastipur district in Bihar hinders the elected women village panchayat members in their role performance. This paper illuminates what is hindering that the elected women were confronting at the gram panchayat. Therefore, the study identified the problem in Bihar is lack of unity among the villagers, caste-based co-operation in the village, conflicts in the village, lack of education among Panchayat members, lack of resources for development works, lack of knowledge of the members about the development project, carelessness among villagers for development works, lack of fund in time bribery and misappropriation of fund non-availability of persons well versed with the rural projects. Among these problems, the lack of resources in the development and lack of knowledge of the members about the development project is the only problem women leaders face.

2.22 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Drinking Water Facilities to the Gram Panchayats across India

Saha and Shiva (2018) conducted a study on providing safe drinking water by utilising the 14th central finance grant and 4th state finance grant in Odisha and Bihar. In Odisha, the study found that it is essential for the capacity building of women elected representatives for substantial participation at ward level proceedings. It was found that elected representatives were often limited participation in decision making in providing safe drinking water due to social norms. Quotas and reservation systems are the initial steps toward ensuring that the underprivileged are represented in decision-making. There was also a massive drive to invest in the creation of an enabling environment through building the capacity of women or representatives from marginalised populations, who are normally excluded from decision-making. This study had a gap in comparison between the reserved and unreserved categories elected representatives in providing safe drinking water.

Roy (2012) completed a study in Balangir, Balasore, Rayagada and Kandhamal about the rapid appraisal of the rural drinking water and sanitation programmes in Odisha. He found that the state government did not attempt to explain the provisions and roles and responsibilities to those who were freshly elected representatives after the Panchayat elections. The sarpanches had a lack of understanding of essential technical knowledge regarding the functioning of the total sanitation campaign and drinking water and sanitation programmes. The study highlighted that most of the Sarpanches had no understanding of how to manage the budget details, including raising user charges and had no cooperation among the DRDA, RWSS and the gram panchayat. The Village water sanitation committee(VWSC) was not functioning as per the state government guidelines in the study areas. According to the study, VWSCs, as community organisations, still have a long way to go in terms of instilling a feeling of community ownership of the water delivery system so that it becomes sustainable. The study did not emphasise on role and responsibilities of the elected representative from the marginalised communities in providing safe drinking water in rural areas.

Sinha and Pathak(2020) conducted a study in Jharkhand that VWSC under the leadership of the sarpanch, mobilised the villagers to use supply pipe water and pay the water fees charges on time. He ensures the transparency and accountability of bills and vouchers through the VWSC by coordinating with the drinking water and sanitation

department. The same author in West Bengal found that the Digamberpur gram panchayat constructed a supply water treatment plan and provided it to each household under the sarpanch women leadership. The GP collects the water charge and ensure safe drinking water in a sustainable way. The study suggests that a lack of training and financial assistance was a significant obstacle in empowering the elected representative to deliver safe drinking water in the gram panchayats. The study emphasises on the role of the elected representatives without categorising their social categories and women.

Rout (2018) conducted a Bakaram Jagir gram panchayat in Telangana State on managing water supply through the gram panchayat. The study shows how the elected representatives of the said gram panchayat participate in managing water supply in the GP. The study found that, by the collective effort of elected representatives, the GP conducted a gram sabha and discussed installing a RO plant in the villages. After installing the RO plant, the safe treated drinking water was getting in the GP. By the mutual leadership of all elected representatives of the GP, they supplied the piped water for drinking to every household in the gram panchayat. They mobilise the people of the ownership of the water management and ensure effective people participation in the gram panchayat. The author argued that democratic decentralisation is an effort to develop and practise direct and deliberative democracy at the grassroots, where people's affairs are managed by themselves with their active participation in making decisions that affect their lives the most. The limitation of the study was that it was restricted to one GP. There was no comparison of the role of the elected representatives among reserved, unreserved and women leadership.

2.23 Research Gaps of the Study

After reviewing the existing empirical literature, in Odisha, most studies found that caste, social norms, and gender prevent elected representatives from the effective functioning of the gram panchayats. Furthermore, an inadequate lack of training for the elected leader reduces weak governance in the gram panchayat. By reviewing many studies found that the performance of the particular reserved categories like Dalit, women and Tribal; however, the studies found that focusing on the specific groups made no comparison among the reserved and unserved categories. The existing literature review shows that in India, income, educational qualification and caste are significant factors that impact the governance process of the gram panchayats. No studies were found in Odisha on how elected representatives participated in the

planning process of the gram panchayat development plan(GPDP), standing committee and its functioning, what capability had developed after attending the training programmes, and how they involve in implementing the drinking water and sanitation programme in the villages. Many studies found in India that the government did not make an effort to strengthen elected representatives in managing the drinking water and providing the safe drinking water in the gram panchayats.

The research gap in the study is that a rare study was conducted on the performance of the elected representatives between reserved categories and unreserved categories in the functioning of the gram panchayats. In the previous studies, no research on awareness of the elected representatives about the utilisation certificate, recommendation of the Palli Sabha, the budget details placed in the gram sabha meeting. Thus, this study emphasises the functional process of the gram sabha where the elected leaders of the GP participate and look into performance, participation and understanding among SC, ST, OBC and UR representatives in conducting the gram sabha meeting. These research gaps were not shown in the previous research studies. Most of the research had been conducted with the participation of the elected representatives of the PRIs in decision making; thus, this research carried out the gram panchayat development plan, which was launched in 2015, and the Odisha state government launched it in 2017. Hence, this is the first time this research will study it. In 2017, the Odisha government launched the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) to prepare effective planning with people participation at the gram sabha. Therefore, this study explores how the GPDP is implemented at the grassroots level for the first time. Besides, it looks to the participation of the elected representatives in this programme.

On the governance process at the grassroots panchayats, no such studies were conducted about the training programmes for the ERs, functioning of the standing committee and awareness of the budget details, awareness of the ERs about the 14th Central Finance Commission fund and the 4th State Finance Commission grant. Hence, this study is going to fill the gap by bridging the above topics. In 2017, the Odisha government merged the ministry of drinking water and the ministry of the panchayat raj into a single department is called the ministry of the panchayat raj and drinking water. Hence, the panchayat raj was given a significant role in providing the drinking water service in the rural areas. In this context, for the first time, this study explores how the elected representatives provide the drinking water service in rural areas through

implementation, monitoring, and decision-making. No previous studies had been shown the role of the elected representatives to utilise the 14th Finance Commission grants and the 4th State Finance Commission grants in delivering the drinking water in their villages. Therefore, this study looks into this part of what is knowledge of the ERs about the schemes of drinking water programmes and their participation in these programmes. This study discusses how the needs on drinking water and sanitation of villages are addressed and planned for, where the ERs make the structure for participatory planning in the villages.

CHAPTER- 3

The Field Context and Study Area

PART – 1: Profiles of Odisha State and Balangir District

3.1 Overview of Odisha

Odisha is situated in Eastern India. It is by area the eighth largest state and by population the 11th largest in Area. Odisha has the third-highest Scheduled Tribe population in India. Neighbouring states include the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand to the north, Andhra Pradesh to the south, Chhattisgarh to the west. It has 485 kilometres (301 miles) of coastline along the Bay of Bengal. The language of Odisha is Odia is one of the Classical Languages of India. In western Odisha, Kosli (Sambalpuri) language is the language of the people. Balangir, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Sonapur, Nuapada, Baudh, Deogarh is western Odisha where the Sambalpur Language is the native language. “Odisha lies between the latitudes 17.780N and 22.730N, and between longitudes 81.37E and 87.53E”.

According to the 2011 Indian census, Odisha's total population is 41,974,218 people, with 21,212,136 men (50.54 percent) and 20,762,082 women (49.46 percent), or 978 females per 1,000 males. Orissa accounted for 3.47 percent of India's population in 2011. The percentage of people living in poverty in 2004-2005 was 57.15 percent, over twice the Indian average of 26.10 percent. Since 2005, the state's poverty rate has significantly dropped by 24.6 percent. In 2018, the estimated percentage of people living in poverty was 32.6 percent. The overall literacy rate of the Odisha state was 75.5 percent, with male and female literacy rates at 83.2 percent and 67.8 percent, respectively, as per the 71st round of the National Sample Survey (2014). In 2011, the SC and ST populations had comparatively lower literacy rates of 69.02 percent and 52.24 percent, respectively.

3.2 Administrative Division of Odisha

Odisha is split into 30 districts. Currently, Bhubaneswar is the capital of Odisha. To streamline their administration, these 30 districts have been grouped under three separate revenue divisions. Their headquarters at Sambalpur, Berhampur and Cuttack, respectively, are North, South and Central. Every division consists of ten districts and has a Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC) as its administrative head. The role of the RDC in the administrative hierarchy is between the district administration and the state secretariat. The RDCs report to the Board of Revenue, headed by an Indian Administrative Service senior officer. Sambalpur is the headquarter of the north division. Under the north division district are Angul, Balangir, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Bargarh,

Kendujhar, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Subarnapur, and Sundargarh. In this division of districts, Balangir District is the study area.

Moreover, the state's capital and largest town is Bhubaneswar. In addition, Cuttack, Rourkela, Berhampur and Sambalpur are the other major cities. Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela are Municipal Corporations in Odisha.

3.3 Human Development Index of Odisha State

Table 3.1: Odisha rank in SDG index

Index Name	Odisha Rank	Index Name	Odisha Rank
SDG (out of 29 State)	25	SDG clean Water & Sanitation	23
SDG End of Poverty	13	SDG Affordable & Clean Energy	25
SDG Zero Hunger	23	SDG Inequality reduction	12
SDG Health & wellbeing	13	SDG Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	18
SDG Quality of Education	25	SDG Sustainable City & Communities	19
SDG Gender Equality	8	SDG Peace, Justice & Strong Institution	27
SDG Employment & Growth	24	SDG Life & Land	5

Source- (NITI Ayog, 2018) SDG-Sustainable Development Goal

The above table 3.1 shows the Odisha State position in India in terms of the sustainable development index. It indicates that Odisha is a poor state in education, clean water and sanitation, justice, strong institution, employment, and growth.

Table 3.2: Odisha's rank in different development index across states of India

Index Name	Odisha Rank	Number of Sate Included
Tendulkar committee BPL Rank (2004-05)	29	29*
Tendulkar committee BPL Rank (2009-10)	23	29*
Tendulkar committee BPL Rank (2011-12)	24	29*
Rangarajan BPL Rank (2009-10)	24	29*
Rangarajan BPL Rank (2011-12)	27	29*
HDI Rank (1990)	27	29
HDI Rank (2000)	28	29
HDI Rank (2010)	28	29
HDI Rank (2018)	26	29
Nutrition Index 1993	5	15
Hunger Index 2009	12	17
MPI 2005-06	23	29*
MPI 2015-16	24	29

Source- SDG-NITI Ayog 2018, HDI- Global Data Lab, MPI- Global Multidimensional Poverty Index Report

Note- SDG- Sustainable development Goal, HDI- Human Development Index, MPI- Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, * suggest Delhi also included in the state list.

The above table 3.2 demonstrates that Odisha is a very backward state where the poverty rate is high. It is the lowest rank in terms of the poverty rate across India, even though it has a rich natural resource.

3.4 Kalahandi-Balangir-Koraput(KBK) Districts

The Planning Commission of India has designated parts of Odisha's southern and western districts as KBK districts, indicating that these districts are the most backward (Kalahandi-Balangir-Koraput). In 1992-93, the three bigger districts were divided into eight districts. Balangir, Sonepur, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabrangpur, Kalahandi, and Nuapada are the eight districts made up of 14 subdivisions, 37 tehsils, 80 CD Blocks, 1,437 Gram Panchayats, and 12,293 villages, constitute as KBK regions in Odisha. The eight districts comprising the KBK region represent 19.72 percent of the population and cover over 30.59 percent of Odisha state's geographical area. Around 90 percent of this region's people still live in villages. According to the 1997 census of BPL Family, among those living in this area, which was 72 percent of the poverty rate, about 82 percent of families was below the poverty line in 1992. More precisely, 49 CD Blocks of KBK districts are considered "very backwards", and 28 CD blocks are regarded as "backward" The predominant manifestations in the region are chronic crop failure, lack of access to essential services and rights, hunger, malnutrition and migration.

For several years, the KBK region has been historically impoverished. According to the Modified Expert Group of the Planning Commission (2000), the KBK region had 89.14 percent of people living below the poverty line, compared to 47.15 percent in Odisha and 26.1 percent in India. In the KBK area of Orissa, the main aspects of poverty are that the social groups of the "lower caste" (ST and SC) are discriminated against by the social groups of the "higher caste." For the persistence of chronic poverty, social exclusion from involvement in political, economic and social systems creates conditions of backwardness. Similarly, in the Coastal area of Odisha, the poverty rate is 66.63 of SC, 42.18 of ST, 24.32 of Other and 31.34 percent of all in 2000. The student dropout rate among the STs and SCs are very high. Women face discrimination in all fields in the KBK region of Orissa. In formal grassroots politics (Panchayat), the 33 percent quota for women is still not effective as they cannot exercise their power primarily because of the patriarchal nature of society. Female literacy in the KBK region is abysmally low and is below 30 percent. Maternal mortality rates are high, indicating that women are at a

disadvantage in terms of health benefits. Furthermore, the average salary rate for female workers is significantly lower than for male workers(Parida, 2008).

A major set of values, caste discrimination, beliefs, and institutional procedures systematically and consistently benefit 'dominant' caste people at the expense of others(lower caste) in the KBK region. Parida(2008) argued that despite many women serving as their families' economic backbones in this region, men's heavy consumption of liquor and abuse against women is not helping these families to escape from poverty. Most people in the KBK area are impoverished and unable to support their livelihoods because there are no job prospects in the agriculture and non-farm sectors for agricultural labour. Some workers migrate to other areas, such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, Chennai, Hyderabad, to get job opportunities and gain mere income to support their livelihoods during the lean season (Sethy, 2020). The prevalence of extreme poverty in this area has been a cause of worry for both the state and the central governments. As a result, the state government has set up a Special Area Development Strategy for the region in consultation with the government of India in order to focus attention on it and accelerate its development. In consultation with the Government of India, a Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) for the KBK districts was drawn up for seven years from 1995-96 to 2001-02 and formally launched by the then Prime Minister on 18.08.1995. In order to strengthen the LTAP, the state government launched a scheme is called the Biju KBK plan in 2007-2008, which provided 120 crores over and above the normal allocation plan. Since 2015-16, the scheme has been delinked by the Government of India. Since 2015-16, the State Government has increased the provision under Biju KBK Yojana to protect funding in the KBK area. The state government decided to augment the provision under the Biju KBK plan to spend 250 crores by an additional amount of 120 crores out of the state plan from 2015-16 until further order with a view to protecting the funding of developmental work undertaken in the KBK region¹. The Biju KBK plan aims to create economic, social and human development opportunities for the region's citizens, especially the disadvantaged. It accelerated the elimination of poverty and achieved the Millennium Development Goals, enhancing local people's quality of life and putting the country in line with other developed regions.

Drawing from KBK, as mentioned above, Balangir is a KBK district where more chronic poverty, social discrimination against the SCs, gender discrimination, unemployment,

¹ this information was accessed from www.kbk.nic.in

and migration are seen as dominant problems. The primary goal of the gram panchayat is to eradicate poverty, economic development and social justice; thus, the study on the gram panchayat was conducted in the district to participate of the elected representatives in the functioning of the gram panchayat.

3.5 Balangir as an Aspirational District

The Government of India launched the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative in January 2018, with the vision of making a New India by 2022, focusing on improving India's Human Development Index ranking, raising citizens' living standards, and ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth for all². The aspirational district was selected based on the Composite Index, which was established by analysing the published district-wise data sources available in the core sectors of poverty, health & nutrition, education, and basic infrastructure. Since poverty has a multi-dimensional effect on society's overall well-being as a whole, the Composite Index has assigned it the utmost weight. NITI Aayog conducted stakeholder consultations and finalised 49 Primary Performance Indicators (KPIs) on six topics: health and nutrition; education; agriculture and water resources; financial inclusion and skills development; and Infrastructure Basic. Each is weighted on these themes, the government's dedication to inclusive growth and its mission to raise the living standards of its people(Kant, 2018).

The same report of the Kant(2018) describes that the main goal of the aspirational district is bridging the inequality in the district by making a plan with a focus on Bridging Regional Disparity through District Planning, Resource Mapping & Convergence of Schemes, Stock-taking, Visioning & Preparation of Vision Document, Real-time Monitoring & Social Audit of District Plans. The Aspirational Districts Program is a step towards developing and increasing some of the most neglected communities. It guides and focuses energy and efforts on the most vulnerable districts. Thus, Balangir District is coming under the aspirational district by the Niti Aayog because this district is coming under the KBK region, a backward, low human index, high poverty rate, and a low indicator of health, education and other basic facilities. One of the programme's strategies is identifying champions of change at district and regional levels to develop a mass movement. The champion changer is elected representatives of district level, sub-divisional, gram panchayat and ward level. They have to channelised to work for development into a mass movement. Therefore, the Balangir district has fit the study on

² see www.vikashpedia.com

the elected representatives of the gram panchayat towards economic development and social justice in this context.

3.6 Overview of the Balangir District

The district lies between 20 degree 11'40 to 21 degrees 05'08 degrees north latitude and 82 degrees to 40'22 east longitude. The Balangir district, erstwhile called Patna state, is located in the western region of Odisha. The district is situated on National Highway 57 at a distance of 316 KM from Bhubaneswar. The Balangir district was formed in November 1949. Balangir district is bordered on the east by Subarnapur district, on the south by Kalahandi district, on the west by Nuapada district, and on the north by Bargarh district. In 1993, the Balangir district was divided into two districts viz. Balangir and Sonpur, as per the Government of Odisha to provide administrative convenience.

The geographical area of the district is 6,575 sq. km. The districts cover 4.22 percent of the state's land area and have a population of 3.93 percent of the state's population. It covers 14 blocks, 14 Tehsils, and 3 subdivisions, with 1783 villages (including 32 uninhabited villages).

The total population of the Balangir district was 16,48,997, which consist of 2.54 per cent of the State population, with a total male population of 8,30,097 and a female population of 8,18,900. The sex ratio of the district has 987 females per 1000 males, with Hindus accounting for 98.13 percent of the total population and Christians accounting for 0.99 percent. The SC population of the district was 2,94,777, and the ST population was 3,47,164 (Census, 2011). There is 17.88 percent of the SC population and 21.05 percent of the ST population. Moreover, the literacy rate is 64.72 percent, whereas the state literacy is 72.87 percent(2011), where as 75.85 percent for men and 53.50 percent for women (females). According to the Census of 2011, 64.72 percent of the total population in the Balangir district is literate, and the tribal literacy rate is 54.37 in community development blocks of the district. Similarly, among the SCs literacy rate is 61.84 percent in CD blocks of the district.

The sex ratio of the district is 987, whereas Odisha state is 979 per 1000. As per district statistical handbook 2011, there is 23.11 percent of Cultivator, whereas, in Odisha, it is 23.4 percent. The agricultural labour is 45.30 per cent of the district, whereas, in Odisha, it is 38.42 per cent. The district's total main and marginal worker is 41.79 per cent and 41.79 percent in Odisha. The main worker of the district is 24.39 per cent, and 25.51 per cent is for the state. The marginal worker of the district is 19.31 per cent, whereas the

state level is 16 per cent for the same. Koshali (Odia) language (98.28 percent), Hindi (1.18 percent), and Telugu (0.11 percent) are the most commonly spoken languages. The official language is Odia. For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the labour force participation rate was 56.40 percent. Agriculture is the district's primary source of revenue, with a per capita income of Rs. 34,395. The total cropped area is 2,63,067 hectares, with a forest area of 1135.26 square kilometres (Balangir District Fact Sheet, 2019). As estimated, the level of literacy among scheduled tribes and scheduled castes has always been a matter of concern. It is, in fact, much lower for Scheduled Tribes in Balangir than for the rest of the population. In 2018, the district's crime rate was 203.03 percent.

3.7 Administrative Setting in Balangir district

In the Balangir district, there are 285 Gram Panchayats with 1,794 villages (inhabited 1764, uninhabited 32)³. In 1993, the Balangir was divided into two districts viz. Balangir and Subarnpur district. There are three Sub-Division viz. Balangir, Partnagarh and Titlagarh. In order to make adequate revenue administration, the district is divided into 14 tahasils viz. Kantabanji, Balangir, Loisinga, Belpara, Khaprakhhol, Muribahal, Deogaon, Titilagarh, Saintala, Tushura, Puitala, Parnagarh, Bangomunda and Agalpur. For the development of rural areas consisting of 1789 villages in 317 Gram Panchayats. The district consists of the 33 Zilla Parishad constituency and 14 Block panchayat Samiti. The number of municipalities is 2, the number of unhabituated villages is 32, the number of Notified Area Commission is 3, the number of inhabited villages is 1757, and the total number of villages is 1783. Urban Bodies: (5): Municipality: (2): Balangir, Titlagarh. NAC: (3): Kantabanjhi, Patnagarh and Tushra.

3.8 Panchayati Raj System in the Balangir District

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj identified the Balangir district as one of the country's most backward, ranking it 250th out of 640 districts (www.indiastatedistrict.com). The three-tier Panchayati Raj was established in Odisha with the enforcement of the Odisha Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1959, which came into effect in 1961. With the enactment of the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act, 1991 on November 1, enforced in 1993, it became even more active. In the three-tier system of the Panchayati Raj in the state, the Panchayat Samiti serves as an intermediary between the district-level Zilla Parishad and the village-level Gram Panchayat, and each of them functions within its own jurisdiction for the development of the district's rural areas for a normal term of five years.

³ Odisha (Balangir) District Gazetteer, 2011 retrieved from <https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/>

Zilla Parishad is the top body in the district consists of the following members; Each Panchayat Samiti in the district are elected two members to the Zilla Parishad; Members of Parliament and elected Members of Legislative Assembly from the district to become the Zilla Parishad members; Chairpersons of all Panchayat Samities of the district. All Panchayat Samities in the district has a chairperson. Chairpersons of the Municipalities/ NAC s and Co-operative Banks of the district, the district officers of health, education, agriculture, public health, forest, works and Co-operative development become the ex-officio members of Zilla Parishad.

One-third of the seats are reserved for women, including SC and ST women, while seats for SC and ST members are allocated based on their demographic proportion. The President is elected from among the members of the Zilla Parishad, and the Vice President is elected in the same way. In the Zilla Parishad, the District Collector will be the Chief Executive Officer. Zilla Parishad monitors and evaluates the various government development programmes executed by Panchayat Samities in their particular district areas and formulates policies for significant rural development areas in the district.

The Panchayat Samities act as an intermediary between Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayats, which were created throughout the state following the provisions of the Odisha Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959. The Panchayat Samiti's chief executive officer is the Block Development Officer. The government officials of the Block are the official members; non-official members of the Samiti are the sarpanch of all gram panchayat within the Community Development Block. One of the elected Panchayat Samiti members is selected as Chairperson, and the other is chosen as Vice-Chairperson, with one of them must be a woman.

Panchayat Samities is responsible for preparing, implementing, and managing all kinds of government development programmes and policies in their region and taking care of the spread of primary education, the trust of management, drinking water facilities and endowment management, etc., and other developmental related work in their respective development.

The Gram Panchayat comprises a group of villages divided into wards, which is considered the primary level unit. Each ward's voters directly elect their ward members. Under the Gram Panchayat, the Sarpanch of the Panchayat is elected by the voters of all the wards and one Naib Sarpanch is elected to look after the Panchayat's work from among the ward members. Panchayat Executive Officer(PEO) is in charge to control and maintaining the office's registers and employees under the gram panchayat and discharge

duties under the Odisha gram panchayat Act. Gram Panchayat's functions include sanitation, the supply of drinking water, the maintenance of ferry ghats and wells, the construction and maintenance of Panchayat roads, cattle pounds, the provision of street lighting and the implementation in the villages under its jurisdiction of various agricultural schemes.

3.9 Key Indicators of Odisha State and Balangir District

Table 3.3 The key indicators of the Odisha state and Balangir district

Indicators	Key Indicators of Odisha and Balangir	
Demography ⁴	Odisha	Balangir
Density of Population(Per Sq.KM)	270	251
Population total	4,19,74,218	1648997
Population Urban (%)	7003656(16.7)	197,381 (11.97)
Population Rural(%)	34970562(83.3)	1,451,616(88.03)
Population of Scheduled caste(%)	7188463(17.1)	294777(17.9)
population of scheduled tribe(%)	9590756(22.8)	347164(21.1)
Decadal growth rate	14	23.3
Education and Literacy ⁵	Odisha	Balangir
Literacy rate total	73%	64.70%
Literacy rate male	82%	75%
Lieracy rate Female	64%	53.50%
Literacy rate SC	69.02%	63.42%
Literacy rate ST	52.24%	54.93%
Sex ratio, 2011	978	987
Sex ratio SC 2011	987	988
Sex ratio ST 2011	1029	1014
life expectancy 2012-16	67.6	55
Economic Indicators	Odisha	Balangir
Total household ⁶ (2011)	96,37,820	4,14,749
BPL Households (Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards ⁷)	3686573(as per 2014)	164848(as per 1992)
Total numbers PHH(BPL CARD HOLDER) (2018)	NA	338733
Total nos of AAY+PHH Cards(2018)	NA	391546

⁴ Census 2011

⁵ Census 2011 and the district statistical handbook Balangir, 2015

⁶ Census 2011

⁷ Odisha at Glance 2016

Above Poverty Line (APL) cards ⁸ (2014)	3565857	NA
Total nos of AAYCards ⁹	1253618(as per 2014)	52813(As per 2018 ¹⁰)
Annapurna (ANP) cards	63452(as per 2014)	2513(As per 2018)
PLO(poor left out families)	479691(as per 2014)	NA
Total nos of Ration Cards in circulation	NA	394059(As per 2018)
Household's characteristic	Odisha	Balangir
Total Household ¹¹	9661085(2014)	414749(2011)
provision of 40 Lpcd Drinking water to total Habitation(2015)	157158	3162
percent of villages electrified ¹²	93.40%	100%
Rural Habitation Covered with piped water supply (2015)	31388(18%)	
Availability of drinking water Near premises and away	42.2% and 35.4%	
Rural drinking water household percentageTape water+well water+handpump+other(2011) ¹³	7.5 %, 19.8 %, 66.9%, 5.8%	6.7%, 11%, 78.7% and 3.7%
Rural total household availability of latrine	8144012	387345
Total household availability of latrine	9661085	432081
Nummber of latrine of total household	85%	89.9%
Rural Open Defecation (2011) %	87%	88.6%
Households with no access to toilets(2018) ¹⁴	45.10%	NA
Coverage Status of IHHL(2018)	87%	70%

3.10 Organisational Structure of Odisha Gram Panchayats after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act,1993

The Odisha Gram Panchayat Act of 1948 was the state's first legislation that defined Gram Panchayat's constitution, powers, and functions. In 1961, the state's three-tiered PRI system was introduced. Odisha Zilla Parishad Act was passed in 1959, and it was amended in 1961 to become the Odisha Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act 1959.

⁸ Odisha at Glance 2016

⁹ Odisha at Glance 2016

¹⁰ www.Balangir.Nic.in(Food and consumer data of Balangir)

¹¹ The district statistical handbook Balangir,2015

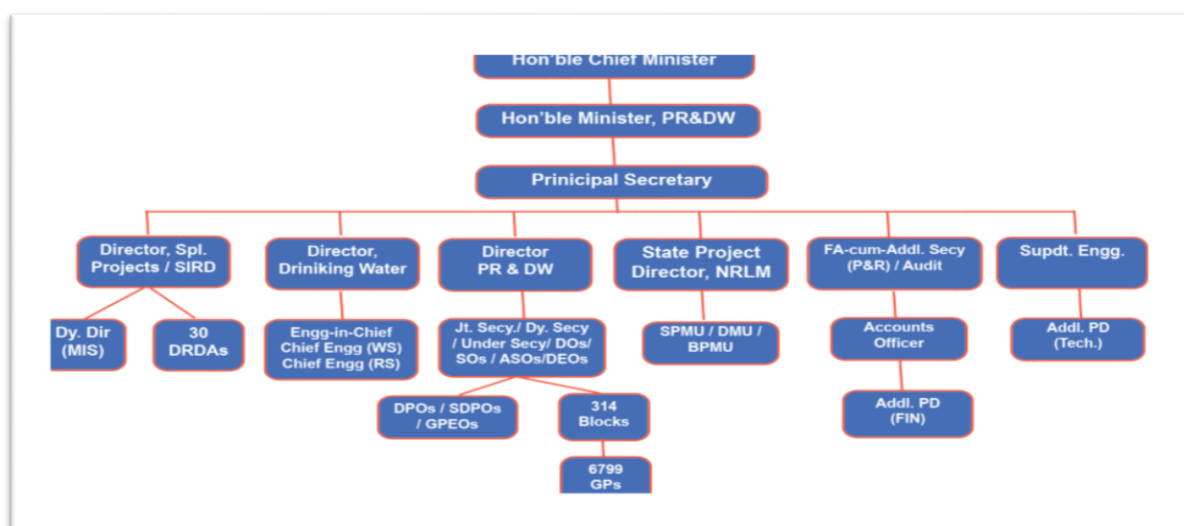
¹² The district statistical handbook Balangir,2015

¹³ Statistical Abstract Odisha 2012

¹⁴ Home page of Swachha Bharat Mission retieved from <https://sbm.gov.in/sbmReport/home.asp>

Odisha has modified the current laws relating to the panchayat system, including three-tier levels the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act 1961 at the district level, the Odisha Panchayat Samiti Act 1959 at the block level, and the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act 1964 at the village level, in line with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992. Odisha's Panchayati Raj Department (PRD) was established in 1994. It primarily communicates with two central ministries: the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). The Odisha government had been amended the Gram Panchayat Acts and Rules from time to time as per administrative convenience. Now, the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule 2014 is implemented in the state as a governance process.

Figure 3.1: Organisational set-up of Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department



Source- Outcome of the budget, Odisha gram panchayat, 2018

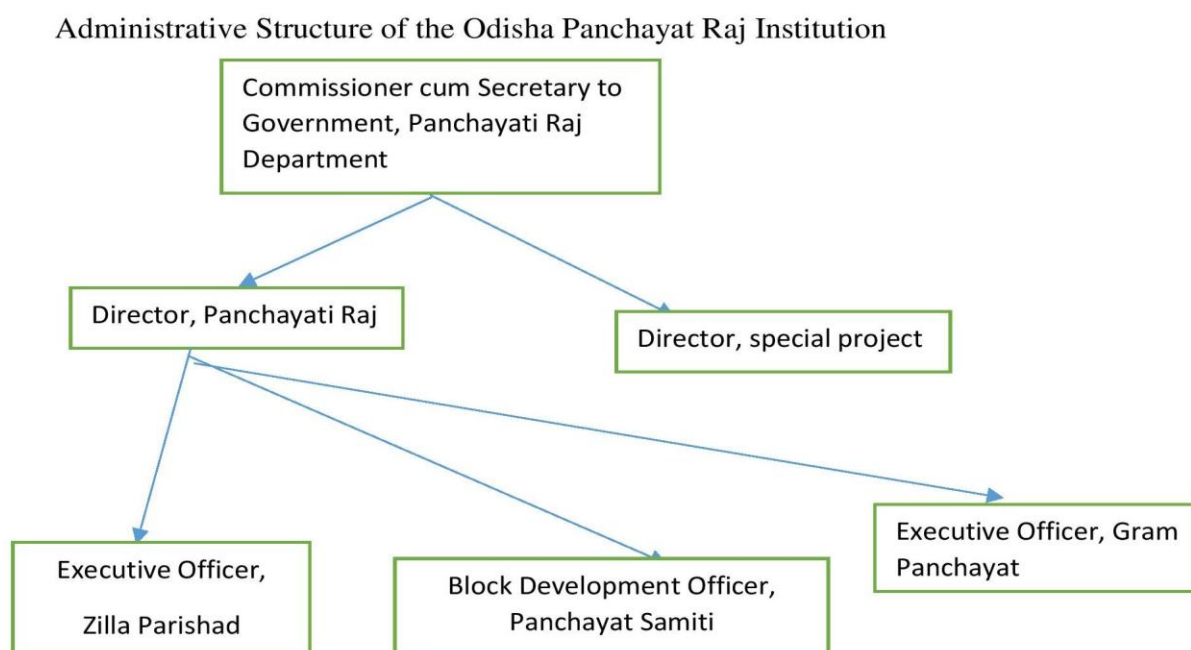
The Panchayat Raj Institutions in Odisha are regulated by the Panchayati Raj (PR) Department of the state government, which is headed by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary and assisted by the Director (PR) and Director (Special Projects) at the state level. The state is divided into 30 districts, each with a Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad is governed by an elected body headed by a president elected from among the Zilla Parishad's elected members. The Collector of the District is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). One Executive Officer (EO) reports to the CEO and is in charge of Zilla Parishad's day-to-day activities. At the Block level, the Panchayat Samiti is governed by an elected body headed by a Chairman elected from among the Panchayat Samiti's elected members, with the Block Development Officer (BDO) serving as the Panchayat Samiti's executive head. The State Government appointed the Village Level Worker (VLW) as

the Panchayat Executive Officer and assigned the general supervision and overall control of the Gram Panchayat to the District Panchayat Officer (DPO).

Gram Panchayats are considered as the development programme formulation unit. Panchayat Samitis has emerged as a significant institution to implement various development programmes, such as poverty alleviation and social security systems, and Zilla Parishads continues to serve as a supervisory body. Zilla Parishad prepares a Master Plan for all aspects of integrated development for the district to avoid overlaps and duplication of work in the field. During the financial year 2017-18, the (Rural Water Supply and Sanitation) RWS&S Wing was moved from the Department of the Rural Development to the Department of the Panchayati Raj and renamed the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department. After such integration, in order to provide the piped supply water, the funds devolved to the gram panchayat for maintenance, control, and supervision.

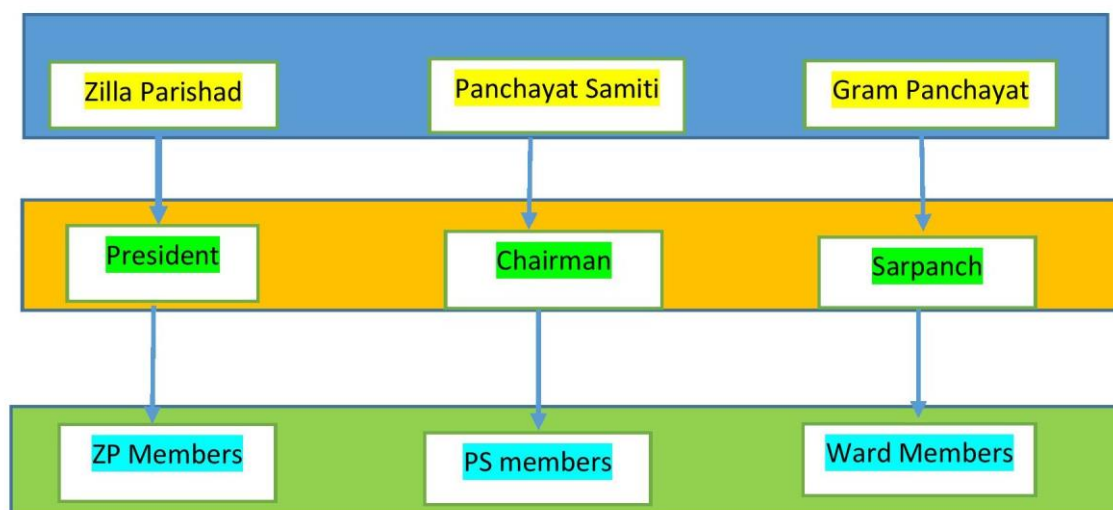
At the state level, Panchayati Raj and the Drinking Water Department operate its activities in 30 sections, and at the field level, it operates 30 Zilla Parishads (ZP), 314 panchayats (PS), and 6799 gram panchayat (GP). Zilla Parishads and District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) at the district level, Panchayat Samities at the intermediate level (Block), and Gram Panchayats at the village level are the present frameworks through which Panchayati Raj Department activities are carried out in rural Odisha. In addition, the State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) in Bhubaneswar (founded in 1964) is responsible for training and capacity building of PRI elected members and field functionaries at the State Head Quarter level. Similarly, three Extension Training Centres (ETCs) are located in Bhubaneswar, Bhawanipatna (Kalahandi), and Keonjhar at the regional level. The following diagram indicates the organisational set-up of the Odisha Gram Panchayat.

Figure 3.2: The administrative structure of the Odisha gram panchayat



The figure 3.3 shows that the elected body structure of the PRI in Odisha is as follows

The elected body structure of the Panchayati Raj Institution in Odisha



3.10.1 Devolution of Power

Following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment(1992), activity mapping was moved to Panchayati Raj Institutions in respect of 18 enlisted subjects from 11 departments. District level officer, Block level Officer, and village level functionaries of 11 line departments have been made accountable to Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti, and Gram Panchayats, respectively, for implementing the subjects or systems schemes transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

3.10.2 Composition of Gram Panchayats in Odisha

In Odisha, the Grama Panchayat is the lowest level of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system. The Orissa Grama Panchayat Act of 1964 established it. Grama is a collection of contiguous villages. There shall be a Grama Sasan for each Grama with a population of more than 2000 but less than 10,000. The Gram Sasan is a legal entity. The Grama Sasan's office and headquarters are located within the Grama's boundaries. In Odisha, Grama Sasan is also known as 'Grama Sabha'. In addition, a Grama Panchayat's total number of wards cannot be less than 11 or greater than 25. One Sarpanch, one NaibSarpanch, and Ward Members compose the Grama Panchayat. The sarpanch is chosen by the voters of the entire Gram Panchayat. The voters of each ward elect one Ward Member from among themselves. Following the announcement of the Sarpanch and Ward Member election results, a special meeting is called to elect one Naib-Sarpanch. The ward members choose the Naib Sarpanch among themselves. If the sarpanch is elected as male, then that gram panchayat should be reserved for the women. Apart from these elected officials, the State Government has appointed a Secretary(Panchayat Executive Officer) to keep track of the records.

3.10.3 Powers and Functions of the Gram Sabha in Odisha

Constitutional status is given to Gram Sabha by article 243A, Gram Sabha, as an assembly of adult people of gram panchayat, is a direct democratic body of self-government at the primary level. "At the village level, a Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such duties as the State Legislature may provide by law"(Joshi and Narwani, 2002).

The gram sabha function is depicted in Section 5 of the Odisha gram panchayat Act, 1964. Section 5(1) required that at least two meetings, one in February and the other in June each year, be held in which all members of Gram Sasan participate, and a development plan be prescribed for them. Section 5(2)(a) stipulated that the quorum of the meeting be one-tenth of the members of the Gram Sasan. (b) If a quorum is not fulfilled, the meeting will be adjourned to a later date, and no quorum will be required for any such adjourned meeting.

Section (5) empowers the gram sabha to (a) approve the plan, projects, and programs for social and economic development before the gram panchayat implements them. Before starting any project, the gram sabha must approve the gram panchayat's plan of programs, scheme, and project in a public meeting known as the Gram Sabha. (b) choose the recipients of poverty alleviation or other comparable programmes. Furthermore, (a) and

(b) show that the fund's utilisation certificate must be received from the gram Sasan (Gram Sabha), which is responsible for the panchayat's plans, programmes, and projects. Every year in June, the gram sabha reviews a report on the gram panchayats' programmes and projects and their progress over the previous year and the annual audit report submitted by the sarpanch. Proposals for the imposition of taxes, rates, rents, and fees, the organisation of community services, the preparation and implementation of agricultural production programmes, and any other issue that may be regulated by a gram sabha.

3.10.4 Reservation in Odisha Gram Panchayat System

The Odisha Gram Panchayat Act 1964 (section 10) deals with the gram panchayat and reservation system constitution. It has a reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) candidates based on the proportion of their population in that gram panchayat to be filled by direct election. In a gram panchayat, such seats will be rotated to various wards of the gram panchayat. If the SC/ST population is insufficient, a reserved seat for both SC/ST will be provided. Furthermore, one-half of the total seats should be reserved for women from the SC/ST communities.

As close to 27 percent as practicable, but not less than 27 percent of seats in every gram panchayat should be reserved for the backward class of persons in the stipulated manner, as per clause (6) of Article 243-D of the Constitution of India, and shall be allotted to various Wards by rotation. Similarly, within every gram panchayat, one-half of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election would be reserved for women belonging to the SCs, STs, and backward castes. The district collector would make a decision based on population density among the SC, ST, and other backward castes through the rotation. The state legislature passed unanimously the Orissa Panchayat Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2011 (February), which amends the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the Orissa Panchayat Samitee Act, and the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act to increase the women's quota from 33 percent to 50 percent. By amending the Panchayat Laws, the Bill also permitted for the reserving of seats and chairpersonships for two terms rather than one, since it was thought that single-term tenure did not encourage more people to vote (Patnaik, 8, 2011, The Time of India).

3.10.5 Sources of Finance and Revenue for the Gram Panchayats

According to section 93 of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, each Grama Panchayat is required to have a Grama Fund. The Grama Panchayat receives the grant through the Grama Fund. All government funds and Grama Panchayat revenue must be deposited in

the Grama Fund. The Grama fund must be deposited in a Nationalised Savings Bank, a Post Office, or the Treasury closest to the Gram Panchayat. The Grama Panchayat's main sources of revenue are listed: Taxes, fines, and government taxes are used to finance the company. The gram panchayat receives the taxes: water- rate where the gram panchayat supplies drinking water; vehicles tax, conservancy tax, latrine tax; drainage tax; lighting taxes, where the lighting of public streets are provided; fees on animals sold in a public market operated by a gram panchayat; fees for monitoring cattle movement; for the sake of crop health; fees for the use of any structure; stores, stalls, market etc.; hire contractors temporarily occupying open ground or any structure; any other tax or fee imposed by the government, which the Grama Panchayat governs.

The main source of the gram panchayat grants is the 14th Central Finance Commission grants, the 4th State Finance Commission grants, grants from state-sponsored schemes and central sponsored schemes, own source of revenue, beneficiary contribution MGNREGS, and donation. A panchayat may be authorised by the state legislature to levy, collect, and appropriate such as tolls, taxes, duties, and fees, according to Article 243 (H). The Governors are directed to form a Finance Commission to assess the financial position of the Grama Panchayat and provide recommendations to ensure a stable financial situation under Article 243-I(1) of the Indian Constitution of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992.

3.10.6 Powers and Functions of the Sarpanch at the Gram Panchayat in Odisha

The Orissa gram panchayat act, 1964, chapter IV, section-19 declares the sarpanch's power, duties, and functions under the Gram Panchayat's authority shall carry out the executive power. Without regard to the generality of the provision contained in this Act, the rule of the Act can make subject to change from time to time by the State government.

1. She/he shall convene and preside over the monthly meeting, Gram Sabha and Standing Committee meeting of the Gram panchayat. She/he shall conduct, regulate, and be responsible for the proper maintenance of the records of the said meetings' proceeding.
2. Sarpanch executes documents relating to the contracts on behalf of the Gram Sasan. She/he has the responsibility and a custodian power of all records, all-important shares, buildings, and assets owned and vested in or under the management or control of the Gram Sasan.
3. Sarpanch shall be responsible for proper working and managing the gram panchayat as required by the Act.

4. He/she is too prepare for all statements and reports required by or under this Act.
5. He/she supervises and controls the acts, rules, and proceedings of all gram panchayats functionaries and staff.
6. She/he shall be the authority to enter into correspondence on behalf of the Gram Panchayat.
7. Sarpanch exercises such other power, discharges other duties, and performs such functions as assigned, imposed, and conferred to him/her or under this Act.
8. Suppose the sarpanch feels that a Gram Panchayat decision is subversive of the Gram Panchayat's decision. He would refer the matter to the concerned Sub-Collector in order to maintain peace and order in the region. (section-20)

The sarpanch is also responsible for exercising any other powers, performing any other duties, or performing any other functions that the government may delegate from time to time.

3.10.7 Powers and Functions of the Naib-Sarpanch at the Gram Panchayat in Odisha

Section-21 stipulated powers and functions of the Naib-Sarpanch

1. Sarpanch may delegate such authority, discharge such responsibilities and tasks, perform to the Naib-Sarpanch as delegated in writing from time to time, and sarpanch may withdraw such powers, obligations, and responsibilities as delegated in writing.
2. When the sarpanch office's office falls vacant, the Naib- Sarpanch take the discharge and perform all duties and functions of the sarpanch until a new sarpanch is elected or nominated.
3. In case the sarpanch's seat is vacant, or if the sarpanch has been continuously absent from the Grama for more than 15 days or has been incapacitated for more than 15 days, or if a similar situation occurs with the Naib Sarpanch, such power, function, and duties are devolved on a ward member of the gram panchayat from a panel of three such members in order to prioritise elect the Sarpanch in the prescribed manner.

3.10.8 Powers and Functions of the Ward Members at the Gram Panchayat in Odisha

Section -22 mentioned the ward member's right in gram panchayat that every ward member of the gram panchayat shall, subject to the rule made on that behalf.

1. They have the right to access the records of Gram Panchayat during office hours after giving due notice to the sarpanch.
2. They have the right to move the resolution and question any office-bearer on the matter of connection with the administration on the panchayat.
3. Scrutinise and inspect all works conducted by the Gram Panchayat and all institutions under the direction, management, or control of the Gram Panchayat, and bring any irregularities discovered during such inspection to the attention of the sarpanch.

3.10.9 Compulsory Functions of the Gram Panchayats in Odisha

Article 243B states a new chapter, part IX, added to the constitution with the heading panchayat. Article 243, new schedule XI, containing 29 power transferred to the panchayat, was added. Thus, PRIs became an integral part of the constitution. The Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, sections 44 and 45 stipulated that there are two types of functions of the Odisha Gram panchayat: the obligation or compulsory function and discretionary or optional.

The following are the compulsory or obligation function of the gram panchayat:

1. It is responsible for constructing, repairing, maintaining, and improving public roads.
2. It is responsible for the gram panchayat to provide lighting and cleaning of public roads and other public places.
3. It is responsible for the gram panchayat to maintain, build and clean drains, public latrines, and urinals.
4. It builds, restores, and maintains tanks, wells, and tube wells, among other things, to supply and store drinking water.
5. It provides appropriate provisions for the scavenging, removal, and disposal of filth, trash, and other noxious contaminated materials.
6. It takes steps to prevent and control the spread of infectious or epidemic diseases.
7. It keeps track of births, deaths, and weddings.
8. It corrects human and animal census reports, as well as the registration of sold animals
9. All properties entrusted to the Grama Panchayat's management are protected, maintained, and developed it.
10. For the sake of crop protection, it regulates and restricts livestock movement.
11. It annihilates and subdues stray and ownerless dogs.

12. It provides the Panchayat Samiti with all appropriate assistance in establishing and maintaining primary education
13. It is in charge of supervising and maintaining social conservation efforts
14. It oversees "Melas," or fairs and festivals, as well as markets, *hat* stands, and cart stands
15. It carries out the agricultural extension schemes
16. It controls and regulates Minor Forest Production.
17. It makes steps for food-processing industries and small-scale industries.
18. It takes steps to improve rural housing.
19. It aims to reduce poverty and promote women's and children's health.
20. It takes steps to enhance social welfare, including the welfare of physically and mentally ill people, as well as the public distribution system and community assets.

Finally, the gram panchayat prepares plans, implements economic development and social justice, and executes any other schemes and programmes listed in the Eleventh Scheduled to India's Constitution.

3.10.10 Discretionary Functions of the Gram Panchayats in Odisha

The main discretionary functions of the Gram Panchayats are as follows:

1. Upkeep and tree planting on both sides of public streets, as well as village forest maintenance.
2. Livestock establishment and development.
3. Slaughterhouse construction, maintenance, and regulation.
4. Steps to helping and advising farmers in the reclamation of wastelands and the cultivation of neighbour lands.
5. Manage and expand various cooperative stores.
6. Famine or other natural disasters alleviates.
7. Maintenance and opening of village libraries and reading rooms.
8. Firefighting services should arrange, and life and property are to be protected in the event of a fire.
9. It steps to establish maternity and child welfare centres
10. The establishment and upkeep of Akharas, Clubs and other recreational facilities are available in the gram panchayat.
11. In order to provide jobs during a time of scarcity, Grainaries were founded, as well as construction and maintenance of works.

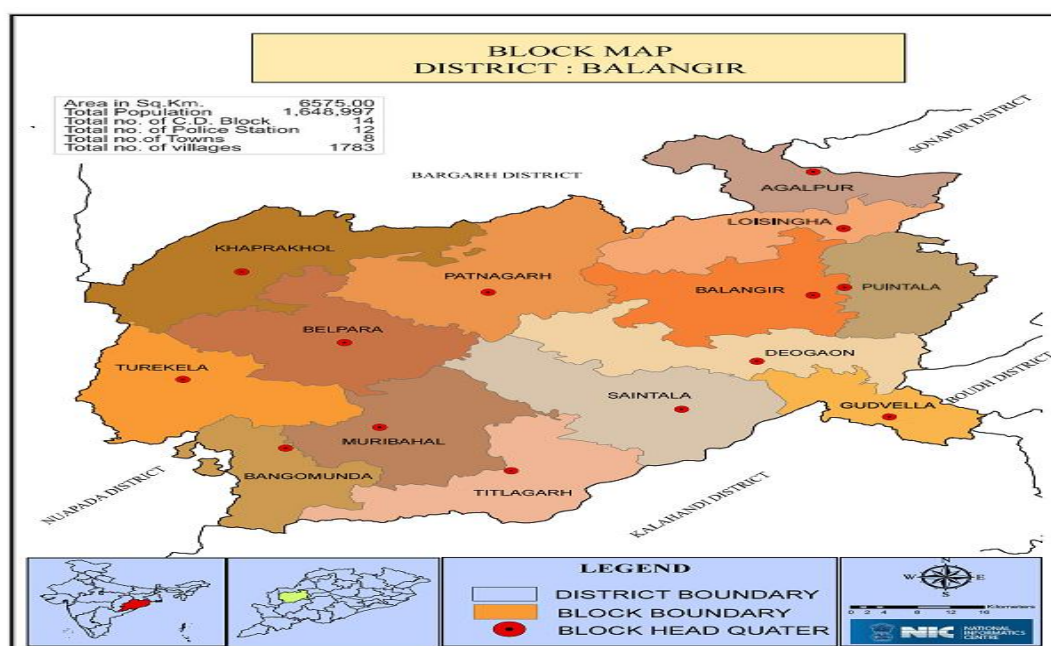
12. Promotion of small-scale businesses and cottage industries.
13. Upkeep and erection of Dharmasalas and rest houses
14. Agricultural industrial exhibitions should maintain and organise.
15. Keeping and gathering statistics of unemployed.
16. With the authorization of the concerned Panchayat Samities, facilities for adult education and the establishment of primary schools should open in the village.
17. It has to form a Grama Swechha Sevaka to assist the Grama Panchayat in times of emergency.
18. Prevention and implementation of the prohibition Gambling programme

Apart from the duties mentioned above, it is also required to carry out any other duties assigned by the State Government on a mandatory or optional basis from time to time.

PART – 2: Gram Panchayats Profiles

Note: References in this section are taken from four main sources, i.e. population from Socio-Economic Caste Census(SECC) data 2011 was used and details the village area retrieved from www.onefivenine.com. Another source is the website of Mission Antyodaya,2019, where information was collected, and the rest of the data was collected in the field and through the Participatory Rural Appraisal method.

Map 3.1: Sampling map of gram panchayats and blocks of the Balangir district



Source-www.Balangir. nic. in

3.11 Profiles of the Gram Panchayats :

The following section describes the profile of the selected 38 gram panchayats in the five blocks of the district. The selected five blocks are the Loisinga block, the Balangir block, the Gudvella block, the Muribahal block and the Bangomunda Block.

In Loisinga Block, the researcher has taken seven gram panchayats for the study areas. The following gram panchayat is described in brief.

3.11.1 Magurbeda Gram Panchayat (SC Male Sarpanch)

Magurbeda has a total population of 671 people. Gram panchayat headquarters is Magurbeda. Balangir is the nearest town to Magurbeda, which is approximately 24km away. The gram panchayat comprises five villages, namely Magurbeda, Kaindapali, Patharkhandi, Brahmanidunguri, and Pardhiapali. The gram panchayat's total population is 3896, including the males and females, in 1939 and 1957, respectively. In this gram panchayat, the SC and ST populations are 1013 and 455. The total household is 977, and the sex ratio is 1008 in the gram panchayat. The people's occupation of the gram panchayat is manual causal labour and agriculture: 582 people were doing manual causal labour, and 162 people engaged in agriculture. The gram panchayat office is in temporary condition and rented house. Total 13 seat is in the gram panchayat. The basic facilities available in the gram panchayat are five villages connected to the all-weather road, five

villages have an internal pucca road, and all village has public transport. To provide the educational development in the gram panchayat, the five primary schools, three middle schools and no high school and five Aanganwadi Centres. It has a community service centre and a public distribution system. Other facilities are one village with piped tap water, one fertiliser shop, and three villages with drainage facilities in the gram panchayat.

3.11.2 Taliudar Gram Panchayat(SC Female Sarpanch)

Taliudar gram panchayat's total population is 8162, including 2237 males and 1742 females. The total household is 794. The SCs Population is 1310, and the STs population is 788 of this gram panchayat. It is located 20km away from Balangir town. There is currently 13 seat for the ward members, and the women SC sarpanch is running the gram panchayat. Uparudar, Taliudar, Boromunda, Bagdia, and Chhatabahal are the village of the Taliudar gram panchayat. The sex ratio of the gram panchayat is 979. The service available in the gram panchayat is auto service for transportation, Anganwadi centre in each village, primary education, secondary education, and high school. Primary sub-health centre at Uparudar village. Adult Education Centre is available in Upparudar village. The majority of the household is engaged in agriculture. Further, people are doing manual casual labour. Moreover, there is a Pisciculture - Inland Fishery/Coastal Fishery at the Baromunda Village operated by the gram panchayat. Two villages have connected to the all-weather road; four villages have an internal pucca road, and all villages have public transport in the gram panchayat. One Public Distribution System(PDS) has been attached to the Gram Panchayat office. Three villages have connected the piped tap water; five primary schools, three middle schools, two high schools, and five Aanganwadi Centres give service in the gram panchayat.

3.11.3 Banipali Gram Panchayat(ST Male Sarpanch)

The total population of the gram panchayat is 3644, including 1863 males and 1781 females. The total number of households of the gram panchayat is 711. The sex ratio is 987. The principal occupation of people of the gram panchayat is agriculture and labour in agriculture and causal manual. Regarding the whole village, Banipali gram panchayat consists of three villages; Banipali, Babja, and Biaripali. Presently, ten ward members seat is there, and ST male sarpanch runs the gram panchayat. The service and infrastructure available in the gram panchayat are: auto, bus and van service is available; there is no permanent gram panchayat office; there are six primary schools, one middle school, and

one high school in the gram panchayat: there is one open kutch drainage. This gram panchayat was formed in 2017. The Anganwadi Centre is running in each village of the gram panchayat. All households of the gram panchayat electrified. For drinking water facilities, all families of the gram panchayat provided the supply drinking water facilities. There is one government seed centre for the farmer.

3.11.4 Kusmel Gram Panchayat(Unreserved Female Sarpanch)

Kusmel gram panchayat consists of eight villages: Kusmel, Lankabahal, Katapali, Brahamanipali, Jamutia, Khaliapali, and Fatabahal. There are currently 14 seats for Ward members, and a general women sarpanch is administering the gram panchayat. The total population of the gram panchayat is 7832, consisting of males 3820 and 3590. The total household of the gram panchayat is 1989. Among the social group, the gram panchayat comprises the SC population is 1508, and the ST population is 1192. Furthermore, 2792 people are illiterate in the gram panchayat. The gram panchayat's principal occupation is agriculture. It has a well-constructed gram panchayat office at the Kusmel village. Only Gram panchayat headquarters viz., Kusmel village has supplied piped drinking water facilities. However, all villages of the gram panchayat have installed the streetlight. The gram panchayat has eight villages connected to the all-weather road, six villages have internal pucca roads, and one village has public transport services. There is two common Service Centre in the gram panchayat. The public Distribution System is running, and two weekly markets are held in the gram panchayat. One post office, eight primary schools, three middle and one high school are in the gram panchayat. There is two veterinary clinic hospital at the Gram Panchayat headquarter. Regarding health service, there is a Primary Healthcare Centre(PHC) centre at Kusmel village.

3.11.5 Kandajuri Gram Panchayat(OBC Female Sarpanch)

Fatmunda, Tentulikhunti, Khairpali, and Kandajuri are the villages in Kandajuri gram panchayat. There are 11 numbers of ward member seats, and the OBC women sarpanch is seated in the gram panchayat. The total population is 3483, containing 1779 males, and 1704 is female; the total household is 878. Among the social group, the SC population is 432, and the ST population is 402. The sex ratio of the gram panchayat is 986. The primary occupation of the people in the gram panchayat is agriculture. In the gram panchayat, two villages are connected to the all-weather road, four villages have internal pucca roads, and four villages have public transport facilities. Banking service available in the village 5 km away. There is a permanent gram panchayat office. At the gram panchayat office, an internet broadband connection was there. Four villages have a centre

of PDS in the gram panchayat. Three weekly markets are held in three villages, and a 100 percent supply pipe water facility is connected in four-gram panchayat villages. Four Anganwadi centres run in four Gram panchayat villages. There is a community waste disposal system in the gram panchayat. There are four primary schools, one middle school, one high school, and Higher/Senior Secondary School functioning in the gram panchayat. All four village has a drainage facility.

3.11.6 Rengali Gram Panchayat (UR Male Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat consists of seven villages: Rengali, Kalilbhal, Podhmunda, Kumiapali, Bagdunguri, Budabahal, and Antapali. Presently, the gram panchayat has 12 seats for Ward Members and is headed by a general male sarpanch. The sex ratio of the gram panchayat is 1023, and the total household is 1400. The total population is 5645; and the SC population is 514; the ST population is 1279; the total male population is 2710, and the total female population is 2771 in the gram panchayat. 910 people are doing manual causal labour, and 335 people have their own land for cultivation. Two villages have connected to the all-weather road in the gram panchayat, and four villages have internal pucca roads. The service facilities available in the gram panchayat are one community service centre, Public Distribution Service centres at three villages, seven primary schools, two middle schools and one high school, one community biogas or recycle of waste for production, seven Anganwadi centres, no piped water facilities in the village. 30 percent of the village connects the all-weather road. One weekly haat (Market) was held in the gram panchayat. Permanent gram panchayat office locates at Rengali village.

3.11.7 G.S Dunguripali gram panchayat(OBC Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat consists of five villages: Ranipali, Banchorpali, Dunguripali, Gerdi, and Bijapati. Currently, the gram panchayat is headed by the OBC women sarpanch. It has 12 seats of ward members. The total population is 3874, including 522 SC and 645 ST population. Out of them, 2003 were male, and 1871 were female population. The sex ratio of the GP is 974. Agriculture and daily wage labour is the main occupation in the gram panchayat. Besides, it has covered the Anganwadi centre for each village of the Gram Panchayat. Regarding basic facilities available in the GP, it has seven primary schools, four middle schools and 1 high school. It has drainage facilities in all villages and runs one veterinary hospital in the gram panchayat. Other basic facilities were the

public distribution system, and it has one weekly haat(market). The piped water connection had been completed to each village of the Gram Panchayat.

3.11. 8 Badibahal Gram Panchayat(ST Women Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat includes 5 villages namely Kadalipali, Bhaliamunda, Bhalupali, Badibahal and Agalapali. It is located 30km away from district headquarter Balangir and 30km away from sub-district headquarter Loisinga. The GP has a 5835 total population, including 2937 are males and 2898 are females. Regarding the social groups, the SC population are 1568 and the ST population 920. Manual casual labour is the primary source of livelihood, and after that, people depend on agriculture as their source of income and subsistence in the gram panchayats. The service facilities available in the gram panchayat are one community service centre, a Public Distribution Service centre at the GP office, five primary schools, five middle schools and one high school, five Anganwadi centres, one village has piped water facilities in the GP. In addition to that, it has drainage facilities in 4 villages, one weekly haat (Market) held in the gram panchayat. It has the whether the village has an internal pucca road.

In Balangir Block, the researcher has taken nine gram panchayats for the study areas. The following gram panchayat is described in brief.

3.11.9 Bhundimuhan Gram Panchayat (SC Women Sarpanch)

Bhundimuhan village is located in Balangir Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha. It is placed 25km away from Balangir, both district & sub-district headquarter of Bhundimuhan village. Bhundimuhan gram panchayat consists of villages such as Kankara, Kakhal, Bhundimuhan, Karlapita and Sargadpali. At present, the SC woman sarpanch leads the gram panchayat, and it has 11 seats of ward members. The total number of households is 788, and the sex ratio is 907. The total population is 2929, containing the male and female is 1536 and 1393, respectively. Moreover, among the social group, the SC population is 585, and the ST population is 1001. Agriculture is the primary occupation in the gram panchayat. Considering the gram panchayat's livelihood, 534 households rely on the labour work for the livelihood, and 140 households depend on cultivation. The gram panchayat has five villages connected to the all-weather road. Five villages have an internal pucca road near the public transport service at Chudapali, 5 km away from the Gram Panchayat office. There are four primary schools, two middle schools and no high school; six Aanganwadi Centres run in the gram panchayat.

Furthermore, one weekly market, one post office, one common service centre, one village has the piped tap water in the gram panchayat. There is a sub-health centre in the gram panchayat.

3.11.10 Kudasinga Gram Panchayat (SC Male Sarpanch)

Kudasingha gram panchayat office is located in Balangir Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha. It is situated 30km away from block headquarter, and district headquarter, Balangir. Kudasinga gram panchayat constitutes villages of Nuapada, Siris, and Kudasingha. Presently, an SC male sarpanch leads the gram panchayat, and it has 11 seats of ward members. The total number of households is 943, and the sex ratio is 865 in the gram panchayat. The total population is 3086: the male and female population is 1655 and 1431, respectively; the SC and ST population is 638 and 279, respectively. The gram panchayat has three villages connected to the all-weather road; three villages have an internal pucca road. Three primary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and three Aanganwadi Centre render the educational service in the gram panchayat. Moreover, two villages have piped tap water and one weekly market, one veterinary hospital, one vocational educational centre/DDU-GKY, one government seed centre, and three community waste disposal systems in the gram panchayat. Furthermore, three villages have drainage facilities in the gram panchayat. For health concerns, there is a primary health care centre in the gram panchayat.

3.11.11 Bidighat Gram Panchayat (ST Male Sarpanch)

Bidighat gram panchayat is situated in the Balangir district of Balangir Tehsil in Odisha. It is placed 20 km away from Balangir, which is both district & sub-district headquarter of Bidighat village. The gram panchayat comprises four villages, namely Janakpur, Bidighat, Kot, and Chantimunda. At this time, the ST male sarpanch oversees the gram panchayat, and it has 11 sets of ward members. The total population is 2064, including males and females, 1115 and 949, respectively; the SC and ST populations are 209 and 643. The total households are 671, and the sex ratio is 851 in the gram panchayat. The gram panchayat has basic facilities such as four villages are connected to All-weather roads, four villages have internal pucca roads, and three villages have Public Transport service. Public Distribution System(PDS) covers all villages, one weekly market, four Primary School, two middle schools and one high school, one Veterinary Hospital, and four Aanganwadi Centre works in the gram panchayat. Moreover, two villages have drainage facilities and piped tap water in the gram panchayat.

3.11.12 Sakma gram panchayat (ST Male Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat consists of four villages: Sakma, Fasad, Ranipali and Kurtulapali. It has 12 seats of ward members, and ST male sarpanch heads the gram panchayat. It is located 17km away from district headquarter Balangir. The sex ratio is 944. The panchayat has a total population of 5210 in which are SCs 1555 followed by STs 72. The primary occupation of the people is agriculture and casual labour. Out of the total, males are 2682, and females are 2528. It has well connected public transport service public distribution system; all ward of the gram panchayat has connected the supply piped water to the households. The Gram Panchayat has drainage facilities and runs four Anganwadi centres. Moreover, 4 primary schools, 3 middle schools and 1 high school provide education, and 1 veterinary hospital provides service for the domestic animal.

3.11.13 Mirdhapali Gram Panchayat (OBC Women Sarpanch)

Mirdhapali gram panchayat office is located in Balangir Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha. It is situated 10 km away from Balangir, both district and block headquarter of Mirdhapali village. The gram panchayat consists of six villages; Baxiudar, Barkani, Mirdhapali, Kagaon, Dhubaudar, and Tulandi. Further, it has 11 seats of ward members, and an OBC woman sarpanch heads the gram panchayat. The total population is 4984, comprising the male and female population is 2593 and 2391, respectively, and the sex is 922 in the gram panchayat. Concerning the social group, the SC population are 1036, and the ST population are 452 in this gram panchayat. Agriculture is the primary occupation in the gram panchayat. The family income in the gram panchayat is that 335 families are undertaking agricultural work, and 751 households work as manual casual labour. Six villages have connected to the all-weather road, six villages have an internal pucca road, and all villages have public transport in the gram panchayat. One Public Distribution System(PDS) has been attached to the GP office. All towns have connected the piped tap water; six primary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and 6 Aanganwadi Centres give service in the gram panchayat.

3.11.14 Madhiapali Gram Panchayat (OBC Male Sarpanch)

Madhiapali gram panchayat office is situated in Balangir Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha. It is located 4km away from Balangir, both district and sub-district headquarter of Madhiapali village. The total geographical area of the village is 249 hectares. The gram panchayat constitutes the village of Khairpali, Rinbachan, Madhiapali, Birmunda, and Dumerpal. This gram panchayat has 11 seats of ward members, and presently, an OBC

male sarpanch manages the gram panchayat. The total households are 1056, and the sex ratio is 947 in the gram panchayat. In the gram panchayat, the total population is 4168, including males, is 2141, and the female is 2027. Moreover, the SC and ST population is 1652 and 418, respectively. The primary occupation of the people is cultivation and manual labour. The basic facilities available in the gram panchayat are five villages connected to the all-weather road, five villages have an internal pucca road, and all village has public transport. To provide the educational development in the gram panchayat, the five primary schools, two middle schools, one high school, five Aanganwadi Centres, and three Vocational Educational Centre—DDU-GKY runs the gram panchayat. Other facilities are two villages with piped tap water, one fertiliser shop, and three villages with drainage facilities in the gram panchayat.

3.11.15 Sibtala Gram Panchayat(Unreserved Male Sarpanch)

Sibtala gram panchayat office is located in Tushura Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha, India. It is situated 27km away from Balangir, both district and block headquarter of Sibtala village. Sibtala gram panchayat consists of four villages: Kundpani, Sibtala, Adendungri, and Naikenpali. The total number of households is 1474, and the sex ratio is 949 in the gram panchayat. The total population is 5265, containing the male and female is 2702 and 2563, respectively. The SC and ST population is 913 and 1401, respectively, in the gram panchayat. The primary source of household income in the gram panchayat shows that 261 households engaged in cultivation work, and 917 families depend on manual casual labour for their livelihood. This gram panchayat may say well-developed educationally; there are four primary schools, three middle schools and three high schools, three Higher/Senior Secondary Schools and four Aanganwadi Centre to provide the education facilities. Concerning transport and communication, the gram panchayat has four villages connected to the all-weather road, an internal pucca road, and public transport services. There are four weekly markets, drainage facilities for all villages. Moreover, the gram has one vocational educational centre that is Dean Dayal Upadhyaya-Grameen Kousal Yojana, one Community waste disposal system, and two Community biogas or recycled waste for production use in the gram panchayat. In order to provide health care, the gram panchayat has one community health centre and two primary health centres.

3.11.16 Jharkarpali Gram Panchayat(Unreserved Female Sarpanch)

Gram panchayat comprises 6 villages: Dudukasira, Haripali, Sialbahali, Gedabanji, Chareimara, Jhankarpali village, located within a distance of 8 km from district headquarter Balangir. Currently, the GP is headed by the Unreserved female sarpanch and has 12 seats of ward members. The total population is 4421, including males are 2174, and females are 2246, 922 are SCs and 1422 are STs. The sex ratio is 1033. The primary occupation of the people is agriculture and casual labour. The tap pipe water has connected all villages of the Gram Panchayat. The public distribution system runs in the Jharkarpali. It has 6 primary schools, 4 middle schools, 1 high school, and 6 Anganwadi centres runs in the Gram Panchayat regarding education facilities. Finally, it has a veterinary hospital in the Gram Panchayat. Besides, one weekly market, one post office, one common service centre, one village has piped tap water in the gram panchayat

3.11.17 Barapudgia Gram Panchayat (OBC Female Sarpanch)

Barapudgia gram panchayat office is located in Balangir Tehsil of Balangir district in Odisha. It is located 18 km away from Balangir, both district & block headquarter of Barapudgia village. Barapudgia gram panchayat consists of six villages; Barpita, Kermeli, Karlapita, Kutensilat, Barapudgia, and Saraspita. At present, the OBC woman sarpanch leads the gram panchayat (won in the unreserved category), and it has 13 seats of ward members. The total number of households is 1301, and the sex ratio is 957. For the gram panchayat's demographic profile, the total population is 5391, comprising the male and female 2755 and 2636, respectively; among the social group, there are 1049 of SC population and 1680 of ST population in the gram panchayat. Agriculture is a primary occupation in the gram panchayat. The primary facility available in the gram panchayat are six villages connected to the all-weather road; Six villages have an internal pucca road, and all villages have public transport facilities. There are six common service centres; three villages have the Public Distribution System(PDS); the other three came to the Gram Panchayat office for PDS. Moreover, the gram panchayat has one weekly market held, and all villages have connected the piped tap water. It has 6 primary schools, 4 middle schools, 2 high schools, and six Aanganwadi Centres in the gram panchayat. Other facilities are one Veterinary Hospital, one DDU-GKY, one Soil Testing centre, one Govt. Seed centre and two community waste disposal systems provide service in the gram panchayat.

In Gudvella Block, the researcher has taken six-gram panchayats for the study areas. The following gram panchayat is described in brief.

3.11.18 Jamut Gram Panchayat(SC Women Sarpanch)

Jamut panchayat office is located 30km towards South from District head quarters Balangir. Jamut gram panchayat contains five villages, namely Jamut, Tikamal, Tikripada, Rahenmal, and Sandangar. The gram panchayat has 11 seats of ward members, and SC women sarpanch lead the gram panchayat. Considering the demographic profile of the Gram Panchayat, the total household is 743; the total population is 2675, including male and female population, is 1356 and 1319, respectively. For the social category, SC and ST population is 635 and 738, respectively. The sex ratio of the GP is 973. People's occupation of the gram panchayat is agriculture. The essential services available in the gram panchayat are: well-constructed gram panchayat office; all village of the Gram Panchayat connects the supply pipe water facilities; one community service centre was there; and three primary schools, two middle schools, and one high school run in the gram panchayat. One veterinary hospital is there, and a drainage system connects five villages of the Gram Panchayat. Further services are: five Anganwadi centres are running in five villages; one PDS system operates at headquarter of the Jamut village.

3.11.19 Madhekala Gram Panchayat (SC Women Sarpanch)

Madhekala is a gram panchayat in Gudvella Tehsil in Balangir District. It is situated 33 km towards South from District head quarters Balangir and 2 KM from Gudvella. Madhekala gram panchayat consists of six villages; Madhekala, Bhuanpada, Lukapara, Kotgaon, Sirabahal, and Atgaon. This gram panchayat has 12 seats of ward members and is currently headed by the SC women sarpanch. The total household and population are 1091 and 3989, respectively. The male and female population is 2028 and 1961, respectively. Similarly, SC and ST population is 1110 and 551, respectively, in the gram panchayat. The sex ratio is 967 in the Gram Panchayat. Agriculture is the primary occupation in the gram panchayat. The essential services available in the gram panchayat are: PDS system provides all six villages; piped tap water connects to six villages; five primary schools, three middle schools, and one high school are running in the gram panchayat. Moreover, six Anganwadi centres and one weekly market operates in the gram panchayat.

3.11.20 Ghuna Gram Panchayat (ST Women Sarpanch)

The Ghuna Gram Panchayat office is located 52 km from the Tushura sub-district headquarters and 52 km from the Balangir district headquarters. It has ten villages; Rajkel, Ghuna, Ranimal, Naimursingh, Tirchabahal, Tarsuguda, Bakbahal, Gudungamal, Sindurmunda, Kumbharpadar. This gram panchayat has 11 seats of ward members, and the ST women sarpanch manages the gram panchayat. The total household and population of the gram panchayat are 1233 and 4593, respectively. Further, the male and female population is 2310 and 2283, respectively. Moreover, the SC and ST population is 966 and 2525, respectively. The sex ratio is 988. The primary occupation of the gram panchayat is agriculture. All Gram Panchayat villages have all-weather road, and pucca road and other essential services are; Bus facility is also there; four community service centres run in the Gram Panchayat; one weekly market runs for business; each village has connected piped tap water because the Rahul river is running alongside the village. There are 11 primary schools, six middle schools, and one high school function in the gram panchayat regarding the education system. There is 11 fertiliser shop, and 12 Anganwadi centres operate in 10 villages of the gram panchayat. The systematic drainage facility has completed ten villages of the gram panchayat

3.11.21 Gambhariguda Gram Panchayat (ST Women Sarpanch)

The Gram Panchayat office is located 25 km from the Tushura sub-district headquarters and 45 km from the Balangir district headquarters. The gram panchayat consists of 8 villages: Kanersingha, Lattara, Belgaon, Gambhariguda, Dhanpur, Sikelpadar, Gabharasha and Raxibhata. The ST women sarpanch heads the Gram Panchayat, and it has 11 seats of ward members. The sex ratio is 1010. The total population is 2315, including 304 SC and 1707 ST populations. Out of them, 1152 are males, and 1163 are females population. People of the Gram Panchayat depend on agriculture as their livelihood. It has 7 primary schools, 2 middle schools, and 8 Anganwadi centres. Only one village has connected with supply piped drinking water and no drainage facilities in the GP. One weekly market runs in the GP. All villages of the Gram Panchayat has pucca road. The Gram Panchayat has no govt. Seeds centres and no community waste disposal system.

3.11.22 Tentulikhunti Gram Panchayat (OBC Women Sarpanch)

In Tentulikhunti Gram Panchayat, there are 12 seats for Ward Members, and the OBC women sarpanch leads the gram panchayat. This gram panchayat consists of 8 villages: Tentulikhunti, Dungurilapali, Jambhel, Dahimal, Pendimunda, Sirjapali, Kundupadar,

and Bhoigura. The total population of the Gram Panchayat is 5385, comprising male and female population is 2731 and 2654, respectively; the total household is 1346. The sex ratio is 962. Other demographic indicators are: the SC population is 1098, and the ST population is 1386 in the gram panchayat. This gram panchayat is near the Tel River. So, a good irrigation facility is there. Their main occupation is agriculture. The basic services available in Tenthulikunti are the following: all village connects the weather roads and bus facility; PDS service cover eight villages; one weekly haat(market) held in 8 villages; eight primary schools, four middle schools, and two high schools are functioning in the GP. All gram panchayat villages were provided with piped water supply to each household, and eight Anganwadi centres are running in the gram panchayat.

3.11.23 Chinched Gram Panchayat (Unreserved Male Sarpanch)

Chinched gram panchayat comprises Madhaipali, Chinched, Lakharpadar, Budhakhaman, and Turla. Chinched Gram Panchayat office is situated in the Balangir district of Tushura Tehsil in Odisha. An OBC male sarpanch presently heads the gram panchayat; it has 11 ward members seats. It is located 40km from Tushura sub-district headquarters and 40km from Balangir district headquarters. The total population is 2945, including the male and female populations, 1523 and 1422, respectively. For the social group, the SC and ST population is 695 and 526, respectively. The sex ratio of the gram panchayat is 932. 268 people engage in agricultural work, and 467 people earn their livelihood by manual casual labour. All villages of the GP has been connected with all-weather roads and internal pucca roads. PDS system is running in the gram panchayat. Only headquarters Chinched village has connected the piped tap water to the households. There are five primary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and six Anganwadi centres in the gram panchayat.

In Muribahal Block, the researcher has covered the eight-gram panchayat for the study areas. The following gram panchayat is described in brief.

3.11.24 Bandupala Gram Panchayat (SC Female Sarpanch)

Bandupala is a gram panchayat office in Muribahal Tehsil, in the Odisha of the district of Balangir. It is situated 70 km west of Balangir's district headquarters. Bandupala gram panchayat consists of six villages, namely Jamunabahal, Satighat, Kachharbhadri Bandupala, Nuamunda and Sandhibahal. This gram panchayat has 11 seats of ward members, and currently, SC women govern the gram panchayat. The total number of

households of the gram panchayat is 1078, and the sex ratio is 973. The total population is 4151 and comprises the male and female populations of 2104 and 2047, respectively. Regarding the social group, SC and ST population is 848 and 1889, respectively. About the primary income source, 301 households engaged in cultivation and 696 families work as manual casual labour in the gram panchayat. The basic facilities available in the village are: two villages connected to the all-weather road, and two villages has internal pucca roads and six Public Distribution System(PDS) in the villages. Five primary high schools and two middle schools, five Anganwadi centres deliver the gram panchayat service regarding the education system. Moreover, six village markets and only one village have connected the piped tap water in the gram panchayat.

3.11.25 Patrapali Kha gram panchayat (SC Male Sarpanch)

Patrapali Kha gram panchayat's office is in Muribahal Tehsil, in the Odisha district of Balangir. It is situated 76 km west of Balangir's district headquarters. From Muribahal, it is 6 KM away. The gram panchayat consists of three villages such as Kherat, Limpada, Jugirata and Patrapali Kha. Currently, the gram panchayat is headed by the SC male, and it has 12 ward members. The total population is 936, and the sex ratio is 987. The total population is 3374, including male and female population, is 1698 and 1676, respectively. For the social group, the SC and ST population is 955 and 488, respectively. Agriculture is the primary occupation in the gram panchayat. The primary facility available in the gram panchayat is: four villages have public transport; the three Common Service Centre; three Public Distribution System(PDS) in three villages; all villages of the gram panchayat has piped tap water. For educational facilities, it has three primary high schools, three vocational educational centres that are DDU-GKY and five Anganwadi centres, giving service to people in the gram panchayat.

3.11.26 Gadagadabahal Gram Panchayat(ST Male Sarpanch)

Gadagadabahal village is gram panchayat office in Muribahal Tehsil in Balangir District of Odisha State. It is located 72 KM towards the west of District head quarters Balangir. It is 3 KM from Muribahal. The sex ratio is 988. The gram panchayat's total population is 4652, including males and females, 2340 and 2312, respectively. Moreover, it has 1024 and 629 SC and ST populations, respectively. Daily wage labour and agriculture is the primary occupation of the Gram Panchayat. This gram panchayat consists of the villages; Katadungri, Tentulikhunti, Dumermunda, Gargarbhal, Kandakhal, and Hadahada. For the time being, the gram panchayat is headed by ST male sarpanch, and it has 11 seats of ward members. This gram panchayat has no permanent gram panchayat office. The

essential services available in the gram panchayat are; six Common Service Centres, no piped tap water, two primary schools, and five Anganwadi centres run in the gram panchayat. The gram panchayat facilitated that one village has a drainage facility and two villages have public transport. It has no village connected to the all-weather road, and no village has internal pucca roads. The public Distribution System(PDS) is attached to the Gram Panchayat office. In this gram panchayat, a communication problem exists, and during the rainy time, it is not easy to enter the gram panchayat.

3.11.27 Ichhapada Gram Panchayat (ST Female Sarpanch)

Ichhapada gram panchayat office is in Muribahal Tehsil in Balangir District of Odisha State. It is located 70 KM towards the west from District headquarters Balangir. This gram panchayat has 11 villages, namely Katarlaga, Jharkhamar, Bahyaudar, Antarla, Baghuabahal, Ichhapara, Sargipali, Sargul, Saibandha, Bhandarbanji and Rengali. The gram panchayat has 11 seats of ward members, and currently, ST woman sarpanch runs the gram panchayat. Moreover, the total number of households is 1833, and the sex ratio is 1017. The total population is 7334, including the male population, 3636, and the female population is 3698. As far as a social group is concerned, the SC and ST population is 1544 and 3572, respectively, in the gram panchayat. Regarding households' income, 1506 households depend on manual causal labour and 196 families engage in cultivation work. The basic facilities available in the gram panchayat are all villages connected to all-weather roads, four villages have internal pucca roads. 11 Public Distribution System(PDS), 11 primary schools and one high school, and 11 Anganwadi centres run in the gram panchayat. Four villages have drainage facilities in the gram panchayat. Three weekly markets are held in the Ichhapara.

3.11.28 Malisira Gram Panchayat (OBC Male Sarpanch)

Malisira gram panchayat office is in Muribahal Tehsil in Odisha State's Balangir District. It is situated 65 km south of the Balangir district headquarters. From Muribahal 9 KM. Malisira gram panchayat consists of eight villages: Dangabanji, Desil, Malisira, Chiknibahali, Khairmal, Kharali, Dengapadar, and Bhutisada. It has 12 seats of ward members, and presently OBC male sarpanch runs the gram panchayat. The total number of households is 1944, and the sex ratio is 1015. The total population is 7140, comprises 3544 males and 3596 females, among the social group, the SC and ST population is 2399 and 3544. The gram panchayat has six villages with an internal pucca road; the three villages have piped tap water, and two villages have drainage facilities. In six villages, Public Distribution System(PDS) runs in the gram panchayat. For educational facilities,

eight primary high schools and two middle schools, one high school, one Vocational Educational Centre /DDU-GKY, and eight Anganwadi centres provide educational services in the gram panchayat.

3.11.29 Muribahal Gram Panchayat (OBC Female Sarpanch)

Muribahal is a tehsil in the Odisha State District of Balangir. Muribahal Tehsil Head Quarters is a town in Muribahal, and it is also a gram panchayat office. It is situated 72 KM west of Balangir District Headquarters. Muribahal Gram panchayat comprises eight villages; Salepara, Paganian, Ghantabahali, Gambharikhola, Dumerpara, Muribahal, Barajura and Banbaha. Presently, the gram panchayat is headed by the OBC women sarpanch, and it has 12 seats of ward members. The sex ratio is 939 in the gram panchayat. The total population of 7631, including the male and female population, is 3936 and 3695. The SC and ST population is 1632 and 1359, respectively. The gram panchayat has seven villages connected to the all-weather road, six villages have an internal pucca road, and eight villages have Public Transport. Public Distribution System(PDS) provides foodgrain in six villages. The piped tap water connected to the village of the GP office. There is one daily market, 2 Veterinary hospitals/Clinics, two Soil Testing centres, two Govt. Seed centre, eight Anganwadi Centre, eight primary schools, one middle school and one high school, and two national banks and post office render service to people of the gram panchayat.

3.11.30 Badsaimara Gram Panchayat (Unreserved Male Sarpanch)

Badsaimara gram panchayat office is in Muribahal Tehsil in Balangir District of Odisha State; it is situated 57 KM towards the west of Balangir District headquarters. It is 17 KM away from Muribahal. This gram panchayat consists of 11 villages; Dhumamal, Kharjuri, Tengara, Badsaimara, Chanutmal, Jharbahali, Amjharan, Andaldarah, Dhatukjuri, Khaliapali, and Patrapa. The gram panchayat runs by the general male sarpanch, and it has 11 seats of ward members. The total households of the Gram Panchayat are 2566: the total population is 10044, and the male and female population is 5098 and 4946, respectively. The sex ratio of the gram panchayat is 970. On the social group aspect, the SC population is 2256, and the ST population is 3050. The agriculture and manual casual labour is the household's primary income, where 582 households engaged in agricultural work, and 1915 families are involved in manual casual labour. The basic facilities are all villages connected to the all-weather road, one regional bank, six villages with public transport, eleven primary schools, two middle schools, one high

school and 11 Anganwadi centres runs in the gram panchayat. No supply piped tap drinking water facility is there.

3.11.31 Goimund Gram Panchayat (Unreserved Female Sarpanch)

Goimund GP is situated in Muribahal Tehsil in the Balangir District of Odisha. It is located 70 KM towards the west of District head quarters Balangir. The gram panchayat comprises 7 villages: Bhormunda, Jhinkidungri, Goimunda, Bhoipara, Budhipadar, Gurunda and Chitramunda. The Unreserved women sarpanch heads it, and it has 12 ward members. The sex ratio is 979. In this Gram Panchayat, the total population is 5993, which includes 3028 are males and 2965 females. Considering the social group, 814 are SCs, and 1168 are STs population. For livelihood purpose, casual labour and agriculture is the primary source for their subsistence. All Villages of Goimund GP have not been connected to the piped drinking water supply to the household. It has 6 Anganwadi centres for children. It has 6 primary schools, 3 middle schools and 1 high school run in the GP. Moreover, this GP has Public distribution system, no weekly market, and each village has a pucca road. There was no health centre or any government seeds centre.

In Bangomunda Block, the researcher has covered the eight-gram panchayats for the study areas. The following gram panchayat is described in brief.

3.11.32 Tureikela Gram Panchayat(SC Male Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat consists of five villages: Tetelpara, Sangamada, Kuturabeda, and Turekela. It is located 100 km from the district headquarter of Balangir and 30 km from the Block office Bangomunda. It has an SC male sarpanch and 12 ward members. The sex ratio is 944 in this GP. This GP has a total population of 3529, of which 1784 are males, and 1729 are females. Regarding the social group, 975 are SCs and 169 are STs population. People of Tureikela depends on agriculture and daily wages labour. The essential services available are the pucca road to each village, 1 weekly market, 4 primary schools, 2 middle schools and no high school, 4 Anganwadi centres. It has public distribution service at the Gram Panchayat office. It has no tapped water and drainage facilities.

3.11.33 Jam Khunta Gram Panchayat(SC Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat comprises of 6 villages namely Jamakhunta, kalkut, Sriram, Jampadar, Turekela and Ganre. It has SC female sarpanch and 13 ward members. Jamkhunta Gram Panchayat has located 99 KM towards the west from District head

quarters Balangir and 13 KM away from Bangomunda. Its sex ratio is 960 and has a total population of 5132; out of them, 1002 are SCs and 1092 are STs. Regarding the gender population, 2618 are males, and 2514 are females. Most of the people of the GP depend on daily wage labour and agriculture. The significant services available in the GP are 1 public distribution service, the pucca road to each village, 3 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market, 6 primary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school, 1 DDU-GKY centre, 1 govt seeds centre and 6 Anganwadi centres.

3.11.34 Bhursaguda Gram Panchayat (ST Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat has 2 villages: Ganjabahal and Bhalumunda. It is headed by ST female sarpanch and 10 seats of the ward members. The GP is located 86 KM towards the west from District headquarters Balangir. It is 15km away from the block headquarter, Bangomunda. It has a total population of 3718 people, including 1845 males and 1873 females. Regarding groups, it has 253 SCs and 174 STs. The sex ratio is 1015 in Bhursaguda. Most of the people of the Gram Panchayat depends on the daily wage labour and agriculture. The significant services available in the Gram Panchayat are 1 public distribution service, the pucca road to each village, all villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market, 3 primary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school, 1 DDU-GKY centre, 1 govt seeds centre and 3 Anganwadi centres. It has drainage facilities in the Bhursaguda.

3.11.35 Bhalumunda Gram Panchayat (OBC Male Sarpanch)

The Gram Panchayat has 2 villages: Ganjabahal and Bhalumunda. It is headed by the OBC male sarpanch and has 10 seats of the ward members. Bhalumunda has located 90 km towards the west from District headquarters Balangir and 9km away from block headquarter, Bangomunda. It has a total population of 3718 people comprising 1845 are males and 1873 are females. Moreover, it has 253 SCs, 174 STs population, and the sex ratio is 1015. People of the GP depends on manual causal labour and agriculture. The gram panchayat has all connected to the all-weather road, and six villages have an internal pucca road. It has Public Distribution System(PDS) that provides foodgrain in two villages. The piped tap water is connected to the village of the GP office and has a Common Service Centre(CSC). There is one daily market, 2 Veterinary hospitals/Clinics, Seed centre, eight Aanganwadi Centre, 2 primary schools, 2 middle schools, one high school, and 2 Anganwadi centres run in the Gram Panchayat.

3.11.36 Mundpadar Gram Panchayat (OBC Male Sarpanch)

The GP is located 86 KM towards the west from District head quarters Balangir and 9km away from Bangomunda. It consists of 7 villages: Mundapadar, Gobindpur, Titisilet, Beherabahal, Kandhabahal, Godramunda and Sagunbhad. Currently, the OBC male sarpanch runs Mundpadar, and it has 12 seats of ward members. The total population is 4855, including 2473 are males and 2382 are females. Moreover, it has 1721 SCs and 1105 STs population. The sex ratio of the panchayat is 963. The basic services available here are 1 public distribution service, the pucca road to each village, 2 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market, 7 primary schools, 1 middle school, no high school and 7 Anganwadi centres. All villages of the GP have the internal pucca road. No drainage facilities are available in the GP.

3.11.37 Jharial Gram Panchayat (OBC Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat has 6 villages: Jharial, Beheravata, Ranipur, Budhipadar, Bahabal, and Pudapali. The GP office is located 82km towards the west from District headquarters Balangir and 8km away from the block headquarter, Bangomunda. Presently, the OBC female sarpanch runs the GP, and it has 12 seats of ward members. It has a total population of 4504 people comprising 2271 are males and 2233 are females. Moreover, it has 1089 SCs and 1001 STs population. People of the GP depends on manual casual labour and agriculture. The essential services available in the GP are 1 public distribution service, 2 community service centres, the pucca road to each village, 3 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market, 6 primary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high school and 6 Anganwadi centres. All villages of the Gram Panchayat have internal pucca roads. It has drainage facilities available in 5 villages of the Gram Panchayat and a government seed centre.

3.11.38 Arsatula Gram Panchayat (Unreserved Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat has 4 villages: Arsatula, Kurdiamunda, Deheli, and Balbeng. Arsatula has located 87km towards the south of district headquarters Balangir and 14km away from Bangomunda block headquarters. Presently, the Un Reserved female sarpanch runs the Gram Panchayat, and it has 12 seats of ward members. But, the sarpanch is OBC women have been elected in Unreserved women category. It has a total population of 4564 people comprising 2354 are males and 2210 are females. Moreover, it has 864 SCs and 1039 STs population. The sex ratio of the GP is 939. People of the GP depends on manual casual labour and agriculture. The essential services available in the GP are 1 public distribution service, 1 community service centre, the pucca road to each village,

3 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market, 4 primary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school and 4 Anganwadi centres. All villages of the Gram Panchayat have internal pucca roads. It has drainage facilities available in 4 villages of the Gram Panchayat and a government seed centre.

3.11.39 Bhuslad Gram Panchayat (Unreserved Female Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat comprises 4 villages: Kirabahal, Paruabhadi, Bhushlad, Palasakhanda. It has 12 seats of ward members and is run by UR female sarpanch. Bhuslad GP office is located 70km towards the south from the district headquarters in Balangir and 29km from Bangomunda block headquarter. The total population of the GP is 3897. Out of them, 1949 are males, and 1948 are females. Moreover, 545 are SCs and 425 are STs population in the Gram Panchayat. The sex ratio of the Bhuslad gram panchayat is 999. Manual casual labour and agriculture is the primary source of income of the GP. The essential services available in the GP are 1 public distribution service, 3 community service centres, the pucca road to each village, 4 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 2 weekly markets. It has 4 primary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools and 4 Anganwadi centres. All villages of the Gram Panchayat have internal pucca roads. It has drainage facilities available in 2 villages of the GP and a government seed centre.

3.11.40 Sindhekela Gram Panchayat(ST Male Sarpanch)

The gram panchayat consists of seven villages; Salemudga, Telasarai, Sindhekela, Bhatasar, Lohrapali, Jadamunda and Putupara. It has 11 seats of ward members, and at the study time, the GP is run by the ST man sarpanch. This GP is located 68 KM towards South from District head quarters Balangir, and 32 KM from Bangomunda block headquarter. The total population of the GP is 8136. Out of them, 4214 are male, and 3922 are female. Besides, the SC population is 1772 and the ST population 1226. To sustain the livelihood of the GP, most the villagers depend on manual casual labour and then agriculture. The essential services available in the GP are 2 public distribution services, 2 community service centres, the pucca road to each village, 3 villages have connected tap piped drinking water, runs 1 weekly market. It has 7 primary schools, 4 middle schools, 2 high schools and 4 Anganwadi centres. Besides, it has an inter-college. All villages of the Gram Panchayat have internal pucca roads. It has drainage facilities available in 2 villages of the GP and 2 government seed centres, 1 soil testing centre and 1 Veterinary hospital.

PART – 3: Profiles of the Elected Representatives

3.12 Socio-Economic Background of the Elected Representative in the Gram Panchayats

The data relating to the socio-economic background of elected representatives of gram panchayat were collected in the present study to get insight into the emerging pattern of participation in the gram panchayat in Odisha in a changing environment. The information was collected by administering an interview schedule to 320 elected representatives of gram panchayat level(third level) in 40 gram panchayat encompassing five Blocks of the Balangir District in Odisha.

The respondents' socio-economic status helps to understand the basis of fact and nature of how people interact with society. Socio-economic profile also indicates the respondent's life in terms of living standard, income activities, and social-political activities. Respondent's profile such as age, sex, families details and educational qualification, income and occupation, land-holding pattern, and asset at their disposal helps understand their meaningful participation in local politics. The social category indicator such as SCs, STs, OBCs and Unreserved of the respondents: this categorised is prescribed by India's Government as their historical background and status of backwardness. Moreover, the respondents' religion, social category, and sub-caste composition are essential to understand the respondent's political participation variance.

3.12.1 Social Categories of the Elected Representatives

Table 3.4: Social category of the elected representatives and their designation in the gram panchayat

Designation	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Sarpanches	10(3.1)	10(3.1)	10(3.1)	10(3.1)	40(12.5)
Naib Sarpanches	8(2.5)	7(2.2)	7(2.2)	8(2.5)	30(9.4)
Ward Members	62(19.4)	63(19.7)	63(19.7)	62(19.4)	250(78.10)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 3.4 shows that most of the elected representatives became gram panchayat members through the reservation in the study areas, out of the 40 Gram Panchayats, 40 sarpanches, 30 naib sarpanches and 250 ward members covering the five blocks of the district. An equal number of the elected representatives (80) had participated from each social group during the interview.

3.12.2 Gender of the Elected Representatives

Table 3.5: The gender categories of the elected representatives

	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Male	33(10.3)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	34(10.6)	141(44.1)
Female	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	46(14.4)	46(14.4)	179(55.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- the field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Gender is the socially constructed role of men and women based on sex. Gender also impacts the socio-economic activity of the person. Sex and gender feature and dispenses various functions, roles, and responsibilities in an individual's personal and private life. The acknowledgement that women's lives are profoundly and systematically shaped by a host of social norms and standards means that governance must be interpreted in a broader way by a productive analysis of gender(Nussbaum and Martha et al., 2003). Women's participation in local politics and governance impacted their activity based on socio-economic status and community norms, which shaped women's movement in panchayat politics. Table 3.5 depicts that 44.1 percent of male representatives and 55.9 percent of women representatives participated in the interview process. In Odisha, 50 percent of reservations for women in the Panchayati Raj System were introduced. This study includes more than 50 percent of women elected representatives.

3.12.3 Age of the Elected Representatives

Age is a significant variable in the study of rural leadership(representatives) in Indian society. The rural representative has been a monopoly of older people who have traditionally dominated all socio-political life paths. Lewis Oscar gives no importance to age as a criterion for the selection of community leadership. Ram Reddy's findings show that rural leadership is old(Malik, 2002, p.40).

Table 1:6 The age of the elected representatives

Age group	SC(%)	ST	OBC	UR	Total
21-30 age group	7(2.2)	13(4.1)	6(1.9)	4(1.2)	30(9.4)
31-40 age group	32(10)	26(8.1)	27(8.40)	30(9.4)	115(35.9)
41-50 age group	33(10.3)	18(5.6)	34(10.6)	35(10.9)	120(37.5)
51-60 age group	8(2.5)	15(4.7)	7(2.2)	9(2.8)	39(12.2)
61-70 age group	0	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	2(2.8)	16(5)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

In this table 3.6 shows that up to 30 years of age as young, 31 to 40 years of age considered as mature, 41 to 50 of age considered as middle age, 51-60 years of age considered as above middle age and 61-70 of the ages considered as the old age¹⁵. Out of the 320 of the respondents, 30 (9.4 percent) leaders were young age, 115(35.9 percent) leader belonged to the matured category, 120 (37.5 percent) leaders was found in the middle age group, 39(12.2 percent) were in the above middle the age group, and 16 (5 percent) were in old age group. It was found that the age of most of the elected representatives was between 31- 50. Specifically, the age groups between 41 to 50 ages people were involved in the local politics.

3.12.4 Marital status of the Elected Representatives

Table 3.7: Marital status of the elected representatives

	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Married	78(24.4)	76(23.8)	80(25)	79	313(97.8)
Unmarried	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	0	0	3(0.9)
Widow	0	2(0.6)	0	1(0.3)	3(0.9)
Widower	0	1(0.3)	0	0	1(0.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Usually, it is believed that a married person is mature, responsible, dutiful and understandable in their role performance in society. Thus, marital status is considered as a determining factor for virtually assigning roles in public and political activities. It affects the rural leadership pattern in local politics. Out of the 320, 313(97.8 percent) of the elected representatives were married, 3(1percent) were unmarried, 3(1) were widowed, and 1(0.3 percent) was widowed. (Table 3.7) In this field survey, the researcher found that all window was old age group. The data in the table shows that almost 97 percent of the elected representatives are married. It specifies that the married person who is supposed to be more responsible, mature, and dutiful is preferred as the leader in their village.

3.12.5 Family Composition of the Elected Representatives

The family size is one of the crucial factors determining the leadership structure in the Indian village. Several studies indicated the relationship between rural leadership and the size of the family. (S N Mishra as cited in Malik 2002, p.51), points out that the size of

¹⁵ For the age categorisation, the *researcher* has taken the source from the NSSO questionnaire

the family is an essential factor in shaping leadership, but the panchayat leaders come from middle-sized families. Their study shows that the larger size of the household has a positive correlation with leadership. Further, as cited in Malik(2002), D.S Chaudhary sums up that the sheer numerical strength of a family unit is no longer a guarantee of political participation in the village panchayat. It can be hypothesised that the elected representatives from a joint and large family are assured of the support of a large group affecting the election scenarios, and they can spend their time for political activities in the village.

Table 3.8: Family's nature of the elected representatives of the gram panchayats

Nature of the Family	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Joint Family	38(11.9)	20(6.3)	25(7.8)	28(8.8)	111(34.7)
Nuclear Family	42(13.1)	60(18.8)	55(17.2)	52(16.3)	209(65.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

In this study, table 3.8 shows that 111(34.7 percent) of the elected representatives belong to joint families, and 209(65.3 percent) of the respondents are from nuclear families. The study found that nuclear families open the way for them to enter into the local politics. The present study found a variation from previous literature as members of the nuclear families has more chances to get into political leadership.

Table 3.9: Family composition of the elected representatives

Size of the families	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Small Family up to 5	22(6.9)	50(15.6)	39(12.2)	56(17.5)	167(52.2)
Medium Family up to 6-8	44(13.8)	25(7.8)	31(9.7)	18(5.6)	118(36.9)
Large Family above 8	14(4.4)	51.6)	10(3.1)	6(1.9)	35(10.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The data above table 3.9 reveals that 168(52 percent) of the elected representatives are from a small family and their family size is 1 to 5 members, and only 35(10.9 percent) of representatives belong to large families. 118(36.9 percent) of the elected representatives are living in middle or medium size families. Above all, the overwhelming majority of the elected representatives belong to small and medium-sized families, and a minor percentage of leaders came from large-sized families. Therefore, this study disproved that large-sized families is correlate with rural elected representatives. To conclude, small and medium-size families dominate the village power structure because of the reservation

system and replacing the dominance of large-sized families. Nevertheless, the prominent elected representatives from the large-sized families were the sarpanch. The study found that most of the men and women sarpanches were from large-sized families.

3.12.6 Religion of the Elected Representatives

Hindus are the dominating religious group in Odisha and comprise a major part of the population. Muslims and Christians are grouped as religious minorities. The predominance of Hindus prevails in this area. Muslims and Christians are very poorly represented in the PRIs of the district.

Table 3.10: Religious status of the elected representatives

Religion	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Hindu	77(24)	80(25)	80(25)	79(24.6)	316(98.7)
Muslim	0	0	0	2(0.6)	2(0.6)
Christian	3(0.9)	0	0	0	3(0.9)
Tota	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The data in Table 3.10 shows the apparent dominance of Hindus(98 percent) and merely less than 1 percent of the elected representatives Muslim and Christians in the sample of the gram panchayat. It indicates the dominance of Hindus and negligence representation of the religious minority in the Panchayati Raj Institution of the district. Regarding 3 Christian elected leaders, they converted their religion from Dalit community to Cristian religion, now they consider themselves as Dalit members.

3.12.7 Educational Qualifications of the Elected Representatives

Literacy is only a crude indicator of education; it encouraged entrepreneurship with little knowledge of writing and arithmetic(Soni,2005 pp.119). Literacy is a vital variable in the development of people and their political awareness and participation. As educated person, educated elected representatives were more conscious of his/her right and his/her duties as citizens of the country. Education and the high percentage of literacy will impact political participation and awareness. (Singh,1994) Education of the elected representatives is connected with their participation and deliberation at the gram panchayat. Thus, Sanyal et al. (2015) argued that low-level literacy characteristic results in low-level oratory competence. (Parthasarathy and Vijayendra 2017). Besides,

Soni(2005) elaborates that education increases the degree of participation, which is vital to development. Low literacy is the main obstacle in the sphere of political and ideological consideration. It is generally considered that illiteracy is a critical problem for the development of India. Illiterate that elected representatives may not understand the rules and regulations of government policies. On the other hand, education will help them to understand the PRI's rules, regulations, and fulfilment objectives (Panchayati Raj Institution) and help them to carry out the day-to-day function of the panchayat.

Table 3.11: The educational qualifications of the elected representatives

Educational qualification	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Primary Education	23(7.2)	10(3.1)	14(4.4)	12(3.8)	59(18.4)
Lower secondary education	32(10)	29(9.1)	39(12.1)	18(5.6)	118(36.9)
10 th Pass	8(2.5)	13(4.1)	10(3.1)	21(6.6)	52(16.3)
Intermediate	10(3.1)	8(2.5)	9(2.8)	11(3.4)	38(11.9)
Bachelor Degree and More	5(1.6)	5(1.6)	5(1.6)	18(5.6)	33(10.3)
Illiterate	2(0.6)	15(4.7)	3(0.9)	0	20(6.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the leadership patterns in a democratic society. The studies of S.R Mehta(1972), S.S.Sharma(1979) and Iqbal Narain(1976) reveal that education has a positive role in making rural leadership. On the other hand, a scholar like D.S.Chaudhary(nd), A.K Mukhopadhyaya and Ranganath find no relationship between education and rural leadership (Malik, 2002, p.46).

The educational qualification of the respondents has a significant influence on the decision making of the gram panchayat. Those who have better educational qualifications they can understand the functioning process of the gram panchayat easily. Table 3.11 shows that the number of lower secondary educated respondents is higher in this study, viz 118(36.9 percent). Out of 320 elected leaders, 59(18.4 percent) of the respondents had completed the primary education, which indicates the low educational qualification; 52(16.3 percent) of the elected leaders had passed the 10th class; 38(11.9 percent) of the elected leaders agreed they attended the intermediate educational level. Further, the lowest number is 33(10.3 percent) who had completed higher education, viz. the bachelor degree. Among the illiterate elected representatives, they were 20(6.3 percent) in this study.

3.12.8 Economic Status of the Elected Representatives

Table 3.12: Economic status of the elected representatives' families

Economic Status	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
BPL(PHH)	64(20)	62(19.4)	65(20.3)	19(5.9)	210(65.6)
APL(NPHH)	8(2.5)	12(3.8)	11(3.4)	61(19.1)	92(28.8)
ANTODAYA CARD	7(2.2)	6(1.9)	4(1.2)	0	17(5.3)
Not Having Card	1(0.3)	0	0	0	1(0.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020*BPL-Below Poverty Line, APL-Above Poverty line

PHH-Priority Household, NPHH-Non Priority Households, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

A significant proportion of Gram Panchayat members have BPL(PHH), and the full form of PHH is a priority household card that is 210 (65 percent) while 92 (28.8 percent) have APL(NPHH); the full form is non-priority household ration card. Regarding having an Antodaya card, 17(5.3 percent) of the elected representatives had such a card. (Table 3.12) Only less than 1 percent of elected representatives have no ration card. Considering the economic status of the three social groups, OBCs had a better economic position than the SCs and STs. Generally, the URs category had better social status than other social groups. Most of them have an APL card.

3.12.9 Occupation of the Elected Representatives

Occupation refers not only to the economic connotation but also it considers in other social and political perspectives. Occupation recognises the social status and economic condition of the individual in the community. Further, it is also a determining factor to become a leader in local politics. It is believed that those who have a good income in their family can spare sufficient time for political activity. In order to become an effective leader in the gram panchayat level, it depends on the nature of the profession whether they can spare time for public affairs while staying in the village.

Table 3.13: Occupation of the elected representatives

Occupations	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Homemaker	0	30(9.4)	0	26(8.1)	0	36(11.2)	0	46(14.4)	138(43.1)
Agriculture	22(6.9)	0	21(6.6)	0	23(7.2)	0	30(9.4)	0	96(30)
Agricultural Labour	9(2.8)	5(1.6)	11(3.4)	8(2.5)	4(1.2)	7(2.2)	0	0	44(13.8)
Daily-Wage Labour	2(0.6)	12(3.8)	7(2.2)	6(1.9)	6(1.9)	3(0.9)	0	0	36(11.3)
Business	0	0	1(0.3)	0	1(0.3)	0	4(1.2)	0	6(1.9)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- the field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Regarding the elected representatives' occupational activity, table 3.13 indicates that 138(43.1 percent) women elected representatives are homemakers or housewives. Among women leaders, a few are labours as well as a homemaker. However, society does not consider this homemaker as an occupation. In the real sense, women's heavy-duty needs much time and effort to manage a family. It is the priceless duty of women, which simply price can not manage the family. 36(11.1 percent) of the elected leaders were engaged in daily wage labour. Furthermore, 96(30 percent) of the elected representatives were involved in agriculture for their livelihood. With regard to daily wage labour for the women leader, from 12(3.8 percent) of the SCs and 6(1.9 percent) of the STs categories who had engaged in these activities for their livelihood. Compared to SCs and STs women leaders, 7(2.2 percent) and 7(2.2 percent) of the women OBCs leaders work as agricultural labour and daily wage labour, respectively. The study found that no women leaders from unreserved categories engaged in daily wage labour and agriculture labour.

Table 3.14: Major income sources of the elected representatives' families

Occupation of the respondent's families	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Agricultural	39(12.2)	41(12.8)	47(14.7)	61(19.1)	188(58.8)
Agricultural labour	16(5)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	12(3.8)	60(18.8)
Labour	22(6.9)	15(4.7)	13(4.1)	0	50(15.6)
Private job	3(0.9)	5(1.6)	5(1.6)	7(2.2)	20(6.3)
Any other jobs	0	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	0	2(0.6)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

India is predominantly an agricultural country, and its economic personality depends on the farming sector's development. However, agriculture's production depends upon the

monsoon in the western part of Odisha. Therefore, the dependence on agriculture for livelihood is precarious. Nevertheless, agriculture is the only significant economic activity in rural areas where the labour force does not work throughout the year. Occupation refers to the economic connotations, and it should be taken into consideration in other social-political perspectives. It is assessed to understand an individual or community's social status and economic condition. The social condition of people depends on what they earn and consume; thus, “occupation is not only important in the distribution of the status and prestige but also a good measure of socio-economic mobility” (Malik, 2002 pp.49).

Table 3.14 points out of the 320 interrogated respondents, 188(58.8 percent) of the respondents' families engaged with agricultural activities. Further, 60(18.8 percent) of the household of the elected representatives engaged with agricultural labour. 50(15.6 percent) of the families of the elected representatives depended on labour for their livelihood. Among the social category, the SC category was more percentage who were involved in daily wage labour, that is 22(6.9 percent) of the SC leaders, 15(4.7 percent) of the ST leaders, and 13(4.1 percent) of the OBC leaders. No one engaged in labour work from the UR category.

3.12.10 Income of the Elected Representative's Families

Income plays an essential part in the development of people's lives. A family's income is regarded as a significant criterion for evaluating Indian society's leadership patterns. The researcher encountered many difficulties to know the respondents' real income because they are unaware and have no knowledge about their earnings because they count their earnings through their agricultural production. It is challenging to get exact data regarding the income status of the elected representatives. Irrigation and monsoon impact agriculture production, which means the utilisation of water potential depending on rainfall. In this study, most of the respondents engaged in agriculture and agricultural labour as their occupations.

Table 3.15: Monthly income of the elected representatives' families

Monthly Income	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
1000-5000	49(15.3)	35(10.9)	25(7.8)	3(0.9)	112(35)
5001-10000	23(7.2)	22(6.9)	31(9.4)	33(10.3)	109(34)
10001-15000	5(1.6)	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	25(7.8)	56(17.5)
15001-20000	3(0.9)	4(1.3)	9(2.8)	13(4.1)	29(9.1)
20001-25000	0	4(1.3)	3(0.9)	4(1.3)	11(3.4)
25001-30000	0	0	1(0.6)	2(0.6)	3(0.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

It is challenging to relate education with family income. It was assumed that if higher education in the family, income could be more. In fact, income is related to many factors such as land ownership, cattle, business, having several various trees, and education. Sometimes the respondents were hesitant to reveal their income straightway; the figure may not be taken as their face value but as an index to the actual position. The income of an individual is relatively associated with the families' income categories and the family's size. The female respondents are dependent income of their family; they revealed that their husband's monthly income counts as the family's monthly income. Table 3.15 reveals that 112(35 percent) of the respondent's families had the income range 1000-5000. In the income range 5001-10000, the higher percentage of the respondent's families is 109 (69.1 percent). Among the social groups, the UR category had relatively better income than other social groups. SC category is more vulnerable in terms of monthly income than other social groups.

3.12.11 Housing pattern of the Elected Representatives

The impact of homeownership indicates that asset accumulation can be an effective mechanism for participatory results. The findings of a study on homeownership and political participation of Andrew B. Hall and Jesse Yoder (2020) suggest that political views and actions are greatly affected by individual economic conditions and suggest that homeowners have a remarkable impact on politics in part because their ownership motivates them to pay attention and participate (Hall and Jesse Yoder,2020). The number of houses and the construction cost determines the economic position of a house owner. The person who possesses more houses and spends more money constructing and maintaining their house indicates their better economic position than persons with a single house with a low construction cost. Thus, house ownership is also associated with special prestige and status in the village.

Table 3.16: Housing pattern of the elected representatives

Having Housing Pattern	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Pucca	10(3.1)	16(5)	21(6.6)	36(11.1)	83(25.9)
Semi pucca	23(7.2)	16(5)	22(6.9)	42(13.1)	103(32.2)
Kuchha	37(11.6)	38(11.9)	33(10.3)	2(0.6)	110(34.2)
PMAY(G)	9	9(2.8)	4(1.3)	0	22(6.9)
Hut	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	0	0	2(0.6)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 *PMAY(G)-Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana(Gramin), the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 3.16 shows that 83(25.9 percent) of the elected representatives have a pucca house. 103(32.2 percent) of respondents have semi-pucca houses. The majority of 110(34.2 percent) of the elected representatives have the Kuchha house. Those who have BPL and Antodaya cards, they got and constructed pucca houses under the PMAY-G scheme. Their percentage is 32(10 percent). Merely 2(0.6 percent) of the elected representatives live in Hut, the delapidated situation. Drawing from this study, most of the elected representatives are in poor condition. In addition to that, among the reserved category, SCs and STs elected representatives have more percentage of Kuchha house than OBCs and URs representatives. Most percentages of OBCs and URs elected representatives had a pucca house. The majority of SCs sarpanches possess pucca houses. It indicates that wealthy SCs sarpanches are electing in the gram panchayat election. Only 1 SCs male sarpanch is living in Hut.

3.12.12 Land Holding of the Elected Representatives

“Land is the most important possession, the principle recognised wealth, and it is closely linked power over the man¹⁶”. Land is one of the most valuable economic assets in rural areas and the primary development and income. Land ownership was seen as an essential element in estimating people's economic situation in ancient times. It is also considered as the key source in the Indian village to gain political power and social status. It is believed that the larger holding and control of land gives citizens greater opportunities in panchayats to be elected. To a greater degree, the people who own the land have better chances of being PRI leaders (Malik,2002, p.56). The land is just a tangible resource for tribal people and occupies a significant position in tribal culture. Many social factors and religious traditions are related to the land. The tribes are linked socially and emotionally with the land. From their landholding calculation, fair ideas about the economic position of the respondents can be obtained.

Land and cultivation are closely connected. The researcher estimated marginal, small and medium and large landholders from the (national sample survey organisation) NSSO survey scheduled. The marginal landholders have 0 to 2.5-acre land; they may be called the marginal farmer. The small landholder is also called a small farmer; their landholding

¹⁶ Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* , Vikas Publication , Bangalore,1966, p.126 cited in Jasprit Kaur Soni(2005), p.34

pattern is between 2.6 to 5 acres. Medium landholding farmer is 5.1 to 10 acres. More than 10 acres of land is a large farmer—the data collected on the respondent's landholding of the family. In medium and large households, the land was not divided among the family's brothers; when the researcher asked about the land-holding pattern, they could not reveal precisely that the land size would reduce if they split the land among the brother. Regarding the information landholding pattern of the elected representatives' families, the correct information may not collect from them because some respondents are hesitant to reveal the correct land possession information. Even women elected representatives could not answer the landholding pattern of their families.

Table 2.17: Land holding of the elected representatives' families

Landholding pattern	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Marginal 0-2.5 acre land	278.4)	33(10.3)	36(11.2)	20(6.2)	116(36.3)
Small 2.6-5 acre land	11(3.4)	11(3.4)	27(8.4)	23(7.2)	72(22.2)
Medium 5.1 to 10 acre land	10(3.1)	18(5.6)	11(3.4)	22(6.9)	61(19.1)
More than 10 acre	0	0	2(0.6)	15(4.7)	17(5.3)
Landless	32(10)	18(5.6)	4(1.2)	0	54(16.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- the field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 3.17 exhibits that 54(16.9 percent) of the elected representatives were landless. The majority of the elected representatives were marginal landholders, that is, 116(36.3 percent); small landholder families were 72(22.2 percent); medium size landholder families were 61(19.1percent), and only 17(5.3 percent)of the families had more than 10 acre land. Regarding landless families, 32(10 percent) SCs families and 18(5.6) STs families of the elected representatives were landless families. Regarding the land possessing, the URs category was richer in terms of land possessing than other social groups.

3.12.13 Assets with Elected Representatives

The ownership of agricultural implements and domestic articles by the elected representatives is assessed for determining their economic condition. It is supposed that the people with the better financial position are more to get elected as leaders in gram panchayat.

Table 3.18: Possessing of assets by the elected representatives

Availability of Assets	SC N=80(25)	ST N=80(25)	OBC N=80(25)	UR N=80(25)	Total N=320
Tractor/Four wheeler	2(0.3)	3(0.9)	9(2.8)	20(6.2)	34(10.6)
Two-wheeler	22(6.8)	29(9.6)	35(10.9)	72(22.5)	158(49.3)
Hand Pump	11(3.4)	15(4.6)	35(10.9)	48(15)	109(34)
Arm Chair	30(9.3)	25(7.8)	57(17.8)	64(20)	176(55)
TV	55(17.1)	50(15.6)	65(20.3)	78(24.3)	248(77.5)
Mobile	70(21.8)	65(20.3))	75(23.43)	78(24.3))	288(90)
Ornament	22(6.8)	18(5.6)	40(12.5))	50(15.6)	130(40.6)
Use of Internet	25(7.8)	15(4.6)	30(9.3)	40(12.5)	110(34.3)
Bicycle	38(11.8)	25(7.8)	45(14)	50(15.6)	158(49.3)
Cooking Gas	50(15.6)	50(15.6)	55(17.1)	70(21.8)	225(70.3)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 3.18 presents that 34(10.6 percent) of the elected representative have a tractor/four wheeler; thus, most sarpanches keep the tractor. Nowadays, mobile is a common asset of all. Thus, 288(90 percent) of elected representatives have a mobile with one family member. Women ward members do not carry the mobile; their family members are holding the mobile. Further, some 10th passed respondents also use the internet on their mobile; they operate social media like Facebook and WhatsApp on their mobile. Moreover, 158(49.3 percent) of the elected representatives' families have two-wheelers, and 248(77.5 percent) of the respondents' families watch TV. A hand pump is used for drinking water and irrigation purpose; 109 (34 percent) of the elected representatives keep handpumps in their houses. It found that most of the sarpanches' homes had handpumps. Cooking gas is also an essential asset; 225 (49.3 percent) respondents' households use the cooking gas. This cooking gas, they got through Ujjala Yojana. To sum up, considering the possessing of assets among the reserved category, more percentage of OBCs and URs elected representative's families own various assets than SCs and STs families.

CHAPTER-4

Role and Awareness of the Elected Representatives in the Functional Process of the Gram Sabha

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the operational process of the Gram Sabha and the way through which elected representatives are involved in it. Gram Sabha is the link between the panchayat and the villagers. The idea of the Gram Sabha was introduced to resolve people's problems through better coordination between the administration and the people, and it encourages people's participation. The Gram Sabha has been given the power to take their own decision on the distribution of government benefits. Many schemes are channelled through the gram sabha. This includes rural housing, pension schemes, below poverty line(BPL) list preparation, toilet making, supply piped water, waste management, etc. It is expected that awareness would be generated about these schemes through the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha has control over the gram panchayat's function. It is a platform where the excluded group such as the SCs, the STs, the OBCs and women can share their problems and needs in the village. The primary objective of the Gram Sabha is to create a deliberative space that not only extends democracy downwards or expands participation but also combines representation and direct democracy, empowering people to profit from democracy.

In an Indian village marked by caste, class, and gender distinctions, creating such an opportunity for discussion, a deliberative space that is accessible to all, is a radical move. Many activists and researchers believe that transforming Gram Sabhas into vibrant platforms where substantive discussions occur and developing them into purposeful institutions tasked with economic planning and social audit would go a long way toward empowering marginalised people. The Gram Sabha is the only forum that can ensure direct democracy. It suggests an equal opportunity to all villagers to criticise, discuss, approve or reject the proposal of the panchayat's activities, evaluate its past performance, and thus act as a watchdog of democracy at the grassroots level. Thus, Gram Sabha can be the most potent groundwork of decentralised governance by guaranteeing elected representatives who are directly and regularly accountable to the people(Hazra 2005).

The conduct of a Gram Sabha, which is simply described as a Gram Sabha's sabha (meeting), is frequently emphasised. Decisions taken without a Gram Sabha meeting are deemed null and void, and in many states, Panchayats (the Gram Sabha's elected body)

play a minor role if the Gram Sabha cannot meet and decide. Gram Sabha is a body corporate consisting of a voter whose names are included in the electoral roll for the panchayat at the village level. Gram Sabha should be held at a convenient place as the sarpanch decides. The annual and semi-annual meetings of the Grama Sabha will take place in February and June, respectively. The Gram Sabha meeting is also scheduled to occur on 26 January, 1 May, 15 August and 2 October of the calendar year, mentioned in the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 and Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014.

4.2 Attendance of the Elected Representatives in the Gram Sabha

Table 4.1: Nature of the attendance by the elected representatives in the Gram Sabha

Nature of the Attendance in the Gram Sabha	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Regular	71(22.2)	75(23.4)	72(22.5)	70(21.9)	288(90)
Never	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	12(3.8)
Irregular	6(1.9)	2(0.6)	5(1.6)	7(2.2)	20(6.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The table 4.1 shows that 288(90) per cent of elected representatives retorted that they always attended the Gram Sabha meeting. Besides, only 12(3.8 per cent) of elected representatives said they never participated in the Gram Sabha. Moreover, 20(6.3 per cent) of elected representatives answered that they sometimes attend the Gram Sabha. Why do the elected representatives sometimes attend the Gram Sabha? Women elected representatives had confronted the problems like pregnancy, taking care of family work, and a long way to go, which are considered the impediments in attending the Gram Sabha. Category wise of elected representatives equally participated in the Gram Sabha.

All men sarpanches attended the meeting regularly. A few percent of women sarpanches revealed that they come to the meeting along with their husband and families relatives. Most of the sarpanches and ward members from the SC, ST and OBC community regularly attended the gram panchayat meeting. Participatory democracy was found that most of the elected representatives were attended the Gram Sabha. By participating in the Gram Sabha of the PRIs, the leader can not measure the quality impact on their lives in the villages. The question is how Gram Sabha's function is put into action in the field. The following tables are discussing on the function of the Gram Sabha.

4.3 Conducting the Gram Sabha Meetings Per Year

The Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014 rule (3) clause 2(a) provides that the collector or sarpanch empowered by the government in that regard may call for a special meeting of the Gram Sabha whenever it considered appropriate, and the panchayat executive officer shall give notice of the meeting after obtaining the sarpanch's approval. The sarpanch shall set the meeting's date and time, including the special meeting required by rule 3(2b). Most elected representatives said that the Gram Sabha had to conduct two times a year. The study found that no special Gram Sabha had been conducted for the gram panchayat development plan and social audit, which was not conducted in the gram panchayat.

4.4 Mode of Communication to the People about the Gram Sabha

The mode of communication about the Gram Sabha lays a significant role in mobilising the people to the public meeting. Most of the communication is through issuing notices and beating the drum in the gram panchayats. The notice includes the date, the venue, and the timing of the Gram Sabha meeting

Table 4.2: Mode of the communication to the people about the Gram Sabha

Mode of communication	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Notice	64(20)	68(21.2)	64(20)	63(19.7)	259(80.9)
Both notice and beating drum	16(5)	12(3.8)	16(5)	17(5.3)	61(19.1)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Above table 4.3 shows that out of the 320 elected representatives, 259(80.9 per cent) of elected representatives agreed that the sarpanches and the Panchayat Executive Officers(PEO) were sending the notice and posting the notice on the wall for disseminating the information concerning the Gram Sabha. Furthermore, 61(19.9 percent) elected representatives replied that the sarpanch adopted both the notice and beating drum method to inform people of upcoming the Gram Sabha meeting. Thus, the study found that posting the notice in a public place and sending the notice to ward members is the primary channel for communicating to inform for upcoming Gram Sabha to be held. A few panchayats practised drum beating and gave the notice to share people for the upcoming Gram Sabha meeting. The Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule 2014 (Rule 3)sub-rule (7) stipulated that the notice of the Gram Sabha's meeting shall publish in the local areas such as public places, weekly markets, high schools, hospitals and Anganwadi

centre. They should announce through speech equipment or by the beat of the drum. In this study, posting and sending the notice is the leading network to inform people about the Gram Sabha. Rule (3) at least fifteen days' notice of the Gram Sabha meeting shall be given, and a copy of this notice shall be served to every ward member.

All representatives stated that they received the notification for the Gram Sabha meeting before a week. Some ward members revealed that Gram Sabha's notification showed in a prominent place where the gram panchayat office was located, but other villages of the Gram Panchayat rarely get the information due to improper sharing of the notification. In this study area, it is pertinent to mention that no mike announcement had been executed, and no poster advertisement for the mobilisation of the people to participate in the gram sabha.

4.5 Elected Representatives' Opinion on the Best Mode of Communication to the People about Gram Sabha

The study found that only sending notice and posting notice at the public places was only the mode of communication to inform people regarding the upcoming Gram Sabha, which is insufficient to be transparent and accountable for the activities of the gram panchayats. Door to door visits and mike announcements is also considered a method for the mode of communication mentioned in the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014. However, these modes of communication were not used before in conducting the Gram Sabha.

4.6 People's Participation in the Gram Sabha

As described by the Balwantrai Committee report (1957), people's participation is more than just contributing a set proportion of the money of a project in cash and kind or by doing manual labour. Participation in the full understanding that all aspects of community development are included, and the government's role is merely to assist them where necessary. "Rural development strategies can realise through people's participation with motivation, active involvement and organisation at the grassroots level of rural people, especially focused on oppressed and marginalised people, in conceptualising and designing policies and programmes, and in creating an administrative, social and economic institution in the form of organising, implementing and evaluating them" (Oakley, 1995:3 as quoted in John and Mohanan, 2009).

Table 4.3: People's participation in the Gram Sabha

People's participation in the GS	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
men participation in large scale	73(22.8)	55(17.2)	55(17.2)	49(15.3)	232(72.5)
women participation in large scale	7(2.2)	24(7.5)	7(2.2)	12(3.8)	50(15.6)
male and female participation in equally	0	1(0.3)	18(5.6)	19(5.9)	38(11.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 * GS-Gram Sabha, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 4.3 shows why the male members of the Gram Sabha were dominating Gram Sabha's decision. Nevertheless, out of 320 elected representatives in the above table, 232(72.5 percent) respondents agreed that men's participation is large in the Gram Sabha. Similarly, 50(15.6 percent) respondents stated that women's participation is large in the Gram Sabha. Further, 38 (11.9 percent) of the respondents reacted that both males and females participate equally in the Gram Sabha. However, the study finds that men's participation in large during the Gram Sabha meeting—indicating men's dominance remains in the Gram Sabha. Women participation in large in the Gram Sabha meeting is significantly low. Odisha Gram Panchayat Act emphasises that 50 percent of women must have participated while conducting the Gram Sabha, which was not fulfilled. The main reason for the low participation in the Gram Sabha was that people were unaware of its outcome, recommendation, and decision, which would significantly impact their rural lives. The participation level in the Gram Sabha shows in the study found that there is a lack of women participation. Women participation in the Gram Sabha was very low on account of social norms and traditional practices. Without people's participation, the governance process would fail, leading to corruption and dominance of the influential people in this institution. People's participation is an integral part of good governance, which is lacking in the study areas. *Women ward member from the Magurbeda Gram Panchayat said that a very rare percentage of the women have participated, that is, three to six out of the whole GP at the gram sabha meeting. Only a few women ward members and a few SHG women who were deliberately involved at the gram sabha meeting.* Reasons for not attending the meeting were: women were not concerned in attending Gram Sabha meetings as they were engrossed with their family works, no proper mobilisation by the gram panchayat and social norms.

Table 4.4: Efforts taken by elected representatives to mobilise Women and SC, ST residents to the Gram sabha meeting

Answers	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
Women	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	12(3.8)	10(3.1)	23(7.2)	21(6.6)	20(6.3)	22(6.9)	24(7.5)	32(10)	164(51.3)
No	21(6.6)	37(11.6)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	14(4.4)	24(7.5)	10(3.1)	14(4.4)	156(48.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)
SC/ST	SC(M)	SC(F)	ST(M)	ST(F)	OBC(M)	OBC(F)	UR(M)	UR(F)	Total
Yes	13(4.1)	16(5)	14(4.4)	14(4.4)	12(3.8)	10(3.1)	2(0.6)	11(3.4)	92(28.8)
No	20(6.2)	31(9.7)	2(8.1)	26(8.1)	22(6.9)	36(11.2)	32(10)	35(10.9)	228(71.3)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 , the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Women shall reserve for not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level (Article 243D(4) & 243T(3)). All articles and rules in CAA are only to bring women into local politics. So, women elected representatives can make social change by bringing women to various gram panchayat meetings. Women can share their needs and problem and participate in the decision-making process in the gram panchayat. Therefore, the researcher asked whether women participated in Gram Sabha and whether the elected representatives had made a special effort to increase women's participation in Gram Sabha.

All the sarpanches had made a special effort to increase women participation. Still, the women's participation in the gram panchayat has not been fulfilled; the sarpanches approach the SHG group and persuade them to participate at the Gram Sabha and Palli sabha. Balangir District is highly patriarchal. It remains the feeling of caste discrimination, and women are considered to have fewer knowledgeable persons than males. Therefore, women participation in gram panchayat activity is significantly less. It is observed that the responsiveness of the elected representatives to mobilise for the attendance of the gram sabha was lacking due to less incentive, lack of training and gender restriction for the women leader.

The women manage the household activities, looking after the children and agriculture work, which confined them to household activity. As a result, most women are excluded from the activity of the gram panchayat. In this table 4.4 demonstrates that 164(51.3 percent) of the respondents had a special effort to increase women's participation in the Gram Sabha. The effort was mobilised through SHG women and organised PEETHA Programmes (People empowerment enabling transparency and accountability on Odisha

initiatives, the Odisha Government scheme). The scheme's main motive was to create awareness among the masses to participate in the gram panchayat activities. In the meeting, all elected representatives deliver the importance of women's participation in the Gram Sabha. Therefore, the elected representatives had effort, and other forms of the mobilisation are the door-to-door visit of their respective ward in villages. On the contrary, 156(48.8 percent) respondents had no effort to increase women's participation in the Gram Sabha.

Unless an increase of participation of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people in the gram panchayat activities had been taken into consideration, the social justice and the welfare for the underprivileged, which is the gram panchayat's objective, would not be achieved. The increase of women participation and increased participation of SCs and STs people in the gram panchayat is required to achieve economic development and social justice. Out of 320, 228(71.3 percent) of the elected representatives did not make any special effort to increase SCs and STs people's participation in the Gram Sabha. As far as the elected representatives' effort is concerned, most elected representatives did not make any special effort to participate for SCs and STs people. Fortunately, 92(28.8 percent) had attempted to increase SCs and STs people's participation in the Gram Sabha drawing from the interview. Among them, most of the SCs and STs elected representatives than other members who had mobilised for the SCs/STs people.

The benefit of participation in the mobilisation effort is not found in the functioning of the Gram Sabha. The elected representatives remain salient in the Gram Sabha; it was held as per the guideline of the gram panchayat act. It is only happening because of the formality of the state government, not for achieving participatory and deliberative democracy. Even the elected leaders could not mobilise the people to participate in the Gram Sabha; in the mobilisation process of participation, only a few women elected representatives mobilised the women to include in the Gram Sabha meeting. Mobilisation is one of the three dimensions of participation, which does work out to some extent the study areas. Most of the elected representatives had no effort in order to improve social mobilisation for social equality for marginalised people, which is an important component of governance.

Sarpanch of the Jamut gram panchayat argued that the gram panchayat could not deliver social justice to SC/ST people. She argued that the GP has no power through the gram panchayat act to eliminate the discrimination. She attempted Dalits people to participate

in the gram sabha. Due to her effort, most of the SC/STs people have been involved in the gram sabha meeting. A men ward member from the Bhursguda gram panchayat criticised no gram panchayat or no government pressure them to mobilise the SC/ST people in order to bring them in the gram sabha meeting.

4.7 Chairing of the Palli Sabha by the Elected Representatives at the Ward Level

Table 4.5: Chairing of the Palli Sabha by the elected representatives at the ward level

Answers	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	12(3.8)	16(5)	17(5.3)	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	13(4.1)	12(3.8)	13(4.1)	104(32.5)
No	21(6.6)	31(9.7)	23(7.2)	30(9.4)	23(7.2)	33(10.3)	22(6.9)	33(10.3)	216(67.5)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 of section 6(4) described that the elected representatives (ward members) representing the Palli Sabha area in the Grama Panchayat should preside over the Palli Sabha meeting. Therefore, the question raised to the elected representatives whether they preside the Palli Sabha or not. In this sense, 216(67.5 percent) of the elected preventatives alleged that they had not presided over the Palli Sabha meeting. Only the sarpanches presided in all meetings of the gram panchayats. (Table 4.5) Those 104(32.5 percent) respective elected representatives who presided at the Palli Sabha meeting are mostly sarpanch. Most SCs, STs and OBCs women elected representatives did not preside at the Palli Sabha meeting in their respective ward. Even unreserved men elected representatives did not chair the Palli Sabha meeting. Thus, the representative democracy was failed in the local governance, the elected representative from concerned ward members who could not chair in the meeting because of the existing social structure, sarpanch raj, lack of training and lack of interest by the state government. The primary purpose of grassroots democracy was not manifested. Only descriptive and symbolic representation was found in the study. It means they were representing the Gram Panchayats because of reservation with their proportionate population without acting for it. Here, the political exclusion was seen among the ward members even though they had to preside the Palli Sabha at the ward level as the gram panchayat act stipulated. But in reality, the sarpanches presides the Palli Sabha meeting; the ward members were excluded from this authority power.

4.8 Voice of Elected Representatives in the Gram Sabha

All elected representatives raised their voices in the Gram Sabha. Only a few women elected representatives had been silenced in the Gram Sabha. The silence of the elected women representatives at the Gram Sabha results from lack of skill, the dominance of the privileged caste, education and training, fear of patriarchal society, and no knowledge of gram panchayat rule and regulation. Participation brings development to the community; those who participate in the political system would cost value, time, competence and educative. This study found that most of the elected leaders of the gram panchayat raised their voice in the Gram Sabha on different issues for village development. Therefore, we cannot say it is intrinsic participation but seen as developmental participation. The leaders substantively raised the issue of their community people, as the study observed that substantive representatives had been developed among the leaders from the marginalised community.

Table 4.6: Developmental issues raised by elected representatives in the Gram Sabhas

issue speaking in the Gram Sabha	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Drinking water & sanitation	6(1.9)	13(4.1)	18(5.6)	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	25(7.8)	5(1.6)	14(4.4)	102(31.9)
Employment & MGNREGS	8(2.5)	4(1.3)	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	3(0.9)	0	5(1.6)	4(1.3)	28(8.8)
Beneficiary selection	5(1.6)	14(4.4)	2(0.6)	6(1.9)	6(1.9)	0	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	47(14.7)
Education	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	0	0	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	1(0.3)	0	8(2.5)
Infrastructure development	9	7(2.2)	10(3.1)	16(5)	9(2.8)	10(3.1)	7(2.2)	16(5)	84(26.3)
Social protection	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	0	0	0	0	0	3(0.9)
Agriculture	0	0	2(0.6)	0	1(0.3)	0	0	1(0.3)	4(1.3)
All of them discuss	3(0.9)	6(1.9)	5(1.6)	6(1.9)	3(0.9)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	5(1.6)	44(13.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 *MGNREGA-Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

All the sarpanches had articulated different issues such as drinking water and sanitation, employment and MGNREGA, beneficiary selection, infrastructure development and social protection. In this table 4.6, out of 320, 44(13.8 percent) respondents spoke on

multiple Gram Sabha issues: water and sanitation, employment, agriculture and education, etc. Most of the sarpanches spoke on all of the problems. In addition, 84(26.3 percent) of the respondents had articulated the subject of infrastructure development for their locality. Further, 28(8.8 percent) elected representatives discussed the employment and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in the Gram Sabha, and 102(31.9 percent) elected representatives spoke of the drinking water and sanitation problem they faced; most women elected representatives raised this issue at the Gram Sabha— 13(4.1 percent) SCs, 10(3.1percent) STs, 25(7.8 percent) OBCs and 14(4.4 percent) URs women elected representatives— raised the need of drinking water for their ward. It indicates that approximately equal proportionate of all categories women leaders kept their views on the drinking water needed in their wards. A significantly less percentage of the panchayat leaders spoke about social protection. The perspective of the participation in the Gram Sabha exposed a dimension of participation that is psychological involvement; only those who participate know what is happening in the meeting. Thus, only the instrumental benefits of participation were developed. Panchayat is a state government agency that shares some information with elected representatives regarding the panchayat executive; they only raised their voice for the people's needs. However, the elected representative did not achieve the private goal through the gram panchayat.

Even though Gram Sabha is a form of grassroots democracy, it has not followed the operational process. The gram panchayat did not make active in strengthening Gram Sabha's operation; thus, there is a communication gap between these two bodies. The actual target groups of the welfare schemes also did not have access to information from the gram panchayats. Accountability and transparency in the affaire of the gram panchayat are almost absent. In order to prepare the planning process in the Gram Sabha, it failed to develop people's participation. Nevertheless, the Gram Sabha has the potential capacity to carry out the functions and responsibilities and raise support from people and government administration. It needs to activate by campaigning the information, education and communication among rural people. SC women sarpanch of the Bandupala gram panchayat noted that she always raised the issue of the overall development of the GP. She carefully listens to all types of developmental works like MGNREGA, drinking water, and beneficiary selection, which raises in the gram sabha meeting. Then, she discusses these issues to provide the service to them. Most of the ward

members raise their voice specific only one issue at the ward level. However, most of the sarpanches maintain that they deliberate about the overall development of the GP.

4.9 Awareness of the Elected Representative on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha

There is an unavoidable issue that needs to discuss in the Gram Sabha. This research focuses on these issues, whether the elected representatives were aware of this or not. Although Gram Sabha is free to discuss any Gram Panchayat-related issues, some compulsory issues need to be addressed at this meeting. These issues are as follows:

1. The gram panchayat's annual statement of accounts
2. The report for the preceding financial year. Last notice of the audit and answers, if any, from the Gram Panchayat
3. The Gram Panchayat Budget for the next financial year
4. Report on the Gram Panchayat development programmes relating to the preceding year
5. Proposed development projects to be undertaken during the current year
6. The recommendation of the Palli Sabha
7. The Gram Sabha may also address those suggestions that it feels are sufficiently relevant for a ward, although the Palli Sabha is not included in its agenda.
8. Usage of financing for plans and programmes.

Table 4.7: Awareness of the elected representatives regarding the recommendation of the Palli Sabha, which needs to be placed in the Gram Sabha

Awareness	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	27(8.4)	25(7.8)	29(9.1)	13(4.1)	19(5.9)	17(5.3)	29(9.1)	24(7.5)	183(57.2)
No	4(1.2)	20(6.2)	11(3.4)	26(8.1)	15(4.7)	25(7.8)	5(1.6)	22(6.9)	128(40)
Can't say	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	0	1(0.3)	0	4(1.3)	0	0	9(2.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Palli sabha's recommendations are considered the development work and programmes that should be taken up during the ensuing year. The annual budget estimate must be submitted to the Palli Sabha by the gram panchayat under sub-section (1) of section 98. Section 98 subsection(6) mentioned that the budget estimate prepared by the sarpanch showing the probable receipt and expenditure should be discussed in each Palli Sabha within the Grama sabha. Therefore, the elected representatives must be aware of this budget and recommend this for approval in the Gram Sabha. Therefore, the Palli sabha

recommendation must be placed in the Gram Sabha, whatever they had been discussed at the ward level. The Palli Sabha is similar to the Gram Sabha, where the people discuss their issues and need for village development. So, table 4.7 demonstrates that 183(57.2percent) elected representatives stated that the Palli Sabha's recommendation had been placed before the Gram Sabha. More importantly, 128(40 percent) respondents replied that such a recommendation was never discussed in the Gram Sabha. Further, 9(2.8) respondents could not express such a recommendation. Furthermore, women elected representatives were less aware of Palli Sabha's recommendation among all categories than men leaders. At the Palli Sabha meeting, the husbands of the women elected members attended along with the sarpanch so that they were unaware of it; most women ward members alleged that the Palli Sabha rarely occurred in their gram panchayat. Some ward members said that the Palli Sabha was held in pen and paper. ST women ward member from the Ghuna Gram Panchayat alleged that it was only the husband of the women sarpanch and the PEO who organised the Palli Sabha meeting without the participation of the villagers at the ward level. Therefore, they make a decision whatever they want and record the minute of the meeting without consulting the respective ward member.

Table 4. 8: Awareness of the elected representatives about the discussion on the development programme proposed during the current year, which was discussed in the Gram Sabha

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	21(6.6)	27(8.4)	25(7.8)	21(6.6)	21(6.6)	24(7.5)	26(8.1)	27(8.4)	192(60)
No	11(3.4)	13(4.1)	12(3.8)	17(5.3)	10(3.1)	16(5)	8(2.5)	18(5.6)	105(32.8)
Can't say	1(0.3)	7(2.2)	3(0.9)	2(0.6)	3(0.9)	6(1.9)	0	1(0.3)	23(7.2)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 4.8 exhibits that 192(60 percent) elected representatives admitted that the development programme proposed to take during the current year was discussed in the Gram Sabha. However, 105(32 percent) elected representatives claimed that this issue was not addressed in the Gram Sabha meeting. Besides, only 23 (7.2 percent) elected representatives kept quiet about the developmental programme and its proposal in the Gram Sabha. Regarding the development programme proposed to be taken during the current year, the gram panchayat implemented several developmental programmes such

as the implementation of programme under central 14th finance commission, the 4th state finance commission, MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin(PMAY) and national rural livelihood mission and so on. So, it is necessary to know which programme is running in the current year, which needs to be discussed in the Gram Sabha. More percentage of the SC, ST and OBC leader were salient than UR category who could not speak about the current programmes and policies. In sum, those who were unaware of it due to lack of training, lack of interest of the PRIs members in participating in the activities of the gram panchayat, no incentive for the ward members lead another reason for not taking the initiative in the functioning of Gram Sabha.

Table 4.9: Awareness of the elected representatives about the discussion on the report in respect of the development plan of GP relating to the preceding year, which was discussed in the GS

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	13(4.1)	27(8.4)	25(7.8)	26(8.1)	23(7.2)	26(8.1)	23(7.2)	25(7.8)	188(58.8)
No	14(4.4)	15(4.7)	13(4.1)	10(3.1)	9(2.8)	19(5.9)	10(3.1)	21(6.6)	111(34.7)
Can't say	6(1.9)	5(1.6)	2(0.6)	4(1.3)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	0	21(6.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 * GS-Gram Sabha, *GP-Gram Panchayat, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Regarding the issue of the report in respect of the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year, table 4.9 presents that 188(58.8 percent) elected representatives reacted that it was placed before the Gram Sabha. Only 111(34.7 percent) of elected representatives replied that they were unaware of this issue discussed in the Gram Sabha. However, 21(6.6 percent) of elected representatives could not express their view on the developmental report plan discussed in the Gram Sabha. All men and women sarpanches were aware of this developmental plan report. However, within all reserved categories, women elected representatives were less aware of the report regarding the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year. The state government had not been imparted capacity building training to the PRIs members in terms of the different developmental schemes and functions of the Gram Sabha, so they were unaware of the report regarding the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year. Due to sarpanch raj (autocratic sarpanch rule) and the control of the PEO, most of the ward members were not active in the functioning of the Gram Sabha.

Table 4.10: Awareness of the elected representatives about the budget of Gram Panchayat for the next financial year in the Gram Sabha, which was discussed in the GS

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	22(6.9)	28(8.1)	23(7.2)	27(8.4)	12(3.8)	30(9.4)	23(7.2)	25(7.8)	190(59.4)
No	3(0.9)	8(2.5)	9(2.8)	7(2.2)	19(5.9)	16(5)	10(3.1)	21(6.6)	93(29.1)
Can't say	8(2.5)	11(3.4)	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	3(0.9)	0	1(0.3)	0	37(11.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 ,*GS-Gram Sabha, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The budget refers to an annual financial statement of income and expenditure. The resource received from a different source and their expenditure on various heads for the next financial year. So, it is necessary to keep the budget in Gram Sabha to solve the various issues in the village. The question asked about discussing Gram Panchayat's budget for the next financial year in the Gram Sabha. Table 4.10 demonstrates that 190(59.4percent) of elected representatives affirmed that the forthcoming budget details had been discussed in the Gram Sabha. However, 93(29.1 percent) representatives alleged that such a budget had not been discussed in the Gram Sabha. Further, 37(11 percent) of the elected representatives were salient about it. With regard to men sarpanches, most of them were aware of the budget. It demonstrates that this issue had not been placed before the Gram Sabha. Men elected representatives were more advanced in knowledge on the budget details within all reserved categories, whereas women elected representatives had little less than their counterparts. It is the right of elected members of the gram panchayat to inspect and know all work undertaken by the gram panchayat, which needs to be discussed in the Gram Sabha so that all villagers may know it. However, nearly 48 percent of the elected representatives were unaware of it. Here, more percentage of women elected representatives were uninformed on this issue. The highest percentage of SC and ST women elected representatives than OBCs and URs women elected representatives who could not speak about the budget. Accountability is the major element of good governance; however, in this study, 40 percent of the elected representatives knew the budget of the GP. The government should activate the gram panchayat and show it on the notice board so that everybody can know it and question them for the proper development. Nonetheless, the study found a lack of accountability regarding the budget sharing among the elected representatives as well as citizens of the villages.

OBC women ward members from the Madhiapali Gram Panchayat revealed that the sarpanch and the PEO hesitantly disclosed the budget details at the gram sabha meeting; thus, they did not share exact information about the grants received from the various source at the public meeting. They do not share the budget details in gram sabha in order to practice corruption. It is noteworthy to find that corruption was prevalent in the gram panchayats.

Table 4.11: Awareness of the elected representatives about the annual statement of account was placed at the gram sabha meeting.

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	11(3.4)	12(3.8)	9(2.8)	7(2.2)	15(4.7)	14(4.4)	26(8.1)	30(9.4)	124(38.8)
No	12(3.8)	17(5.3)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	15(4.7)	16(5)	5(1.6)	14(4.4)	111(34.7)
Can't say	10(3.1)	18(5.6)	13(4.1)	19(5.9)	4(1.3)	16(5)	3(0.9)	2(0.6)	85(26.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The annual statement of account means budget preparation and how to mobilised finances. The budget states which work items are to be considered, the work's cost and propriety must be discussed in the Gram Sabha. What is the balance for the last year? The amount received from the central and state government needs to be discussed in the Gram Sabha, which is a significant function. The question asked whether the annual statement of account of Gram Panchayat discuss in the Gram Sabha? Table 4.11 reveals that out of 320, 124(38 percent) of elected representatives replied that Gram Panchayat's account's annual statement had been discussed in the Gram Sabha. However, 111(34.7) of the elected representatives said that the account of GP's annual statement in the Gram Sabha had not been discussed. However, 85(26.6 percent) of the representatives said they could not speak on the gram panchayat account's yearly statement. A significant percentage of the SCs, STs and OBCs elected representatives than URs categories claimed that the annual statement of account was not placed before the gram sabha. It derived from the study that elected representatives from the URs category had knowledge about the annual statement of account of the gram panchayats. It was observed that elected women representatives were more ignorant than their counterparts regarding awareness on the annual statement account.

Table 4.12: Awareness of the elected representatives about the utilisation certificate placed in Gram Sabha

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	20(6.3)	21(6.6)	24(7.5)	21(6.6)	18(5.6)	22(6.9)	25(7.8)	30(9.4)	181(56.6)
No	9(2.8)	17(5.3)	13(4.6)	15(4.6)	16(5)	21(6.6)	9(2.8)	14(4.4)	114(35.6)
Can't say	4(1.2)	9(2.8)	3(0.9)	4(1.2)	0	3(0.9)	0	2(0.6)	25(7.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The utilisation certificate must place for approval in the Gram Sabha meeting. Then only the funds would release for work. This certificate was sent to the block development officer (BDO) to release the fund for the developmental works. Table 4.12 presents that 181(56.6 percent) elected representatives replied that the programme's utilisation certificates had been placed in the Gram Sabha. Around 35 percent of the elected representatives said they had never heard about the utilisation certificates placed in the Gram Sabha. The questions arise who and why issues the utilisation certificate, the purpose of the certificate, and the importance of the certificates. Regarding these questions, most of the elected representatives were unaware of it. The study revealed that more percentage of the SCs, STs and women elected representatives were aware of the utilisation certificates. The majority of unreserved men elected representatives had aware of it. The importance of the utilisation certificate is that it needs to submit to the block development officer (BDO), then only the subsequent funds will be released for the development work. Due to a lack of training on the UC, most ward members were not aware of it. Concerning the utilisation certificate(UC), the sarpanches have known it, but they do not want to share it with the ward members for apprehending open corruption. The people's participation is significantly less in the Gram Sabha, so raising questions about the account details, UC, the financial budget was rare. More percentage of the women representative from the SC/ST category were not well aware of the details and procedure of utilisation certificate. According to most ward members, the sarpanches and the panchayat executive officer (PEO) do not want to share this information with ward members and the people because they make some money and profit from the budget and accounts. It was found that there is a need to be improved transparency and accountability in the gram panchayats because 45 percent of the elected representatives had no idea about the utilisation certificate for the funds. Only getting the awareness of the functioning of the Gram Sabha would not produce a substantive representation.

4.10 The Functional Process of the Gram Sabha

Table 4.2: Awareness of the elected representatives about the agenda for the Gram Sabha

Agenda Making	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a Large extent	7(2.2)	10(3.1)	9(2.8)	7(2.2)	7(2.2)	14(4.4)	15(4.7)	24(7.5)	93(29.1)
To a Some extent	15(4.7)	20(6.2)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	15(4.7)	18(5.6)	19(5.9)	16(5)	135(42.2)
Not at all	11(3.4)	17(5.3)	13(4.1)	19(5.9)	12(3.8)	14(4.4)	0	6(1.9)	92(28.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Only sarpanches were aware of setting the agenda for the Gram Sabha meetings. In most cases, the PEO of the gram panchayat sets the agenda; in some cases, both sarpanch and PEO had prepared Gram Sabha's agenda. Table 4.13 shows that 135(42.2 percent) elected representatives said that they were aware of it to some extent; they received the notice with the agenda of the Gram Sabha. 93(29.1 percent) of the elected representatives said they had comprehended it to a large extent for the Gram Sabha. In contrast, 92(28.8 percent) respondents alleged that they did not know about the agenda of the Gram Sabha. In case of the large extent of the understanding women leaders knows about the agenda, less percentage of the SCs (3.1 percent) and STs(2.2 percent) gram panchayat leaders than OBCs (4.4 percent) and URs (7.5 percent) leaders who knew the agenda-setting for the gram sabha in the gram panchayat. In order to make a clear understanding of the people, the agenda of the Gram Sabha should be written in clear and straightforward language. If the elected representatives did not know about this, the ordinary villagers would get a very poor idea of the gram sabha agenda. It was clear from the interview that the gram panchayat did not consult the elected representatives and the villagers before setting Gram Sabha's meeting agendas. Some ward members revealed that the district administration prepares the Gram Sabha agenda through the block development office (BDO) in the form of notices and posters. After that, the PEO and sarpanch develop the agenda is based on the suggestion of the BDO.

Decentralised governance through that gram panchayat, which was revived after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, needs more substantive participation of the representatives and the villagers. However, the present study found that decentralised planning was not happening; only the government official and sarpanches prepared the gram panchayat agenda without the involvement of the ward members.

Table 4.14: Quorum fulfil in Gram Sabha

Answers	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Yes	37(11.6)	38(11.9)	44(13.8)	46(14.4)	165(51.6)
No	39(12.2)	38(11.9)	33(10.3)	32(10)	142(44.4)
Do not know	4(1.2)	4(1.2)	3(0.9)	2(0.6)	13(4.1)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Section-5(2)(a) of Orissa Gram Panchayat Act(OGPA),1965 stipulated that the quorum for the meeting of the Gram Sasan(Gram Sabha) shall be one-tenth members of the Gram Sasan. The interview found that 165(51.6 percent) of the elected representatives affirmed that the Gram Sabha quorum had been fulfilled. (Table 4.14) Even 13(4.1 percent) of the elected representatives had no idea of quorum. 142(44.4 percent) of elected representatives repudiated that quorum had not been fulfilled in the Gram Sabha. Most elected representatives complained that the gram panchayat's peon collected the village's signature after the Gram Sabha meeting. More percentage of the SCs (12.2 percent) and STs (11.9 percent) elected representatives than OBCs (10.3 percent) and URs (10 percent) categories condemned that the quorum of the gram sabha was not fulfilled.

Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule 2014 mentioned that quorum under rule number 3 clause(a) should include one-third of members present as women. Otherwise, the meeting shall adjourn for next time. This study finds that women's participation in the Gram Sabha is less compared to men. Even one-third of women member's participation had not been fulfilled in the Gram Sabha. Some ward members revealed that the quorum had not been fulfilled because of lack of information or notice, meeting place, frequently adjourned in the absence of the required quorum and unfair decision-making processes etc., are responsible for the differential participation of people in the Gram Sabha.

Table 4.15: Place and time of convenience to all to conduct Gram Sabha

Answers	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Yes	45(14.1)	51(15.9)	52(16.2)	55(17.2)	203(63.4)
No	35(10.9)	29(9.1)	28(8.8)	25(7.8)	117(36.6)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Rule 3 (7) of the Odisha Gram Panchayat (2014) states that Gram Sabha meetings should be organised at a conspicuous place where people can conveniently participate in fulfilling the quorum. Table 4.15 presents 208 (68 percent) responded that it was convenient for them and people to attend the Gram Sabha: time and place to conduct the

Gram Sabha in respective gram panchayat. However, 98(32 percent) respondents replied that they had an issue with the time and place where gram sabha was conducted. The women elected representatives expressed that they had to go a long way to attend the Gram Sabha meeting without male support. The labour class elected representatives faced a problem participating because they lost their daily income. Women elected representatives of the Gram Sabha were also absent due to the burden of family work. The SCs, STs, OBCs, and URs elected representatives had faced the problem in attending the Gram Sabha meeting, and their percentages are 35(10 percent), 29(9.1 percent), 25(8.8 percent), and 25(7.8 percent), respectively. According to most respondents, the blocks administration decided the time and date of these gram sabha meetings.

Table 4.16: Process of decision making in the gram sabha

Decision making in the Gram Sabha	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Consensus	52(16.2)	62(19.40)	65(20.3)	69(21.6)	248(77.5)
Voting	0	0	0	0	0
Lottery Method	0	0	0	0	0
Not Ending with final decision	28(8.8)	18(5.6)	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	72(22.5)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The study found that consensus is the method by which most decisions come to final approval. Table 4.16 shows that 248(77.5 percent) o elected representatives said that the gram panchayat's final decision reached the consensus method. On the other hand, 72(22.5) elected representatives revealed that the Gram Sabha session ended with no definitive conclusion or decision. Lottery and voting methods can be used to come final decision in the Gram Sabha. Rule 3 (sub-rule13) of the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule,2014, states that the voting or lottery method can transact the Gram Sabha meeting, and no proxy vote is allowed. However, the Gram Sabha meeting used no voting and lottery methods. Only sarpanches and panchayat executive officers play a major role in the coming final decision in the Gram Sabha. Sometimes upper caste people influence the final decision of the Gram Sabha. The researcher found that the panchayat executive officer recorded the Gram Sabha meeting's business (discussion) proceedings and final decisions. The minutes of the proceedings are entered in a book to keep for inspection of the members. The primary purpose of the Gram Sabha is to prevail in the deliberative democracy in the local governance. However, the study found that decision made by a dialogue between consensus decision-making and representative democracy in the Gram

Sabha is that the sarpanch, the PEO and some influential villages always took the major decision in the Gram Sabha for their favour. Moreover, the research found that the block development officer was also involved in the decision making at the grass-root level.

Table 4.17: Resolution passed in the Gram Sabha and followed for the implementation in the gram panchayat (A+B)

Passed of the Resolution(A)	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Yes	73(22.8)	76(23.8)	76(23.8)	78(24.4)	303(94.7)
No	0	0	0	0	0
Unaware	7(2.2)	4(1.2)	4(1.2)	2(0.6)	17(5.3)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)
Resolution Follow or Not(B)	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Yes	20(6.2)	23(7.2)	31(9.7)	27(8.4)	101(31.6)
No	13(4.1)	13(4.1)	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	40(12.5)
Followed Some Activity	47(14.7)	44(13.8)	41(12.8)	47(14.7)	179(55.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table (A) data 4.17 shows that 303 (94.7 percent) elected representatives claimed that they are aware of the various resolutions passed in the Gram Sabha. Considering resolution follow for the implementation, 101(31.6percent) elected representatives answered that the resolution had been followed whatever they passed in the Gram Sabha. Table(B) presents that 40(12.5 percent) respondents' alleged resolution had not been followed what they passed in the Gram Sabha. Besides, 179(55.9 percent) elected representatives claimed that some of Gram Sabha's resolutions had been followed to implement their village. Sarpanch and the Panchayat Executive Officer prepare the gram panchayat's plan as per the BDO's direction from Block Panchayat. They diverted the plan passed in the Gram Sabha; thus, some resolutions were not followed. In some cases, the resolution was passed to work in the location of the lower caste people. Later, the upper castes people were influenced not to follow the passed resolution properly. The gram panchayat needs to devolve more power from the state government to accomplish the developmental work. People's participation was low in the Gram Sabha; thus, the Gram Sabha's outcome was unknown to the villagers. More people participate in the Gram Sabha, more the work passed in the resolution of the meeting would execute with demand-driven.

SC women ward member of the Magurbeda gram panchayat complained that installing a new tube well at their Dalit Basti was passed in the resolution at the gram sabha, but

later, it was altered to install it at the OBC Basti. As a result, she has lamented that the post of the ward members was as a namesake.

Table 4.18: Satisfaction level of the elected representatives for the functioning of the Gram Sabha

Satisfaction level for GS	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Strongly satisfied	2(0.6)	3(0.9)	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	4(1.2)	6(1.9)	4(1.2)	10(3.1)	33(10.3)
satisfied	19(5.9)	20(6.2)	24(7.5)	21(6.6)	12(3.8)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	16(5)	144(45)
undecided	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	0	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	0	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	12(3.8)
Not satisfied	9(2.8)	21(6.6)	12(3.8)	15(4.7)	14(4.4)	20(6.2)	14(4.4)	18(5.6)	123(38.4)
strongly not satisfied	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	0	0	8(2.5)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 4.18 shows the elected representative's satisfaction level with the functioning of the Gram Sabha process. Out of the study's sampling, 33 (10.3 percent) respondents replied that they had been strongly satisfied with the Gram Sabha process—those who were strongly satisfied, most of them are the sarpanches of the gram panchayat. Moreover, 144(45 percent) respondents stated they were satisfied with the Gram Sabha process and its functioning. However, 123(38.4 percent) respondents reacted that they were not satisfied with the Gram Sabha process. Considering the dissatisfaction with the Gram Sabha's function, the reasons placed: the resolution did not follow for the action; consensus is the only method to reach the final decision without applying the lottery method; for women elected representatives, their husband attend in it so that they are unhappy with Gram Sabha; it is a long-distance for the women member to attend in it. Notably, women elected representatives' voices are not recognised what they raised the issue is another reason for their dissatisfaction with the Gram Sabha. Moreover, some respondents reacted that the upper caste and the panchayat executive officer dominated Gram Sabha's functioning. Therefore, the intrinsic value of participation was not achieved; they did not become inner satisfaction because their demand and voice in the Gram Sabha were undermined.

The reasons are the low education qualification features, low economic status, low caste status, and lack of training on this, domestic work for women elected representative, making them less assertive in the Gram Sabha; thus, they became unsatisfied with the Gram Sabha process. In addition, one ward member said that "the socio-cultural factors,

particularly the mindset of being ruled and the inability to resist and the consequences of not questioning also play a role in the people's low participation in the Gram Sabha". According to the study's findings, elected representatives believe that these meetings are dominated by a small group of people close to the sarpanch and that the benefits of welfare programmes are mainly distributed among themselves. Most of the ward members grieved that their monthly seating charge for the meeting was just 240. They felt that they were undertaking social work without an incentive in their villages. Besides, they argued that their interest in political work would be enhanced if their incentive increased in the gram panchayat. *OBC male Sarpanch of the Malisira Gram Panchayat argued that the 14th CFC grants and the 4th state SFC grants were insufficient to meet the demanded work in the gram panchayat.* But, the study found that the sarpanch has a three-tier building with a tractor and other four-wheelers vehicles; it seems that a wealthy family in the village. The study inference that most of the sarpanches in the study areas belonged to wealthy families. Consequently, they did not worry about the monthly incentive in the gram panchayats.

4.11 The Critic of the Researcher on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha

Gram Sabha(GS) forums promise to establish democracy at the grassroots, enabling socio-economic inclusion, involvement in development planning and implementation, and guaranteeing panchayat responsibility to the people. The way GS operates in Odisha states demonstrates a huge gap between what it could accomplish and what it really does. The majority of investigation findings show that GS has so far failed to fulfil its duty and role as a deliberative body, a participatory forum, or an accountability mechanism. GS might have been a means of ensuring that people, particularly the marginalised, are incorporated into local self-government institutions and that the representative structure acts in accordance with their formal representation and the plural interests of the constituency in question. However, it is less practised; it fails to live up to many "deliberative democracies". As a result, one should abandon the romantic notion of GS. The study found that the elected representatives raised the question at the Gram Sabha on various developmental issues for their villages, which wrote it down in the minute book and passed the resolution in the meeting. It was observed that the passed resolutions in the Gram Sabha were not put into action. Consequently, the elected representatives had been unsatisfied with the function of the Gram Sabha. Here, the elected representatives had involved in the function of as descriptive and symbolic representatives. Still, it demonstrated some activities that had passed resolutions, and it was implemented; thus,

they hoped that the villages' developmental issue could be solved through the Gram Sabha. Information education communication (IEC) activities should be channelised, and the state should initiate adequate support to strengthen the Gram Sabha. Moreover, the ward members should be given incentives to develop their interests; thus, they can mobilise the people to participate in the Gram Sabha. The panchayat executive officer(PEO) should be a recorder, not a decision-maker, and the panchayat raj institution (PRI) members and the villagers should make plans. The bureaucratic control over the Gram Sabha should be removed. Then only it may achieve local democracy through the Gram Sabha. The participation of women, SCs and STs in the Gram Sabha was not emphasised by the gram panchayats; therefore, the state government should take the initiative to mobilise such people to part in the functioning of the Gram Sabha. The ward members representing the standing committee and the groups need to be activated and constantly assisted them so that they can play their roles effectively. An active ward member who is able to address the issues of his or her constituency at the appropriate level almost reflects the views of the people represented. Therefore, there may be no need for people to visit the panchayat office on a regular basis or even attend frequent Gram Sabhas.

CHAPTER-5

Participation, Awareness and Challenges Faced by the Elected Representatives in the Governance Process of the Gram Panchayats

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the awareness of the elected representatives about the budget and source of the fund received in the gram panchayat. In addition, it enunciates what the challenges faced by the elected representatives in the governance process of the gram panchayat are. The concept of governance is the way those with power use that power. A definition of that is “governance is the whole of public as well as private interactions have taken to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities. It includes the formulation and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for institutions that enable them”(Kooiman and Bavinck, 2005). Governance must be citizen-centred, citizen-friendly, and citizen-oriented. In order to bring about new improvements in the structure, the governance system must implement the requisite changes, keeping in mind the current needs of the day-to-day people. To achieve economic development and social justice in rural villages, good governance is essential at the gram panchayat level to deliver public service. Good governance is crucial to social inclusion and can only ensure the public's involvement and accountability through panchayats that are constitutionally mandated local democratic institutions. The Gram Panchayat's governance process is that the elected representatives and other stakeholders of Gram Panchayats need to be made familiar with the power and funds of it, the process to be followed for ensuring democratic decision making, participatory planning and effective implementation of the scheme for local development, prudent management of public funds, day-to-day office management and follow the social audit for the accountability to the villagers. The central government has been ensured the devolution of the power, resources and other power transferred to the gram panchayats vary significantly across the states. Panchayat is a state subject; the Odisha state has its own Panchayat Act and Rule governing the essential process followed by the gram panchayat. Thus, this chapter analyses the gram panchayat's governing process, issues and challenges faced by the elected representatives, awareness of the elected representatives on the various schemes and policies, role and function of the standing committee, the process of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan, and the functional role of the elected representatives.

5.2 Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Monthly Meetings of the Gram Panchayat

The monthly meeting is essential functioning of the gram panchayat. According to the gram panchayat rule, 2014, the gram panchayat should organise every month a meeting with all elected representatives to transact the activities for the rural development. In the field study, all the elected representatives agreed that they regularly attended the gram panchayat's monthly meeting. Along with women elected members, their families accompany them to the gram panchayat during the meeting but stay outside the office. Only elected representatives of the two gram panchayat complained that the monthly meeting of the GP was not held regularly. They criticised that the sarpanch could not conduct the meeting in their respective gram panchayats.

5.3 Involvement of Elected Representatives in the Inspection of Record Maintenance

It is mentioned in the previous chapter that around 97 percent of the elected representatives are first time elected in gram panchayat election. Moreover, their families members were also never elected to the gram panchayat. The SC, ST, and OBC representatives entered into the gram panchayat's administration and governance process on account of the reservation system of state and central act.

Table 5.1: Regularity of record checking by elected representatives

Register Checking	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Always	6(1.9)	12(3.8)	13(4.1)	10(3.1)	13(4.1)	14(4.4)	21(6.6)	20(6.2)	109(34.1)
Sometimes	13(4.1)	17(5.3)	13(4.1)	10(3.1)	15(4.7)	18(5.6)	10(3.1)	19(5.9)	115(35.9)
Never	14(4.4)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	20(6.2)	6(1.9)	14(4.4)	3(0.9)	7(2.2)	96(30)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019 -2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 of section-22(a) states that it is compulsory duties that every member of the gram panchayat shall access during the office hour the records of the gram panchayat after giving due notice to the sarpanch. Thus, this duty is of ward members to check all registers of the Gram Panchayats. However, the researcher asked the sarpanch that all registers and records were kept under the (PEO)Panchayat Executive Officer's control. Table 5.1 displays that out of the total sample, 109(34.1) respondents replied that they had checked the gram panchayat registers. 115(35.9 percent) elected representatives had checked registers sometimes in the gram panchayat. Nevertheless,

96(30 percent) respondents had not been checked the gram panchayat records. It observed that approximately, among the reserved category, both men and women elected representatives the same percentage check the gram panchayat registers. Compared with OBC and UR elected representatives, the SC and ST leaders were less percentage who had been checked the registers of the gram panchayat. The study shows that more percentage of the UR and OBC male elected representatives were active in checking the registers of the gram panchayats. *OBC and SC women members of the Rengali Gram Panchayat said that they forcefully checked the registers of the gram panchayat, which the PEO always keep the registers in the locked cupboard. Sometimes the PEO was hesitant to show the registers to them.*

Reasons for the low frequency of register checking are bureaucratic control that the PEO was so dominant that he controls the gram panchayat; the sarpanch raj is that the sarpanch's dominance in the gram panchayat; low educational qualification may be a factor for not checking; gendering issue is another factor that most of the women elected who did not do the same. Other reasons are low caste status, not having the proper training on administrative activities, resulting in less assertion among them in the gram panchayat. Moreover, the husbands of the women elected representatives participated in the gram panchayat's functioning; therefore, women representatives were unaware of the grant. Checking the gram panchayat registers is their right, stated in the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act; however, this activity does not happen in the gram panchayats.

5.4 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on the 14th Central Finance Commission (14th CFC)

The 14th Central Finance Commission (14th CFC) has awarded Rs. 200,092 crore to the Gram Panchayats (GP) across the country for 2015-20 for social and economic development. Ninety per cent of this is provided as a basic grant and ten per cent as a performance grant in the gram panchayat. (Centre for Budget and Policy study, 2018) The 14th central finance commission, the 4th state finance commission, MGNREGA and other development flagship programmes directly have transferred the fund to the gram panchayat.

Table 5.2: Awareness of the elected representatives about the 14th Central Finance Commission grants

Awareness of CFC	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	5(1.6)	7(2.2)	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	10(3.1)	17(5.3)	17(5.3)	21(6.6)	98(30.6)
To some extent	8(2.5)	14(4.4)	11(3.4)	6(1.9)	14(4.4)	8(2.5)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	97(30.3)
Not at all	20(6.2)	26(8.1)	19(5.9)	23(7.2)	10(3.1)	21(6.6)	0	6(1.9)	125(39.1)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019 -2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

All sarpanches were aware of the 14th Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants. However, not all ward members were conscious of that. Table 5.2 exhibits that out of 320 elected representatives, 98(30.6 percent) panchayat leaders had familiar with these grants to a large extent. It is worthwhile to mention that 97(30.3) elected representatives had aware of the grants to some extent. On the other hand, a significant percentage of respondents, 125(39.1 percent), did not know about this grant. In the context of no knowledge about the 14th finance commission grants, more percentage of the SCs and STs leaders were unfamiliar with this fund than OBCs and URs leaders in the study areas. This is a central grant for utilising the governance process of the GP where more percentage of the URs and OBCs leaders are primarily associated with this grant than the SCs and STs leaders because historically, the URs categories were more dominants in politics. First-time SCs, STs and OBCs leaders enter local politics through the reservation process; thus, they need time to learn the governing process perfectly. *Male ward members of the Kusmel Gram Panchayat reveal that the sarpanch did not share any information regarding receiving the 14th CFC grant. The PEO and Sarpanch secretly record all registers; they do not show any registers to them.*

The CFC grants use to maintain the drinking water and sanitation facilities, sewage management, village road, solid and liquid waste management, street light and other civic amenities. The 14th CFC grants were released to the gram panchayat based on two types, viz., basic grants and performance-based grants. The basic grant was devolved to each GP without condition. At the same time, panchayats must fulfil two criteria in order to obtain the performance grant. To start, they should keep audited annual reports for the previous two years. Second, they must demonstrate an improvement in Gram Panchayats' own revenues from the previous year. As a result, the 14th FC has to stay true to its core mandate of ensuring proper accountability of local finances and service delivery by focusing on implementing and delivering an effective auditing and accounting system in

Gram Panchayats. For the year 2016-17 (6209 GPs), the 14th central finance commission grants and the 4th state finance commission grants increased from Rs. 22.09 lakh to Rs. 49.21 lakh per Gram Panchayat, depending on whether it is in a scheduled or nonscheduled area, excluding the performance grant. (Centre for budgeting and policies studies, 2018) The less awareness of the elected representatives of this grant is because of the lack of capacity building training lack of transparency; the sarpanches and the PEO know about this grant, but they do not share this with the ward members; Low literacy among the elected representatives and low social status prevents them from becoming assertive regarding the 14th Central Finance Commission Grant. Approximately Rs. 22 lakh devolved per GP in an annual year¹, only basic grants. The panchayat executives officer also did not share with them. The sarpanch apprehends that if the ward members know the amount, they may question the expenditure. To avoid this question, the sarpanch and the PEO do not disclose this amount how much is the share getting from this grant. In addition, low education and lack of adequate training of the PRIs members are the prime cause for unawareness of these funds details. Even though the 14th CFC fund is a major central grant and the Gram Panchayat's activities depend upon these funds, most ward members and naib sarpanches were not aware of it. Henceforth, a lack of transparency and accountability was found in the functioning of the Gram Panchayats.

5.5 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the 4th State Central Finance Commission Grants

Every State government is required to create a state finance commission with the mandate to review Gram Panchayats and municipalities' financial condition and make recommendations to distribute the net proceeds of taxes, levies, duties, tolls, and other revenue collected by the state between the State government and local self-government institutions. It determines the taxes, duties, tolls, and other revenue collected by the state; and determine the taxes, duties, tolls, and other revenue collected by the state between the State government and local self-government institutions. The State Finance Commission also suggests that local governments take action to strengthen their financial services. Every five years, it is reconstituted. It needs to submit the result to the State Legislature for review and approval. The amount of money devolved to Gram Panchayats based on their recommendations varies significantly between states. The States' discretionary control in the devolution of functions and functionaries to Gram Panchayats

¹ The researcher estimated this from <https://www.egramswaraj.gov.in/approveActionPlan.do>

is one of the key reasons for this variation. Approximately each gram panchayat receives Rs.10 lakh per GP each year under the 4th SFC in Odisha². This grant uses for the piped water supply, street light GP, staff quarter (GP), staff quarter(PS), maintenance of capital assets GP, capital assets for revenue generation of Gram Panchayat and incentive grants.

Table 5.3: Awareness of the elected representatives on the 4th State Finance Commission Grants

Awareness of SFC	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	5(1.6)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	9(2.8)	15(4.7)	14(4.4)	73(22.8)
To some extent	7(2.2)	11(3.4)	13(4.1)	9(2.8)	15(4.7)	12(3.8)	18(5.6)	22(6.9)	107(33.4)
Not at all	21(6.6)	28(8.8)	19(5.9)	23(7.2)	13(4.1)	25(7.8)	1(0.3)	10(3.1)	140(43.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The state government do not provide the training and capacity building to the elected representatives regarding the management of the funds, so the majority 140(43.8 percent) of the respondents had no idea of the 4th state finance commission. (Table 5.3)The reasons are many: gender discrimination and their husband are attending the gram panchayat's work instead of them; not having proper training about this grant; the sarpanches and the PEO controlling the gram panchayat without sharing any information with them; therefore, they did not know about this grants. Fortunately, most of the sarpanches and a few ward members were aware of this state grant for the gram panchayat, viz. 73(22.8 percent) respondents know the grant to a large extent. Compared with UR elected representatives, the SC, ST and OBC leaders had less knowledge about the 4th state finance commission grant. Most of the UR leaders were well aware of it. The study shows that 5(1.6 percent) SC, 8(2.5percent) ST, 6(1.9 percent) OBC Gram Panchayat leaders were well aware of this fund, whereas 15(4.7 percent) of the URs leaders knew well about these funds. Further,107(33.4 percent) elected representatives partially knew the 4th State Finance Commission grant because they are frequently associated with the PEO and sarpanch of the gram panchayat. In local democracy, it is also crucial for public accountability and transparency, particularly in light of efficient and equitable local administration service. In this study, the aim of the local democracy is a democratic system, which is relatively accessible to the disadvantaged and can potentially democratic participation was failed to obtain in the gram panchayat. The financial decentralisation,

² The researcher estimated this from <https://www.egramswaraj.gov.in/approveActionPlan.do>

to some extent, was devolved to the gram panchayat and its ward members, who did not become aware of its utilisation and other details. Then, how can the local democracy achieve social development? Decentralisation could not make proper awareness among panchayats leaders in respect to funds details and the source of funds which the Gram Panchayats have been received.

5.6 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Annual Budget of the Gram Panchayat Grants

An annual financial statement of income and expenditure is referred to as a budget. Budgeting is the process of deciding how to mobilise funds and which items of work to consider, how much each of them costs, how to prioritise them, and finally, how to include them in the budget while taking into account the available funds and applicable rules. It consists of the actual (or revised estimates) of total receipts under each source. The Gram Panchayats are in charge of identifying socio-economic development projects in education, health, water supply, irrigation, road, drainage, and plantation and mobilising funds to complete the projects. Furthermore, they must prioritise these initiatives based on the needs and desires of the local community. They would spend money on maintenance of existing infrastructure and public services and spending money on new projects and works. Thus, the elected representatives need to know to estimate the annual budget of their gram panchayat.

Table 5.4: Awareness of the elected representatives about the Annual Budget for GPDP

Annual Budget for GPDP	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
to a large extent	9(2.8)	4(1.2)	3(0.9)	5(1.6)	6(1.9)	6(1.9)	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	59(18.4)
To some extent	12(3.8)	12(3.8)	11(3.4)	10(3.1)	10(3.1)	17(5.3)	13(4.1)	21(6.6)	106(33.1)
Not at all	12(3.8)	31(9.7)	26(8.1)	25(7.8)	18(5.6)	23(7.2)	6(1.9)	14(4.4)	155(48.4)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020 GPDP- Gram Panchayat Development Plan, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 5.4 presents 155(48.4 percent) elected representatives who answered that they had not been aware of the gram panchayat's annual budget prepared in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). Further, 106(33.1 percent) respondents replied that they knew about the annual budget to some extent, which means they knew partially about the budget. Positively, 59(18.4 percent) elected representatives stated that they were aware of the annual budget to a large extent. However, due to lack of training, lack of education, and lack of interest, most elected representatives had been unknown about the budget.

Budgeting is a complicated business needs proper training. Therefore, a government must impart training more effectively to the elected representatives. The elected representatives from the reserved categories are mostly ward members who did not know the annual budget of the GP, which indicates that the deliberative democracy and participatory democracy has failed in local bodies. The study found that only bureaucrats and sarpanches manage the fund details of the Gram Panchayats. However, the naib sarpanches and ward members were ignorant about the budget. Disclosures of the details of the budget in any meeting of the gram panchayat is the accountability of the local body; however, the study shows that around 50 percent of the Gram Panchayat members had no idea about the budget of the gram panchayat. The study found that SC, ST, and OBC elected representatives are more ignorant than URs members about the budget details. Without knowing the budget details, there is no possible way to prepare the GPDP. In the governance process, knowledge about the budget is essential for the elected representatives, which was not found in the present study. *OBC Women sarpanch of the Barapudugia Gram Panchayat said she do not have any idea about the budget of the GP, and her husband deals with all activities in the villages. ST male ward members same GP lamented that sarpanch told him that the GP had not been any grants from the government, hence, no need to know about the budget details.*

5.7 Training and Capacity Building Programmes for the Elected Representatives

Training is a crucial component of human resource development. Training is described as a trainer's teaching/learning activities to effectively assist an organisation in performing a specific task or job. People's efficiency and effectiveness at work are improved by providing them with the practical information, skills, and attitudes required to complete assigned responsibilities at a high level of success.

The State Institute Of Rural Development And Panchayat Raj (SIRD and PR) continues to organise training programmes for Zilla Parishad (ZP) members, Panchayat Samiti(PS) members, Sarpanches, and ward members through DRDA with the help of collaborative partner organisations (CPOs) in multi-location mode across the state with Project Chief, district rural development agency(DRDA) as the District Training Director in an attempt to cover all elected representatives of 3-tier PRIs at least three times on different modules during their tenure(SIRD &PR, Bhubaneswar, Annual Report, 2018-2019). However, in the annual report of the SIRD, Bhubaneswar says that only three-time training to the

elected representatives during their tenure is not sufficient to understand the gram panchayat governance process.

The members of the gram panchayats need to be educated, motivated and trained about their rights and responsibilities. Considering the wide divergence and heterogeneity elements in their social, economic, and educational background, it may be difficult for the government. Moreover, 50 percent of women members, traditionally homemakers and mothers, assume a new role of decision-maker for welfare and development activities. This will imperatively call for innovative training strategies and approaches (Palanithurai, 2001). Sarpanches and the ward members of the gram panchayat are not aware of all the rural development programmes and schemes. They know only a few programmes from the officials; their needs are increasing, which needs enormous resources. To govern effectively in the GP, training is essential for implementing the various programmes and policies in rural areas.

Table 5.5: The elected representatives's attendance for the training programmes conducted by the SIRD and PR

Training Received	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
One time	11(3.4)	17(5.3)	16(5)	14(4.4)	14(4.4)	20(6.20)	7(2.2)	23(7.2)	122(38.1)
Two time	19(5.9)	23(7.2)	20(6.2)	19(5.9)	20(6.2)	18(5.6)	27(8.4)	21(6.6)	167(52.2)
No training	3(0.9)	7(2.2)	4(1.2)	7(2.2)	0	8(2.5)	0	2(0.6)	31(9.7)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 5.5 reveals that 122(38.1 percent) elected representatives affirmed that they had attended the training programme only once after two years of becoming the elected representatives. Moreover, 162(52percent) elected representatives stated they had participated in the training programme two times. However, 31(9.7 percent) respondents said they had not participated in any training programme. It is observed that women elected representatives who did not attend the training programme because of domestic work, migration to other states for livelihood did not receive any information or notice for attending the training programme. Five organisations which provide training are: the training was imparted in Loisinga by NICT, Bhubaneswar; in Balangir block, the training was given by MP.CON limited, Bhopal; in Gudevella Block, the training was provided by Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, Bhubaneswar; in Muribahal Block, the training was accomplished by Service Centre for Disable, Titilagarh; in Bangomunda

Block, the training was provided by Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, Bhubaneswar.

Two-time training is not sufficient for the elected representative in two years of the tenure. They became elected representatives in March 2017, and the interview was conducted in March 2019. In between, they got trained only two times in this period. It seems that training in Odisha has not been imparted well, and essential topics in the gram panchayat have not been covered for the representatives of PRIs who determine the rural development in the villages. In order to manage panchayats, capacity building or training is essential at the grassroots institution. However, the study found a lack of continuous training for the elected representative; thus, the leaders were not enhanced administrative skills in the panchayats. *OBC male naib-sarpanch of the Mirdhapali gram panchayat said that only two times training did not cover the gram panchayat's basic function. He argued that they should be imparted the training in terms of the governance of the gram panchayat at least three times a year. He lamented that the training on the budget was imparted to them, which needed to incorporate into the training schedule.*

Table 5.6: Various subjects learned by the elected representative at the training centres

Learn the Subject from the Training Centre	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
GPDP	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	1(0.3)	4(1.2)	15(4.7)
Role and Responsibilities of ER	9(2.8)	12(3.8)	14(4.4)	8(2.5)	12(3.8)	17	5(1.6)	15(4.7)	92(28.8)
Budgeting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Both GPDP & Role of ER	19(5.9)	23(7.2)	21(6.6)	20(6.2)	20(6.2)	18(5.6)	27(8.4)	21(8.4)	169(52.8)
Forgetting Subject	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	0	3(0.9)	1(0.3)	0	1(0.3)	4(1.2)	13(4.1)
Not attended	3(0.9)	7(2.2)	4(1.2)	7(2.2)	0	8(2.5)	0	2(0.6)	31(9.7)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020 *GPDP-Gram Panchayat Development Plan, ER-Elected Representative, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Specifically, the elected representatives were trained on the two subjects: the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) and the elected representatives' roles and responsibilities. The SIRD and PR, Bhubaneswar, prepared the training agenda focusing on above mentioned two subjects. Table 5.6 shows what the ERs learned in the training programme; 169 (52.8 percent) elected representatives recollected that they had learned both the GPDP and the role and responsibilities of the elected representatives. 15(4.7 percent) respondents recalled that they had acquired only the knowledge of the GPDP.

Further, 92(28.8) respondents were reminded that they had learned about the role and responsibilities. Unfortunately, 13 (4.1percent) of elected representatives replied that they had been forgotten what they had learned at the training programme and 31(9.7 percent) answered that they had not attended it. Due to low education no frequent training, most elected representatives could not recollect what they learned from the training programme. Similar observation among the reserved category men and women elected representatives had the same knowledge on GPDP and elected representatives' functions. However, the majority of the women elected representatives forgot the subject of what they learned. At the training centre, the training was provided phase-wise; first, the sarpanches had been imparted, and secondly, ward members had been imparted training. There was no particular focus on SCs and STs representatives separately. Constant training is required for the PRI leaders, which does not impart by the state government.

Table 5.7: The gram panchayat guideline book received by the elected representatives

Opinions	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	30(9.4)	36(11.2)	32(10)	32(10)	28(8.8)	28(8.8)	31(9.7)	43(13.4)	260(81.3)
No	3(0.9)	11(3.4)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	18(5.6)	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	60(18.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Some elected representatives showed the panchayat guideline book in the Odia language to the researcher during the fieldwork. This book contains the chapter on the elected representative's role and responsibilities, act and rule of the gram panchayat and the governance process, different schemes and programmes, and the available government official with the gram panchayat. However, most of the elected representatives did not go through the book. The SIRD and PR Bhubaneswar prepared this book. Thus, table 5.7 presents 206(81.3 percent) elected representatives who said they had received such a book for reference. However, some of the elected representatives revealed that they had not been gone through this book in detail. Without reading this book, they cannot question the affair of the gram panchayat. Odisha Panchayat Department did not pressurise the elected representatives to read the book correctly and implement it in the field.

5.8 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Various Schemes, Programmes, Acts and Rules in the Gram Panchayat

Table 5.8: Awareness of the elected representatives on various schemes and programmes in their gram panchayat

Awareness of Schemes and Programmes	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	13(4.1)	17(5.3)	22(6.9)	10(3.1)	22(6.9)	16(5)	23(7.2)	18(5.6)	141(44.1)
To some extent	18(5.6)	28(8.8)	17(5.3)	24(7.5)	12(3.8)	25(7.8)	11(3.4)	24(7.5)	159(49.7)
Not at all	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	6(1.9)	0	5(1.6)	0	4(1.2)	20(6.3)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

There are some schemes implemented in Odisha gram panchayat level: the 14th central finance commission grants, the 4th state finance commission grants, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS), Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), Syama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission, Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin, Biju Pucca Ghar, Swaccha Bharat Mission- Grameen, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Ama Gaon Ama Bikash-New. These are some central and state-sponsored schemes implemented through the gram panchayat. A few schemes, such as the 14th central finance commission grants, the 4th state finance commission grants, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS), directly fund transferred to the gram panchayat for implementation of the gram panchayat. Other schemes the gram panchayat involved for implementation and indirectly receiving any fund from them.

Table 5.8 shows that 141(44.1 percent) elected representatives responded that they were aware of the schemes running in the gram panchayat to a large extent. Under this category, most of the sarpanches were aware of this. Similarly, 159 (49.7 percent) respondents remarked that they knew these schemes to some extent—only a few 20(6.3 percent) of the respondents could not speak about it. A similar percentage of the women elected representatives from SCs, OBCs and URs had sound knowledge about various schemes, approximately 5 per cent. Among these percentages, most of them were sarpanches. In the case of the men elected representatives, more percentage of the URs leaders than SCs, STs and OBCs gram panchayat leaders who had comprehensive knowledge about the programmes and policies implemented in the gram panchayats.

23(7.2 percent) URs male leaders knew to a large extent, whereas 13(4.1 percent) SCs, and 22(6.9 percent) STs and OBCs leaders were aware of it.

By participating in the GPs, the women leaders from marginalised communities in the GP have developed some knowledge on the welfare schemes implemented in their villages. Thus, educative participation(developmental) was manifest among the elected PRIs members in the gram panchayat. Those leaders who participated in the governance of the GP grew the developmental participation among them. The next stage is intrinsic participation among the PRIs members, which will develop gradually after getting knowledge and skill in the gram panchayat activities.

5.9 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Acts and Rules in the Gram Panchayat

Table 5.9: Awareness of the elected representatives on the Act and Rule of the gram panchayats

Awareness of the Act and Rule	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	5(1.5)	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	4(1.2)	14(4.4)	9(2.8)	40(12.5)
To some extent	18(5.6)	18(5.6)	14(4.4)	16(5)	15	14(4.4)	18(5.6)	21(6.6)	134(41.9)
Not at all	13(4.1)	27(8.4)	21(6.6)	23(7.2)	16(5)	28(8.8)	2(0.6)	16(5)	146(45.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The gram panchayat acts and rules are the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, and the Rule 1968. Subsequently, the Odisha government passed the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014, followed by all panchayat stakeholders in Odisha. The central government has passed the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, to implement the Gram Panchayat's function across the country. Odisha government has been amended the Panchayat Act and Rule as per changing time and needs of the people; it was again amended in 1994. Regarding the Acts and Rule, the Odisha government has passed the various acts and rules in the three-tier Odisha Panchayats. This study focuses on only the gram panchayat's rules and acts. Thus, the acts and rules of the Odisha gram panchayats are the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the rule 1968, Odisha Standing Committee Rule 2002, Orissa Minor Forest Produce Rule, 2002.

The question asked the elected representatives whether they knew the acts and rules of the Odisha Gram Panchayat and the central government. The majority of the sarpanches

and well-educated naib sarpanches and a few ward members said about the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act and Rule that is 12 percent of the respondents because they had gone through the Odisha gram panchayat guideline book. In table 5.9, out of 320, 146(45.6 percent) elected representatives did not speak any act and rule of the Odisha Gram Panchayat. Only 134(41.9 percent) elected leaders said they knew it to some extent; they recollect it because they attended the training and read the gram panchayat's guideline book. The study found that the URs elected representatives were more aware of the gram panchayat act and rule than SCs, STs, and the OBCs elected representatives. Historically, the URs gram panchayat leaders controlled the land properties and high status in social norm; thus, they knew through rule and act, they could control the resources of the villages. Therefore, they were actively involved in local politics. On the other hand, the SCs and STs categories historically have low education status and no control over the land properties; these factors affect their involvement in local politics.

5.10 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Roles and Responsibilities in the Gram Panchayat Activities

Table 5.10: Awareness of the elected representatives about role and responsibilities in the functioning of the GP

Awareness of role and function	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	11(3.4)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	11(3.4)	15(4.7)	12(3.8)	83(25.9)
To some extent	19(5.9)	27(8.4)	22(6.9)	21(6.6)	21(6.6)	20(6.2)	17(5.3)	26(8.1)	173(54.1)
Not at all	5(1.6)	11(3.4)	7(2.2)	11(3.4)	5(1.6)	15(4.7)	2(0.6)	8(2.5)	64(20)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Total 5.10 shows that 80 percent of the elected representatives answered that they knew their roles and responsibilities in the gram panchayat. Out of them, 83(25.9 percent) were aware of their role to a large extent; in this category, most respondents were sarpanches and naib sarpanches. Further, 173(54.1 percent) elected representatives understood their role in the gram panchayat to some extent. Conversely, 64(20 percent) respondents remained salient in their understanding of the role and responsibilities in the gram panchayat. The reasons are low literacy, lack of training, domestic work burden of women, the low remuneration of ward members, women's husbands attending the panchayat activities, their voice not being recognised in the gram panchayat and lack of interest in their activities. Thus, they do not interest to recollect their role and

responsibilities in the gram panchayat's functioning. The benefits of participation found in the study that the elected representatives become aware of their duties and roles in the gram panchayat; it is called developmental participation. The panchayat Acts provides elected representative power for inspection, inquiring into their affairs in the GP, suspension of the panchayat resolution, issuing the direction, etc., to the state government. However, such provision was hardly utilised by the elected representatives in the gram panchayats due to being unaware of their roles and duties in the functioning of the gram panchayat. More percentage of the URs categories Gram Panchayat leaders than SC, ST and OBC leaders were aware of the roles and responsibilities in the gram panchayat. Among the male elected representatives, 9(2.8percent) SC, 11(3.4 percent) and 8(2.5 percent) OBC leaders had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities of the Gram Panchayats, whereas 15(4.7 percent) of the URs GP leaders were well aware of it.

5.11 Enhancement of the Capacity Building of the Elected Representatives after Attending the Training Programmes

Table 5.11: Enhancement of the capacity building of the elected representatives after attending the training programmes

Enhances the capacity	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	27(8.4)	23(7.2)	26(8.1)	18(5.6)	31(9.7)	26(8.1)	29(9.1)	33(10.3)	213(66.6)
No	3(0.9)	17(5.3)	10(3.1)	15(4.7)	3(0.9)	12(3.8)	5(1.6)	11(3.4)	76(23.8)
Not attending	3(0.9)	7(2.2)	4(1.2)	7(2.2)	0	8(2.5)	0	2(0.6)	31(9.7)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

UNDP (2010) defines capacity as “the ability of the individuals, institutions and societies to performs functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner”. Capacity development is thereby the “process through which these abilities are obtained, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time”. Depending on the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, geographical landscape, political awareness, organisation's commitments, and individuals involved, the elected representatives' experience has differed. High literacy and political awareness, freedom women at the domestic, help enhance elected representatives' capacity building after receiving training (Venkatesu, 2016).

The gram panchayat's members have expressed that the training programme has been helped them address the gram panchayat's functioning related issue. Out of the total sample, 213(66.6 percent) respondents replied that they had gained their knowledge and assertiveness after attending the training programme. (Table 5.11) However, 76(23.8 percent) respondents alleged that they had not enhanced and motivated their capacity to manage the gram panchayat. This attitude may be cultivated from the lack of interest, the lacuna in the training strategies, and the lack of motivational speech at the training programme. For the reserved women representatives, they need special training. Some ward members said they had difficulty in understanding because of the complicated method of the training programme. In addition, some SC and ST women ward members had a problem travelling a long distance to reach the training centre. The elected representatives had not received the training regarding the schemes and programmes, budgeting, gender issue, child and education, and health care issues. They have not trained on resources management and social audit programmes, essential for running the gram panchayat's administration.

5.12 The Work Assigned to the Gram Panchayat for Developmental Activities

Gram Panchayat implements various developmental work³ in Odisha: general provision for maintenance of Tube wells, construction of new tubewell, water tanker for water supply during summer to the water scarcity in the villages, purchase of bleaching powder, lime for bleaching and cleaning of water tanks, construction of crematorium, installation of street light, construction of bathing step with dress changing room, repair and maintenance of GP office, completion of GP office Gate and boundary, construction of market complex(Stall), cleaning of the street of villages (fortnightly), cleaning of Schools Anganwadi centres area (Weekly), awareness camp for SBM/Palli Sabha/Gram Sabha etc., honorarium to Self Employee Mechanic (SEM)/Addl. SEM, construction of School Boundary, Purchase of cleaning materials, equipment, brooms, etc. towards operation and maintenance time to time, and organisation of Health Check-up Camp, construction of small culvert on Gram Panchayat Road, improvement of Pisciculture tank, and construction of Kalyan Mandap,

³ See priority wise activity details, Retrieval from [https://www. egramswaraj.gov.in/a](https://www.egramswaraj.gov.in/a) , the GP implements various work through the elected representatives such as install tubewell, repair culvert, drain, Pond and other sanitation projects.

The gram panchayat's sectoral⁴ works are administrative & technical support, drinking water, family welfare, maintenance of community system, markets and fairs, poverty alleviation programme, roads and transport, rural electrification, and sanitation. Therefore, the gram panchayats were allocated with the untied fund to implement these works based on the said sectoral work.

5.12.1 Welfare and Developmental Works Initiated by Elected Representatives

Table 5.12: The elected representatives demand various developmental work in their village

Demanded Works	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Demanded PMAY-G for deserved unlisted household					
Yes	52(16.2)	54(16.9)	48(15)	46(14.4)	198(61.9)
No	28(8.8)	26(8.1)	32(10)	34(10.6)	122(38.1)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded Pension Yojana for old age people					
Yes	54(16.9)	54(16.9)	56(17.5)	57(17.8)	221(69.1)
No	26(8.1)	26(8.1)	24(7.5)	23(7.2)	99(30.9)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded MGNREGA work for the ward or village level					
Yes	63(19.7)	56(17.5)	58(18.1)	55(17.2)	232(72.5)
No	17(5.3)	24(7.5)	22(6.9)	25(7.8)	88(27.5)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded repair and improvement small infrastructure building					
Yes	47(14.7)	37(11.6)	50(15.6)	56(17.5)	190(59.4)
No	33(10.3)	43(13.4)	30(9.4)	24(7.5)	130(40.6)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded drinking water for the village					
Yes	66(20.6)	64(20)	66(20.6)	48(15)	244(76.3)
No	14(4.4)	16(5)	14(4.4)	32(10)	76(23.8)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded Health care facilities					
Yes	48(15)	36(11.2)	48(15)	55(17.2)	187(58.4)
No	32(10)	44(13.8)	32(10)	25(7.8)	133(41.6)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Demanded school education					
Yes	49(15.3)	49(15.3)	44(13.8)	50(15.6)	192(60)
No	31(9.7)	31(9.7)	36(11.2)	30(9.4)	128(40)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

⁴ The sectoral work is the categorised group of work. Retrieval from <https://www.egramswaraj.gov.in/a>

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 5.12 shows what and how elected representatives initiated developmental and welfare work in the villages; around 61 percent of the elected representatives demanded to include the desired family in the list of the housing schemes. For pension yojana, around 70 percent of the elected representatives demanded this work, and they collected the documents from the desired beneficiaries; they submitted to the gram panchayat's office and these documents to include them in the pension schemes. For MGNREGS work, around 72 percent of the elected representatives demanded this work for the villagers; they applied them to initiate this work in their village. They applied the proper channel to get MGNREGS to work in their village on behalf of the oppressed people. In order to implement developmental infrastructure work, 60 percent of the elected representatives demanded infrastructural work such as bathing ghat and small culvert, the school boundary and repairing the road of their villages. Concerning drinking water, 74 percent of the elected representatives demanded this need in the gram panchayat.

Around 60 percent of the elected representatives claimed the school boundary to provide educational development, activated the school committee, and monitored the school's mid-day meals schemes in their respective gram panchayat. Moreover, 58 percent of the elected representative claims to develop the health care facilities in their respective gram panchayat regarding health care facilities. Sarpanches and naib sarpanches of all reserved categories claimed the villagers' developmental and social welfare benefits in their respective gram panchayats. SCs, STs, and OBCs women ward members had actively demanded the village's need, indicating that they come out from the four walls of life and participate in local political signs as a political representation. The study shows that all social categories representatives had been demanded works based on rural development for their villages.

The intrinsic value of participation is that inner gratification and internal satisfaction that the person having a sense of one's own individual worth. In addition, through participation, the person develops the individual worth in community issues, and they would feel a sense of belonging to the community's betterment. The study found that demanding the developmental work for the village create intrinsic participation among

the leaders. They felt satisfied that they had demanded the developmental works for their villages.

Table 5.13: The fulfilment of the gram panchayat demand for the various activities

Demanded works had been fulfilled in the village	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
To large extent	21(6.6)	21(6.6)	21(6.6)	29(9.1)	92(28.8)
Some extent	46(14.4)	47(14.7)	49(15.3)	44(13.8)	186(58.1)
Not at all	13(4.1)	12(3.8)	10(3.1)	7(2.2)	42(13.1)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above data in table 5.13 shows that 91(28.8 percent) elected representatives fulfilled their demands raised in the gram panchayat. In this category, all sarpanches and some naib- sarpanch whose demands were fulfilled to a large extent. In addition, 186(58.1 percent) respondents indicated that they partially fulfilled their demands; it means their demands were fulfilled to some extent. However, 42(13.1 percent) elected representatives were disappointed that their claim for developmental work had not been fulfilled. By fulfilling the demanded works in the gram panchayats, the URs elected representatives who are more percentage than other social groups had been fulfilled their demanded activities in the gram panchayat. The study shows that SC, ST, and OBC elected leaders achieved their work 21(6.6 percent) in each group, whereas 29(9.1 percent) of the leaders from the URs categories fulfilled their target activities in the gram panchayats. *A male OBC ward member of the Bhalumunda Gram Panchayat argued that all ward members of the GP actively collected all documents from the eligible villagers relating to the pension scheme, food securities schemes, and the other beneficiary selection schemes. Then, they submitted it to higher authorities in order to get a welfare scheme. He claimed that they had done all assigned work on time.*

The block development officer (BDO) decides most of the planning of the gram panchayat with the prescribed guideline. As per the instruction of the BDO, the PEO and sarpanch drew the planning of the gram panchayat with the least participation of ward members and villagers. Due to the reservation provision of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, the SCs, STs and OBCs—the marginal community—were becoming the village leader and claimed the need of the village through the gram panchayat. By fulfilling the demanded work in the gram panchayat, the elected leaders

of the PRIs seemed to enhance their status in the family and the community. The women leaders are now consulted on village development after becoming elected representatives.

In some cases, they find a new self-identity as they come to be known by their own names as panchayat members rather than family identity or those of their husbands. After their demanded work had been fulfilled, substantive representation and intrinsic participation thrived among elected panchayat leaders. They felt that they had done something worth it for society.

5.13 Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Planning Process of the Gram Panchayats

Planning is the core of all development processes in the gram panchayat, whether socio-economic, cultural at the micro-level or macro level. Planning is always an essential requirement for the open flow of information and excellent resource mobility for the proper economic growth in the gram panchayat.

Table 5.14: Planning process of gram panchayats

GP Planning	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Depend on the issues	5(1.6)	6(1.9)	6(1.9)	7(2.2)	24(7.5)
Planning in Monthly meeting/ depend on the fund	32(10)	23(7.2)	27(8.4)	36(11.2)	118(36.9)
Discussion and Resolution in the gram sabha/ Through GPDP	6(1.9)	6(1.9)	11(3.4)	11(3.4)	34(10.6)
No planning, Only sarpanch and Secretary prepares	26(8.1)	31(9.7)	24(7.5)	21(6.6)	102(31.9)
Unaware	11(3.4)	14(4.4)	12(3.8)	5(1.6)	42(13.1)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

In this table 5.14 , the researcher found that 118(36.9 percent) of the respondents said that the plans had been prepared in the monthly meeting of the gram panchayat. So, it means they may indirectly participate in planning. Based on the gram panchayat's monthly meeting, they prepare a plan. These plans may change later as per the PEO and sarpanch wish and submit it to the BDO. However, 34(10.6 percent) respondents reported that the plan had been prepared based on a resolution passed in the gram sabha. Therefore, 102(31.9 percent) of the elected representatives alleged that the sarpanch and the PEO had prepared the plan without involving ward members and villagers and submitted it to the BDO office. Moreover, 42(13.1 percent) respondents alleged that they had no idea how the plan had been prepared. These elected representatives are women whose husband

participates in the functioning of the gram panchayat. As a result, they did not know about the planning in the gram panchayat. Decentralised planning rarely occurred in the gram panchayat; the study found that only bureaucrats and sarpanch made the plan without preparing the GPDP plan. The people and ward members hardly participate in the gram panchayat planning. *Two SC women ward members of the Kudasinga Gram Panchayat alleged that while preparing GPDP or yearly plan, the sarpanch and the PEO prepare all plans without involving the ward members. They felt they were elected as ward members as the namesake.*

5.14 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP)

The Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) is a participatory process in which all stakeholders work together to match people's needs and priorities with available resources. The plan focuses on a village-wide survey conducted by the villagers using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. Gram Panchayats are in charge of delivering basic services to local communities as well as resolving the vulnerabilities of the poor and oppressed. This can only be done by implementing well-thought-out plans and making effective and prudent use of available resources. The Gram Panchayat would benefit from the involvement of villagers and elected representatives in the plan planning process: Recognise the differences in the village's overall growth as well as its social and economic needs; Assess the felt needs as well as real needs of the people and identify the magnitude of development gaps and problems; Prioritise the issues and problems that the village faces; Identify financial resources that are available and adapt them to needs; Formulate a plan to resolve the issues by matching resources to needs; prepare a scheme and participatory plan for Gram Panchayat development and ensure that the GP is directly accountable to its villagers.

Last twenty-five years, the government of the India and state government released to have a constitutional decentralising planning process, and after 2015, the government of India issued the guideline of GPDP and advised the state government to devise their guideline for the GPDP. So, Odisha has devised a guideline of the GPDP, called “Ama-Goan Ama-Yojana”, that enables the planning process at the gram panchayat level. GPDP is not only a planning process and participation of elected representatives in decision making but also a process of good governance in the gram panchayat. GPDP is

a constitutional planning process where all elected representatives and the villagers of the gram panchayat make a plan with due process of felt need priority of the people. Section 44 and 45 of the Odisha Gram Panchayat, 1964 empower the gram panchayats to provide the obligation and discretionary functions such as drinking water facilities, village infrastructure development, essential service to the village, poverty alleviation programme, so on to the villagers. In this context, the GPDP should prepare to comply with these gram panchayat's functions.

Table 5.15: Awareness of the elected representatives about GPDP programme

GPDP Process	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	7(2.2)	11(3.4)	11(3.4)	9(2.8)	11(3.4)	8(2.5)	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	83(25.9)
To a some extent	20(6.2)	21(6.6)	21(6.6)	19(5.9)	16(5)	21(6.6)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	154(48.1)
Not at all	6(1.9)	15(4.7)	8(2.5)	12(3.8)	7(2.2)	17(5.3)	2(0.6)	16(5)	83(25.9)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 5.15 shows that 154(48.1 percent) elected representatives said they could understand the GPDP to some extent. Moreover, 85(25.9) respondents admitted that they are aware of it to a large extent. However, 83(25.9 percent) respondents conceded that they did not know about the GPDP. The gram panchayat follows seven-step in the process of the GPDP, which most of the elected representatives could not speak about. In 38 gram panchayat of the study area, there were no constituted planning units at the gram panchayat level. More or less equally, the SCs, STs, OBCs and URs were aware of it.

The planning unit's constitution is mandatory in the GPDP's guideline; it needs to be activated the standing committee in the gram panchayat. The planning unit consists of Sarpanch, ward members, PEO, members of the standing committee, Junior Engineer, ASHA, ICDS worker, NGO person, and SHG members. Once in training, the elected representatives came across the concept of the GPDP; due to no implementation of the GPDP, most of them forgot about this. The GPDP was not following its process in most of the GPs because of the state government's negligence in implementing the GPDP.

The majority percentage of SC, ST and OBC women elected representatives knew this to some extent. Anyhow, these women—the marginalised women—had been aware of the GPDP to some extent, indicating the participation of the planning process of reserved women representatives is gradually improving. Why did they not understand the GPDP

completely? Because they had participated in the training programme only one time. Moreover, the state government also did not take the step to follow the guideline of the GPDP.

Table 5.16: Opinion of the elected representatives regarding the follow-up process of the GPDP

Following of the GPDP	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Following Completely	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	17(5.3)	44(13.8)
Following partially	22(6.9)	24(7.5)	21(6.6)	25(7.8)	92(28.8)
Not at all	49(15.3)	47(14.7)	50(15.6)	38(11.9)	184(57.5)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

In the study area, only two-gram panchayat follow the process of GPDP's guideline. Sibtala gram panchayat, in Balangir Block where the sarpanch is OBC male and in Deoagaon Block, Goudgoth gram panchayat where the sarpanch is SC women. They follow the GPDP's process in their gram panchayat. Table 5.16 shows that 92(28.8 percent) of the elected representatives partially agreed to follow the GPDP process. "The seven steps of the GPDP's process follow: identifying the resource envelope of the GP; generating of participatory planning environment; situational analysis and participatory planning; projection and finalisation of a development plan by the GP; technical and administrative approval; post plan arrangement; and system support and capacity building for participatory planning".

Only the Odisha Government devised the guideline of the GPDP in 2015 to follow it; but, there is no seriousness of the government to implement this. Few people participate in the gram panchayat; thus, the bureaucracy decides the gram panchayat plan and uploads it on the web portal of plan plus. Therefore, in this study, the researcher found that 184(57.2 percent) elected representatives agreed that the GPDP's process had not been followed by their respective gram panchayat. The decentralised planning keeps people at the forefront; here, people are the centre, and everything revolves around it. Instead of an initiative of the state government to implement the GPDP, the decentralised planning do little or nothing to empower the vulnerable people in the Gram Panchayat directly.

This study reflects that majority of the elected leaders claimed that the process of the GPDP was not followed up in the gram panchayat. They argued that the PEO and sarpanch prepare it in pen and paper without the involvement of villagers and ward members. Later, it was uploaded to the website of the plan-plus. In measuring the

governance process of the gram panchayat, the element of participation was missing during the planning for development in the villages.

5.15 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Sources of the Fund for the Gram Panchayats

Table 5.17: Awareness of the elected representatives about the sources of the fund for the GP

Awareness of the Fund's source	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	6(1.9)	8(2.5)	10(3.1)	6(1.9)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	19(5.9)	9(2.8)	74(23.1)
To some extent	10(3.1)	19(5.9)	12(3.8)	16(5)	11(3.4)	15(4.7)	10(3.1)	15(4.7)	108(33.8)
Not at all	17(5.3)	20(6.2)	18(5.6)	18(5.6)	15(4.7)	23(7.2)	5(1.6)	22(6.9)	138(43.1)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source-The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The financial resource envelope of a gram panchayat could broadly constitute the following sources of funds: “(1) 14th Finance commission grants likely to be released to Gram Panchayat,(2) State finance commission grants likely to be availed by the Gram Panchayat,(3) Share of Gram Panchayat from MGNREGS fund, (4) own resource of the Gram Panchayat, (5) other untied grants available to Gram Panchayat,(6)beneficiary contribution if any, (7) other resource transferred to the Gram Panchayat under Central Sponsored Schemes(CSS) and State-Sponsored Schemes(SSS)”.

The data in table 5.17 shows that 74(23.1 percent) elected representatives acknowledge that they were aware of the fund source for the gram panchayat to a large extent. Furthermore, 108(33.8 percent) respondents replied that they were aware of these fund's sources to some extent, which means partially. In contrast, 138(43.1 percent) elected representatives alleged that they had not been known about the GP's fund source. More percentage of the OBC and UR leaders were aware of the source of the funds than SC and ST leaders in the study areas. From the table, it can be noted that 19(5.9 percent) UR elected representatives are aware of it to a large extent, 6(1.9 percent) of SC leaders knew about it. In the case of the women elected representative's knowledge about the source of the funds, women from all categories, most of them, had no knowledge about the source of the funds than men elected representatives. The study found that no elected representatives were able to explain between tie fund and untie fund.

Concerning no knowledge of the fund's source, the elected representatives had not received any training programme on this issue. On behalf of women elected representatives, their husbands attended the gram panchayat's activities, so they did not know about the source of funds for the gram panchayat. Due to not having the information, the source of the fund for the gram panchayat; therefore, the sarpanches, the PEO, government official of the Panchayat Samiti are taking their own advantage and make a plan without consulting the ward members and villagers in the gram panchayat. Those who had been participated actively in the activities of the GP, they knew the source of the funds. It indicates that instrumental benefits of the participation are observable among the PRIs members in terms of the fund's collection and utilisation.

5.16 Awareness and Involvement of the Elected Representatives about Standing Committee(SC)

Table 5.18: Awareness of the elected representatives about the Standing Committee functions and its other details

Awareness of ST	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	8(2.5)	14(4.4)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	8(2.5)	13(4.1)	79(25.7)
To some extent	21(6.6)	23(7.2)	26(8.1)	20(6.2)	21(6.6)	23(7.2)	21(6.6)	24(7.5)	179(55.9)
Not at all	4(1.2)	10(3.1)	5(1.6)	11(3.4)	4(1.2)	14(4.4)	5(1.6)	9(2.8)	62(19.4)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 5.18 shows that 80 percent of the elected representatives were aware of the function of the standing committee in the gram panchayat. They knew that the gram panchayat had formed the standing committee to deal with various villages' issues. However, there is no uniform policy for the standing committee, no awareness of people about the standing committee, lack of proper training regarding the standing committee, and lack of exposure visit also cause the committee is not functioning. Other reasons are no financial power of the standing committee, not the value of the gram sabha, no allowances and uniformity in honorarium, lack of communication between the panchayat and the people in the village, and delay in decision making due to the irregularity of the committee meeting and attendance. Moreover, there is a lack of awareness about the standing committee; there is less awareness about the people's role and responsibilities and low awareness among the public representative. Mainly, the government is not

interested in activating and channelising the committee in the gram panchayat. Finally, there is a lack of transparency in decision-making, so that people cannot trust them.

Standing committees must be more involved and assist the sarpanch in preparing, executing, and monitoring activities related to the assigned development problem. As per Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule 2014, every gram panchayat must constitute the standing committees to perform various functions. According to GPDP's guideline of Odisha⁵ 2015, seven the standing committee must constitute every gram panchayat: “(1) standing committee of planning, finance, poverty alleviation programme and coordination,(2) standing committee of work, irrigation, electricity and drinking water and sanitation,(3) standing committee of public distribution welfare of the weaker section, Forestry, and cattle feeding, (4) standing committee of education, sports and cultural activities, (5) standing committee of agriculture, animal husbandry, soil conservation and watershed and pisciculture,(6) standing committee of health, social welfare, women and child development,(7) standing committee of handicraft and village industry, khadi and Gram Udyoga, rural housing”.

Standing committee meetings in Odisha are held according to the following procedure:

1. Each standing committee holds at least one meeting each month, which can be either general or emergency.
2. In consultation with the chairperson of the standing committee, the Panchayat secretary calls the meeting.
3. To administer the proceedings, a quorum is required.
4. The meeting is postponed if a quorum is not reached.
5. The meeting should be presided over by the chairperson of the standing committee.
6. The Panchayat secretary keeps a record of attendance and minutes.
7. Prior to the standing committee meeting, Gram Panchayat issues notices and agendas among elected representatives and people.

⁵ Our village our plan, a guideline book, retrieval from <https://www.sirdodisha.nic.in/>

Table 5:19: Opinion of the elected representatives regarding the meeting and functioning of the Standing Committee

Functioning of the Standing Committee	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Regular	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	17(5.3)	15(4.7)	58(18.1)
Irregular	31(9.7)	33(10.3)	23(7.2)	27(8.4)	114(35.6)
Not at all	34(10.6)	36(11.2)	40(12.5)	38(11.9)	148(46.3)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

According to the Draft Model Panchayat and Gram Swaraj Act⁶ (2009), each PRI must create standing committees to carry out its various functions. (1) Within three months of the respective gram panchayat's first meeting, the standing committees should be formed (2) A formal meeting of the Gram Panchayat need to be called for this reason, and members of the standing committee are elected by the concerned elected representatives (3) Within one week of the standing committee's formation, the members elect one chairperson from among themselves. (4) Every standing committee has several such members as the Gram Panchayat, including the chairperson, so that all elected members are members of one of the standing committees. (5) The chairperson of each standing committee, except for the finance standing committee, is chosen by the members of that standing committee from among themselves. (6) The GP sarpanch, naib-sarpanch, and chairpersons of the other four standing committees make up the finance and planning standing committee. (7) The chairperson of the standing committee on women and child development is usually a woman. (8) The government officials from concerned line departments can also be members of standing committees as invitee members. (9) Standing committee recommendations are communicated to the Gram Panchayat in the form of resolutions by the chairpersons of the respective standing committees, and the Gram Panchayat considers these.

Table 5.19 shows that only 58(18.1 percent) elected representatives replied that the standing committee had functioned regularly in their gram panchayat. Moreover, 114(35.6 percent) respondents replied that the standing committee had been functioning irregular in their gram panchayat. However, 148(46.3 percent) elected representatives alleged that the standing committee had not been functioned at their gram panchayat. The state government could not monitor the gram panchayat's standing committee and not

⁶ The said Act was formulated by the Central Government of India keeping in views various states panchayat act, so every state can follow it as iniformely; thus, the information was axccessed from http://www.nrddp.org/file_upload/national%20panchayati%20raj%20institutions.pdf

pay particular attention to its function. In addition, the elected representatives have not been trained on the functioning of the gram panchayat. These factors result in the ineffective functioning of the standing committee. The standing committee is in pen and paper, and the state government do not activate and channelise it to integrate with GPDP. No standing committee had their fund to implement the rural development programmes. By doing so, it undermines participatory democracy at the grassroots level. *An OBC women ward member of Rengali Gram Panchayat lamented that this standing committee (SC) exist for the namesake. She complained that no regular meeting was held, no recommendation of the Standing Committee was taken care of, and government also did not inspect whether it works or not.*

5.17 Proxy Women Elected Representatives in the Gram Panchayats

The Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014 (rule.1) stated that no person who is the relative of members should be permitted to participate in the meeting or interfere in the Gram Panchayat's day-to-day business. The study found that this rule was contravened in the Odisha gram panchayat. Male relatives of women's leaders often usurp control from them, taking advantage of the women's place in the patriarchally constructed society. While women representatives in rural areas face no formal barriers, cultural barriers such as gender roles and financial restrictions, freedom of movement, low literacy, and non-party affiliation have become inextricably linked to their problems.

Table 5.20: The elected representatives' view on the proxy women elected representatives prevails in the GPs

Proxy Women	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To great extend	6(1.9)	18(5.6)	11(3.4)	9(2.8)	11(3.4)	18(5.6)	9(2.8)	13(4.1)	95(29.7)
To some extend	18(5.6)	15(4.7)	17(5.3)	15(4.7)	16(5)	12(3.8)	20(6.2)	24(7.5)	137(42.8)
Not at all	7(2.2)	11(3.4)	11(3.4)	14(4.4)	6(1.9)	14(4.4)	3(0.9)	7(2.2)	73(22.8)
Don't know	2(0.6)	3(0.9)	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	1(0.3)	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	2(0.6)	15(4.7)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019-2020 the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 5.20 shows that an absolute majority of around 72 percent of women elected representatives are in the proxy. Out of these respondents, 95(29.7 percent) elected respondents opined that women elected representatives are represented to a great extent in the proxy. Furthermore, 137(42.8 percent) elected representatives admit this practice prevails to some extent. In contrast, 73(22.8 percent) respondents disagreed that women

elected representatives to work themselves in their gram panchayat. Due to the proxy candidate, the quality of social development reduces. The men rule the panchayat and do not allow women to execute the gender perspective in most issues such as health, drinking water, sanitation, and other community programmes. In this study, the more proxy women elected leaders had been among the UR and OBC categories. The SC and ST women leaders got the opportunities of more mobility in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Yet, in the case of the SC and ST women leaders come to the work along with their male family members.

The study found that for the proxy women elected representative, their male family members, i.e., husbands, sons, brother, father-in-law, represent most women elected representatives in the gram panchayat. The women elected representatives do not attend the monthly meeting of the gram panchayat in a real sense, but their signature/thumb impression is taken on the meeting's proceeding later on. It is also applied to women sarpanch; their husbands and fathers-in-law carry out the gram panchayat activities. Reasons for women elected representatives becoming proxies in the gram panchayat: gender role, all men institution, low literacy, financial constraints, paid in pittance (no salary), the income of their husband, need lobby with block and district panchayat, no political party affiliation leads the proxy. The sarpanch needs to have any political party affiliation in the gram panchayat election. In order to get the funds, the women sarpanch's husband affiliated with any political party. In this scenario, her husband works with such a political party; automatically, the power is transferred to their husband and becomes the proxy women in the gram panchayat. Here, representative democracy was failed due to the proxy representatives' entry into the governance of the gram panchayat.

5.18 Elected Representatives' Responses about their Monthly Salaries

Table 5.21: The elected representatives' responses about their monthly salaries (remuneration)

Salary Satisfaction	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Unsatisfied	63(19.7)	60(18.8)	59(18.4)	47(14.7)	229(71.9)
Satisfied	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	3(0.9)	2(0.6)	23(7.2)
Neutral	4(1.2)	5(1.6)	15(4.7)	28(8.8)	52(16.3)
Can't say	4(1.2)	6(1.9)	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	16(5)
Total	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	320(100)

Source- The field work survey 2019, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 5.21 shows that 229(71.9) of the elected representatives disappointedly reported dissatisfaction regarding the salary received in the gram panchayat's work. This percentage cover most of the ward members of the gram panchayat. In contrast, 23(7.2 percent) respondents revealed that they were satisfied with receiving a salary, are mostly sarpanches. They stated that they are working for public service, not for a salary, so they are happy with this salary. The researcher observed that this group of sarpanch are from wealthy families. The majority of the SC, ST and OBC elected leaders than URs leaders were unhappy with their incentive in the gram panchayat. The study shows that 19.7 percent of SCs, 18.8 percent of STs and 18.4 percent of the OBC Gram Panchayat leaders were dissatisfied with their remuneration, whereas 14 percent of the URs elected leaders were unhappy with it.

Further, 52(16.3 percent) respondents replied that they were neutral on the hiking salary issue. They felt that if the salary hikes, it would be good for them. This category of elected representatives is naib sarpanch and some ward members from affluent families. Most of the ward members alleged that they are receiving Rs.240 per seating charge for the month. The naib sarpanch is getting Rs.750 per seating per month, and the sarpanch is receiving Rs. 1800 per month. They also expressed their disappointment that ward members are currently paying just Rs 240 per sitting of their respective panchayats as an allowance. "Ward members receive a pittance of Rs 240 per month since one panchayat meeting is held every month," the ward members lamented during the interview. All representatives of PRI of Odisha hiked their salary, except the ward members of the gram panchayat. This factor demotivates them to work actively in the functioning of the gram panchayat. They supervise, monitor, and inspect the developmental work of their ward level. They collect the ration card and other documents from the villagers for different schemes like housing schemes, old-age pension schemes, and other developmental schemes, which they submit to the gram panchayat for their welfare. They (ward members) have not prescribed the timing to work in the gram panchayat's work. They received many villagers' complaints about the different social issues; they have to spend their time for solving this issue. In this situation, they desire satisfactory emoluments from the government to spend more time actively in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Prameya News Paper (2020) reported that a sarpanch's salary was Rs 1,880 previously, which has been increased by 25 percent to 2,350. A naib-sarpanch will draw Rs 940 as salary, which was Rs 750 previously. Similarly, Panchayat Samiti members and block

chairmans' salaries increased to Rs 3,530 from Rs 2,820, while Zilla Parishad members' salaries increased to Rs 7,040 Rs 5,630 previously, and Zilla Parishad chairman's salary has been increased to Rs 9,380 from Rs 7,500. However, they did not start receiving a hiked salary.

5.19 Conclusion

Access to information and education are also variables that are significantly related to participation among elected representatives in the gram panchayat. Those who had 10th pass and have more educational qualifications are well known about the schemes and funds details of the gram panchayat. Similarly, access to information is associated with higher participation among the elected leaders in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Those who are dominant caste and close association with the sarpanches were more aware of the schemes, mechanism of the functioning, grants and fund details; thus, they could accomplish the task which was assigned by the GP. Gender is once again intensely linked with participation. Women elected representatives take part in gram panchayat meetings to a much lesser extent than male representatives. This indicates women's low participation in public life due to social norms and patriarchy in the Balangir district. Those who had the livelihood securities, mostly the unreserved category elected representatives, had sound awareness about the 14th CFC grant, the 4th SFC grant, budget details and various schemes of the gram panchayat. Despite the lack of income, low caste status, lack of sound education and gender hindrance, the elected representatives from the reserved categories attempted to participate effectively in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Education alone, however, is not sufficient to run the gram panchayat. Personal qualities such as good analytical understanding, democratic ideas and values, leadership fairness, frankness, and the ability to communicate with others were considered in the functioning of the gram panchayat. In this study, elected representatives claimed that they had improved some skills and knowledge after attending the training programmes. Therefore, the elected representatives should be imparted with the training programmes on the good governance process and social value in governing adequately in the gram panchayat.

CHAPTER-6

Roles and Awareness of the Elected Representatives in the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programme in Gram Panchayats

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the role of the elected representatives in providing safe drinking water and sanitation in their gram panchayats. Besides, it describes their awareness of drinking water and sanitation schemes at the gram panchayat level. As entrusted by the Indian Constitution, Gram Panchayats have a crucial role in addressing groundwater depletion and drinking water pollution. Gram Panchayats are responsible for deciding needs, preparing, involving the community, implementing schemes, monitoring water quality, and establishing and collecting tariffs. Drinking water safety planning at Gram Panchayat will help to address a lack of drinking water and improve people's health. It involves conservation, protection and expansion of sources as well as quality monitoring, operations and maintenance. Open defecation is a most significant sanitation challenge for the gram panchayat to eliminate. In all stages of an emergency, safe drinking water, good sanitation, and hygiene practices are essential for survival. In specific emergencies, people are particularly vulnerable to waterborne diseases, which may cause sickness and death. Women and children are especially vulnerable because they comprise the majority of the poorest of the poor, and they live in rural areas. Therefore, gender issues must be addressed in water and sanitation interventions if equal and equitable development is to be achieved.

The role of the gram panchayat has to clean the village, end open defecation, manage solid and liquid waste, and encourage people to practice hygienic and pay attention to school and Anganwadi sanitation. Since independence, significant progress has been made in providing drinking water in rural areas; however, water shortage and drinking water quality issues remain unsolved. Drinking water for the rural areas is a constitutional requirement. The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act calls for states with the power and authority they need to operate as self-governing institutions. This role entails developing plans and implementing schemes on 29 different subjects, one of which is drinking water. The study addresses the drinking water and sanitation programme and how the elected representatives of the gram panchayat involve in providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in their gram panchayat. Moreover, the study will attempt to understand the elected representatives' understanding level in the gram panchayat's

drinking water and sanitation programme. This chapter explains how the elected representatives from marginalised communities participate and discharge their duties in implementing the gram panchayat's drinking water and sanitation programme.

6.2 Role of the Elected Representatives in Mobilising for Open Defecation Free

As per the 2011 census, the state has about 1,57,773 rural habitations, a rural population of 3.49 crores in 6798 gram panchayat. According to the 2011 Census, rural Odisha has 14 percent sanitation coverage, and 83 percent of the population survives in rural areas, with a high proportion of scheduled tribes (ST) and scheduled castes (SC). It is ranked 22nd out of 23 countries on the human development index, 32nd out of 35 countries on the gender development index, and 12th out of 17 countries on the global hunger index [UNICEF(n.d) pp.6]. Odisha is now 100 % achieved the free of open defecation. Since 2 October 2014, a total of 66,83,148 toilets have been installed, according to data posted on the Swachha Bharat Mission (SBM) website, representing an increase of 86.22 percent in the number of households with toilets. During the current fiscal year 2019-20, the state constructed a total of 9,34,406 toilets. According to data, 46,785 villages in 30 districts have been declared as Open Defecation Free, with 6,801 gram panchayats¹.

Table 6.1: Mobilisation programme by the elected representatives to use the toilets in the villages

Mobilise people to use toilet	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Always	9(2.8)	16(5)	7(2.2)	9(2.8)	7(2.2)	13(4.1)	8(2.5)	13(4.1)	82(25.6)
Sometime	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	20(6.2)	17(5.3)	14(4.4)	10(3.1)	14(4.4)	11(3.4)	107(33.4)
Not at all	14(4.4)	20(6.2)	13(4.1)	14(4.4)	13(4.1)	23(7.2)	12(3.8)	22(6.9)	131(40.9)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The gram panchayat initiates social mobilisation for building the toilet and maintains a safe environment through proper waste disposal. It is the duty of the gram panchayat under the Swach Bharat Mission- Gramin; therefore, the elected representatives were asked how they mobilised people to use the toilet. Table 6.1 presents that 82(25.6 percent) of the respondents revealed that they always mobilise people to use the toilet out of the total sample size. Among them, most of them are sarpanches. In addition, 107(33.4 percent) of them sometimes mobilised people to use the latrine. Nevertheless, 131(46

¹ The data was accessed from <https://www.orissadiary.com/odisha-achieved-100-open-defecation>

percent) elected representatives said they had never mobilised people for using the toilet. The lack of mobilisation is the ward members' low salaries, so they had not actively mobilised for any programme and policy at the village level. Moreover, on account of women's domestic work, they have less time to mobilise people. 25 percent of the elected leaders have mobilised the people to use the constructed toilet in their villages. However, a significant percentage of leaders(40.9 percent) had not been mobilised the people for using the toilet. Here, mobilisation is one of the dimensions of participation that failed to achieve grassroots democracy. More or less all categories of the elected representatives (33percent) who had been sometimes mobilised people to use the toilet.

6.3 Open Defecation Free Status in the Study Area

Table 6.2: Opinions of the elected representatives about the status of the ODF in the study areas

ODF Village	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
ODF Status	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	11(3.4)	12(3.8)	39(12.2)
Half	21(6.6)	23(7.2)	22(6.9)	23(7.2)	89(27.8)
Less than half	23(7.2)	17(5.3)	20(6.2)	22(6.9)	82(25.6)
Open defecation	28(8.8)	32(10)	27(8.4)	23(7.2)	110(34.4)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020,* ODF- Open defecation free, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Open defecation refers to defecation in forests, fields, bushes near a water source and the village's roadside or other open spaces. The pathogens can be transmitted by hand, surface and toilet, contact with animals, poorly maintained and unclean toilets, and moving vehicles within Open Defecation(OD) areas. The major sanitation challenge for Gram panchayats is to remove open defecation. Indeed, 84.7 percent of rural households of Odisha are defecated in the open at the 2011 Census of India. Odisha and Jharkhand (91,7 percent) and Chhattisgarh have the lowest access to household toilets is 85.2 per cent(UNICEF, n.d.). The Balangir district of Odisha is a low performing district in terms of toilet construction which has less than 40 percent sanitation coverage (Singh, 2018).

The above table 6.2 shows that only 39(12.2 percent) elected representatives claimed that their village is open defecation free. Out of the data's total sample, 89(27.8 percent) respondents stated that 50 percent of the villagers practise open defecation in their respective village of the gram panchayat. Moreover, 82(25.6 percent) respondents expressed that less than half percent of their villagers use toilets. However, 110(34.4 percent) respondents alleged that their village's people are going 100 percent open

defecation. It is observed that the village with piped water drinking water was more likely to access toilet and toilet use. Therefore, if the pipe water is connected to their villages, it may stop the open defecation in the gram panchayat.

Table 6.3: Reasons for the open defecation in the gram panchayats

Reason for ODF	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Psychological and behavioural Block	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	10(3.1)	13(4.1)	44(13.8)
Traditional belief, superstition and cultural norm	15(4.7)	15(4.7)	17(5.3)	27(8.4)	74(23.1)
Lack of space, water, and awareness	44(13.8)	45(14.1)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	169(52.8)
Faulty design of toilet	11(3.4)	9(2.8)	7(2.2)	6(1.9)	33(10.3)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Open defecation reasons are psychological and behavioural blocks, traditional belief and superstition, lack of space, water, awareness, and faulty toilet design. Table 6.3 reveals that the majority of the elected representatives, 169(52.8percent), revealed that people had not been used the toilet because of improper water facilities, inadequate space in their homes, and lack of awareness. Similarly, 74(23.1percent) respondents had not been used the toilet because of the traditional belief, superstition and cultural norms. It was practised that when women go to the toilet, they must take a bath after that. It is a cultural practice in rural areas. In the toilet, there is no attached bathroom. Thus, they prefer open defecation in order to take a bath after that.

A single toilet for a large family is difficult to manage when used; thus, they prefer open defecation. It is observed that most of the toilet was not constructed in the household's premises. Instead, it was built in the agricultural field and other places far away from their house. That indicates that the purpose of individual household latrine application(IHHL) is not being fulfilled in rural India. In achieving the ODF, the decentralised governance was failed at the grassroots panchayat. The aim of the SBM and sanitation responsibilities of the gram panchayat could not discharge adequately due to not devolving the gram panchayat's financial role. Only the maintenance role was given to the GP under the 14th CFC grants. Further, no one prescribes the role of the ward members in the panchayat act in managing the sanitation behaviour of the people. The PRIs member did not undertake mobilisation activities and awareness programmes due to negligence of the state government.

6.4 Role of the Gram Panchayats in Mission Swachha Bharat²(MSB) Scheme

The government of India's Swachh Bharat Mission is a national cleanliness initiative. This initiative aims to complete the project by the year 2019. The key goal of the Swachha Bharat Abhiyan included ending the practice of open defecation, converting unsanitary toilets to pour flush toilets, eliminating manual scavenging, ensuring proper solid and liquid waste disposal inculcating behavioural changes in people, raising sanitation awareness, and encouraging private sector involvement in sanitation projects. The mission is being carried out in both rural and urban areas. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, and Zilla Parishad are all involved in this mission. The Swachh Bharat Mission has the following goals (Gramin): “improving the quality of life of people in rural; motivating people to maintain sanitation in rural by 2019; to encouraging local working bodies (such as communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions) to provide the required long-term sanitation facilities; develop innovative environmental sanitation systems that are community-managed, with a specific emphasis on solid and liquid waste management in rural areas; to foster environmentally sound, long-term sanitation in rural areas”.

Gram Panchayats have a vital role in the implementation of SBM-G. The gram panchayat (1)organises social mobilisation for the building of toilets as well as the preservation of a safe environment by proper waste disposal. (2) Engage relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for interpersonal IEC and training. (3)Encourage daily toilet use, toilet maintenance and upgrades, and interpersonal contact in the name of hygiene education. (4) Over and beyond the required number, contribute from their own capital to school sanitation. (5)Ensure that all SBM-G components meet safety requirements (for example, the distance between a water source and a latrine – adhering to the minimum distance for IHHL, school and Anganwadi toilets, and community sanitary complexes; controlling pit depth, pit lining to avoid pollution, pit collapse, and so on). (6) Maintain good hygiene practices, such as keeping the area around hand pumps and water bodies clean and clear of human and animal excrement. (7)Act as the custodian of properties built under MSB, such as community complexes, environmental elements, drainage, and so on. (8) Rural Sanitary Mart(RSM)can also be opened and controlled by GPs. (9) At last, monitor the MSB programme.

² Mohd. Taquiuddin, (2019),Panchayat management, publisher NIRD and PR, Hyderabad,pp. 187-211

Table 6.4: Awareness and the role of the elected representatives in the SBM-G in the gram panchayats

Awareness of the SBM-G	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	11(3.4)	19(5.9)	15(4.7)	11(3.4)	13(4.1)	16(5)	21(6.6)	14(4.4)	120(37.5)
To some extent	15(4.7)	20(6.2)	12(3.8)	12(3.8)	13(4.1)	13(4.1)	7(2.2)	17(5.3)	109(34.1)
Not at all	7(2.2)	8(2.5)	13(4.1)	17(5.3)	8(2.5)	17(5.3)	6(1.9)	15(4.7)	91(28.4)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020 *SBM-G denotes Swachha Bharat Mission-Gramin, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.4 shows that 120(37.5 percent) of the elected representatives had aware of the Swachha Bharat Mission-Gramin to a large extent. Among them, most are the sarpanches. Those who have higher educational qualifications of ward members understood and spoke the aim of this mission. In addition, 109(34.1 percent) of the respondents revealed that they had been aware of this mission to some extent. However, 91(28.4 percent) respondents said they had not been aware of this programme. In contrast, 29 percent of the elected representatives did not know about this scheme because they had not been trained on the subject of drinking water and sanitation and not functioning of the VWSC. The survey found that the majority of the elected representatives could elaborate on how to implement the SBM-G. They merely knew that this scheme was either run or going to be run in their gram panchayat; however, they had no knowledge of the implementation process.

No single rural sanitary mart (RSM) was operated in rural areas. On the other hand, most of the sarpanches know the role of the gram panchayat in SBM-G in the gram panchayat. Due to the large scale of the toilet construction and the pressure from the Panchayat Samiti, the sarpanches and some ward members had conscious of the Swachha Bharat Mission-G scheme and the role of the GP in this scheme to some extent. For women GP leaders, 19(5.9 percent) SC representatives had comprehended it to a large extent than OBCs and URs leaders, that is 16(5 percent) and 14(4.4percent), respectively. With regard to some extent of the awareness, more percentage of the SCs leaders than other social groups were aware of it.

6.5 Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) in Odisha

The Government of Odisha, the Rural Development Department, specifically its subdivision for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation(RWSS), is responsible for the rural water supply in Odisha. It aims to provide all rural residents with safe, sustainable

drinking water and sanitation. Village Water and Sanitation Committees(VWSC) in Odisha manage piped water supply systems to provide drinking water to villagers. The VWSC can be registered or not for additional responsibilities. RWSS (Odisha Gazette,10 February 2005) is in charge of the headworks and rising primary, while VWSC will be in charge of the distribution line and stand posts/domestic links within the village limits. This committee manages the operation and maintenance of the supply water scheme. When the VWSC/GP assumes full responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the drinking water supply system, the VWSC/GP determines the user fees that must be paid, and the user fees received are held in the bank account. According to the report, VWSCs, as community groups, also have a long way to go inspire a sense of community control of the water supply system to become sustainable(Roy, 2012).

Table 6.5: Awareness of the elected representatives about their role of the VWSC in the supply of drinking water of the gram panchayats

Awareness of the VWSC	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	6(1.9)	8(2.5)	9(2.8)	8(2.5)	11(3.4)	12(3.8)	17(5.3)	12(3.8)	83(25.9)
To some an extent	7(2.2)	19(5.9)	17(5.3)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	10(3.1)	9(2.8)	10(3.1)	90(28.1)
Not at all	20(6.2)	20(6.2)	14(4.4)	23(7.2)	14(4.4)	24(7.5)	8(2.5)	24(7.5)	147(45.9)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.5 indicates the awareness of the elected representatives about the role of their VWSC in the supply drinking water programme of the gram panchayat. Only 83(25.9 percent) elected representatives knew the role of the VWSC in the gram panchayat largely; among them, most of them are sarpanches. For those who have completed higher education like 10th to BA of the ward members, 90(28.1 percent) ward members revealed that they knew some function and role of the VWSC in the supply drinking water programme. However, 147(45.9 percent) of the ward members did not know the role and responsibilities of this committee. It is the duty of the state government to train the elected representatives regarding how to manage and operate the supplied drinking water and sanitation in the gram panchayat. However, the ward members and sarpanches did not receive such training within two years.

It is a central grass-roots functional institution of the VWSC³ that acts as “an extension of the Gram Panchayat for rural water supply and sanitation management, solid liquid waste management(SLWM) management, and O&M arrangements at the habitation village or GP level. The VWSC is obliged to facilitate behavioural change, community-based monitoring mechanisms, fundraising by imposing sanitation cess and penal law enforcement and regulations to ensure that drinking water and sanitation services are smooth and sustained through GPs”. These types of functions of the VWSC had not occurred in the study area.

Table 6.6: Involvement of the elected representatives in the functioning of the VWSC

Opinion	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	15(4.7)	37(11.6)	16(5)	30(9.4)	11(3.4)	38(11.9)	17(5.3)	34(10.6)	198(61.9)
No	18(5.6)	10(3.1)	24(7.5)	10(3.10)	23(7.2)	8(2.5)	17(5.3)	12(3.8)	122(38.1)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.6 shows that 198(61.1 percent) elected representatives have been members of the VWSC or have been involved in it. However, 122(38.1 percent) of them had never been part of this committee. Most of the women elected representatives had participated in the VWSC, which is mentioned in the gram panchayat act. The act mandate 50 percent of the women members in the committee. The study found that more percentage of the women elected representatives than their counterparts had been involved in the committee. The committee runs in the namesake; they had been involved in its membership.

Table 6.7:Nature of the VSWC in the functioning

Functioning of the VSWC	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Regular	13(4.1)	14(4.4)	19(5.9)	19(5.9)	65(20.3)
Irregular	38(11.9)	33(10.3)	27(8.4)	32(10)	130(40.6)
Not at all	29(9.1)	33(10.3)	34(10.6)	29(9.1)	125(39.1)
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

³ Odisha rural sanitation draft, (September, 2019), Panchayati raj and drinking water department, odisha government, retrieved from <https://www.odishapanchayat.gov.in/E>

Table 6.7 presents the PRI members' opinions on the functioning of the village water and sanitation committee. In the Balangir district, 65(20.3 percent) replied that the function of the VWSC is to have regular meetings; thus, they are satisfied with this committee's functioning. In addition, 130(40.6) gram panchayat members reply that the function of the VWCS had been irregular in conducting the meeting; therefore, they are somehow satisfactory for their functioning. However,125(39.1 percent) respondents alleged that VWSC had not held the meeting; the committee is the only namesake. Through the GPDP, drinking water and sanitation should ensure convergence with top priority, and intervention can be mainstreamed into existing financial deliberation. The VWSC prepare the plan, the need, the budget and monitor for the drinking water and sanitation so that safe drinking can reach each household. Thus, it is a mechanism of grassroots democracy that needs to be functional at the village level. However, in the study area, the VWSC had not functioned properly. The state government had not activated it. The elected representatives had not participated actively in the functioning of it. *An OBC male ward member of the Jharial Gram Panchayat said that the functioning of the village water and sanitation committees are feeble. The committee was an inability to collect funds to manage and operate the supply pipe water, and no monthly meeting occurred by this committee. He added that the elected representatives addressed this issue individually rather than collectively, which is not best practice in the gram panchayat.*

6.6 Role of the Sarpanches in Ensuring the Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities

As the village head, the sarpanch is responsible for ensuring the villages and households drinking water security. The sarpanch has the power to organise Gram Sabha with active participation from all stakeholders, creating a competent VWSC, resolving disputes in a transparent and just manner, monitoring construction for quality, and monitoring account and expenditure to ensure that the funds available are used efficiently. In addition, he/she can coordinate with the block/district and support organisation to provide equal water supply to everyone, including SCs, STs, and poorer households. The following table show how the sarpanches effectively execute his/her role in providing safe drinking water and sanitation in their gram panchayat.

Table 6.8: Role of the sarpanches in ensuring drinking water and sanitation facilities

Categories	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	4(10)	6(15)	5(10.5)	5(12.5)	4(10)	6(15)	4(10)	6(15)	40(100)
Taking up drinking water issues for discussion, planning and approval to Gram Sabhas									
Yes	3(7.5)	5(12.5)	4(10)	4(10)	3(7.5)	6(15)	3(7.5)	5(12.5)	33(82.5)
No	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	0	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	7(17.5)
Monitoring the quality of work expenditure for safe drinking water									
Yes	2(5)	4(10)	3(7.5)	2(5)	2(5)	4(10)	2(5)	3(7.5)	22(55)
No	2(5)	2(5)	2(5)	3(7.5)	2(5)	2(5)	2(5)	3(7.5)	18(45)
Resolving conflicts whenever required regarding providing safe drinking water									
Yes	3(7.5)	5(12.5)	5(12.5)	3(7.5)	4(10)	4(10)	4(10)	4(10)	32(80)
No	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	0	2(5)	0	2(5)	0	2(5)	8(20)
Ensuring equity in water supply and access with special attention towards SCs and STs									
Yes	4(10)	6(15)	5(12.5)	5(12.5)	2(5)	6(15)	3(7.5)	5(12.5)	36(90)
No	0	0	0	0	2(5)	0	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	4(10)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.8 presents the role of the sarpanch in ensuring safe drinking water in the gram panchayat. So, a total of 40 sarpanches participated in the interview. All sarpanches said that they formed the VWSC in their respective gram panchayat. In the study, 33(82.5 percent) sarpanches affirmed that they discussed the safe and sanitation issue in the gram sabha meeting. All sarpanches agreed that they were taken cooperation from the block panchayat. 36(90 percent) sarpanches said they had ensured the provision to the SC and ST households without discrimination.

Regarding access to household connections of the supply drinking water, no discrimination could be found in the surveyed sample; the piped water connected to all belong to SCs/STs and OBCs. Moreover, 22(55 percent) of the sarpanches said they monitored the quality of works, revenue, and expenditure. However, 18(45 percent) of sarpanches had not been done it because, for women sarpanches, their husbands or other relatives were doing it. 32(80 percent) of the sarpanches participates in conflict resolution to provide safe drinking water in their GPs. To solve conflict resolution regarding safe drinking water, most men sarpanches attempted to resolve conflict resolution; for women sarpanches, their husbands and relatives participated in conflict resolution in the gram panchayat. Regarding the role of the sarpanch in ensuring safe drinking water in the GPs, they were actively discharged their duties from social categories—SCs, STs, OBCs and URs. *Unreserved male sarpanch of the Badsaimara Gram Panchayat said he would not*

discriminate against SC/ST households accessing safe drinking water. He always attempted to provide safe drinking water to every household of the GP. OBC female sarpanch from Muribahal Gram Panchayat said her husband and she ensure that supply pipe water for the drinking water should reach every household at least two times in the GP.

As per the guidelines of the Odisha Panchayat Act, the sarpanches formed the VWSC in their GPs. However, based on caste and class in the rural society, the sarpanches have maintained an equity in providing the drinking water in the GPs without discrimination of caste and class. In substantive representation, the action or opinion accords with wishes, needs, or interests, of those for whom he/she acts; he/she must put himself in their place, take their part, and act as they would act. The study found that the sarpanches played substantive representation such as conflict resolution, monitoring and revenue expenditure and solved the drinking water problem in the gram sabha, involved in planning to provide the drinking water equally in the villages.

6.7 Role of the Ward Members in Providing the Safe Drinking Water at the Ward Level

Ward members are in charge of providing leadership at the ward level, raising awareness and mobilising ward citizens' for active participation in Gram Sabha meetings. In addition, they should ensure that all sections' needs in their wards have been adequately represented in the village drinking water plans and monitor the planning, construction, expenditure, and day-to-day operations and management of the village drinking water plans.

Table 6.9: Role of the ward members in ensuring drinking water and sanitation facilities at the ward level

Categories	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	29(10.3)	41(14.6)	35(12.5)	35(12.5)	30(10.7)	40(13.5)	30(10.7)	40(13.5)	280(100)
At the ward level, making awareness of the drinking water for the citizen									
Yes	27(9.6)	34(12.1)	26(9.4)	29(10.4)	16(5.7)	25(8.9)	13(4.6)	15(5.4)	185(66.1)
No	2(0.7)	7(2.5)	9(3.2)	6(2.1)	14(5)	15(5.4)	17(6.1)	25(8.9)	95(33.9)
The ward members mobilise the people to participate in the Gram Sabha									
Yes	14(5)	27(9.6)	15(5.4)	18(6.4)	16(5.7)	16(5.7)	17(6.1)	22(7.9)	145(51.8)
No	15(5.4)	14(5)	20(7.1)	17(6.1)	14(5)	24(8.6)	13(4.6)	18(6.4)	135(48.2)
Monitor the day-to-day management of water supply									
Yes	14(5)	24(8.6)	15(5.4)	23(8.2)	16(5.7)	17(6.1)	9(3.2)	13(3.2)	131(46.8)
No	15(5.4)	17(6.1)	20(7.1)	12(4.3)	14(5)	23(8.2)	21(7.5)	27(7.5)	149(53.2)
As members of the GP, to participate and contribute in planning for drinking water									

Yes	14(5)	22(7.9)	17(6.1)	15(5.4)	18(6.4)	22(7.9)	19(6.8)	23(8.2)	150(53.6)
No	15(5.4)	19(6.8)	18	20(7.1)	12(4.3)	18(6.4)	11(3.9)	17(6.1)	130(46.4)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.9 presents data on awareness of the ward members about the village water sanitation committee(VWSC) form at the village/ GP level. Every GP had a standing committee on the village water sanitation. Regarding the demand for safe drinking water at the ward level, 187(66 percent) ward members had been building awareness of ward citizens for proper usage of the drinking water and sanitation. They consistently disseminate information about the importance of drinking water and not wasting the tap piped supply of drinking water. More percentage of the SC and ST ward members than OBC and UR leaders were active in making awareness about safe drinking water at their ward level. In this context, women ward members from 34(12.1 percent) of the SCs, 29(10.4 percent) of the STs who said that they had actively been involved in creating awareness to the villagers, whereas 25(8.9percent) OBCs and 15(5.4 percent) of the URs ward members did it. About mobilising the ward citizens on drinking water and sanitation, 146(51.8 percent) ward members agreed that they had been mobilised citizens to participate in the gram sabha. However, 48 percent of them said they did not work for the same. In this activity, more percent of the SC women ward members (9.6 percent) than (6.4 percent) of the STs women ward members, (5.7percent) of the OBCs and (7.8 percent) of the URs women ward members did the same activity at the ward level. It shows that the SCs women leaders were more active in this activity.

131(46.8 percent) of ward members answered that they monitored the existing piped water supply to manage correctly, but some replied not regularly. Considering the monitoring activity by the women ward members in proving the safe drinking water, 8.6 percent of the SC and 8.4 percent of the ST each, 6.1 percent of the OBC and 4.6 per cent of the UR had monitored the source of the drinking water and ensured that it would reach safe drinking water to the households of the villages. The study shows that more percentage of the SCs and STs women ward members were active in this context. In order to participate in planning for drinking water, 150(53.6 percent)affirmed that they directly or indirectly participate in the planning process for drinking water. In the monthly meeting at the gram panchayat, they shared the issue and challenges in delivering service for drinking water at the ward level. It was observed from the study that the ward

members were active in discharging their duties in providing the drinking water service where the supply pipe water was installed in the villages.

The role of the ward members from marginalised communities in providing the drinking water and sanitation of the gram panchayat was seen as developmental participation. Developmental participation is a benefit of participation, which can increase their democratic effectiveness by learning how the system functions and developing the skills necessary to influence its decisions. The study found that the ward members were engaged actively in delivering the drinking water and sanitation without adequate incentive. In this context, women ward members were more excited to work in the supply of drinking water. It seemed that the substantive representatives had been appeared among the ward members.

6.8 Role of the Gram Panchayat in Managing the Safe Drinking Water Services

The Gram Panchayat has been empowered by the 73rd amendment act that devolved the fund, function and functionaries to provide the drinking water service in the rural villages. Providing safe drinking water to each household depends on the effective functioning of the gram panchayat. Hence, it becomes pertinent to comprehend how these intuitions (gram panchayats) provide drinking water services to ensure improved access to safe drinking water supply in rural villages. The following table shows the role of GP in managing the safe drinking water service.

Table 6.10: Roles of the gram panchayat in managing the safe drinking water service

Categories	SC	ST	OBC	UR	Total
Total	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	80(25)	320(100)
Issue of water and sanitation discuss at the GS					
Yes	65(20.3)	68(21.2)	68(21.2)	67(20.9)	268(83.7)
No	15(4.6)	12(3.8)	12(3.8)	13(4.1)	52(16.3)
Drinking-Water Test done or not					
Yes	35(10.9)	36(11.2)	34(10.6)	35(10.9)	140(43.7)
No	45(14)	44(13.7)	46(14.3)	45(14)	180(56.2)
Drinking-Water chlorinated or not					
Yes	28(8.7)	28(8.7)	29(9)	32(10)	117(36.5)
No	48(15)	52(16.2)	50(15.6)	53(16.5)	203(64.3)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 6.10 demonstrates that 268(83.7 percent) of the respondents said they discussed the issue of drinking water and sanitation in the gram sabha meeting. In the discussion at the gram sabha, they did not discuss the availability of the water source, the need for safe

drinking water and agricultural activities. They discuss only the immediate need for the drinking water installation of the new tubewell and the extension of the new pipe for the supply of water and miss the sustainable point of view. In the gram sabha, the report of the VWSC was not placed. Only sarpanch and close ward members decided to provide the drinking water facilities, which emerged the irregular service problem. Moreover, around 88 percent of elected representatives complained that they have a problem with safe drinking water in their village.

The Sibbala gram panchayat's sarpanch revealed that the Gram Panchayat should use the Field Testing Kit (FTK) at the most basic level. The FTK is a simple instrument that can measure consistency parameters, including hardness, pH, fluoride, chloride, and nitrate, among other things. The H₂S vial, one of the products in this package, is a very simple and inexpensive device for locating faecal coli pathogens. Therefore, water samples from all points in the Gram Panchayat should be tested with these kits. He knew this information because he completed a master degree and was a resource person at the Bhubaneswar, SIRD and PR. Hence, 140(43.7 percent) of elected representatives agreed that they had tested the drinking water using FTK.

On the other hand, 180 (56.2percent) of the respondents revealed that drinking water had not been tested at the village level. Due to the lack of coordination of the RWSS department and lack of bureaucracy interest, they did not test the drinking water in their villages. According to the BIS, at least twice a year need to test the drinking water in the villages, which is not happening in the study areas.

The GP should ensure that the bleaching powder pack is purchased and chlorinated in the existing drinking water source regularly in a given time. The study found that 117(36.5 percent) elected members replied that the GPs regularly had chlorinated drinking water in their areas. However, 203(64.3 percent) of the GP members alleged that the GPs had never been chlorinated the drinking water in their locality. *Unreserved male sarpanch from Sibbala Gram Panchayat said the meeting of the VWSC regularly was held, and the committee had been collected water tariffs committee from the households.*

6.9 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Funding Details for the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programme

The 14th CFC of India focused on delivering essential services like water supply and sanitation using basic (90 percent) and efficiency (10 percent) grants given to Gram Panchayats. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is the nodal ministry for the Finance

Commission Funds, concentrated even more on the grants' use by providing advisories on how to use the 14th FC grants for sanitation and safe drinking water in schools and Anganwadi centres. Local bodies in Odisha would have a more robust financial resource base thanks to the SFCs. The financial tools provided by the 4th SFC were supposed to turn PRIs into fiscally sustainable institutions. These two central and state grants directly transferred to the gram panchayat in Odisha for safe drinking water and sanitation. The programme of Swachha Bharat Mission-(Gramin) primarily focused on the building of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) and the elimination of open defecation in villages (ODF). The programme offers a financial reward of Rs 12,000 for installing and usage of toilets. The Block panchayat and gram panchayat implement this programme.

Odisha gazette (2018) stated that the Gram Panchayat should be responsible for the operation and maintenance of tubewells and water supply schemes within the GP, including payment of energy bills for existing piped water supply projects, honorarium for Self Employed Mechanics, running costs of mobile vans for preventive maintenance, maintenance costs of all State tube-wells, including spare parts, and maintenance of taps, including replacement to be met from the CFC/SFC. Therefore, before execution of work under BASUDHA and NRDWP, the Gram Panchayat shall be deposited with Executive Engineer RWSS and 10 percent of the overall project expense or Rs.10.00 lakhs or less in convergent funds. In the context of drinking water at the GP level, a letter issued by the state government in 2017⁴ of which 30 percent of the available grants (from 14th FC grant and 4th state FC grant) are earmarked for expenditure on drinking water supply.

Table 6.11: Awareness of the elected representatives about the sources of the funds for the safe drinking water and sanitation

Awareness of the Funds	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	6(1.9)	11(3.4)	9(2.8)	6(1.9)	11(3.4)	11(3.4)	19(5.9)	11(3.4)	84(26.3)
To a some extent	13(4.1)	14(4.4)	14(4.4)	14(4.4)	11(3.4)	16(5)	12(3.8)	14(4.4)	109(34.1)
Not at all	14(4.4)	22(6.9)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	12(3.8)	19(5.9)	3(0.9)	21(6.6)	127(39.7)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

⁴ Panchayati Raj Dept., Govt. of Odisha, "Taking over operation and maintenance of Rural Piped Water Supply Systems (PWSSs) and tubewells and sinking of new tubewells by Grama Panchyats out of CFC and SFC Grants," No. 3420 (28.02.17). Last accessed on 25 July, 2020. <https://odishapanchayat.gov.in/English/download/CFC%20SFC%20letter%20No%203420%20on%2028.02.2017.pdf>

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.11 shows that 84(26.3 percent) of the respondents agreed that they knew about the fund source for drinking water and sanitation to a large extent. Further, 109 (34.1 percent) of them said they knew these funds to some extent. Hence, around 60 percent of the elected representatives are aware of the fund source for drinking water and sanitation. However, 126(39.7 percent) of the elected representatives alleged that they did not know the exact funding source for safe drinking water and sanitation. Those who knew the source of the fund to a large extent are mostly sarpanches and naib sarpanches. They revealed that only two central schemes are the 14th CFC and the 4th State Finance Commission grant to manage drinking water and sanitation. As far as partial knowledge of the elected representatives is concerned, they were aware of the 14th CFC and Swachha Bharat Mission-G. It is worth noting that more percentage of the 19(5.9 percent) of the UR male and 11(3.4 percent) of the OBC male elected representatives than 6(1.9 percent) of the SC male and 9(2.8percent) of the ST male representatives who are aware of the source of the fund for the drinking water. It shows that more percentage of the UR and OBC elected leaders than SC and STs leaders who controlled and managed the funds for the drinking water in rural areas. All sarpanches were aware of the source of the fund for safe drinking water. The negative side of the GP is that most of the ward members were not aware of it. Therefore, the ward member could not solve safe drinking water problems at the ward level. Among them, SCs, STs and OBCs ward members —reserved categories, who were unknown how to utilise a source of the fund in order to service delivery in the villages. In this context, the state government did not have a step to build capacity building among them.

Regarding 10 percent of allocation under the Basudha and NRDWP, most of the sarpanches said they did not receive in GP's account; this is utilised and implemented by the district's RWSS wing. Only sarpanches of the GPs who can handle the financial management of the drinking water, but not ward members involved in it so that they(Ward Members) were not interesting to know the fund details of the drinking water and sanitation of the villages. Administrative decentralisation would be failed without financial decentralisation, which has been seen in the case of the ward members.

6.10 Drinking-Water Budget in the Gram Panchayats

A 'water budget' is just an estimate of the amount of water required and available in the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat must prepare a water budget after gathering information about the various sources and water supply schemes available. This is essential for the preparation of a source sustainability strategy. Estimates the amount of water available to the Gram Panchayat from various sources and compares it to the amount of water needed for various uses. The study asked about the water budget of the GPs. So, all elected representatives said that there was no separate water budget in the GPs. It was found that they prepared it with the main budget with the convergence of the GPDP.

Table 6.12: Awareness of the elected representatives about the utilisation of the fund in the drinking water and sanitation

Answers	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Yes	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	8(2.5)	4(1.2)	8(2.5)	7(2.2)	11(3.4)	6(1.9)	60(18.8)
No	14(4.4)	17(5.3)	16(5)	14(4.4)	7(2.2)	20(6.2)	13(4.1)	19(5.9)	120(37.5)
Don't Know	11(3.4)	22(6.9)	16(5)	22(6.9)	19(5.9)	19(5.9)	10(3.1)	21(6.6)	140(43.8)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 6.12 shows that around 80 percent of the elected representatives had no idea about the proper utilisation of the funds, which hints at the absence of transparency in fund utilisation. Negatively, 120(37.5 percent) of the GP members said that no proper utilisation of the funds for safe drinking water and sanitation has happened in the GP. Besides, 140(43.8 percent) of the elected members said they were salient about utilising the funds. It seems that corruption practices have happened in the gram panchayats. *ST women ward member from the Sibhala Gram Panchayat said that only the PEO and sarpanch utilise the safe drinking water fund. They did not inform the ward members about how and where the expenditure was carried out in the GP. SC women members of the same panchayat alleged that they had been an acute shortage of drinking water problems during the summer in their Dalit Basti; however, they were not allowed to bring water from the general and OBC wards. She lamented that she repeatedly complained it to the sarpanch, but in vain, still, they depend on an open well for the drinking water. She argued that to become a ward member is of no use for her.*

Table 6.13: Involvement of the elected representatives in the fund's channelisation for drinking water in their GP

Fund Mobilisation	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Fully	12(3.8)	6(1.9)	8(2.5)	4(1.2)	15	6(1.9)	25(7.8)	19(5.9)	95(29.7)
Partially	10(3.1)	11(3.4)	14(4.4)	5(1.6)	19(5.9)	15(4.7)	9(2.8)	9(2.8)	92(28.8)
No	11(3.4)	30(9.4)	18(5.6)	31(9.7)	0	25(7.8)	0	18(5.6)	133(41.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

Table 6.13 displays that 95(29.7 percent) of the elected representatives have been involved in mobilising the funds towards the drinking water and sanitation project. Here, most of the elected representatives are sarpanches who had been involved fully in the fund channelization for the drinking water. Notably, 92(28.8 percent) GP members were partially involved in the same. OBC and UR elected representatives participated more in this activity than SC and ST representatives. It was observed that 3.8 percent of males and 1.9 percent of female representatives from the SC category were fully involved in the fund mobilisation, whereas 7.8 percent of male and 5.9 percent of the female representatives from the UR category had engaged in the activity. Moreover, 133(41.6 percent) of the elected representatives had never participated in fund channelization toward improving the drinking water in their GP. Here, the study found that most of the SC and ST elected representatives had no idea about the fund's details.

6.11 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Schemes and Programmes for the Drinking Water and Sanitation in Odisha

The funds allocated to two centrally-funded programmes, the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and the Swachh Bharat Mission – Rural(SBM-R), could be used to assess the Union government's water and sanitation funding, according to the Centre for Budget and Government Accountability's working paper series (2020). By 2025, the central government aims to have piped water in each and every household. Furthermore, with the commencement of the Jal Jeevan Mission in July 2019, an increase in NRDWP is expected for the first time since 2012-13. The NRDWP and SBM-R are two important schemes for the gram panchayat's drinking water and sanitation programmes. The NRDWP scheme is implemented and funded to the rural water supply and Sanitation(RWS&S) Wing. The primary objective of the programme is to construct the piped water supply scheme(Agarwala, 2020).

Odisha government launched the Buxi Jaga Bandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitation (BASUDHA) scheme in 2017- 2018. The objective of the BASUDHA Scheme is to provide the best quality standard parameter drinking water. To short out the grievance, the Odisha Government launched helpline number 1916 for the grievance. After the project gets completed, the lack of potable water will be resolved as required under this scheme. The other two crucial schemes for drinking water and sanitation are the 14th central finance commission grants under the union government and the 4th state finance commission under the Odisha government, providing the grant to utilise in the drinking water and sanitation sector.

Table 6.14: Awareness of the elected representatives about drinking water programmes and schemes in the gram panchayat

Awareness of the Policies	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
To a large extent	11(3.4)	16(5)	14(4.4)	13(4.1)	14(4.4)	13(4.1)	21(6.6)	12(3.8)	114(35.6)
To a some extent	18(5.6)	20(6.2)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	14(4.4)	22(6.9)	11(3.4)	26(8.1)	147(45.9)
Not at all	4(1.2)	11(3.4)	9(2.8)	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	11(3.4)	2(0.6)	8(2.5)	59(18.4)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.14 shows that 114(35.6 percent) of the elected representatives agreed that they knew the schemes and programmes of the drinking water and sanitation; thus, they also knew the BASUDHA scheme and NRDWP of RWSS. Furthermore, they knew the channelisation fund for the drinking water—named the 14th CFC grant—is a significant fund to manage the drinking water and sanitation. Those who know a large extent about these programmes are sarpanches and naib sarpanch, including some educated ward members. Moreover, 147(45.9 percent) of the respondents said they know these schemes partially because the funding pattern of the drinking water directly transferred to the RWSS and the Block panchayat. Therefore, they did not have ideas of the funding pattern of these schemes. However, 59 (18.4 percent) respondents sadly revealed that there were unknown programmes and policies regarding drinking water and sanitation in their gram panchayat. As it is observed from the table, more percentage of the 21(6.6 percent) male UR elected representatives than other categories that is, 11(3.4 percent) of the SC, 14(4.4 percent) of the each ST and OBC counterpart are well aware of the available programmes and policies for the safe drinking water and sanitation. In

the case of the women elected representatives, more percentages 16(5 percent) of the SC leaders than other social categories that are 13(4.1 percent) of the each STs and OBCs leaders and 12(3.8 percent) of the URs leaders who knew about these schemes and programmes. The study found that more percentage of the SC women GP leaders than other social groups women leaders have a good understanding of the drinking water policies. Because in their SC communities, they lacked safe drinking water at their ward level. Therefore, participation of the elected representatives in the gram panchayat has become a development, or educative, effect to the extent that participation changes participants by developing new values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and beliefs. Thus, nearly 81 percent of the elected leaders know the drinking water and sanitation schemes run in the villages. The study found that the elected representatives from the marginalised communities somehow became educative and developmental after the participation in the functioning of the gram panchayat.

OBC male sarpanch of the Chinchad Gram Panchayat argued the state government did not impart the training to them (Including Sarpanches and ward members) about schemes and programmes relating to drinking water and sanitation and its management. As a result, they do not have proper awareness about the schemes and programmes of safe drinking water.

Table 6.15: Responses of the elected representatives about services of drinking water and sanitation

Satisfaction with the drinking water service	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Strongly Satisfied	5(1.6)	7(2.2)	5(1.6)	13(4.1)	11(3.4)	12(3.8)	4(1.2)	14(4.4)	71(22.2)
Satisfied	12(3.8)	18(5.6)	13(4.1)	4(1.2)	10(3.1)	10(3.1)	17(5.3)	19(5.9)	103(32.2)
Undecided	0	6(1.9)	3(0.9)	3(0.9)	0	6(1.9)	0	4(1.2)	22(6.9)
Dissatisfied	14(4.4)	13(4.1)	19(5.9)	20(6.2)	13(4.1)	18(5.6)	13(4.1)	8(2.5)	119(37.2)
Strongly Dissatisfied	2(0.2)	3(0.9)	0	0	0	0	0	1(0.3)	5(1.6)
Total	33(10.3)	47(14.7)	40(12.5)	40(12.5)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	34(10.6)	46(14.4)	320(100)

Source- The field survey, 2019-2020, the figures in parentheses denote the percentage of total

The above table 6.15 shows that 71(22 percent) of the elected respondents agreed that they were strongly satisfied—were mostly sarpanches and naib sarpanches. In addition, 103(32.2 percent) of the elected representatives revealed that they were satisfied; they

hoped that their problems would solve through the gram panchayat's intervention. However, 98(32 percent) of the respondents complained that they were dissatisfied with drinking water and sanitation facilities. Besides, 5(1.6 percent) respondents said they were strongly dissatisfied with the gram panchayat's drinking water and sanitation facilities. Some of the reasons for dissatisfaction are the minimum role of the gram sabha, dysfunction of VWSC, no faith in the role of the PRIs members and no training on managing drinking water and sanitation. Moreover, the state government prepared no specific particular role and guideline for the ward members to manage drinking water in their villages. Notably, the ward members are getting 240 rupees, so they do not want to spend their time managing the drinking service. As shared by the GP Sarpanch, delays in fund flow from the state to the GPs, as well as delays in obtaining instruction from the States related to implementing plan processes at the GP level, contribute to the late completion of plans and activities relating to drinking water and sanitation.

SC Women Sarpanch from Bhundimuhan Gram Panchayat said they had not informed any updated information from the RWSS and any changes in policies relating to drinking water programmes, or even not from the block panchayat how to manage and proper funds devolve to GP.

6.12 Conclusion

Despite the lack of training of the ward members about managing the supply pipe water and source of the drinking water, they attempted to mobilise the people to use the safe drinking water, monitoring existing supply pipe water, water tank and other sources of the drinking water. Most of them raise the issue of chlorinated and water testing for the drinking water at the ward level. Involvement of the women elected as a member of the VWSC was seen as descriptive representatives, not as substantive representatives. The VWSC was not functioning correctly due to no effort of the state and central government. The study found that as the SCs/STs people have lacked sufficient safe drinking water at the ward level, SC/ST ward members were more active in monitoring and awareness to ensure safe drinking water in the villages. Women elected representatives are better at understanding the issue of drinking water and sanitation because they use it at the household level; thus, the government should devolve the financial assistance to them for the operation and maintenance of the drinking water. All elected representatives should train on the water budget, incorporate it in GPDP, financial management, its

sustainability, the role of the self-employed mechanic (SEM) and government officials, and the BASUDHA scheme and other central schemes.

Most importantly, the government would devolve adequate funds to the GP so that they can manage it the proper way. The role of the ward members, naib sarpanches and sarpanches are equally crucial in certain situations. The government only emphasises the role of the sarpanches rather than ward members' role in implementing the schemes in the rural areas. Recognising the special status of the ward members and Naib sarpanches, the state and central government should hike the incentives for them and assign new prescribes roles in the gram panchayat act and rule. Then only, the service delivery in drinking water would reach every household and maintain its sustainability.

CHAPTER-7

Report of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In the following section, the research explores the findings of the FGD dealing with the functioning of the gram sabha and the role of the elected representatives, understating of the PRIs members on the reservation system, caste influence in the gram panchayat. In addition, it illuminates the governance process of the gram panchayat and how the elected leaders perform their influential role. Further, the FGD found out how the villagers were satisfied with the gram panchayat's role in delivering water and sanitation service.

7.1 Introduction

15 Focus Group Discussions (FDG) were organised in the five blocks. In the FGD, villagers were the participants. The participants were adult members ages 20 to 29, 30 to 45, 46 to 56, 57 to 67. An average of 10 members participated in each 15 FGDs. Hence, the total participants are 150 in this discussion. Regarding age and their percentage of FGD, 10 percent of the young participants, 30 percent come in the age group of 30 to 45, 35 percent come in the age group of 46 to 56, and 25 percent come in the age group of 57 to 67. In these FGD, three SHG groups were involved; 26 percent of women participated, and 74 percent of men contributed their views in the FGD. Within each block, 3 FGD was conducted; thus, a total of 15 FGD was held in five Blocks. Those who participated in FGDs are homemakers, farmers, teachers, daily-wage workers, shop owners, tailors, and businessmen by profession. The gram panchayat intends to implement the programme and policies for economic and social justice where people's participation is significant because people can participate directly in the planning process. The gram sabha is a statutory function of the gram panchayat; it is a platform for people to keep their needs and problems sorted out directly. The report was prepared based on the Focus Group Discussion report, conducted in the selected five blocks of Balangir district. The key topic of this discussion was the role of the gram panchayat to solve people's problems. FGD allows the researcher to quickly pick up on crucial nonverbal information, such as expressions of excitement, attitude, behaviour, doubt, hesitation, stress, agreement, and disagreement.

7.2 Objectives of the FGD

Focus group discussions (FDG) were undertaken to consult the village community in the five blocks on (1) the function and participation in the gram sabha process; (2) to identify issues and challenges of their village and the problems existing in their village; and (3)

view on the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives in various program and policies. Further, the FGD attempts to cover all social categories; the SC, the STs, the OBCs and URs, including women participants of the villages.

7.3 Methodology of the FGD

Fifteen focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with the participation of the 150 villagers to explore their views, including 5 FGDs held at the gram panchayat office and 10 FGDs in villages different locations in the study areas from March 2019 to March 2020. The FGDs were held separately for females which three SHG groups and male villages in three distinct population groups: Young age (20 -30), middle-aged (30 to 50 age group) and elderly (50+) to obtain information of each category's specific problem and needs of the villages. Two village participants were chosen and asked to bring their friends who met the FGD's requirements. Sometimes, the sarpanch and the ward members help to gather people to discuss the gram panchayat's functioning. A popular place like the Kalyan Mandap and club (Community Centre) of the village was selected as the location to conduct the FGD.

7.4 The Key Findings with regard to the Functions of the Gram Sabha

The perception of the gram sabha is that it is a practical and potentially powerful mechanism for solving people's problems to develop a comprehensive operational framework and plan for the protection and empowerment of people. On the other hand, minimum people's participation in the gram sabha leads to no use for the development of the people. However, the weak implementation of the gram sabha hampers its potential. The people's participation is significantly less in the gram sabha. Most villagers expressed that the people did not inform when and how the gram panchayat would be held in the gram panchayat. Significantly fewer women participated in the gram sabha; those who had participated only through the SHG. The villagers point out that Gram Sabha's role is minimal in deciding the development priority for the GP because it is only the Panchayat Executive Officer who decides the plan and programme in the gram sabha. People felt that decisions and recommendations made by Gram Sabha did not carry out any weight and were overlooked by senior officials. This perception amongst villagers led to certain delegitimation of the institution of Gram Sabha in the eye of the people.

7.5 Legal Awareness of the People about the Gram Sabha

Many participants expressed that the legal awareness of the gram sabha had not been realised because the quorum of the gram sabha was not fulfilled, and they were

disappointed that the panchayat peon circulated the registers of the gram sabha in the village to get signature for the requisite quorum. Low participation in the gram sabha was attributed to the lack of information, neglecting the sarpanch and the panchayat executive officer to share the people about the gram sabha. The gram panchayat should encourage the villagers' awareness of the gram sabha's existence, function, and rights; however, the FGD found that most people seemed utterly ignorant about these functions. In the group discussion, it was found that people were unaware of the outcome of the recommendation, the resolution passed, and the gram sabha's decision.

7.6 Issues and Decision-Making Process at the Gram Sabha

The FGD found that the issue discussed in the gram sabha was more or less the same across all panchayat. The primary issues were drinking water, beneficiary selection, infrastructure development, and MGNREGS work. This is generally an agenda set by the government, the amount utilised from the 14th CFC and fourth state finance commission grants. The people were not aware of the agenda of the gram sabha. The FGD revealed that the village's influential people still dominate the gram sabha's decision-making process. Those who participated in the gram sabha revealed that the final decision was reached through consensus. None of the gram sabhas had adopted any voting or lottery method to decide in the gram sabha. Nevertheless, people did not oppose this consensus method of the gram sabha. However, it was noted that FGD participants were unhappy with the functioning of the Gram sabha. However, people point out that there is no accountability between the sarpanches and the ward members, which is a significant problem in terms of the institution's accountability. To improve the transparency of both elected officials and the panchayat, procedures such as social audits should be institutionalised. The gram sabha's reputation will be enhanced as a result of this. The FGD found that people were not participating in any social audit programme of the gram panchayat. It seems that there is no accountability in the performance of the gram panchayat for the village development.

7.7 Gender Issues and SC/ST Participation in the Gram Sabha

Women empowerment and women's issue was not discussed in the gram sabha, although those panchayats with a woman sarpanch. The women from the SHG group said that women from the villages were unaware of their right to attend the gram sabha. Women members never had asserted their needs in the gram sabha meeting. However, some SHG members asserted their needs through the group, but individually. Even male members are not interested in encouraging the participation of women members in the meeting.

One man said that *"women do not know anything about the gram panchayat, that is why they should not participate in the gram panchayat meeting"*. For the SC/ST people's participation in the gram sabha, there was no special effort by the villagers and the panchayat's functionaries to enhance their participation. Generally, those SC/ST people who were aware of the gram sabha meeting, they only involved during this meeting.

7.8 Procedural Issues of the Gram Sabha

During the focus group discussion, it was found and observed that the majority of gram panchayats only held mandatory gram sabha meetings. The block panchayat selected the date and time of these meetings, but the agenda remained unchanged primarily on a review of the government's development programmes. Another issue was that distance from the meeting location and timing hampered effective participation, particularly for daily wage workers, women, and people living in peripheral villages. In the gram sabha, the main discussion was only the MGNREGS, housing scheme, and government schemes, which consumed much time discussing and excluding the other issue in the meeting.

7.9 The Factors Affecting the Role of the Gram Sabha

The human resource development in the socio-cultural milieu is low, and the society is deeply fragmented and hierarchical. The technical input is also not available. The conducting of the gram sabha is entirely reliant on government funds and grants. The use of available resources and methods for raising additional resources are not given much consideration. However, with minimal support from the state government, the gram sabha has the potential to carry out the effective roles and responsibilities entrusted to them. No serious discussions and deliberations are taking place in the gram sabha meetings. People have not embraced the gram sabha as a welcoming institution that will care for their issues and needs. The agenda for the gram sabha meetings will be dictated by the top administration, undermining the spirit of democracy. People's participation is low in the gram sabha. The quorum is generally incomplete, and the provision to conduct the gram sabha is not compulsory, is often used. They are holding meetings the next days allowed for having the present only 'the desired people'. Notwithstanding the provision of one-third of women, this condition is contravened practically in these areas. Lack of information dissemination is one of the reasons for the low participation in the gram sabha. The bureaucracy system is not supportive and accountable to the gram sabha.

A significant amount of resources are now being transferred to the panchayat, which has resulted in the formation of a corrupt nexus between elected representatives, the bureaucracy, and prominent local people who see a chance to profit financially. As a result, the Gram Sabha continues to be weak; as a result, they reject and weaken any attempts to deny the Gram Sabha's efficiency. The gram sabha practically functions as a government institution rather than a people's institution because it is limited to inbuilt factors and dictated by the state government. In order to make pro-people, pro-nature, and pro-women, it needs efficient facilitators who will work more intimately without discrimination of the caste, creed, and class.

7.10 Villagers' View on the Performance of the Women Elected Representatives (EWR) in the Gram Panchayat

Many elected women representatives (EWRs) relied on their husbands and other family members for assistance in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Most EWRs have tended to show minimal visibility and impact. The people of the FGD concede that they were often silent at the gram panchayat meetings. The villagers admitted that the SC/ST reserved Sarpanches were puppets under the upper caste people in the gram panchayat. Husbands of the elected women representatives were maintaining power by controlling the action of the wives, in so doing leading by proxy. Women's reservations reduced the political opportunity for men who are usually experienced politically. The argument suggested that reservation may reduce effective democracy by replacing men elected from various backgrounds, earlier governed by the powerful men in the gram panchayat. As a result, proxy women leaders emerged in the functioning of the gram panchayat.

7.11 Villagers' view of the Villagers on the Performance of the Elected Representatives in the Gram Panchayats

The villagers pointed out that no ward members and naib sarpanch are the only sarpanches that enjoy significant policymaking power. She/he has the final say in allocating public funds across different investment categories and benefits for selection. However, these decisions are supposed to be made in consultation with and ratified by the villagers. To this end, the sarpanch is mandatory to convene and organise several village-level meetings during the year. In this sense, the villagers replied that only the PEO and sarpanches are doing all gram panchayat activities without consulting the villagers. At least, they should conduct the gram sabha meeting with the people's active participation, which was not happening in the gram panchayat. However, the villagers said that all

sarpanches of the villages, public goods allocations are shifted to disadvantaged groups, indicating that the elites are not captured on average. The PEO, sarpanch, and other government officials took advantage of their benefits and made all the gram panchayat decisions.

7.12 Villagers' View on the Performance of the Elected Representatives and involvement of Their in the Family Member in the Gram Panchayats Activities

The family background in India has always served politics as a source of political recruitment. It is unnecessary to expect only rural women to compete without any support and call them dummy candidates. FDG revealed that many of these so-called dummy female candidates dared to display independent decision-making power and refused to act as dummies when elected. It is often called for the women to participate in the meeting, and their husbands or other families always attend the meeting. The meeting was attended regularly by all sarpanch women. It is often women sarpanch come to the meeting along with their husbands. All sarpanches from the SC/ST community regularly attended the gram panchayat meeting. The most critical factors for assessing the effectiveness of elected leaders' participation are the performance of panchayat members or sarpanches. During the gram panchayat meeting, sarpanches SC, ST, and OBC women showed themselves were not to be mere spectators. Most of them expressed their opinions on several proposals, and most talked about the problems of villages with villagers and presented them in the gram panchayat. Despite the increasing unsupported against sarpanch women, it is evident that they can exercise power, which is hitherto the primary domain of men; they are desperate and still try all possible means to regain power. Women leaders could make it easier for other women to express their policy priorities. The argument suggests that reforming the democratic structure aggregates villager expectations as a channel by which women leaders influence policy outcomes, even though their husbands made all decisions.

7.13 Discussions about the Needs of the Village Development

The research found that drinking water is a significant need for most villages from the focus group discussion. Safe drinking water is essential in the village, which the gram panchayat ensures to maintain. People complained that the VWSC is not functioning correctly, it is only sarpanches, and the PEO decided to ensure the drinking water facilities. The villagers alleged that the drinking water is regularly not coming where the piped supply water was installed in the gram panchayat. People of the villagers demanded

the MGNREGS work from the gram panchayat. The old-age pension and housing schemes are essential schemes, which most of the families are not included even though they are eligible. To make the inclusion in the housing scheme, the beneficiary was selected based on the SECC list. People alleged that the poor household was excluded from getting the house under the PMAY-G. Moreover, the people complained that those who bribed the sarpanch and the PEO are getting the housing scheme in the gram panchayat. Even though the person was above the age of 60, they have not included the old age scheme in the gram panchayat; they have submitted their desired document to the sarpanch through the ward members. However, they were waiting more than many years to get an old-age pension with blurring hope. Regarding the MGNREGS work, the FGD pointed out that the people were demanded the MGNREGS work, some of the GPs could neither provide them with the work nor unemployment allowance. Many labourers were still not getting their wages after they worked in the schemes. In this context, the elected representatives were helpless to provide employment opportunities for the villagers.

7.14 Awareness of the Villagers about 14th CFC and 4th SFC Grant in the Gram Panchayats

Out of the 150 villagers, most people did not know about the 14th central finance commission and the 4th state finance commission grants. However, the villagers had no idea how much the funds and the grants the gram panchayats received annually and its utilisation in the various social sectors. There are many issues such as lack of participatory planning at the gram panchayat level, lack of alignment of gram panchayat plans with district and state plans, the insufficient capacity of local body functionaries, inadequate devolution of funds, no notice board for the fund details; thus, villagers were not aware of the CFC and SFC grants by the state government limits effective utilisation of the resources for improving the people of villages in Odisha.

7.15 Villagers' View on the Standing Committee in the Gram Panchayats

In the FGD, villagers revealed that they had no knowledge of how many standing committees exist in their gram panchayat. Most of the villagers alleged that they had ideas about whether the standing committee has existed or not and their chairperson in their gram panchayat. Most of the villagers complained that the villagers were not informed about when and how the standing committee functions. The FGD found that awareness building was absent about the standing committee at the community level, and there is no awareness about the committees' roles and responsibilities. It needs to initiate activities

to enhance the community's awareness level about the standing committees in the gram panchayat through the constitution of committee in the gram sabha. Those who knew the standing committee which was constituted in the gram sabha, argued that there had been a frequent irregularity in conducting the standing committee meeting due to a lack of coordination and communication between the public representatives and officials.

7.16 Discussion on the Current Programme and Policies in the Gram Panchayats for Rural Development

The focus group discussion revealed the list of activities the gram panchayat had executed in their villages. The activities were the purchase of Bleaching Powder/Lime for water purification, operation, and maintenance of tubewell, piped water supply, an extension of piped water supply, installation of LED street Light in the existing poles, construction of crematorium, completion of boundary wall at up school, Construction of Boundary Wall of UP/ME School, repair and maintenance of G.P Office, Electrification to all school and Anganwadi centres, constructing and cleaning of the Bathing ghat with dress changing, construction of Guardwall at water conservation tank, improvement of Pisciculture tank, repair and maintenance of Community centre, cleaning of the street of the village, and repair and maintenance of the club.

7.17 Discussion of the villagers about the Current programmes and Policies of the Gram Panchayats

In the focus group discussion, people discussed the programme and policies run by the gram panchayat in their villages. The schemes run in their gram panchayat; these are the old-age pension scheme and other pension schemes such as disability, widow and Madhu babu pension, public distribution service under the food security act, PMAY-G, MGNREGS, safe drinking water and sanitation programme, and Anganwadi centre. Some villagers revealed about the Busudha scheme, in 2017-18, Odisha's Chief Minister, Sri Naveen Patnaik, introduced the Buxi Jagabandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitations (BASUDHA) Scheme. The scheme aims to provide safe and sufficient water to every rural household through piped water supply systems. An increased supply of 70 LPCDs (litre per capita per day) would meet drinking, cooking, and other domestic needs. Another important scheme was discussed that the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAYG) was launched to fulfil the "Housing for All" scheme by 2022. It is a rural housing initiative that seeks to provide beneficiaries with a 25-square-meter pucca house

with basic amenities. Most of the gram panchayats implement this housing scheme in the study areas.

7.18 Faith of the Villagers on the Gram Panchayats

Villagers expect that their sarpanch is responsible for more than just providing direct services by holding other government departments and officials accountable to the village. When the piped water supply fails, villagers do not go directly to the block level or the concerned government agency's district office. Hence, the sarpanch is responsible for operating and maintaining the water tank effectively as a mediator and service provider. Many villagers believed they had no influence, a lack of accountability, much corruption, and only a few people benefited. The FGD indicates that the gram sabha, with only an average of a few percent of members attending, is not yet an effective governance mechanism. There is no vigilance committee or grievance addressal box for an additional accountability mechanism in the gram panchayat regarding accountability. Moreover, the FGD has shown that the gram sabha is not an adequate mechanism of accountability. The villagers complained to work in their villages, such as road repairing, rejuvenating the pond, culvert building, constructing drainage for wastewater, a new tubewell, and extension of the supply piped water and electricity problem. In this regard, the sarpanches said they would work after the resolution passed in the gram sabha. The time was passed, but no work has initiated; therefore, some villagers complained that the sarpanches had not received their complaints; thus, villagers who have gone to a higher authority to complain about their elected officials have had little success because the officials have not been receptive to their grievances or, in some cases, have sided with the sarpanch.

7.19 Discussion by the Villagers about the Infrastructure Facilities in the Villages

The effectiveness of a rural development initiative depends on the provision of basic infrastructure. Those who have convenient access to infrastructure facilities profit the most, while those who do not have sufficient infrastructure access are bypassed. The villagers view the accessibility and adequacy of various infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, sanitation, street lighting, education, health, road and transportation. The FGD reveals that certain social facilities like sanitation and dumping yard were found inadequate to the villagers. There was no proper disposal system even though the dumping yard and dustbin was kept. Safe drinking water is an essential need that the gram panchayat fulfil. The gram panchayat will extend the piped supply water to each village

that is far away. Under the Basudha and NDWP, most of the villages would connect the drinking water. Through the MGNREGS work, rural infrastructures were developed in the villages, such as the pond renovation, micro and minor irrigation works, food grain storage, renovation of traditional water bodies, water conservation and water harvesting structures, and check have been developed dam. The gram panchayats had been built pucca internal roads or streets within a village, complete with side drains and culverts, to provide all-weather rural road connection to unconnected villages and connect the existing pucca road network to rural areas production centres.

7.20 Role of the Gram Panchayats in Providing Toilet Facilities to the Villagers

The FGD revealed that the gram panchayat has no role in constructing the toilet in the village. The NGOs and other agencies built a toilet in their village. The GPs have been conducted any special meeting to ensure the construction and usage of Individual House Hold Latrine (IHHLs), and most of the gram panchayats have not guided the villages on the location of IHHLs houses, materials required, and their procurement. The gram panchayats had not communicated to people for simple precautions required during the construction of the latrine. The gram panchayat had not explained to people about the process of financial assistance available under MGNREGA/NB/MSB/ / Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY)/ Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)/ and other State housing schemes.

The FGD found out that most of the gram panchayats kept an adequate number of waste collection dust bins in the different points in the villages. However, no proper arrangements had been made for the regular collection of solid and liquid waste from these dustbins. The gram panchayats have not stepped any proactive role by taking punitive measures such as levying fines for unhygienic practices which affect village cleanliness. The gram panchayats had not mobilised the public to participate in sanitation and hygiene campaigns, enlisting the help of local officials from the departments of health, women and children, rural development, and Panchayati Raj, among others. The FGD found that the gram panchayat had not been promoted regular use, maintenance and up-gradation of toilets, and interpersonal communication for hygiene education. Above all, most gram panchayats have not carried out social mobilisation to construct toilets and maintain a clean environment through the safe disposal of wastes. The gram panchayat has not shared the information on the distance between a water source and a latrine in the villages.

7.21 Role of Gram Panchayats in Creating Open Defecation Free Villages

In the Gram Panchayat, a participatory campaign with the active participation of citizens must be organised to address the sanitation situation, opportunities for improvement, and particular issues for the elimination of the open defecation practice. However, the FGD found that the gram panchayat did not have such activity in the study areas. The gram panchayat could not create social pressure to ban open defecation in rural areas, which the respondents revealed in the FGD. If people are encouraged to build latrines in their houses, they must have proper access to necessary hardware. Gram Panchayats, self-help groups (SHGs), agencies, individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), whoever is interested in providing the material should be allowed to do so as a commercial venture as well as for the benefit of the community. Here, the NGOs and other agencies took a contract to construct the toilet in the gram panchayats. However, the gram panchayats were silent for encouraging to construct the toilet in their villages.

7.22 Role of the Gram Panchayat in Providing Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation in the Villages

The Gram Panchayat is in charge of ensuring that all homes in the village have access to enough and safe drinking water, as well as the long-term sustainability of drinking water systems and sources. The panchayat must plan for the proper utilisation of groundwater, surface water, and roof water to meet the drinking water requirement. It should avoid becoming excessively reliant on a single source, especially groundwater. The FGD found that the villagers had no knowledge about the Gram Panchayat's Water Source Sustainability Plan and water budget, whether the gram panchayats prepared it or not. The people from the FGD said most of them who did not attend the gram sabha and Palli Sabha and those who attended this meeting said that drinking water and sanitation were discussed for immediate need in the villages. The gram panchayat must estimate water availability to the Gram Panchayat from various sources and compares it to how much water is required for various purposes. However, the villagers revealed in the FGD that the gram panchayat did not know, and even the gram panchayat did not share the information with them. The question asked that "is there any particular provision of drinking water for the cattle and other animals?". The villagers said that the gram panchayats did not render such a function for the animals. The gram panchayat had been done the chlorination in approximately all tubewell and water tanks in their villages. Some villagers said that the gram panchayats regularly undertook to test water quality.

Some of them said the gram panchayats had not regularly tested drinking water quality in their villages.

7.23 Opinion of the Villagers about the Elected Representatives in Providing the Safe Drinking Water Facilities in the Villages

People in the FGD alleged that sarpanches could not be solved when the piped water supply stopped. For example, in the Kusmel gram panchayat of Losinga Block, people complained to the sarpanch when the tubewell got damaged because a single tubewell is insufficient for the big village. Villagers demanded to install a new tubewell in their village. The gram panchayat has a general women sarpanch. Hence, the sarpanches said we have to wait and take permission from the BDO or higher authority. Before that, the resolution has to pass in the gram panchayat meeting. Then only the new tubewell can open in the village. However, the problem has been solved in the due process; the sarpanch might repair the damaged tubewell from the CFC grants or panchayat funds. But, the villagers had to wait a long time to get the service. The participants of the FGD agreed that when they approached or called for the ward members regarding the drinking water issue, the ward members listened to them and took to the sarpanch and the PEO for solving. However, the ward members had no idea about the grant and funds details for the drinking water and sanitation. Anyway, the ward members were actively involved when the issue of drinking water arose in their villages. The villagers agreed that the ward members monitor planning, construction, expenditure, and water supply management, and they mobilised the active participation of ward people in Gram Sabha meetings. The villagers said sometimes ward members herself and her husband worked in the drinking water problem in the villages. Hence, the study found that the role of the ward member is active and satisfactory in dealing with the drinking water issues in the gram panchayat.

7.24 Discussion with the Villagers on the Village Water and Sanitation Committee(VWSC)

The GP's Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) is responsible for village water and sanitation planning, implementation, service, maintenance, management, and drinking water security. The VWSC is also responsible for purchasing goods and services, overseeing contracts and works, and payment processing. Most of the participants in the FGD exposed that the VWSC was not active, and some of them said that they rarely knew the committee's existence. Most of them agreed that the committee's monthly meeting was rarely conducted with fewer people's participation. The FGD agreed that they had no idea of the role and the function of the VWCS.

8.25 Discussion with the Villagers about the Drinking Water Programmes in the Villages

The FGD revealed that the villagers were unaware of the fund's details for drinking water and sanitation. Most of the participants from the FGD said that they had heard the Basudha scheme (Buxi Jagabandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitations) and did not know about the 14th CFC and 4th SFC whose funds can be utilised for drinking water. Most of the villages had no knowledge about the National Drinking Water Programme, its aim and its objective. The Swachhagrahis are the grassroots soldiers of Swachha Bharat Mission who play the dynamic role of motivators – influencing behaviour change in sanitation practices in rural areas. When the researcher asked about them, most of the villagers in the FDG said there was no such position in their gram panchayat. A few respondents in the FGD agreed that they knew such a person (Swachhagrahi) in their gram panchayat, but they rarely interacted with the villagers regarding sanitation.

7.26 Status of Safe Drinking Water in the Villages

Most of the villagers in the FGD said their villages had been connected with the piped drinking water supply in the villages. Regarding the connected piped drinking water supply, sometimes it was not regular in their gram panchayat. On the other hand, some villagers alleged that they had not joined the pipe supply drinking water in their village; they depended upon the tubewell. However, the main issue is that most tube wells dry up during the summer due to a reduction of water levels. This creates a severe problem for the poor villagers in terms of getting drinking water. The deep bore well of the villages has been dismantled for a long time. They argued that no gram panchayat had initiated its repair so far.

CHAPTER-8

Findings, recommendations and conclusion

8.1 An Overview of the Study

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act brought a new era where people from marginal communities entered the local bodies as elected representatives and made plans and policies for rural development. They participate in the governance process of the gram panchayat. However, the panchayat system failed to include the disadvantaged groups in the governance process effectively. The villages of rural India are now governed by 618 Zilla Parishads, 6603 Panchayat Samities, and 248983 Gram Panchayats. Currently, the new Act is carried out to decentralise power, allowing socially excluded people to engage in these multi-federal grassroots institutions. The constitutionally protected opportunities through reservation have shaped political spaces for these groups to participate directly in the governance processes. It was not easy to envision Dalits and other socially excluded groups (including women) leading and steering the villages as Sarpanchs or Chairpersons of Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads. However, owing to the 73rd Amendment, it has already a reality. In this respect, this new system is revolutionary in character, as well as a new experiment in implementing democracy and democratic governance in Indian villages. Even after sharing enough authorities and resources, the system has not been able to empower the panchayats adequately in the last two and a half decades after constitutional reforms. The current social orders of caste, patriarchy, gender, bureaucratic power, lack of training, and lack of education are challenging the legal orders. In this context, the study has attempted to address the governance process where the elected representatives participate in discharging their duties. It also tried to explore the factors affecting participation for the elected representatives in these democratic public institutions of governance. It also explores the mechanism of the gram panchayat like gram sabha, GPDP, the standing committee, the implementation of the plan and policies of the safe drinking water and sanitation that operate in the villages where the elected representatives work as the protagonist for rural development. Therefore, the Balangir district was selected to know the governance process of the gram panchayat and the participation of the GP members in it.

Balangir district is a very backward district recognised by the planning commission. In 2018, this district was recognised as an aspirational district by the Niti Aayog. The gram panchayats and the elected representatives were selected based on a stratified random

sampling method in the blocks headed by SCs, STs, OBCs and URs sarpanches. The five blocks were selected based on the high, middle and low literacy rate and size of the block in the Balangir district in Odisha. Equally, 80 elected representatives were selected from each category—SCs, STs, OBCs and URs. In Odisha, it was 50 percent reservation for women candidates, so more than 50 percent of elected women representatives were chosen in the study. Thus, the total elected representatives were 320 from the selected blocks. Regarding the respondents, 38 sarpanches, 30 naib sarpanches and 252 ward members participated in the interview in the study. The aim of selecting panchayats based on such criteria is based on the idea that these representatives of the so-called marginalised groups from the reserved category along with unreserved category were selected to know their participation in the governing process of the gram panchayat.

8.2 Findings from the Socio-Economic Status of the Elected Representatives

There are a total of 320 elected representatives, of which 44.1 percent are male, and 55.9 percent are female. While 40 gram panchayat, including 157 villages, is covered in the study. The study was conducted by applying the stratified sampling method; each group was considered, that is, SC, ST, OBC and UR categories having more than 50 percent women representatives in gram panchayats. In this study, most age groups are 30-40, and 41 – 50 respondents were 35.9 percent and 37.5 percent, respectively. In terms of educational qualification, 36.9 percent of respondents had completed lower secondary education. Besides, 18.4 percent of respondents completed primary education. Hence, the educational qualification of the respondents is low in the study areas. Around 10 percent of the elected representatives entered into the bachelor degree course. It seemed in the study that the majority of the respondents, approximately 55 percent of them, had low education qualifications.

There are many different types of castes/ tribes in the selected gram panchayats. Though the study focused on SCs, STs, OBCs and URs social groups, the different caste and tribes were considered. Regarding the respondents' landholding pattern, 16.9 percent of elected representatives are landless families; most are SC families, with 10 percent of them. The majority percentage of the landholdings, 36.3 percent and 22.2 percent of the elected representative of families, is marginal and small farmers in the study, respectively. Further, 19.1 percent and 5.3 percent of the respondents are medium and more than 10-acre land, respectively. Similarly, 19 percent of ST families of the

respondents are keeping the medium land holding pattern in the study. In these two categories, most of the PRI members are OBCs and general categories.

In addition, 43.1 percent of women elected representatives are homemakers, and 6.3 percent of women elected representatives are agricultural labour and daily wage labour, respectively. Around 30 percent of elected representatives were engaged in agricultural work. The monthly income of the respondents' families is meagre; 35 percent of the family's income is between 1000-5000 per month. On the other hand, 34 percent of elected representatives' families earned between 5000 to 10000 per month. In comparing the social group, the unreserved and OBCs categories gained more income than the SCs and STs families. Compared to other social groups, the SCs Gram Panchayat members are low in terms of land ownership, occupation or income. Most of the SC representatives are labour. On the other hand, OBCs and URs elected representatives are primarily in cultivation, having more land, better occupation, and higher income. Considering the respondents' poverty status, 20 percent and 19 percent of SC/ST respondents' families have the BPL status, and 20 percent of OBC respondents families have BPL status. More percentage among the SC/ST families had Antodaya cards. It indicates that the SCs and STs elected representatives are poorer than OBCs and URs representatives.

8.3 Participation of the Elected Representatives and People in the Gram Sabha

The study found that most of the elected representatives participate in the gram sabha meetings, including men and women elected representatives. All of the elected representatives replied that the gram sabha held two times a year. Regarding the people's participation, 72.5 percent of the respondents replied that men's participation was large at the gram sabha meeting, and 15.6 percent agreed that the women's participation was large at the gram sabha meeting. It is found that men's presence is high in the gram sabha meeting. To mobilise the people, 51.3 percent of the elected representatives had an effort to mobilise the women, and 28.8 percent of respondents did the same for the SCs and STs people to participate in the gram sabha. Most of the ward members said that the gram sabha is being organised for the namesake to complete the legal procedures of the PRIs. Significantly few women of the villages are participating in the gram sabha. Only through the SHG some women were participating in the gram sabha. Nagel argued that "for most people, political participation is simply a means to other goals." Here, the elected representatives participating in the gram panchayat meeting did not attempt to mobilise the people, which is the people's goal. The communication between the government and

elected representatives was developed through the gram sabha meeting. But mobilisation was missing. Mobilisation is one of the dimensions of participation. In this study, participation in the form of mobilisation was not occurring correctly.

8.3.1 The Elected Representatives Raised their Voices in the Gram Sabha

Most of the elected representatives raised their voices in the gram sabha. Most of the women elected representatives discussed the gram sabha's drinking water and infrastructure development for their villages. The sarpanches bring various subjects like beneficiaries selection, drinking water and sanitation, MGNREGS work, etc., in the gram sabha. In addition, most of the ward members discussed and raised social developmental work for their ward level. Nagel argued the intrinsic value of participation which developed a sense of satisfaction with the individual worth in community issues. The study found that the elected representatives from the marginalised group could create intrinsic value of participation by speaking at the gram sabha. It indicates that the responsiveness of the elected representatives has emerged in the governance process of the gram panchayats.

8.3.2 Mode of Communication to the People about the Gram Sabha

Around 80.9 percent of the elected representatives said that people were informed about the gram sabha through the notice, which was pasted on the wall of public places in advance. Not before 15 days in advance, but a few days before; as a result, no sufficient time has been provided to the villagers to schedule their priorities and reserve their time for the gram sabha meetings. Only a few gram panchayats applied both drum beating and notice methods to mobilise people for participating in the gram sabha. In addition, all of the leaders clarified that the best method is applying both notices and beating the drum to inform people about the gram sabha. The elected representatives revealed that notice was pasted only where the gram panchayat's office is located; other villagers lack such information, rarely reaching the gram sabha notification in other villages, hamlet village and ward level. A similar thing happens when the drum beating is organised; the drum beating does not occur in other gram panchayat villages. All these aspects impact people's participation in the decision making processes of the gram sabha. Regarding the Palli Sabha's presiding, 35.2 percent of the elected representatives said they presided over the Palli Sabah. This percentage includes most of the sarpanches. The ward members can preside the Palli Sabha in their respective ward, but this study found no following the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014, in conducting the Palli Sabha meeting. However,

67.5 per cent of the elected leaders said that the sarpanch presides their Palli Sabha meeting in their ward.

8.3.3 Awareness of the Elected Representative on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha

In fact, awareness is a process that is the first step to include in the decision-making process. 57.2 percent of elected representatives were aware of the Palli Sabha's recommendation, which discusses at the gram sabha meeting. However, some elected representatives said that the Palli Sabha was not held timely. 60 percent of the elected representatives agreed that they had discussed the development programmes in the current period in the gram sabha, which is implemented in their villages. 58.8 percent of elected representatives recollected that of the discussion on the report in respect of the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year. However, 34.7 percent of elected leaders said such a discussion was not held. 40.5 percent of the elected representatives were not aware of Gram Panchayat's budget for the next financial year. They said this topic was not discussed in the gram sabha. Around 61.3 percent of the elected representatives had not been aware of the gram panchayat's annual statement, which was placed before the gram sabha. About 43.4 percent of the elected representatives had not been aware of the utilisation certificate placed in the Gram Sabha.

The study found that an average of 50 percent of women and men elected representatives from marginal communities like SCs, STs, and OBCs were aware of the function and role of the gram sabha; they knew the Palli Sabha's recommendation and development programmes in the current year, budgeting and annual statement of account of the gram panchayat, the utilisation certificates of the gram panchayat, which placed to discussed in the gram sabha. Jack H . Nagel argued that "participation has development, or educative, effect to the extent that the process of participation itself changes participants by developing in the new value, attitudes, skill, knowledge and belief". In this context, after participating in the gram sabha, the elected representatives from the marginalised communities somehow cultivate ideas of a new role and function of the gram sabha. Therefore, they became aware of the function of the gram sabha when they participated in the meeting.

8.3.4 The Functioning of the Gram Sabha

Regarding the agenda-setting, 28.8 percent of the elected representatives complained that they were unaware of the gram panchayat's agenda-setting, even though they did not see it in the gram sabha notification. The study found that only the sarpanches and the PEO prepared the agenda for the gram sabha meeting. Further, 42.2 percent of the elected leaders expressed their views that they were aware of the agenda-setting to some extent in their gram panchayat. 48 percent of the elected representatives said the quorum of the gram sabha was not fulfilled due to a lack of reaching information to people about the gram sabha. The meeting used to be adjourned several times; the next time, there is no need for the quorum; thus, the sarpanch and PEO discharge their duties without people's participation. Thus, the PEO and the sarpanches work without the intervention of people in the gram panchayat. We can say it as the gram panchayat run by the PEO.

As far as the time and place was concerned, 63.4 percent of the respondents revealed that time and place was convenient. The women elected representatives expressed their view that they have to go a long way to attend the gram sabha meeting; without male support is a difficult task for them. Those who work as labourers had faced losing their daily wage due to attending the gram sabha meeting. Concerning the final decision in the gram sabha, 84 percent of the respondents said that the consensus method is used to reach the final decision in the gram sabha. However, as per the Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule, 2014, the vote and lottery method should be used to get the gram sabha's final decision, which contravenes the rule. The study found that only the sarpanch, the PEO, and a few influential people of the villages take all gram sabha's decisions. While discussing the gram sabha's resolution, 94.7 percent of the elected representatives claimed that the various issue's resolution passed in the gram sabha. Nevertheless, 12.5 percent of the respondents said the resolution was not followed for the activity. 55.9 percent of the leaders claimed that the passed resolution had been followed some activity. The study found that the implementation of the resolution was changed later by the sarpanch to execute the work.

8.3.5 Satisfaction Level of the Elected Representatives on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha

Around 44.7 percent of the elected leaders accepted that they were not satisfied with the functioning of the gram sabha. The reasons for the dissatisfaction with the gram sabha's function: the resolution did not follow for the action; consensus is the only method to

reach the final decision without applying the lottery method; for women elected representatives, their husbands attend in it so that they are unhappy with gram sabha; it is a long-distance for the women member to attend in it. Other reasons are highlighting that the voice of the women representatives was not recognised in the gram sabha. Jack H . Nagel (2002) said intrinsic value is inner gratification and internal satisfaction that the individual has a sense of one's own individual worth and an intensified identification with own community. Approximately 45 percent of the elected representatives did not achieve the intrinsic value of participation because they felt that the bureaucrat and the sarpanches controlled the gram sabha. The reasons for the unsatisfied among ward members are lack of information or notice, meeting place was not convenient, frequently adjourned in the absence of the required quorum, less incentive and unfair decision-making processes etc.

8.3.6 The Critical Findings for the Gram Sabha

The study finds out the gram sabha is not operative up to the expected level due to some reasons are following; the lack of effective leadership, adequate administrative support from Block and District level panchayat, lack of suitable advertising for the gram sabha meeting, lack of assertive citizenship among the individuals in the villages and finally, lack of strong political will to strengthen the gram sabha. The Gram Sabha's strength is based on strong inputs from an efficient governance/delivery system (Supply Side) and the community's history, culture, and mindset (Demand Side), external factors such as NGOs, activists, and service delivery staff providing catalytic inputs. In the name of training and empowerment of panchayats, a unilateral focus on the Sarpanch and the Secretary(PEO) has resulted in the transition from Panchayati Raj to 'Sarpanch Raj. The ward members' role was not prioritised, which resulted in low participation of people, and people's problem was not solved at the gram panchayat level. People may not face the problem or even participate in routine gram sabha if an active ward member can raise the question of her/his ward constituency at the appropriate level. Ward members representing the various standing committees need to be activated to play an influential role.

People did not understand the significance of gram sabha, and only a few people attended the gram sabha. It is challenging to bring the poor to the gram sabha as they have to lose their income on the meeting day. There was no practice among people to sit and discuss the panchayat's affair in the past. The difference of opinion between people and sarpanches has created a gap among various collectivities. Most of the sarpanches did not

have the organising capacity. Moreover, people look at issues in the background of caste affiliation in the gram sabha meeting.

8.4 Participation and Challenges Faced by the Elected Representatives in the Governance Process of the Gram Panchayat

This part of the chapter discusses the GPDP, the standing committee, the gram panchayat's financial support, and the capacity building of the gram panchayat's elected representatives. Further, it discusses whether the elected representatives know various programmes and policies of the gram panchayat.

8.4.1 Checking the Registers by the Elected Representatives in the Gram Panchayat Office

35.9 percent of the elected representatives affirmed they have been checking the registers of the gram panchayat, but not regularly. Moreover, 30 percent of the GP leaders said they had never checked the same. The reasons for not checking the registers are low education, no training, the dominance of sarpanch and the PEO, suppressing the gender issues, and low caste status. Compared to OBCs and URs elected representatives, the SCs and STs leaders had a lower percentage who verified their gram panchayat registers. According to the findings, a higher percentage of male elected representatives from the URs and OBCs were involved in checking the gram panchayat registers. Thus, the SCs and STs leaders were far behind the URs categories in checking the registers of the GPs.

8.4.2 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Grants for the Gram Panchayats

The study found that almost 39.1 percent of the elected representatives were unaware of the 14th Central Finance Commission grants. Further, 30.3 percent of the GP leaders had an idea about this fund, but partially. All sarpanches were aware of this fund. A majority of the naib-sarpanches and some ward members who are well educated were known about this grant. However, the study found that the sarpanches did not share information about this grant with the ward members and the villagers because sarpanches did not want to face the villagers and the ward members' questions. Panchayats can utilise the CFC funds to keep drinking water and sanitation services in good working order, sewage control, village road maintenance, solid and liquid waste management, street lighting, and other civic amenities.

Since the state government does not provide elected representatives with training and capacity building to manage funds, most respondents, 43.8 percent of the GP leaders, had

no idea what the 4th State Finance Commission grants are. 33.5 percent of the representatives knew it to some extent. Here, all sarpanches knew this grant and its utilisation. The majority of the naib sarpanch knew about this fund to some extent. However, only a few percent of ward members have been aware of this grant. The 14th finance commission grant is a central grant for utilising the GP governance process, and it is associated with a higher percentage of URs and OBCs leaders than SCs and STs leaders because historically, the URs categories were more dominant in politics. First-time SCs, STs, and OBC leaders enter local politics through the reservation process; therefore, they need time to develop their understanding of the governing process. Further, SCs, STs, and OBC leaders had less understanding of the 4th state finance commission grant than UR elected representatives. The majority of the UR's leaders were well aware of the situation. There are several reasons for this: Gender discrimination and their husbands attending gram panchayat function instead of them; Lack of proper training about this grant; Sarpanches and PEO manage the gram panchayat without sharing any details with them; therefore, they were unaware of this grant.

8.4.3 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Annual Budget of the Gram Panchayat

Regarding the annual budget, 48.4 percent of elected representatives said they were unaware of the gram panchayat's annual budget. Furthermore, 33.1 percent of the respondents said they were aware of the annual budget only to some extent, indicating that they partially knew the budget. Positively, 18.4 percent of elected officials reported that they were well-informed about the annual budget. Due to lack of the training of the PRIs members on the budget, they have less idea on that, as a results development process are becoming slow in the villages. The elected representatives from the reserved categories are largely ward members who are unaware of the GP's annual budget, indicating that deliberative democracy and participatory democracy in local governments have failed. The study discovered that the fund details of the GPs are managed by the bureaucrats and sarpanches alone. The study discovered that elected representatives from the SCs, STs, and OBCs have less knowledge about the budget details than members of the URs.

8.4.4 Training and Capacity Building Programmes for the Elected Representatives

The SIRD, PR Bhubaneswar and the DRDA of the district is organising the training programme for the elected representatives of the gram panchayat, mainly focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the elected leaders and Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP). However, after two years as elected representatives, 38.1 percent of the elected representatives said they had only completed the training programme once. Furthermore, 52.2 percent of elected officials said they had attended the training programme twice. Each training programme lasts two to three days, which is insufficient time for elected officials to learn about all of the gram panchayat's roles and functions. Specifically, the elected representatives knew about the two subjects after attending the training: the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) and the elected representatives' roles and responsibilities. The GPDP and the elected representative's role were both remembered by 52.8 percent of the elected representatives. The study found that most elected representatives had an idea about the GPDP.

There was no special design training for the women, the SCs and the STs elected representatives. Still, they are not receiving such training, which is primarily focusing on them. The only significant change is the increased number of elected public representatives to get training at the SIRD and the DRDA, but the programme's quality has hardly contributed to any fundamental change in the gram panchayat's functioning. Even after receiving the training, there is no significant change in the elected representatives' capacity development. Regarding the guideline of the gram panchayat, 80 percent of the leaders had received the gram panchayat guideline book at the training centre. However, most respondents did not go through the book after receiving it.

8.4.5 Enhancing the Capacity of the Elected Representatives for the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats

The main objective of the training is to upgrade their knowledge and skills to perform their responsibilities better, such as implementing programmes equitably, enabling them to think in terms of concrete actions which they can take or facilities and equipping them with the skill required for day-to-day performance of executing duties. As far as the elected representatives' capacity development is concerned, 66.6 percent of the respondents replied that they had gained knowledge about the GP activities and assertiveness after attending the training programme. Now, they can become aware of their role and responsibilities, schemes and programme of the gram panchayat, they could

speak at the monthly meeting and gram sabha meeting about the village's problem. Nevertheless, whatever training was imparted to them is not sufficient; there is a need for more number of trainings and strategies, then only they can empower with regard to the functioning of the gram panchayat. Special training is required for the reserved female representatives. Because of the training program's complicated method, several ward members reported they had trouble comprehending it. Furthermore, some women from the SCs and STs wards had difficulty travelling a long distance to the training centre. The elected members had not been trained about the various schemes, budgets, gender concerns, child and education issues, or health care issues. They have not received training in resource management or social auditing, both of which are necessary for administering the gram panchayat.

8.4.6 Demanded Work of the Elected Representatives and Its Fulfilment

In terms of housing schemes, 61.9 percent of elected representatives demanded that the desired family be included in the list. Around 69 percent of elected representatives demanded pension yojana, including the documentation from the desired beneficiaries. Approximately 72.5 percent of the elected representatives demanded MGNREGS jobs for the villagers. 59.4 percent of elected representatives sought infrastructural work such as bathing ghat and small culvert, the school boundary, and repairing the road in their villages in order to undertake developmental infrastructure work. 76.3 percent of the elected representatives demanded this need in the gram panchayat concerning drinking water.

On the fulfilment of the demand of the elected representatives, 58.1 percent of the respondents indicated that they partially fulfilled their demands; it means their demands were fulfilled to some extent. Positively, 28.8 percent of the elected representatives agreed that their demanded work had been fulfilled whatever they demanded activities from the gram panchayat. As compared among the social groups, more percentage of the URs category elected leaders than SC, ST and OBC groups leaders who had been fulfilled their demanded works. The BDO makes most of the gram panchayat planning decisions based on the prescribed guidelines. According to the BDO's instructions, the PEO and sarpanch drew the gram panchayat's plan with the least involvement of the ward members and villagers.

The Panchayati Raj System will bring not entirely unfavourable outcomes. Reservation provided assured representation to previously socially excluded groups at panchayat levels, opening new avenues and opportunities. This reservation extended to the positions of sarpanch of the PRIs, which suddenly put representatives of these groups in positions of power. The majority of them are newcomers to politics, with only a handful having any prior political experience. They have been learned from the ground up on this incredible experience. One significant point is that the transformation they faced in their lives when serving as a PRIs elected official was nothing short of empowerment.

8.4.7 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

For optimum utilisation of Gram Panchayat resources, the ministry of panchayat came up with the idea of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) – an annual plan of each panchayat where the villagers would decide where the money should be spent. By preparing the GPDP, every panchayat knows how much money it is under different schemes and how it should utilise them. The ministry of panchayat raj also issues detailed guidelines for preparing the GPDP. As per the GPDP guideline of the Odisha Government, there are following the process of the GPDP. The process highlights; (1) identifying resource envelope of GP, (2) Generation of participatory planning environment, (3) situation analysis and participatory planning, (4) projection and finalisation of development by the GP, (5) technical and administrative approval, (6) post plan arrangement, and (7) system support and capacity building for participatory planning.

According to the study's findings, the elected representatives (48.1 percent) said they could understand the GPDP only to some degree. Furthermore, 25.9 percent of them acknowledged that they were well aware of it. However, 25.9 percent of the elected public representatives did not know the GPDP's process, even though they attended the training programme. 57.5 percent of the elected representatives agreed that their gram panchayats did not follow any process of the GPDP that they learned at the training programme. Besides, 28.8 percent of the respondents said they were following the GPDP's process partially. The study found a lack of the state government's initiative to implement the GPDP, which the central government had framed the guideline. The state and central government's interest in implementing the GPDP is not so enthusiastic and does not take the step to pressure the district mechanism to work effectively based on the GPDP's

guideline. The survey found that various methods like the beating of drums, cinema/slides, posters, rallies, loudspeakers, issuing letters, etc., were not followed in the generation of awareness for GPDP. In order to make a plan for the GPDP process, no stakeholder was consulted before preparing the plan, only sarpanches and the PEO prepares the plan, and sometimes they consulted the ward members in the monthly meeting. Regarding the people's participation in the planning process of the gram panchayat, villagers were never consulted before the preparation of the GPDP plan.

8.4.8 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about their Roles and Duties in the Gram Panchayats

The majority of the respondents in the group were sarpanches and naib sarpanches, with (25.9 percent) the elected representatives being very conscious of their role. Furthermore, 59.2 percent of the elected members had a basic understanding of their role and function in the gram panchayat. In contrast, 20 percent of respondents did not express their understanding of the gram panchayat's role and responsibilities. GP leaders from the URs category were more conscious of their role and responsibilities in the gram Panchayat than those from the SCs, STs, and OBCs categories. Among the male elected representatives, 9(2.8 percent) of the SCs, 11(3.4percent) of the STs, and 8(2.5 percent) of the OBCs GP leaders had a strong comprehension of their duty and duties as GPs, whereas 15(4.7%) of the URs GP leaders had a good understanding of it.

8.4.9 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Schemes and Programmes in the Gram Panchayats

The majority of the elected representatives were aware of the various programmes and policies currently implemented in their gram panchayat. Nevertheless, they did not know precisely which schemes target the particular work. Most ward members did not know the fund's details, such as constructing the tubewell from the 14th CFC or 4th SFC and any other scheme. On the other hand, 41 percent of the elected representatives (most of the sarpanches) knew the programme and policy to a large extent. Around 95 percent of the elected representatives were aware of the running schemes; only 44.1 percent of the leaders knew it to a large extent. It means they knew the details, whereas around 49.7 percent of them knew this to some extent. It means they knew the programme and policies of the gram panchayat partially. A similar percentage of women elected members from SCs, OBCs, and URs, around 5 percent, understood various programmes thoroughly. Sarpanches made up the majority of these percentages. Regarding male elected

representatives about the understanding of policies, more percentage of the URs gram panchayat leaders had a complete understanding of the programmes and policies undertaken in the gram panchayats than SCs, STs, and OBCs gram panchayat leaders. Good governance depends upon the understanding of the acts and rules, then it should follow. The study found that the weak governance process in the GPs is due to the negligent steps of the state and central government.

8.4.10 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Acts and Rules in the Gram Panchayats

The Odisha government has passed the various acts and rules in the three-tier Odisha Panchayats concerning the Acts and Rules. Thus, the acts and rules of the Odisha gram panchayats are the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the rule 1968, Odisha Standing Committee Rule 2002, Orissa Minor Forest Produce Rule, 2002. 45.6 percent of the elected representatives did not speak any act and rule of the Odisha Gram Panchayat. The research reveals that elected members from the URs had a better understanding of the gram panchayat act and rules than elected representatives from the SCs, STs, and OBCs. Historically, the URs gram panchayat leaders had authority over land possessions and high social status; as a result, they knew that they could manage the villages' resources through rule and act. As a result, they were quite active in local politics. On the other hand, SCs and STs leaders had traditionally been poor educational status and no ownership over land properties; these are the factors that lead to less involvement in local politics.

8.4.11 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on Sources of the Funding Details for the Gram Panchayat

It is essential to know the source of the fund details for the elected representatives to make the plan and utilise it properly for development work in their villages. The gram panchayat receives grants from three major sources: the 14th Central Finance Commission grants, the 4th state finance commission grants, and MGNREGS. Moreover, other classifications of the source of the grants are central and state-sponsored schemes and own funds.

The study found that 23.1 percent of the elected representatives, including all sarpanches, replied they know well about the source of the fund details of the gram panchayat. Whereas 33.8 percent of the leaders said they knew it to some extent, they partially identified this. 43.1 percent of the elected representatives had no idea where the funds

were granted. For example, they did not know the difference between central and state funds and the purpose of the funds. In this regard, the sarpanches and the PEO take advantage of making the plan with their discretion without consulting ward members and people of the villages. For women elected representatives, their husbands attended the gram panchayat's activities, so they did not know the source of funds for the gram panchayat. In the study areas, a higher percentage of OBCs and URs leaders were aware of the source of funds than SCs and STs leaders. For instance, 19(5.9 percent) of UR elected representatives were aware of it to a large extent, whereas 6(1.9 percent) of SC leaders were aware of it. When it came to women elected representatives' understanding of the source of funding, women from all categories, the overwhelming majority of them, had no knowledge of the source of funds.

8.4.12 Standing Committee of the Gram Panchayats

The Gram Panchayats would not be able to address any of these issues during their general body meetings. All states have formed subject-specific statutory committees of the Gram Panchayats in order to concentrate attention on the subjects. The Gram Panchayat and its standing committee meetings are crucial for decision-making. With the aid of its functionaries, all of the Gram Panchayat's elected members collectively deal with various aspects of local development through the standing committee. The standing committee should be participatory and democratic so that all members' opinions can hear and make a collective decision. All of the elected representatives were members of the gram panchayat's standing committee. Moreover, around 81 percent of the respondents were aware of the existence, functional details and benefit of having the standing committee in the gram panchayat. However, approximately 46 percent of the elected representatives complained that there was no proper functioning of the standing committee. 35.6 percent of the elected representatives said it was functioning irregularly. Why is the standing committee not functional? First, there is no financial power of the standing committee, not the value of the gram sabha, no allowances and uniformity in honorarium. Second, there is a lack of transparency in decision-making, so that people cannot trust them. Predominantly, the government has not been taken an interest in activating and channelising the committee in the gram panchayat. The state government could not keep track of the gram panchayat's standing committee and pay close attention to its activities. Third, the elected representatives have not received training on how the

standing committee works. As a consequence of these factors, the standing committee could not work effectively.

8.4.13 Conducting Planning Process at the Village Panchayat Level in the Study Areas

In Odisha, the BDO has control over the planning processes of the panchayats. In theory, the GP should prepare the plans and budget before sending them to the BDO, but the BDO also requires each GP to submit a plan based on the issues and guidance. The PEO and the sarpanch create the project's plan and budget. The only responsibility of the gram panchayat is to pass a gram sabha resolution on the issues and guidelines and send it to the BDO. At the block level, the BDO instruct the PEO to make the plan as per their direction; thus, the PEOs and sarpanches prepare the plan by following the direction of the BDO. About the gram panchayat's planning process, 36.9 percent of the elected representatives said they prepared the village's needs when they attended the monthly meeting. In addition, 10.6 percent of respondents reported that the plan was prepared based on a resolution passed in the gram sabha. However, 31.9 percent of the elected representatives alleged that the sarpanch and the PEO prepared the plan without involving ward members and villagers and submitted it to the BDO. Hence, the bureaucracy controls the gram panchayat's planning process. It was found that the majority only PEOs and sarpanches prepare the plan without involving the ward members and people while making the GPDP.

8.4.14 Proxy Women Elected Representatives in the Gram Panchayats

The table shows that an absolute majority of around 72 percent of women elected representatives are in the proxy. According to the study's finding, the URs and OBCs categories had the most proxy women elected leaders. Women GP leaders from the SCs and STs might have more mobility in the gram panchayat's operations. Women leaders from the SCs and STs, on the other hand, come to work alongside their male family members. The survey found that most proxy women elected representatives in the gram panchayat are represented by male family members, such as husbands, sons, brothers, and father-in-law.

8.4.15 Honorarium and Salaries of the Elected Representatives

71.9 percent of the elected representatives disappointedly reported dissatisfaction with their salaries and honorarium received in the gram panchayat's work. Most of the ward members alleged that they are receiving Rs.240 per seating charge for the month. On the

other hand, the naib sarpanch gets Rs.750 per seating per month, and the sarpanch receives Rs. 1800 per month. The ward members said this is very injustice they receive a pittance of Rs 240 per month, which leads to work inefficiency, ineffective and lack of interest in the public work. The majority of the SCs, STs and OBCs elected GP leaders than URs elected GP leaders were unhappy with their incentive in the gram panchayat. The SCs, STs, and OBCs elected leaders were economically weak and low income; thus, they were unhappy with this work of the gram panchayats. The URs elected leaders had land properties and were rich in economic resources, so that they were happy with local politics. Therefore, they controlled the resources of the GP.

8.5 Drinking-Water and Sanitation Programmes in the Gram Panchayats

This section describes the role of the gram panchayat in delivering safe drinking water and sanitation in the villages. Further, it explores how and whether the elected representatives are aware of the gram panchayat's drinking water and sanitation programmes.

8.5.1 Open Defecation Free and Coverage of the Toilet Facilities

Having facilitated the households' toilet, all respondents replied that their full coverage of IHHL had constructed households in their village, and the construction work is going on. The study found that 12.2 percent of the elected representatives claimed that their village was now open defecation free. Around 87 percent of the respondents replied that their villages had been practised open defecation. Psychological and behavioural barriers, traditional beliefs and superstitions, a lack of room, water, awareness, and a defective toilet design are reasons for open defecation. According to the majority of elected representatives (52.8 percent), people are not using the toilet due to a lack of proper water facilities, insufficient space in their homes, and lack of understanding.

8.5.2 Mobilisation by the Elected Representatives to Use the Toilet

Regarding the mobilisation to use the toilet, 25.6 percent of the respondents said they always encouraged and mobilised people to use the toilet. The majority of them are sarpanches. In addition, 33.4percent of them sometimes inspired people to use the latrine. Further, 40.9 percent of the elected representatives replied that they never mobilised people to use the toilet. All social categories of the elected representatives were not serious about mobilising people to take advantage of using the toilet.

8.5.3 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Swachha Bharat Mission-Gramin

Gram Panchayats have a vital role in the implementation of SBM-G. The gram panchayat (1)organises social mobilisation for the building of toilets as well as the preservation of a safe environment by proper waste disposal. (2) Engage relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for interpersonal IEC and training. (3)Encourage daily toilet use, toilet repairs and upgrades, and interpersonal contact in the name of hygiene education. (4) Over and beyond the required number, contribute from their own capital to school sanitation. (5)Ensure that all SBM-G components meet safety requirements (for example, the distance between a water source and a latrine – adhering to the minimum distance for IHHL, school and Anganwadi toilets, and community sanitary complexes; controlling pit depth, pit lining to avoid pollution, pit collapse, and so on). Around 71 percent of the elected representatives knew about the Swachha Bharat Mission. Out of them, 37.5 percent of the leaders know well these schemes, and most of them were sarpanches. More percentage of the SCs leaders than other social groups were aware of the Swachha Bharat Mission-G.

8.5.4 Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) in Odisha

Every GP have constituted the village water and sanitation committee. As far as the VWSC's responsibilities are concerned, 25.9 percent of the elected representatives were aware of the role and the function of the VWSC. However, 45.9 percent of elected GP leaders said they had no idea about it. The reason for the unknowing about this committee is GPs forms the committee but not functioning, lack of state government's interest to activate the committee, and less honorarium of the elected representatives. On the other hand, 61.9 percent of the elected leaders said they are members of the VWSC. Around 43 percent of women elected members in the VWSC, whereas 18.4 percent of male elected representatives were involved in the VSWC.

Approximately 40 percent of the elected leaders alleged that the VWSC had not functioned at all. Hence, they were dissatisfied with the functioning of the VWSC. In addition, 40.6 percent of the PRI members appealed that the function of the VWCS had irregularly been conducted the meeting; therefore, they are somehow satisfactory for their functioning. Regarding its function, the recommendation of the VSWC irregular was placed before the gram sabha meeting. Positively, 20.3 percent of the elected leaders

replied that the function of the VWSC is regularly organised; thus, they are satisfied with this committee's functioning.

8.5.5 Role of the Sarpanches in Ensuring the Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities

The sarpanch shall have a role, and duty are the following: (1) bringing drinking water issues to Gram Sabhas for debate, preparation, and approval; constituting the GPWSC and ensuring its successful operation; (2) monitoring income, fees, and revenue, expenditure, and work quality; (3) guaranteeing equity in water supply and access, with particular attention to SCs/STs/weaker sections and distant areas (if any); and (4) obtaining assistance from block/district support organisations/departments, as required. In the study, 81.6 percent of sarpanches affirmed that they addressed the safety and sanitation problem in the gram sabha meeting, and the VWSC was formed in each gram panchayat. According to the study, 89.5 percent of the sarpanches ensured safe drinking water facilities to the SCs and STs households without discrimination. 78.9 percent of the elected representatives responded that they had been solved the conflict arising regarding the issue of the drinking water at the village level. Concerning the role of the sarpanch in providing safe drinking water in the GPs, they were actively discharged their duties from social categories—SCs, STs, OBCs and URs.

8.5.6 Role of the Ward Members for Providing the Safe Drinking Water at the Ward Level

GP ward members are required to provide leadership at the ward level, raise ward citizen consciousness, mobilise active participation of ward people in Gram Sabha meetings, and ensure that all sections of society in their wards are adequately addressed in the village plans track day-to-day water supply management. As members of the GP, participate and contribute as required to prepare, implement, and monitor activities at the GP level.

51.8 percent of ward members agreed that they mobilised the ward citizens to participate in the gram sabha. At the ward level, more percentage of the SC women ward members (9.6percent) than ST women ward members (6.4percent), OBC women ward members (5.7percent), and UR women ward members (7.8percent) who had been actively engaged in the mobilisation effort for the people participating in the Gram Sabha to solve the issue of the drinking water. It appears that women leaders in the SCs were more involved in this activity. 66.3 percent of the ward members attempted to create awareness among people for safe drinking water at the ward level. More percentage of the Ward members

from the SCs and STs were engaged in creating awareness of safe drinking water at their ward level than OBCs and URs leaders. Nearly 47.2 percent of ward members answered that they monitored the existing piped water supply to manage correctly, but some replied not regularly. In terms of the women ward members' monitoring activities in providing safe drinking water, 8.5 percent of SCs and STs of each, 6 percent of OBCs, and 4.6 percent of URs had each monitored the source of the drinking water and assured that it would reach the communities' families. According to the findings, a high percentage of the SCs and STs women ward members were involved in this activity.

In order to participate in the planning for drinking water supply, 53.9 percent affirmed that they directly or indirectly participate in the planning process for drinking water. In the monthly meeting at the gram panchayat, they shared the issues and challenges in delivering drinking water service at the ward level. The study shows that the ward members had been discharged their duties to provide drinking water service to the villagers. However, some factors need to be improved, such as more training, adequate fund flows, people participation, no control of the bureaucracy over them, and proper information about the district panchayat and block panchayat. Then only they would be more active in providing drinking water to their GPs. The study found that women elected representatives of the VWSC has taken a lead role in motivating women in other areas to come forward and play key roles in managing their water resources. Regarding the role of the WWM(Women ward Members) in drinking water, they were more serious about drinking water and sanitation issues in the villages.

8.5.7 Awareness of the Elected Representatives on the Sources of the Funding Details for the Gram Panchayats

Only two grants are directly available to the gram panchayat; the 14th Central Finance Commission Grants and the 4th state finance commission grants, whose objective is to improve the water and sanitation programme in the gram panchayat. Also, Swachha Bharat Mission-(Gramin) primarily focused on the building of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) and the elimination of open defecation in villages (ODF). The programme offers a financial reward of Rs 12,000 for installing and using toilets.

26.3 percent of respondents agreed that they had a good understanding of the fund's drinking water source and sanitation. This was known to the majority of sarpanches and Naib-sarpanches. Furthermore, 39.7 percent of them said they did not know these funds.

34.1 percent of the elected representatives said they knew it to some extent. They do not have complete knowledge about the source of the funds' details. It was worth noting that more percentage of the URs and OBCs elected leaders than SCs and STs leaders who had controlled and managed the funds for the drinking water in rural areas. 29.7 percent of the GP elected members said that they had been involved in the planning process for drinking water service. In this activity, the study shows that the SCs and STs GP leaders were less involved than the OBCs and URs GP leaders. For example, men leaders who had not been participated in this activity is 9.4 percent of SCs and 4.4 percent of STs, whereas all men GP leaders from the OBCs and URs who have participated in the channelising the fund for the drinking water service.

8.5.8 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about the Schemes and Programmes for the Drinking Water and Sanitation in Odisha

35.6 percent of the elected representatives agreed that they were aware of the drinking water and sanitation schemes; thus, they know the Basudha scheme and NRDWP of RWSS. They knew the channelisation fund for the drinking water—naming the 14th CFC grant and 4th SFC grants —is a significant fund to manage the drinking water and sanitation. Moreover, 45.9 percent of the respondents said that they knew these schemes partially because they argued that the drinking water's funding pattern directly transferred to the RWSS and the Block Panchayat, so they were unaware of this. As shown in the table, a higher percentage of the male URs elected representatives, 21(6.6 percent) who were well acquainted with the existing programmes and policies for safe drinking water and sanitation. The other social groups were 11(3.4percent) SCs, 14(4.4 percent) of each STs and OBCs counterparts who knew it. In the case of women elected representatives, a higher percentage of 16(5percent) of the SC leaders knew about these schemes and programmes than the other social groups, which were 13(4.1percent) of each ST and OBC leader and 12(3.8percent) of the URs leaders. The study revealed that a higher percentage of SC women GP leaders had a strong awareness of drinking water policies than women from other social categories. Because in most SC communities, they had been neglected to have safe drinking water facilities at the ward level.

8.5.9 Awareness of the Elected Representatives about Water Budgeting in the gram panchayats

A "water budget" is essentially an estimate of how much water the Gram Panchayat requires and has available. After gathering information on the various available water

supply schemes and sources, the Gram Panchayat must prepare a water budget. It is needed in order to prepare a source sustainability plan. Water budget refers to the need and assessment of drinking water in the gram panchayat. Nevertheless, all respondents said they had no idea how the water budget was prepared on drinking water and sanitation in the gram panchayat. The study finds that there was no separate water budget preparing in any GPs in the study areas.

8.5.10 Role of the Gram Panchayats in Managing the Safe Drinking Water

83.7 percent of the elected representatives said the drinking water issue had been discussed. This discussion was limited only to the immediate need for drinking water, not the sustainable plan and operation and managing of the drinking water. In the gram sabha, the report of the VWSC was not placed. Only sarpanch and close ward members decided to provide the drinking water facilities to the irregular service problem. 43.7 percent of the elected representatives revealed that they knew that their tubewell had been tested using the Field Testing Kit (FTK). In contrast, 56.2 per cent of them alleged that such a test had not been conducted at their ward level. Due to the lack of coordination of the RWSS department and lack of bureaucracy interest, they did not test the drinking water in their villages. According to the BIS, at least twice a year need to test the drinking water in the villages, which is not happening in the study areas. The study found that 36.5 percent of the elected members replied that the GPs had been regularly chlorinated drinking water in their areas. However, 64.3 percent of the GP members alleged that the GPs had never been chlorinated in the drinking water in their locality.

8.5.11 Capacity Enhanced by the Elected Representatives in Providing Drinking Water Facilities

The elected members are superficially engaged with the safe drinking water supply in terms of drinking water. They were concerned with project execution, not long term sustainable strategic planning and monitoring. They lack awareness of drinking water supply issues, the linkages to the sustainable water source, unsafe sanitation and safe water supply. As a result, they did not include necessary aspects in their annual planning in the gram panchayat. Their understanding was confined to achieving open defecation free(ODF) through toilet construction as far as sanitation is concerned. Due to irregular capacity building, training and information flow, members of the PRIs lack awareness of the current government's rules and orders. They were unaware of planning, executing, monitoring, and surveillance drinking water and sanitation programmes. Their duty and role are mainly limited to mobilising the people's demand and monitoring water sources.

They remain heavily dependent on government officials or engineers for each step of the drinking water and sanitation project cycle, including post-construction.

8.5.12 Satisfaction Level of the Elected Representatives in Providing Safe Drinking and Sanitation

22.2 percent of the elected respondents agreed they are very strongly satisfied; they are primarily sarpanches and naib sarpanches. 32.2 percent of the elected representatives revealed that they were satisfied; they hoped that their problems would solve through the gram panchayat's intervention. However, 37.2 percent of the respondents complained that they were dissatisfied with drinking water and sanitation facilities. Besides, 5 percent of the respondents said they were strongly dissatisfied with the gram panchayat's drinking water and sanitation facilities. The gram sabha's minimal involvement, VWSC's dysfunction, and a lack of training on managing drinking water and sanitation are reasons for dissatisfaction. In addition, the state government did not designate a specific role or set of guidelines for ward members to handle drinking water in their communities. Importantly, since each ward member receives 240 rupees per month as a seating charge, they do not waste time handling the drinking service.

8.6 Recommendation for the Gram Sabha

The following paragraphs discuss the gram sabha's recommendation to improve the gram sabha's function in the gram panchayat.

8.6.1 Mode of Communication to Conduct the Gram Sabha

Active participation in gram panchayats and more equitable service delivery are closely linked to information. On the other hand, an ordinary villager has very much restricted access to information. He or she is unlikely to understand the panchayat's powers, how the sarpanch can be kept responsible for wrongdoings, or how rights can be upheld; for example, people should have easy access to this material. Energising Gram Sabhas is the genuine hurdle for successful rural local governance. Hence, it is necessary to develop processes for the Gram Sabha to meet daily and substantively, with active involvement from its members, and track its operations. Before holding Gram Sabha meetings, a notice about the meeting must be distributed to the public at least 7 days in advance through written messages, beating drums, and other means. The Gram Sabha meeting will be meaningful if its members' active participation in the monitoring of its operations.

8.6.2 Beneficiary Selection and Identifying Needs of the Villages

To choose the beneficiaries, create a prioritised database of the needs of individual households and neighbourhoods. A computerised database may be designed to ensure all information about every household in the Gram Panchayat. A team of responsible villagers other than elected officials may assist the panchayat in identifying the village's concerns and needs. Encourage all members of a village's household to make recommendations and representations.

8.6.3 Accountability of the Gram Sabha

Complaint and Suggestion Boxes can be placed in public areas in the village so that residents can leave their feedback and ideas. Regarding the complaint box, it should be discussed in the gram sabha. The gram sabha should develop a village-level plan to overcome hunger and poverty with the help of a dedicated agency (NGO/VO) that may deter replicating the mechanism at the macro level. Adequate Publicity: Information about the function and importance of the gram sabha to the people should be disseminated continuously and through consistent mechanisms.

8.6.4 Mobilisation of the People to Attend the Gram Sabha

Suitable Location and Space: The gram sabha meetings should be held in a regular, convenient place that can regularly accommodate a sufficient number of people. To mobilise the population, effective use of local media is essential. Local news organisations, such as newspapers and television stations, should be included in the process of disseminating knowledge about gram sabha's significance. Continuous Advertisement: Continuous ads should be placed in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj at the national level and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development at the state level, illustrating the importance of people's participation in the gram sabha meetings. Effective Gram Sabha Case Studies: Evaluation and documentation of each village panchayat should be documented and screened as gram sabha success stories. Incorporation of Gram Sabha Practices into the School Curriculum: The value and significance of gram sabha should be taught in primary and secondary schools to help children and adolescents understand the meaning of democracy as future potential people. An amalgamation of the Panchayati Raj System with Civil Society Organisations such as youth clubs and Self-Help Groups would improve outcomes. Young People's Awareness: There should be a strong demarcation regarding the importance of young people's collective well-being. Any tasks for adolescents should be assigned responsibilities in adopting sustainability programmes such that youth feel like they contribute to improving

people's conditions. In order to mobilise the SCs/STs people to participate in the gram sabha, a special committee should be formed in the Gram Panchayat, including SCs/STs representatives, so that they can mobilise villagers.

8.6.5 Gram Sabha as a Deliberative Democracy

Roadmap from Panchayati Raj to Parliament: A local democratic, participatory system will serve as democratic colleges, and as such, they will serve as a blueprint for leadership qualities. It also serves as a training ground for those interested in learning how to govern processes. There should be a particular focus on women members who can keep their needs in the gram sabha. Thus, the state government should make a strategy or mechanism to recognise the women members' voices in the gram sabha. It should be compulsory to speak by women members in the gram sabha. There should be extraordinary power to the ward members in order to arrange the gram sabha. For example, give them an incentive to mobilise people to attend the gram sabha meeting. Women elected representatives can make more participatory by mobilising women into the gram sabha meeting. Thus, they should be trained and provide an incentive to excitingly participate and mobilise women members to attend the gram sabha meeting.

8.6.6 Suggestions for Documentation and Record-Keeping in the Gram Sabha

In Odisha, holding the gram sabha twice a year is insufficient; the 4 to 5 times the gram sabha should be held in a year for each gram panchayat. The quorum should be mandatory for each gram sabha, and if the quorum was not fulfilled, the same is not required for the second time. The study suggested that a second time also quorum is required for the gram sabha. Within 24 hours, the complete record of proceedings, including photos, must be uploaded to a website. Every adjourned gram sabha should be kept accountable, and the administrative machinery should be required to provide a reason for the adjournment.

8.6.7 Publicising the Agenda of the Gram Sabha

Apart from suggestions made by members before the gram sabha meeting, every panchayat should have a pre-determined, mandatory agenda. Members of the panchayat should be required to present the roadmap (development plan), appraisal reports of current work, assessment report (including social audit), utilisation certificates, audit report, and other documents for consideration and approval at the specific GS Meeting so that people get aware about their significance and can address and explain the complexities involved. The ward members should be included in the planning process while the gram panchayat prepares the agenda of the gram sabha.

8.6.8 Activating Palli Sabha to Discuss the Needs of the Villagers

In Odisha, the Palli Sabha should be activated to place the recommendations in the gram sabha. It requires an increase in the number of the time to conduct the Palli Sabha. The guideline should frame the ward members to preside the Palli Sabha, and power should be given to them to address all the needs and problems of the ward in the gram panchayat or gram sabha. The conduct of a Gram Sabha, which in simple terms means the sabha meeting of a Gram Sabha, is generally highlighted. This has become so mandatory that decisions made without a Gram Sabha meeting are considered as a null and void.

8.7 Recommendations for Strengthening the Governance Process in the Gram Panchayats

Most of the elected representatives are from marginalised communities such as SCs, STs, OBCs; they are becoming first time elected representatives. Therefore, they may not have adequate skills to maintain the administration of the gram panchayat. Moreover, women elected representatives can face an additional problem because they have to work in household activities as well as the functioning of the gram panchayat. Hence, the elected representatives have been faced various challenges in the activities of the gram panchayat. Here, some recommendations were given to the following discussion to improve the governance in the gram panchayat.

8.7.1 Training Programme for the Elected Representatives

The training programme had helped the participants to comprehend the need for the Panchayati Raj System, its administration, responsibilities and the role of the elected representatives to better society. However, they said that they had to face several problems in convening the Gram Sabha meeting as the people did not understand the purpose of the meeting. Only two times, they attend the training after two years assuming the office. Two-time training is not sufficient for them to understand the role and function of the gram panchayat. Thus, they have not developed confidence and hope to effectively convince them and organise the meeting due to the lack of training. The training programme, of course, has encouraged the participants to take steps to get the function of the gram panchayat. Nevertheless, it was felt by the elected representatives that immediate follow-up action might be taken to keep the sarpanches in touch with the panchayat's function and schemes to ensure full participation of the people.

In the training programme, some necessary traits are required for them as qualities of a successful leader: ensuring the support of the people and officials, understanding the

group dynamics in the villages, and bringing out solidarity among various social groups and their leaders for common action, economic independence for their personal life, easily approachable, possessing tender qualities like love, affection, patience, humbleness, non-violence and feeling of the togetherness, team spirit, open-mindedness and vigilance, respecting the people's feeling and sentiment, more flexible in approach and action to keep the people together, understanding and accepting one's own fault (self-analysis), grasps over the rules of administration, and understanding the concept of democracy, development and sustainability. In addition, the training programme should include the subjects such as the annual budgeting, social audit, the utilisation of the 14th Central Finance Commission grants and 4th State Finance Commission grants, the right and duties of the elected representatives for good governance in the grassroots panchayat.

8.7.2 Problems of Women Elected Representatives in the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats

It should create a forum at the gram panchayat level where the women elected representatives to share their problems and experience to solve the problem encountered in the gram panchayat. A handbook in the vernacular language on the panchayat administrative with key features, duties and responsibilities of the sarpanch, naib sarpanch, and ward members, the panchayat executive officer, and the BDO, panchayat's duties and responsibilities, affairs like provision of drinking water and sanitation, street light, social justice, economic development of the weaker section, SC/ST, women and child care; thus, this book should distribute to all elected representative immediately after the election. Further, note that the schemes and developments pertaining to individual and rural development should be adhesive on the gram panchayat office wall and distributed to all elected representatives. A copy of the 11th schedule containing the 29 subjects allocated to the PRI should share with all elected representatives. A set of state government acts and rules of the gram panchayat shall be distributed to all elected representatives to enhance the capacity after reading the material.

8.7.3 Formulation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in the Gram Panchayats

Plans must be prepared in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Department's Government Resolution on GPDP, which was published in 2015. The aim is to define the planning processes and developmental goals that will guide sector-by-sector expenditure. The plan must be evidence-based,

participatory, and inclusive in order to evaluate the interests of all the segments of the population and critically prioritise potential initiatives.

In Odisha, the GPDP process was not followed properly in the gram panchayat; thus, the state government should enforce the guideline, and the technical team should visit every GP to prepare the GPDP. Participatory planning should be an annual exercise: Planning is more than prioritising the use of available resources. People become more conscious of their social and economic status due to this process. Annual activities will keep them up to date, and the proposals will be able to address the present situation. Need for augmenting plan size of the GPDP: According to the State Finance Commission's suggestions to raise the per capita plan size, the state may consider making more money accessible to GPs by transferring untied funds. More devolution of activities to GPs, followed by financial devolution by budgetary funding, may be seen to increase GP plan size. The Constitution requires each district to prepare a drafted District Development Plan (DDP). The DDP must be created using a bottom-up approach, which is suggested in preparing the plan for the GPDP. Enthusiastic Officer for a Cluster: The state government may consider forming clusters of about 15-20 GPs and recruiting a dedicated officer/facilitator to plan and monitor various GP activities, including the GPDP. For ease of execution, Master Trainers can be assigned to each cluster regularly. They will be compensated depending on how many days they work. Participation of all elected representatives must be in preparing the GPDP in the gram panchayat. Each ward member should assign a task to present their ward's problems to incorporate in the GPDP.

8.7.4 Inclusive Gram Panchayats: Focus on Every Group in the Village

Participation of the villagers need to be more inclusive: The study discovered that many wards had low attendance rates in gram sabha/pallis sabha. In addition, certain socioeconomic classes were underrepresented. As a result, more focus should be placed at the ward meetings, with SHGs playing a more active role in this regard. Backward communities, women, and children should be invited to such meetings and allowed to voice their demands. Enhancing communication with the villagers: The training exercise should be conducted on the plan of the GPDP. Thus, communication with people has been limited to inform them on the training exercise's date and time to participate. That did not address the more important reasons why the GP should be consulted plan and the involvement of citizens in the planning process. The state can devise a coordination plan for informing rural residents about the need for GPDP and the procedures to be followed.

8.7.5 Convergence of NGOs, SHGs and Line Department in the Gram Panchayat

More convergence with NGOs and SHG: More collaborations with civil society organisations such as the Federation of SHGs and NGOs with experience in different aspects of planning and development are required. Convergence between GPs and the SHG Federation for collaboration and use of the GPDP should be prioritised and promote women's economic well-being. Institutional Strengthening of GPs: More officials from the line departments are needed to improve the GPs' administrative functioning and the Gram Sabha. Accounting can be computerised so that it can be seen in real-time. For improved tracking, the programme should be able to generate scheme/sector-level expenditure progress. Convergence with other programmes and policies must be ensured: The GPDP should be convergence with programmes such as MGNREGS, Watershed Development Programs, SBM(G), NRDWP, SRLM, and others. Enhancing livelihood prospects with GPDP funds and the above flagship programmes should be promoted, and best practices should be documented for replication and sharing.

The approved plan should be widely disseminated: The community must be informed about the approved plan. This can be accomplished by reporting key features of the plan in the Gram Sabha held after the plan's approval and writing the plan's key features on the wall. CSOs (Civil Society Organizations), such as SHG Federations, may be given copies of the plan to help them to understand their position and provide general information to local residents. Since people have Facebook accounts, the proposal could also be shared there.

8.7.6 Timely Release of Funds and Grants

Funds and grants should reach GPs on time: The timely release of funds is crucial to enhancing implementation efficiency. There should be more predictability in terms of the amount and time when the funds reach the GPs, and there should be less delay in the release of funds. GPs can also be advised to invest their OSR advance to cover the expenditures that would be made with CFC grants, which are less ambiguous. Enhancing Own Source Resource (OSR) should be prioritised in order to increase OSR's share of GPDP support. For quality improvement, the same should be monitored.

8.7.7 Technical Training for the Panchayat Functionaries

The PEO and the elected representatives also need to be equipped with more technical aspects of planning, monitoring, and implementation. Also, one-time or two-time training may not help the purpose. They need to be trained every year. All elected representatives

should be trained on the panchayat enterprise suite that is the e-panchayat how the data can be placed in the different portals of e-panchayat. A particular training programme should organise the elected representatives on budgeting, source of the funds, and tax collection of the gram panchayat. The GP should improve its own resource source (ORS); in this regard, the panchayat's functionary should be trained to enhance it.

8.7.8 Roles and Functions of Standing Committee

There will be seven standing committees in each Gram Panchayat, each with 12 members, in Odisha. The standing committees should address the problems that the villagers face and make recommendations for Gram Sabha resolutions. Thus, all standing committees should activate in the gram panchayat. Standing committees must become more involved and assist the sarpanch in preparing, executing, and monitoring activities related to the assigned development problem. As per Odisha Gram Panchayat Rule 2014, every gram panchayat must constitute the standing committees to perform various functions. It should be mandatory to integrate the standing committee's report with the process of the GPDP in the gram panchayat. Further, 50 percent of the women elected members should be in each standing committee

8.7.9 Focus on the Role of the Ward Members in the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats

The government should hike the salary or honorarium of the elected representatives; thus, they can enhance their interest in working in rural development. Sarpanches are doing all developmental work, so the ward members were less interested in the panchayat. The ward members should do the contract work of the gram panchayat for their respective ward, for example, bathing Ghat building, crematorium, culvert, installing new tube well, repairing school boundary and water tank, etc. State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SRIDPR) is a training institute under the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department in Odisha. Moreover, it has three extensions training institutes that impart the training to the panchayat's functionaries. More numbers the extension training institute should open in Odisha with many elected representatives in the panchayat. The educational qualification of the Panchayat Executive Officer is graduation which is not sufficient to understand the concept of democracy, social development, social exclusion and inclusion, and sustainability. The minimum qualification for the PEO should be a master degree in social science so that she/he can adequately understand social development.

8.8 Recommendations for the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

Balangir is a part of the Koraput, Balangir, and Kalahandi (KBK) region, and several socioeconomic metrics show extreme poverty. Water quality is a major problem in several development blocks in Balangir, with fluoride levels in the groundwater above the minimum safe limit. Another source of concern is the frequent failure of tube wells and rural piped water supply units. Balangir¹ is one of Odisha's worst-performing districts when it comes to providing drinking and sanitation facilities. The State government will be in charge of most development programmes under the CFC. As a result, GPs had not emphasised water and sanitation facilities in institutions as directed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. "GPs in Odisha gave priority to only those areas of work which were from time to time instructed by the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department" (PRDWD)

8.8.1 Funds and Grants for Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

More monetary resources should be invested in the capacity building of elected and non-elected GP functionaries, including ward members. It needs to prepare need-based plans, budgets, monthly accounts/audits, and translate the 14 CFC and SFC grants into action. A few sarpanches complained that the government does not consider timely releasing funds of the 14th CFC in managing safe drinking water. Lack of inadequate preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), weak monitoring, and poor financial management were some of the reasons for the delay in fund utilisation.

8.8.2 Decentralised Planning for the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

There is also a need for a robust coordination mechanism between the Centre, State and Local bodies such as PRIs concerning the implementation of 14 CFC's recommendation, activity selection and preparation of GPDP. When planning projects and proposals in the form of a GPDP in response to local needs, there was an absence of flexibility in using funds. The decision on which activities to include in the GPDP is made at the state level. There is a need for transparency in budget and physical outcome data for projects funded by the 14 CFC and SFC at the district and gram panchayat levels. It is essential to improve GPDP planning by state governments, which must decentralise plans based on local needs. GPs should concentrate on water security and conservation in addition to implementing water supply projects in the 14CFC. WASH and GPDP: Delivering

¹ ¹ Economic Survey, 2017-18 (https://www.pc.odisha.gov.in/Download/Economic_Survey_2017-18.pdf)

services on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is a significant responsibility of the GP. Following the achievement of ODF status, the state is working on an ODF sustainability programme. The state must also ensure that every household has access to clean drinking water through a pipeline, which will entail a scheduled investment. The WASH schedule and the GPDP should be integrated.

8.8.3 Monitoring and Audit for the Programme of the Drinking Water Programme

There is also a need to create an independent organisation for conducting a social audit at the GP level. The audit report should share with all ward members to understand the financial position of the gram panchayat. In order to engage with the state, district, and local governments for transparency and accountability, NGOs also need regular support to develop their capacities on local level planning, budgeting, and monitoring regarding safe drinking water and sanitation.

8.8.4 Role of the SIRDPR in Providing the Safe Drinking Water Programme for the Gram Panchayats

A review of the SIRDPR material reveals that the current teaching content does not emphasise post-construction assistance. The study material did not cover asset inventory and asset management, budget accounting for preventive maintenance, major infrastructure upgrades or reconstruction, preventive maintenance plans, and other topics. Other important issues, such as hygiene education or WASH in schools, Anganwadi (child care centres), and health care facilities, were also not covered. There were also no explicit references to women or marginalised communities being included in the planning and implementation phases.

8.8.5 Capacity Building Programme for the Panchayat Functionaries

Capacity building programmes are being implemented at the state, district, and block levels to equip PRI representatives and RWSS officials with programme preparation and implementation skills in order to achieve 100 percent ODF status and drinking water source coverage in the state. Including mega PWS(Piped Water Supply) like BASUDHA, technocrats should be educated and focused on developing and running water supply schemes; they are also imparted the SBM training. Bureaucrats and elected representatives must be trained and orientated on-demand generation, building, and follow-up activities pertaining to sanitation. The study found that the PD-DRDAs, BDOs, and engineers daily update notices and rule changes at weekly or monthly review meetings. Capacity building and knowledge flows to the PRIs, on the other hand, are not as consistent. As a result, PRIs are unaware of current government orders and cannot

comply with them, nor learn how to prepare, implement, and monitor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programmes. The training for PRIs members on RWSS is output instead of outcome-oriented. The study found that the PRIs representatives did not receive any training on the drinking water and sanitation programme; therefore, they could not correctly handle the village's drinking water and sanitation programme.

8.8.6 Training for the Post-Construction in the Maintenance for the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

Elements of post-construction support are not covered in training. Beyond ODF and behaviour change communication, the training should include preparing for ongoing maintenance and water protection planning programmes. As a result, capacity-building programmes continue to make PRIs reliant on engineers or officials at each stage of the WASH project cycle, including post-construction, which must be rectified so as not to depend on them constantly. The training content does not include topics such as design, implementation, and evaluation. Operation and maintenance of drinking water supply schemes and tariff collection mechanisms are needed to ensure the scheme's smooth operation and functionality. The rural water supply initiatives include an operations and maintenance (O&M) aspect that focuses on preventive maintenance, fault repair, costing problems, and drinking water scheme regulatory compliance.

8.8.7 Proper Communication of the Block Official with Elected Representatives at the Gram Panchayat Level

Assistant Engineer (AE) at the block level is responsible for developing water supply systems, ensuring that they are functional, and communicating with the communities, with the help of the Junior Engineer (JE). The process of handing over a water supply to the sarpanch and ward members was one of the most important aspects of the AEs' training. The study found that both sarpanches and the ward members did not understand the details, reporting faults, inventory and maintenance schedules. However, AEs may understand such things, and long-term maintenance, including infrastructure repair, was not included. AEs, BDOs, sarpanches, and ward members must receive updates on new rules and regulations regarding safe drinking water and sanitation at periodic review meetings. While interacting with BDO regarding drinking water and sanitation, the study found that BDOs recognise ODF targets as their sanitation accomplishments guide panchayats and swacchagrahis to achieve them. They are, however, unaware of community mechanisms, which are the cornerstone for maintaining community-level

ownership of person and organisational sanitation. Furthermore, the BDOs seem to have limited awareness of convergent actions for applying for the rural sanitation programme with other services, such as the food security programme, ICDS, agricultural livelihoods, welfare, MGNREGS and rural housing.

8.8.8 Creating a Separate Fund for Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

There was a lack in the guidelines for utilising the 14th CFC grants to be revised with clear goals with respect to delivering drinking water and sanitation provisioning to institutions, such as health centres, schools, and AWCs. A separate budget head with appropriate funding allocation should be created in the 15th CFC, SFC and Jal Jeevan Mission grants, which will be used solely for WASH facilities in the institutions. Awareness and honorarium should be created for the ward members to manage the drinking water and sanitation programme. It is suggested that the continuing Central Sponsored Schemes and grants like the 14th SFC and 4th CFC should give an intensified priority to WASH facilities at the institution in a sustained way rather than leaning on Corporate Social Responsibility funds to accomplish these targets

8.9 Conclusions on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha

The Grama Sabhas are intended as a direct democracy forum wherein the people have a question not only to their representatives but also in discussing, deciding, and participating in the panchayat's development initiatives. The gram sabha is chaired by the sarpanch is intended to ensure people's participation and responsibility to them. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, made gram sabhas a mandatory provision of the respective state acts for the first time, making it an integral part of the Panchayati Raj System in India.

The study finds out the gram sabha is not operative up to the expected level due to some reasons are following; the lack of effective leadership and effective administrative support from Block and District level panchayat, lack of adequate advertising for the gram sabha meeting, lack of assertive citizenship among the individuals in the villages and finally, lack of strong political will to strengthen the gram sabha. It is generally believed that transforming Gram Sabhas into vibrant forums where substantive conversations occur and developing them into purposeful institutions entrusted with economic planning and social audit will go a long way toward genuinely empowering people, particularly women, Dalits, the STs and OBCs.

The gram sabha is still captured by the upper caste in the district because the people from the weaker section rarely participate in this meeting. Upper caste males control panchayat resources and embed discriminatory attitudes. Discriminatory attitudes continued to govern to a larger extent the experience of the Dalit men/women representatives. In this regard, trained line department staff should attend the gram sabha to bring out equal participation and remove the domination of the upper caste in the gram sabha. Gram Sabha is now a place of narrow parochial thought, such as nepotism, groupism, major caste dominance, religion, and so on. Thus, the Gram Sabhas have struggled to provide social and economic justice in many ways. Notwithstanding these limitations, Gram Sabha is the only viable option for accountable and responsible governance. Gram Sabha can be enabled by increasing openness and accountability to improve the decision-making process. It is necessary to establish a realistic and straightforward approach for prioritising the individual beneficiary list.

The Gram Sabha, the general assembly of villagers, has a crucial role and responsibilities in the effective functioning of panchayats through discussion of the annual statement of the account, budget for the next financial year, discussion of the recommendation of the Palli Sabha and discuss the ongoing programmes and previous programmes of the gram panchayat. These are the functions of the gram sabha where the elected representatives should assign each task to discharge effectively. The UR category elected representatives were more active in the functioning of the gram sabha than reserve categories. The government should enhance the capacity building of the elected representatives from the reserved categories so that they can effectively participate in the functioning of the gram sabha.

People's confidence in the Grama Sabha system has been eroded due to a lack of accountability in recording the minutes of Grama Sabha meetings. These problems have led to declining interest of members in women, SCs, STs and OBCs members. It is often seen that Grama panchayat staff were going from house to house to take the signature of the villagers so as to fulfil the requisite quorum. Enormous IEC programmes regarding the gram sabha's importance among villagers and various groups in villages such as Self Help Groups, farmer clubs, and youth clubs should be organised and circulated in the villages. The gram panchayat has a fund for the IEC activities; in reality, the sarpanches and the PEO did not spend this amount to mobilise people for attending the gram sabha. Various departments that provide direct services to the public, like the Zilla

Panchayat/Block Panchayat, will be brought under Gram Sabha's purview. The capacity of elected representatives to conduct and monitor Gram Sabha proceedings should be addressed by providing them with the training.

Usually, elected representatives are unable to call meetings for fear of being facing the people's wrath. When they call it, they do so to satisfy their constitutional obligation. The gram sabha should not be regarded as a threat to the elected representatives as an institution limiting their independence and operational area. On the other hand, the gram sabha gives their governance legitimacy and consent. These are the flaws that were brought up in the meetings that can be addressed. People's participation is an essential condition for the success and the achievement of the gram sabha. The gram panchayat will bring greater participation of the people better quality of administration.

The Gram Sabha is intended to serve as a pathway for communication and empowerment, especially for women and those economically and socially backward sections. It is a platform to encourage and train people for a healthy democracy, fosters harmonious relationships between officials of different line departments, offer an opportunity for social audit of development schemes, panchayat functioning, etc. The above intention of the gram sabha was not found in the present study.

8.10 Conclusion on the Participation, Awareness and Challenges of the Elected Representatives in the Functioning of the Gram Panchayats

The government need to provide capacity building to the elected representatives constantly, which help them to better governance in the gram panchayat. However, even after receiving the training by the elected representatives, there is no qualitative transformation in the capacity development in the gram panchayat. Only the changes are seen that at the NIRD and PR, SIRD and PR, DRDA, and ETCs increased the number of the training of the PRIs members, but the quality of the programme has rarely given for any significant change in the functioning of the gram panchayat in the district. The training programme should arrange separately for women elected representatives, and sometimes the training imparts them with the co-training centre. In checking the registers of the gram panchayat, a higher percentage of the URs and OBCs elected representatives who had inspected the registers of the gram panchayat. But, the GP leaders from the SCs and STs categories rarely investigate the registers; for that, the state government should train them to look into it regularly.

The 14th finance commission grant and the 4th state finance commission grant are essential funds for the gram panchayats; however, the study found that a higher percentage of the URs and OBCs elected representatives were conscious about it. However, in the case of the SCs and STs elected representatives, they were less aware of these grants. Thus, the state government should prepare a guideline for accountability about these grants so that each elected representative can perceive the grants and utilise them for the village development. The constant training programmes should be conducted yearly thrice for the SCs, and STs elected representatives about their role and responsibilities, programmes and policies, Acts and Rules of the state government. In this context, the higher percentage of the URs and OBCs leaders are advanced in knowledge regarding the acts and rules of the gram panchayats.

The purpose behind the arrangements for the standing committee system in gram panchayat is to delegate the powers and coordinate the decision-making process of the participation of PRIs members, people, and government officials. However, the standing committee is not functioning in a proper way in the study area. It needs to activate for the proper function of the gram panchayat. The standing committee should devolve the funds, functions and functionaries. With the allotment of committee wise budget, they can function independently to plan, monitor, and implement the gram panchayat developmental initiatives. Therefore, in the Balangir district, no proper devolution of funds to the standing committee, the functioning of such a committee system is too weak.

The Gram Panchayat Development Plans were conceived in February 2015, shortly after the announcement of the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation to give more than Rs. 2 lakh crore to Gram Panchayats across the country through state governments for the period 2015 to 2020 and to enable them to spend it as they see their requirement, under specified guidelines. The state government embraced the recommendations and agreed to speed up the capacity building of panchayat functionaries, who will be in charge of the 14th FC's huge funds. The Ministry of Panchayat Raj developed model guidelines for Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), which were envisioned as an annual plan to every Gram Panchayat in which the villagers would determine how the funds should be utilised. The Odisha State Government developed its own GPDP guidelines based on the model guidelines. The seven steps of the GPDP's process follow: “identifying the resource envelope of the GP; generating of participatory planning environment; situational analysis and participatory planning; projection and finalisation

of a development plan by the GP; technical and administrative approval; post plan arrangement; and system support and capacity building for participatory planning”. The gram panchayats in the Balangir district have not been following the guidelines. As per the guideline, all elected representatives were trained on the concept of the GPDP. However, no gram panchayat followed the seven-step as mentioned above of the GPDP. The villagers were also did not aware of the GPDP. Here, the gram sabha has no role in the process of the GPDP. Sarpanches and the PEOs of the gram panchayats prepare the major plan for the GPDP as per the instruction of the BDO, which is uploaded in the plan plus website by the district panchayat. The people and the ward members were unaware of this planning and the website of the Plan plus. A huge people campaign is required for the GPDP, and the IEC initiative requires to make awareness of the GPDP in the village of the Balangir district.

In order to make a plan in the gram panchayat, all plans were prepared by the government official without people’s participation in any meeting. Therefore, participation of the people and elected representatives need to be mandatory in the planning process, for that it needs to produce the photocopy as a piece of substantial evidence. Proxy women elected representatives governs the gram panchayat, which is prevailing in the study areas; mostly happened among the URs and OBCs categories. To curb the proxy women elected representatives in the governance of the gram panchayats, strict enforcement needs to follow as per a gram panchayat rule, 2014 so that the fathers, husbands and sons of the women representatives would not be allowed to administer the gram panchayat on behalf of them.

The elected representatives from the SC and ST category have low-income status and have low educational qualifications. They were first-time entered into the local bodies for the governance process. They need to get an adequate incentive for time spent in the gram panchayats' governance process. All ward members complained that they receive Rs.240 per seating charge for the month. The naib sarpanch is getting Rs.750 per seating per month, and the sarpanch is receiving Rs. 1800 per month. This amount is so lesser that livelihood is not possible for them—this need to increase their honorarium per month. If not, they may not find interest in paying full attention to the functioning of the gram panchayat or else the corruption might be increased.

8.11 Conclusion for Drinking Water and Sanitation Programmes

In the sector of the drinking water and sanitation programmes, the role of the elected representatives requires to improve and provide them with some incentives and training; then they can become competent enough to deal with affairs of the gram panchayat. The State government should emphasise the underprivileged elected representatives from the reserved categories—SCs, STs and women leaders for special training and empower them to monitor the resource of the gram panchayats.

The ministry of the Odisha gram panchayat was merged with the ministry of drinking water and sanitation in 2017. Moreover, rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) under the rural development department were amalgamated with the Panchayati Raj department for better services delivery. However, the problem of operation and maintenance is still a big concern. Therefore, the existing Village Water and Sanitation committees (VWSC) should be activated and made fully serviceable in each village and hamlet to mobilise community contribution, community participation, and ownership of operation & maintenance responsibilities. This is possible only if the villages, RWSS and Gram Panchayats converge and supplement each other in accomplishing targets. Although open defecation persists, the gram panchayat's role is still evolving through ownership and participation at various stakeholders. Perhaps it is the age-old habit, conservative mindset, and limited subsidy use, but total sanitation still faces formidable obstacles. Otherwise, the huge investments could not produce the desired results due to a lack of attention to the quality of assets created and their use. The ward members from the SC and ST categories need financial knowledge regarding drinking water service, and they should be assigned the task of mandatory monitoring and evaluation in the matter of drinking water service.

Community management in terms of the VWSC is vulnerable to the local level. It will require a robust policy framework to sustain it. As a result, the government's responsibility is to establish policies, legislation, and a legal framework under which the water supply and sanitation sector, the private sector, the training sector, and other sectors can function, which governs relationships between owners, implementers, and financiers. A supportive structure is important for community management. Many villages lack the resources to provide facilitation and management, technical design and supervision, long-term training, legal concerns, assessment, auditing, and safe drinking water management

monitoring. The drinking water and sustainability plan and the GPDP must be combined and displayed in detail in public places.

The sarpanches and the PEOs were involved in utilising the funds for the drinking water and sanitation; however, the ward members were not engaged in this activity. The state government should ensure that preparing, planning, and utilising the funds should be placed before the ward members. Then only, good governance cherishes and reduce political exclusion among the ward members in the gram panchayats. The ward members and naib sarpanches need to train about delivering safe drinking water and sanitation, its fund's details, and various information flow from the district level in the villages. A financial honorarium should provide to them while engaged in maintenance and operation in drinking water and sanitation. By doing so, it will reduce the corruption practice. Women elected representatives should make the village water and sanitation committee chairperson to understand and solve it better because they are primarily associated with drinking water and sanitation issues in the families.

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Interview Schedules

Annexure-I

Name of Gram Panchayat:

Name of the Block Panchayat (Samiti):

Name of the District:

1. Name –
2. Age -
3. Designation-
4. Caste – GNL/SC/ST/OBC, or any sub-caste-
5. Religion –Hindu/ Muslim/Christian/ any other
6. Nature of the family- joint/nuclear/ none of above
7. Marital status - Married, not married, widow, widower
8. Education status of respondents: Primary Education, Lower secondary education, 10th Pass, Intermediate, Bachelor Degree and More, Illiterate
9. Profession/occupation of the respondents: Agriculture, Agricultural casual labour, agriculture business, agriculture private service agriculture politics, agriculture retire, Business, Daily wage labourer, private service, Any other profession
10. Size of family-small family, medium family, large family
11. How many families members do you have (including children)?
12. Head of the family
13. Month & year of elected as Sarpanch/Ward Member
14. Monthly income of the Respondents (in Rs):
15. Monthly Income of the Families:
16. Landholding pattern of the respondents:
17. Type of house – pucca-1, semi pucca-2, kucha-3 hut met-4, PMAY-5
18. Have you been electrified in your room? Yes / NO
19. Do you have a toilet? Yes / No
20. Assets of the households: Radio, TV, Cycle, Mobile and bike, armchairs and sofa set, palanka, washing machine, laptop, Tractor, other four wheelers, handpump
21. Home Appliances : Radio /Iron box/Fridge/TV/ Washing Machine/ jewellery/Furniture

22. Drinking water facility: Common Tubewell and own tubewell, river, water pipe facility and any other source
23. BPL Status, which ration card do you have? BPL/APL/ Antodaya /don't have
24. Electricity/latrine: Y/N
25. Do you have drainage facilities: Y/N
26. Is educational institutions near to your house: Y/N
27. Are there any medical institutions near to your house: Y/N
28. Is the bus stop and marketplace near to your house: Y/N
29. Other basic infrastructure available in your GP

The second section of the interview schedule regarding gram sabha

1. Have you been attended the gram sabha meeting? Yes/No
2. How do you communicate to inform people about the Gram Sabha ? Notice/ drum beating and door to door visit
3. What is the best method to inform people about the Gram Sabha meetings? 1. Notice 2. Mike announcement 3. Poster,4. Personal contact 5. Letters 6. News Paper, Other Methods
4. What is the difference between Gram sabha and Palli Sabha?
5. Which groups of people participate in the large numbers at the Gram Sabha(GS)?
Men and women
6. Have you been attempted to mobilise Women and SC, ST residents to Gram sabha? Yes/No
7. Have you been chaired of the Palli Sabha during the meeting at the ward level?
Yes/No
8. Which subject do you raise your voice in the Gram Sabha? , Drinking water, MGNREGA, Health, Education, selection of the beneficiary, infrastructure development, social justice, most of all.
9. Awareness of the Elected Representative on the Functioning of the Gram Sabha
 - The gram panchayat's annual statement of accounts
 - The report for the preceding financial year. Last notice of the audit and answers, if any, from the Gram Panchayat
 - The Gram Panchayat Budget for the next financial year
 - Report on the Gram Panchayat development programmes relating to the preceding year

- Proposed development projects to be undertaken during the current year
 - The recommendation of the Palli Sabha
 - The Gram Sabha may also address those suggestions that it feels are sufficiently relevant for a ward, although the Palli Sabha is not included in its agenda.
 - Utilisation certificate place in the gram sabha meeting
10. Do you aware of the functions of Gram Sabha?
 11. Do you aware of the agenda for the Gram Sabha? Yes/No
 12. Quorum fulfil or not in Gram Sabha? Yes/No
 13. Were the place and time convenient to conduct the gram sabha meeting for all?
Yes/No
 14. Did the Gram Sabha pass any resolution? If so, what?
 15. Did the passed resolution follow or not? Yes/No
 16. What is the process of decision making in the Gram Sabha?
 17. How are the decisions arrived at in Gram Sabha meetings? Consensus 2. Voting
3. Lottery method
 18. How do you satisfy the functioning of the Gram Sabha?

The third section of the interview schedule regarding the participation of the PRIs members in the functioning of the gram panchayat

1. Have you participated regularly in the monthly meeting of the gram panchayat?
Yes/No
2. How do you inspect all registers of the gram panchayats? Always, Sometimes and
Never
3. Do you aware of the 14th Central Finance Commission (14th CFC) grant? If yes,
How?
4. Do you aware of the 4th State Finance Commission (14th CFC) grant? If yes,
How?
5. Do you aware of the Annual Budget for GPDP? If yes, How?
6. Have you been attended the training programmes attended after being
representative? If Yes, How many times?
7. What are the various subjects you have learned in the training centres?
8. Did you receive the gram panchayat guideline books during training time?
Yes/No

9. Have you been aware of various Acts and Rules in the gram panchayat? If Yes, How? Explain the Acts and Rules.
10. Have you been aware of various schemes and programmes in the gram panchayat? If Yes, How? Explain the schemes and programmes.
11. Have you been aware of the elected representatives on various roles and responsibilities in the gram panchayat? If Yes, How? Explain the Acts and Rules
12. Do you have enhanced the capacity building after receiving training? Yes/ No, How?
13. Have you been initiated welfare and developmental work in the GP? Yes/No, what are the developmental works?
14. Have you been finished the initiative work after taking responsibility? Yes/No
15. Do you aware of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) in the Gram Panchayat? Yes/No
16. How do you participate in the GPDP in the gram panchayat?
17. What is your opinion regarding the follow-up process of the GPDP is your GP?
18. What is the planning process of the gram panchayat?
19. Have you aware of the source of the fund for the Gram Panchayat? If yes, how?
20. Have you been aware of the Standing Committee function and its other details? If Yes, How?
21. What is your opinion regarding the functioning of the Standing Committee in the gram panchayat?
22. What is your view on the proxy women elected representatives prevails in the GPs?
23. Have you been satisfied with the remuneration you get through the gram panchayat? Yes/No, If Yes How, If No, Why?

The fourth section of the interview schedule regarding implementation of drinking water and sanitation programme in the gram panchayat

1. Have you mobilised people for Open Defecation Free in the GP? If if, How?
2. What is the open defecation free status in the GP?
3. What are the reasons for the open defecation in the gram panchayat?
4. Do you have knowledge of the SBM-G? Yes/No
5. Do you aware of the role of the SBM-G in the gram panchayat? If Yes, How?
6. Are you a member of the VWSC in the GP? Yes/No

7. Have you been aware of the role of the VWSC in the supply of drinking water of the gram panchayat? If Yes, How?
8. Are you involved in the functioning of the VWSC of the gram panchayat? Yes/No
9. How does VWSC function in the GP?
10. What is the role of the sarpanch in ensuring drinking water and sanitation in the GP?
 - Taking up drinking water issues for discussion, planning and approval to Gram Sabhas: Y/N
 - Monitoring the quality of work expenditure for safe drinking water: Y/N
 - Resolving conflicts whenever required regarding providing safe drinking water: Y/N
 - Ensuring equity in water supply and access with special attention towards SCs and STs: Y/N
11. What is the role of the ward members in ensuring drinking water and sanitation in the GP?
 - At the ward level, making awareness of the drinking water for the citizen: Y/N
 - The ward members mobilise the people to participate in the Gram Sabha: Y/N
 - Monitor the day-to-day management of water supply: Y/N
 - As members of the GP, to participate and contribute in planning for drinking water: Y/N
12. What is the role of the GP in managing the safe drinking water service?
 - Issue of water and sanitation discuss at the GS: Y/N
 - Drinking-Water Test done or not: Y/N
 - Drinking-Water chlorinated or not: Y/N
13. Have you been aware of the source of the funds for safe drinking water and sanitation in the GP? If Yes, How?
14. Have you been aware of utilising the funds for safe drinking water and sanitation in the GP? If Yes, How? If no, Why?
15. How do you involve in the fund's channelisation for drinking water in their GP?
16. Have you been aware of the gram panchayat's drinking water programmes and schemes? How?
17. Are you satisfied with providing the drinking water and sanitation service in the GP? If Yes, how? If No, Why?

Guide for Focus Group Discussion

Annexure-II

Name of village/Gram Panchayat:

Date, Venue and Time:

Composition of Participants:

Mapping out problems of gram sabha and development of the village

1. **How does people's participation in the gram sabha?**
2. **How does women's participation in the gram sabha?**
3. **Opinion about notification of the gram sabha**
4. **Place and time is convenient for the gram sabha**
5. **How do the elected representatives play a role in organising the sabha?**
6. **Which subject discuss in the gram sabha?**
7. **Frequency of the gram sabha**
8. **Action follows after the gram sabha**
9. **Are you satisfied regarding the gram sabha**
10. **What is your wish fulfilled through the gram sabha**

Need and issues exist in the villages

1. **What is your need for village development?**
2. **Discus on employment, health, education and infrastructure development of your village.**
3. **Do you aware of the 14th CFC and 4th SFC grant in the gram panchayat?**
4. **Did the gram panchayat sort out the villager's problems?**
5. **View on the standing committee in the gram panchayat**
6. **Discuss the programme and policy of the gram panchayat, which is running in the gram panchayat.**
7. **What is the infrastructure facilitated in the villages?**

Drinking water and sanitation programme

1. **How do the villages cover the toilet construction for each household?**
2. **Where did the villagers practice the defecates after the construction of the toilet?**
3. **What gram panchayat has been taken step to stop the open defecate in the villages?**



















Participation of the Elected Representatives in the Governance of the Gram Panchayats: A Study of the Balangir District, Odisha

by Sudam Tandi

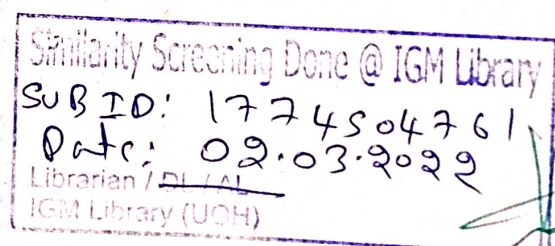
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PARTICIPATION AS A PERSISTENT PROBLEM IN GRAM SABHA: A STUDY ON THE WOMEN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN GRAM PANCHAYAT OF ODISHA

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Abstract: Gram Sabha is an essential institutional mechanism that enables the people and elected representatives to identify problems and prepare the plan for need of the villages. The study's objective is to determine the degree of participation of elected representatives in conducting during the gram sabha. Further, the paper aims to know whether there is any disparity between men and women elected representatives' participation during the gram sabha. The paper is based on primary and secondary data. The direct interview conducted with the elected representatives focused on the women elected representatives on the gram sabha's participation. Our main finding is that women elected representatives speaking less in the gram sabha, less effort to increase the women, SCs, and STs participation in the gram sabha, the women elected representatives to depend on their husband when they decided on the gram panchayat's activities. The paper suggests that the functioning of the gram sabha, which was deliberating in the gram sabha: discussing the issue on the annual statement of account of Gram Panchayat in the Gram Sabha; debating the budget of Gram Panchayat for the next financial year in the Gram Sabha; assessing the report in respect of the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year; deliberating development programme proposed to be taken during the current year; placing the recommendation of the Palli Sabha. In this backdrop, the women elected representatives were more ignorant in term of functioning in the gram sabha.

Keywords: participation, women elected representatives, resolution, mobilisation, decision-making, gram sabha and functioning.

Article History

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Introduction

The gram sabha is an integral part of the gram panchayat in Odisha. Section 5 of the Odisha gram panchayat act 1964 mentions its role and function where the elected representatives can play a vital role in conducting the gram sabha function. The gram sabha is a social forum where all members of the gram panchayat can articulate their need and present their problem to solve it. Thus, it is an essential role of the elected representatives to assert the village's need and present the view at the gram sabha, which this study is concentrated all about. The paper illustrates how women elected representatives utter their voice concerning the function and process of the gram sabha in the Loisinga Block of Balangir District. The paper highlighted three different representatives like Sarpancha, Naib Sarpanch and Ward Members who articulate their voice at the gram sabha on the different programme and policies and its utilisation. The analysis demonstrates how the elected representatives are making a special effort to increase SCs, STs, and women's participation. Moreover, the paper underlined how the discussion is held in the gram sabha, where the elected representatives established their need and problem for the villages.

By making provision for Gram Sabha meetings, the Panchayati Raj Act provides the participatory government with legal validity (Sivanna 2014). A three-tier model of democratically elected governments at the village, block/taluk and district levels were adopted by the CAA (The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act). Gram Sabha is a forum where to encourage the involvement of citizens in planning and implementation of the village, and reservation of seats for women and those belonging to SC, ST and backward castes, mandatory elections once in five years, and so on, have also been provided for by the CAA. (D.Rajasekhar, M. Devendra and R. Manjula, 2018) Gram Sabha leads the Panchayati Raj Institutions in their preparation and implementation of developmental functions. It must play a role as a facilitator for the involvement of people in their village's affairs.

Since the gram sabha is instituted in the 73rd Constitutional Act, it is a forum of the deliberative discussion for the poor. This forum is the subject to electoral accountability and is free space for open discussion. It is not a private discussion where the elite group may control the people. The gram sabha allows lower castes to use the space to counter caste discrimination. The elected representatives from the weaker section to transform the patriarchal system and social norm to overcome remain silent of the people. Thus, while speaking at the gram sabha for development purpose by the elected representative and citizen make claims for dignity and marginal groups voice their concerns which were previously "hidden transcripts" to make a developed village. Education of the elected representatives is concerned for participation and deliberation at the gram panchayat. Thus, Sanyal et al. (2015) argued that low-level literacy characteristic result in low-level oratory competence (Sanyal et al. 2015 cited in Parthasarathy, R. & Vijayendra Rao, V., 2017) In Tamil Nadu, the study evaluated that despite a high rate of attendance of women representatives at the gram sabha, the women representative are considered as the "silent sex" at this meeting. (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014, cited in Parthasarathy, R and Vijayendra Rao, V., 2017). Palaniswamy, N, Parthasarathy, R, & Rao, V, (2018) highlighted that the evidence from Indian panchayat raj system shows that women are less likely to attend local village meetings or gram sabha. Women elected representatives had the low-level performance to run for local office. (Ban & Rao, 2008b; Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004, Agrawal, 2001) This paper



will show how women elected representatives participate in this backdrop and articulate their voice in the gram sabha.

The function of the Gram Sabha

Section 5 of Odisha gram panchayat, 1964 depicts the function of the gram sabha. The section-5(1) stipulated that there shall be at least two meetings in February and the other in June every year where all gram Sasan members shall participate and prescribed the development plan for them. Section-5(2) (a) the quorum of the meeting shall be one-tenth of the members of the Gram Sasan. (b) In case there being no quorum fulfilled, the meeting will be adjourned to a future day and no quorum shall be necessary for any such adjourned meeting.

Section (5) the gram sabha shall have power to (a) approve the plan, projects and programmes for social and economic development before any plan which is implemented by the gram panchayat. So before going to work any project, the gram sabha must approve the plan of the programmes, scheme and project of the gram panchayat in the public meeting which is called Gram Sabha. (b) Select the beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation or similar other programmes. Further, (a) and (b) depicts the utilisation certificate of the fund shall be obtained from the gram Sasan (Gram Sabha) which is implemented by the panchayat for the plans, programmes and projects. And at the gram sabha are held during the month of June each year, the report of the programmes and works undertaken by the gram panchayats and their progress during the preceding year along with the annual audit report submitted by the sarpanch. (c) at any gram sabha, proposals for levy of taxes, rates, rents and fees and the enhancement of rates there and organisation of the community services, drawings up and implementation of agricultural production plans and any other matter as may be prescribed.

Meaning of Participation

Participation produced the negative phenomenon, difficulties, danger and dilemma that can not solve by mere exhortation. The advocacy of participation is easy; it is challenging to practice. The different form of participation yield contradiction and conflict result. Elite, whether bureaucrat or demagogues, use the participatory device to mask their own manipulative rule. The phenomenon of participation is everywhere that can apply in society. Jack H. Nagel 1987 defines *"participation refers to actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence the outcome"*.

Three Dimensions of the Participation

According to Jack H Nagel, he explores the concept of participation within three class of behaviour that falls on the borderline of participation. Three are psychological involvement, mobilisation and private goal which we will discuss the following for understanding. The psychological involvement is merely following the political event, forming an opinion without engaging in action. In doing so, only collecting information on different event which does not itself influence anything it is highly vulnerable to influence others. Thus, we can't remark that it is active participation, but the attitude and the knowledge which the participant gains which required may be a precondition of the effective action. But the knowledge without action is not active participation.

In the mobilisation process, the mass physical involvement in a development project for their benefit treated as the label of mobilisation. The participation and mobilisation are different, but it is an interface to influence the best participants with an option of choice. "The definition of participation requires that members influence the outcome; they cause the outcome they prefer. The free choice set up the potential for influence. But sometimes citizens influence what happens without any obvious choice among policies". (pp-4) Thus, the mobilisation only influences the members to participate in any activity, either voluntary or formal choice. The private goal is termed as particularised contacting; the theory presented that the participants who are pursuing goals they share at least some fellow citizen about complaining, missing and requirement which influence the life of an individual. In this paper, these are the dimension of the participation that we would link within Gram Sabha's participation.

Method and Material

In the unique background of the Odisha Gram Panchayats, this analysis was carried out. The study is based on the primary and secondary data gathered from the GPs and sample elected representatives selected. The descriptive and analytic methodology is carried out to discern the degree of the participating women elected representatives. Lisinga Block under Balangir District was designated as study areas where seven gram panchayat were selected for the study out of the twenty gram panchayat. Moreover, the observation method and a simple random sampling method were engaged in the research because all data of the elected representatives were available.

The districts of Southern and Western Odisha are regarded as the most backward region by the planning commission, which re-designated some of these districts as KBK (Kalahandi-Balangir-Koraput). The three larger districts were re-organised into eight districts in 1992-93, viz., Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabrangpur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Sonepur and Rayagada. 14 Subdivisions, 37 Tehsils, 80 CD Blocks, 1,437 Gram Panchayats and 12,293 villages constitute these eight districts. Thus, Balangir district chooses for the study area. In the Balangir District, the total ward members are 3798 and the total sarpanches 315. Again, Lisinga Block was selected as the study area. Thus, the total ward members are 239, and the sarpanches are 20 in the Lisinga block. In Lisinga Block, the SCs ward members are 41, the STs ward members are 46, the OBCs ward members are 40, and the general ward members are 86. Here, nearly 60 percent are women ward members in the reservation category of SCs, STs and OBCs. In Balangir District, almost



50 percent of women elected ward members are reserved in the category of the SCs, STs and OBCs. Among all category of the ward members, the general category is the highest 1214. In the general category, 50 percent of men and women, respectively. The total SCs, STs and OBCs ward members are 689,879 and 1025 respectively. Concerning sarpanches numbers, the total SCs, STs, and OBCs are 60, 72 and 93, respectively. The general category sarpanches are 92—the average 55 percent women sarpanches reserved in SCs, STs, OBCs and general category. The present study was focused on the SCs, STs and OBCs elected representatives in Loisinga Block of the Balangir District. (District Panchayat Office Balangir, Odisha, 2017)

Table 1selection of the GP and elected representatives from Loisinga Block of Balangir district

SL no	Block	Gram Panchayat	Sarpanch	Naibsarpanches	Ward members	Total
1	Losinga	Mgurbeda	1	1	6	8
2	Losinga	Taliudar	1	1	7	9
3	Losinga	Upparbahal	1	-	7	8
4	Losinga	Banipali	1	1	7	9
5	Losinga	Kusmel	1	-	8	9
6	Losinga	Kandajuri	1	1	7	9
7	Losinga	Rengali	1	1	7	9
		Total	7	5	49	61

Source – field survey 2020

Total of 61 elected representatives selected for the study. Out of this, seven sarpanches, fivenaibssarpanches and 49 ward members chosen to know their degree of participation and how they articulate in the gram sabha.(table 1) The total panchayat of the Loisinga Block has 20 the gram panchayat. Out of the twenty gram panchayats, seven gram panchayatsselected for the study areas. These gram panchayats are Magurbeda, Taliudar, Upparbahal, Banipali, Kusmel, Kandajuri and Rengali. Under one gram panchayat, there are four to five villages. Therefore, the researcher travels most of the villages to interview the elected representatives of the respective gram panchayat.

Table 2Classification of designation, social group and sex description of respondents.

	SC		ST		OBC		Other		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Wom en	
Sarpanch	1(11.1)	2(11.8)	1(12.5)	0	0	1(7.7)	1(100)	1(100)	7(11.5)
Naib Sarpanch	0	2(11.8)	0	0	2(33.3)	1(7.7)	0	0	5(8.2)
Ward Member	8(88.9)	13(76.5)	7(87.5)	6(100)	4(66.7)	11(84.6)	0	0	49(80.3)
Total	9(100)	17(100)	8(100)	6(100)	6(100)	13(100)	1(100)	1(100)	61(100)

Source-Field work survey,2020

Table 2 shows that among the Sarpanches' social category, Dalit sarpanches are the highest 3 number, threesarpanches, 1(33.3 percent) and 2(66.7 percent) sarpanches are men and women respectively. The total sarpanches are 7 number, out of 7, 1(50 percent) men and 1(50 percent) women sarpanch from the unreserved category. Among the OBC(other backward castes) category, there is 1 (100 percent) men sarpanch. Similarly, the total naibsarpanches are five numbers, out of this, two women Dalit naib sarpanch and two men and one women naibsarpanches are from the OBC group. Regarding ward member details, eight men and thirteen women are from the Dalit community. Seven men and six women are from the tribal community, and four men and eleven women are from other backward caste communities. So highest percentof elected representatives are taken for the study, viz., is 26 Dalits and 19 OBCs category.

Results of the study

Table 3 details the attendance of the respondents in the gram sabha

Variable		Sarpanches		NaibSarpanches		Ward Members		Total
		Male	Women	Male	Women	Male	women	
Do you attend Gram Sabha?	Always	3(100)	4(100)	2(100)	3(100)	17(89.5)	25(83.3)	54(88.5)
	No	0	0	0	0	0	3(10)	3(4.9)
	Sometime	0	0	0	0	2(10.5)	2(6.2)	4(6.6)
	Total	3(100)	4(100)	2(100)	3(100)	19(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020



Above table 3 depict that most of the elected representatives attended the gram sabha in a year. Out of 30 women ward members, 3(10 per cent) women ward members did not participate in the gram sabha. A woman replied that due to being pregnant, she could not participate in the gram sabha, one woman ward member replied that she could not attend the gram sabha due to migration to other states. The study found that most elected representatives are attending the gram sabha in the study areas. Yet, only a few women elected women did not participate in the Gram Sabha, which shows a disparity.

Table 4 Proportion of people's participation in the gram sabha

Variable	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanches	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Members	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward member	
men in large scale	3(100)	3(75%)	2(100)	3(75%)	16(84.2%)	26(86.7%)	52(85.2%)
women in large scale	0	1(25)	0	1(25%)	3(15.8%)	4(13.3%)	9(14.8%)
Total	3(100)	4(100)	2(100)	4(100%)	19(100%)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey, 2020

Table 4 shows that the male members of the gram sabha were dominating the gram sabha's decision. Nevertheless, out of 61 elected representatives, 9 (14.8 per cent) respondents agreed that women participation in large. Out of 4 women sarpanches, 1(25 per cent) decided that women in large scale attend the gram sabha. Out three women naib sarpanches, 1(25 per cent); of 19 male ward members, 3 (15.8 per cent); out of 30 women ward members, 4(13.3 per cent) agreed that women participation in large scale at the gram sabha. Out of 61 elected representatives, 52(85.2 percent) acknowledged that participation of men in large scale at the gram sabha. It usually observed that men dominance in the gram sabha are there.

Table 5 making any special effort to increase women participation in the gram sabha

Response of respondent	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanches	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Members	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward member	
Yes	3(100)	0	0	4(100)	0	7(23.3)	14(23)
No	0	2 (100)	19(100)	0	3(100)	23(76.7)	47(77)
	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61 (100)

Source-Field Survey, 2020

Table 5 depicts that 47(77 per cent) elected representatives did not make a special effort to increase women participation and all sarpanches attempted to enlarge the women participation at the gram sabha. Out of the 30 women ward members, 7(23.3 per cent) tried to improve the women participation at the gram sabha. Nevertheless, 23(76.7 per cent) women ward members did not make any special effort to increase the women participation at the gram sabha. The Odisha government has made any guideline to improve the women participation where the elected representative bound to do

Table 6 Making an effort to increase the participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Response	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanches	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Members	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward member	
YES	2(66.7)	0	1(5.3)	1(25)		2(6.7)	6(9.8)
NO	1(33.3%)	2 (100)	18(94.7)	3(75)	3(100)	28(93.3)	55(90.2)
Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey, 2020

In table 6, in case of increasing the SC and STs people's participation, 55(90.2 per cent) representatives said they had not made any special effort to improve their gram sabha involvement. Unless increase of the involvement of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in the gram panchayat activities had taken into consideration, the social justice and the welfare for underprivileged which is objective of the gram panchayat would not achieve. The increase of women, SCs and STs participation in the gram panchayat is required to achieve economic development and social justice. As far as no effort is concerned, most elected representatives did not make any special effort to participate for SCs and STs people in gram sabha.

Table 7 show the speaking of respondents in the gram sabha

The response of the elected representative	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanches	Naib Sarpanch	ward member	Sarpanches	Nain Sarpanch	Ward member	



speak at the Gram Sabha meeting	Always	3(100%)	2(100)	17(89.5)	4(100)	3(100%)	12(40%)	41(67.2)
	Sometime	0	0	2(10.5)	0	0	16(53.3)	18(29.5)
	No	0	0	0	0	0	2(6.7%)	2(3.3)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

Table 7 shows that out of the 61 respondents, 41(67.2 per cent) elected representatives always spoke on the different issue in the gram sabha. All sarpanches and naib sarpanches expressed on the distinct subject such as drinking water facilities, MGNREGA work, infrastructure and educational reform, etc. in the gram sabha. Out of 30 women members, 12(40 percent) women ward members always spoke, 16(53.3 percent) women members sometimes said at the gram sabha. Moreover, 2(6.7 percent) women ward members never open their mouth at the gram sabha. The silence of the elected women representatives at the gram sabha occurred because of lack of skill, education and training, fear of patriarchal society and no knowledge of the gram panchayat rule and regulation. However, the maximum of women elected representatives, viz—16 (53.3 percent) sometimes speaks in the gram sabha, which indicates that women are always lagging behind the men in term of decision-making in the gram sabha.

elected representatives discussed the different Subjects in the Gram Sabha meeting for the need of the villages

Table 8 elected representatives discussed the different Subjects in the Gram Sabha meeting for the need of the villages

Subject discusses in the gram sabha	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanches	Naib Sarpanch	ward member	Sarpanches	Nain Sarpanch	Ward member	
Drinking water and sanitation	0	0	1(5.3%)		2(66.7%)	8(26.7%)	11(18)
employment MGNREGA	0	0	6(31.6)		0	3(10%)	9(14.8)
Beneficiary selection	0	0	5(26.3)	1(25%)	0	10(33.3%)	16(26.2)
Education	0	0	1(5.3%)	0	0	1(3.3%)	2(3.3)
Infrastructure development	0	2(100)	5(26.3)	0	1(33.3)	7(23.3%)	15(24.6)
social protection		0	1(5.3%)		0	1(3.3%)	2(3.3)
all of them discuss	3(100%)	0	0	3(75%)	0	0	6(9.8)
Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Primary survey 2020

Table 8 displays that all the sarpanches had articulated different issues such as Drinking water and sanitation, employment and MGNREGA, beneficiary selection, infrastructure development and social protection. Out of 30 women ward members, 8(26.7 per cent) and 10(33.3 per cent) women ward members discussed water and sanitation and beneficiary selection which is the highest percentage addressed in the gram sabha. Moreover, 15(24.6) percent of elected representatives discussed the infrastructure development such as culvert construction, drainage and road repairing. Whereas out of 19 male ward members, 6(31.6 per cent), 5(26.3 percent) and 5(26.3 per cent) men ward members discussed in the gram sabha regarding the subject of the employment and MGNREGA, beneficiary selection and infrastructure development respectively. Most of the women naib sarpanches deliberate over the issue of drinking water and infrastructure development.

Table 9 shows how the elected representative decides in the Gram Sabha.

variable	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Independently	3(100%)	2(100%)	12(63.2%)	1(25%)	1(33.3%)	7(23.3%)	26(42.6)
discuss with husband and relative	0	0	3(15.8%)	3(75%)	1(33.3%)	19(63.3%)	26(42.6)



influence of the PRI	0	0	4(21.1%)	0	1(33.3%)	4(13.3%)	9(14.8)
Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

In the gram sabha, the elected representatives are depended upon their relatives and others to decide the matter(table 9). Most of the cases happen with women elected representatives when they attend at the gram sabha. All male sarpanches are taking independently in the sabha. Considering womensarpanches,3(75 per cent) of respondents were consulting to their husbands before taking the decision in the gram sabha. Moreover, 1(33.3 per cent) women naib sarpanch depends on their husband in decision making at the gram sabha and 1(33.3 per cent) womennaib sarpanch agree with the collective decision of the gram panchayat. Out of the 19 male ward members,4(21.1 per cent) male ward members acknowledged that whatever the gram panchayat and people take the decision collectively. Considering women ward members on the decision making in the gram sabha, 19(63.3 per cent) out of 30 women ward members was consulting their husband before taking any decision in the gram sabha. Furthermore, out of 30, 7(23.3 per cent) women ward members are taking the decision or speaking independently in the gram sabha. So it is clear to appear that most women elected representatives to depend on their husband and other relatives while taking the decision or speaking in the gram sabha.

Table 10 Presenting review the all programme and policy of the last one year in Gram Sabha

The response of the Respondents	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Yes	3(100)	2(100)	9(47.4)	4(100)	1(33.3)	8(26.7)	27(44.3)
No	0	0	8(42.1)	0	2(66.7)	19(63.3)	29(47.5)
Unaware	0	0	2(10.5)	0	0	3(10)	5(8.2)
Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

Table 10 demonstrates that out of 61 elected representatives, 27(44.3 percent) answered that review of programme and policy of the last year discussed in the gram sabha. However, 29(47.5 percent) of the respondents replied that no review had done so far in the gram sabha, and 5(8.2 percent) of the respondents were not aware of it. It is always women ward members are more unaware of this. Out of the 30 women ward members, 19(63.3 percent) members and 2(66.7 percent) of women naib sarpanch who did not know the review detail of programme and policy in the gram sabha. Also, 8(42.1 percent) men ward members expressed that the policy review did not place in the gram sabha.

Table 11show discussion on tax collection in the gram sabha

Response of Respondents	Male			Women			Total
	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Yes	3(100)	2(100)	9(47.4)	4(100)	3(100)	8(26.7)	29(47.5)
No	0	0	4(21.1)	0	0	1(3.3)	5(8.2)
Unaware	0	0	6(31.6)	0	0	21(70)	27(44.3)
Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

Table 11 indicates that out of 61 elected representatives, 29 (47.5 per cent) conceded that tax and its collection discussed in the gram sabha. However, 5(8.2 per cent) elected representatives disagreed that tax and its collection discussed in the gram sabha. All sarpanches and naib sarpanches said that they discussed the tax collection in the gram sabha. Similarly, 4 (21.1 percent) men ward members and 1 (3.3 per cent) women ward members answered that tax collection details did not place in the gram sabha. Surprisingly, 6(31.6 per cent) men and 21(70 per cent) women ward members noted that they were unaware of tax collection. Why are they unaware of tax collection and its details? Answer to this question was that the sarpanches and panchayat executive officer make all arrangement of it, and they never disclose this to ward members.

Table No 12 Respondents responses on the annual statement of account of Gram Panchayat in the Gram Sabha

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
annual statement of	Yes	3(100)	2(100)	10(52.6)	3(75)	1(33.3)	13(43.3)	31(50.8)
	No	0	0	7(36.8)	0	1(33.3)	7(23.3)	15(24.6)



account of GP in the GS	Unaware	0	0	2(10.5)	1(25)	1(33.3)	10(33.3)	15(24.6)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

While the Gram Sabha is free to discuss any Gram Panchayat related issues, some issues need to be addressed(table 12). These issues are the annual statement of account of Gram Panchayat placed in the Gram Sabha. Out of 61, 31(50.8) percent of elected representatives acknowledged that they discussed the annual statement of account of Gram Panchayat in the gram sabha. However, 50 percent of respondents are unaware of it and directly refused to know about it. Here, women ward members are more ignorant of it.

Table No 13 Respondents responses on a budget of Gram Panchayat for the next financial year in the GS.the Issues to be Discussed in the Gram Sabha

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Budget of GP for the next financial year in the GS.	Yes	2(66.7)	2(100)	11(57.9)	3(75)	1(33.3)	19(63.3)	38(62.3)
	No	1(33.3)	0	4(21.1)	1(25)	1(33.3)	6(20)	13(21.3)
	Unaware	0	0	4(21.1)	0	1(33.3)	5(16.7)	10(16.4)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

Table 13 shows that Gram Panchayat's budget for the next financial year in the Gram Sabha is a crucial issue, discussed in the gram sabha. In this study, 38(62.3 percent) of elected representatives accepted that they discuss the budget for the next financial year in the Gram Sabha. Unfortunately, 13(21.3 percent) of respondents responded that they did not know the following year's budget details. Regrettably,10(16.4 percent) of the elected representative reacted that they were unaware of it. Women ward members are more unaware and not knowing it—out of 30 women ward members, 6(20 percent) and5(16.7percent) of respondents—did not see the budget details in the gram sabha.

Table No 14 Respondents responses on the report in respect of the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Report in respect of the development plan of GP relating to the preceding year.	Yes	3(100)	2(100)	15(78.9)	4(100)	3(100)	20(66.7)	47(77)
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unaware	0		4(21.1%)	0	0	10(33.3)	14(23)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

IOOn the matter of report of the development plan for next year, 3(100 per cent) men sarpanches, 2(100 per cent) and 15(78.9 per cent) men ward members said that they discussed the report in respect of development plan of the gram panchayat relating to the preceding year in the gram sabha. (table 14) It is total 47(77percent) of respondents agreed that they had discussed it. Out of 30 ward members, 10(33.3 percent) women ward members did not know this report. Once again, it is women lagging learning of the information regarding the development plan of Gram Panchayat.

Table No 15 Respondents responses on development programme proposed to be taken during the current year

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Development programme proposed to be taken during the current year.	Yes	2(66.7)	2(100)	16(84.2)	4(100)	3(100)	26(86.7)	53(86.9)
	No	1(33.3)	0	3(15.8)	0	0	1(3.3)	5(8.2)
	Unaware	0	0	0		0	3(10)	3(4.9)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

Table 15 shows that out of the 61 elected respondents, 53(86.9 percent) acknowledged the developmental plan and



programmes discussed in the gram sabha. However, 5(8.2 percent) elected representatives disagreed that no discussion held in the gram sabha such development programme to implement for the current year and 3(4.9 percent) of respondents. More percentage of women ward members, viz., 3(10 percent), were not aware of the various development programmes proposed to be taken during the current year. Most of the sarpanches and naib sarpanches except one men sarpanch were aware of this.

Table No 16 Respondents responses on the recommendation of the Palli Sabha.

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Recommendation of the Palli Sabha.	Yes	3(100)	2(100)	15(78.9)	4(100)	3(100)	21(70)	43(78.7)
	No	0	0	4(21.1)	0	0	6(20)	10(16.4)
	Unaware	0	0		0	0	3(10)	3(4.9)
	Total	3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

In table 16, Palli Sabha's recommendation is essential for the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP), which leads toward the accomplished task for village development. According to the GPDP guideline, the GPDP start from the Palli Sabha and finish with the gram sabha's approval. Therefore, Palli Sabha's recommendation plays a significant role in the formulation plan in the gram panchayat. So, 43(78.7 per cent) agreed that they discuss the recommendation of the previous Palli Sabha resolution in the gram sabha. However, 10(16.4 percent) of the elected representatives alleged that Palli Sabha's proposal did not discuss in the gram sabha.

Table No 17 Respondents responses on utilisation certificate placed in Gram Sabha

Issue discussing in the gram sabha	Response of Respondents	Male			Women			Total
		Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	Sarpanch	Naib Sarpanch	Ward Member	
Do you aware that the utilisation certificate placed in Gram Sabha?	Yes	3(100%)	2(100%)	13(68.4%)	4(100%)	2(66.7%)	13(43.3%)	37(60.7)
	No	0	0	3(15.8%)	0	0	5(16.7%)	8(13.1)
	don't know	0	0	3(15.8%)	0	1(33.3%)	12(40%)	16(26.2)
Total		3(100)	2(100)	19(100)	4(100)	3(100)	30(100)	61(100)

Source-Field Survey,2020

It found that 3(100 per cent) male sarpanches, 2 (100 per cent) male sarpanches and 13(68.4 per cent) male ward members acknowledged that the utilisation certificate placed at the gram sabha. (table 17) Besides, 4 (100 per cent) women sarpanches, 2 (66.7 per cent) women naib sarpanches, 13(43.3 per cent) women ward member agreed that they were aware of utilisation certificates were placed at the gram sabha. Nevertheless, 3 (15.8 per cent) male and 5(16.7 per cent) women ward members disagreed that they were not aware of utilisation certificate placed in the gram sabha. Besides, 3 (15.8 per cent) male, 1(33.3 per cent) women naib sarpanch and 12 (40 per cent) ward members replied that they do not know that what is the utilisation certificate. We observed that 15.8 percent male and 40 percent women ward members were ignorant about the utilisation certificate(UC). Thus, the information of UC was not passed to all ward members by the Sarpanches and Panchayat Executive Officer.

Discussion on women elected representative's voice-making in the gram sabha

1. Yet some women ward members are absent in the gram sabha. Thus, the elected women representatives require to participate in the gram sabha for articulating their need and issue of the village development.
2. But the disappointing factor is that 52(85.2 per cent) elected representatives replied that only male in large attends the gram sabha. As per Odisha gram panchayat rule, 2014 section-3 and sub-section 8(b) one-third women members should be present in the gram sabha meeting otherwise the meeting the president shall adjourn the meeting until such other days as he thinks fit. However, this study shows the participation of women members one-third did not achieve as per Odisha gram panchayat rule, 2014.
3. Regarding women involvement in large scale, one Dalit women sarpanch of Upparbahal gram panchayat, she replied that she had mobilised the SHG women to attend the gram sabha. Thus, women participation in large number in her gram panchayat observed. Only men involvement in large scale in gram sabha observed in the study area. Still, men control the functioning of the gram sabha in Balangir district.



4. The speaking in the gram sabha is an essential factor in expressing their need and issue for village development. Nevertheless, more than 30 percent of elected representative remained as a silent spectator. Among them, women elected representative are more silent listener.

5. The issues such as women and child issue, health services and social justice regarding marginalised people were not discussed in the gram sabha. The elected representatives discussed the topics such as drinking water, MGNREGA works, beneficiary selection and infrastructure development in the gram sabha. The women-related-issue was neglecting to discuss in the gram sabha.

6. When women elected representatives to participate in the decision-making process in gram sabha for any village's developmental issue, they consulted with their husbands or relatives before speaking in the gram sabha meeting. Thus, most of the women elected representative did not decision independently in the gram sabha.

The argument on the functioning of the Gram Sabha

7. It is interpreting that more women representatives than the men representatives did not agree to review the programme which placed at the gram sabha. One women ward member explained that no review was done in detail and not receiving any answer when asked for. A man ward member replied that the sarpanch and PEO(Panchayat Executive Officer) discussed forthcoming work. Sometimes, women ward members are absent at the gram sabha; instead, their husbands present in the gram sabha. Later, the Panchayat Executive Officer and panchayat peon collect women ward members' signature from home. That is why most women representatives are not aware of the last year's review programme and policy in the gram sabha.

8. Above all, the gram panchayat budget for the next financial year discussed; but, only nearly 38 percent of the ward members were not aware of it. Among them, the women elected representative are more ignorant on the issue of budget.

9. The report regarding the development plan of Gram Panchayat relating to the preceding year is an essential topic, which needs to be discussed in the gram sabha. Fortunately, 77 percent of elected representative said they had discussed this in the gram sabha. Awkwardly, 23 percent of elected representatives were not aware of it, and most of the women ward members had no idea of reporting the development plan of the gram panchayat.

10. It is always women ward members, who had no idea which development plan proposed to be taken during the current year. In this sense, nearly 13 percent of women elected representative alleged that they had not discussed such an issue in the gram sabha.

11. Out of 30 women ward members, 30 percent of them, reacted that PalliSabha's recommendation did not place in the gram sabha. And, in this regard, 21 percent of men ward members had a similar view.

12. Nearly 35 percent of elected representatives claimed that the utilisation certificate was not placed in the gram sabha to discuss it. Among them, women elected representatives were more uninformed on this certificate, and it's usage.

Conclusion Remarks

The three-dimension of participation's theory: the psychological involvement that elected representatives to participate in the gram sabha is only for giving the opinion or may not engage with the activity; in the mobilisation process, the elected representatives failed to mobilised women, SCs and STs people to participate in the gram sabha; the elected representatives somehow achieved the private goal because they expressed their view on the different issue such as drinking water and sanitation, employment work(MGNREGA), and beneficiaries selection, which influence people of the village. Genuine participation requires the influence of the people and the outcome. In this sense, the elected representative's participation in the gram sabha seems somehow improved for social change. Yet, women elected representatives are lagging the behind in terms of speaking, knowing, and articulating on different issues—programme and policies in the gram sabha. To enhance their articulating power, it requires free from men dominant in the gram sabha; the training requires elected representatives to improve capacity building; the caste-based discrimination should remove that is in people's mindset. Only then, the participation of the women elected representative in gram panchayat may bring holistic development in the village.

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CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE GRAM PANCHAYAT: A STUDY ON TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN ODISHA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Capacity building is an essential step to cope with the pace of development at present. Human development and capacity building are closely interfaced to achieve the developmental goal in any sector. The paper explores how the elected representatives in the gram panchayat have been enhanced their skill and knowledge after elected in the gram panchayat. The paper explains the key questions like the learning outcome of the elected representatives after training in gram panchayat and how the elected leaders in the gram panchayat uplift their skill to transform the village development. The study seeks to examine how the state government provided the training programme to a larger number of elected members to elevate their skills in the governance process of the gram panchayat. Therefore, the paper is based on direct interviews with 306 elected representatives of gram panchayats of five Blocks in the Balangir District of the Odisha State in India. When the field survey was undertaken, most interviewees had acquired some of the knowledge and skills appropriate to the elected representatives three years after assuming office. It was found that most of the elected members could not transform their style and practice in the village development. The study found that after involving in the training programme, there is no such enhancement in the capacity building of the elected representative in the functioning of the gram panchayat. After getting the training programmes, only they have learned the role and responsibilities of the gram panchayat somehow, and the sarpanches gained the knowledge of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) to develop the plan in the gram panchayat.

Keywords: Capacity building, training, elected representatives, gram panchayat, governance

Introduction

The 73rd constitutional amendment act and the subsequent enactment of the local state bodies act after 1994 provide many responsibilities to the local body leader in the PRI. Local body leaders require sufficient skill and capacity to carry out all of these tasks in highly fragmented communities with complicated administrative structures. All of these prerequisites for smooth functioning of local bodies to deliver goods, capacity building exercise for local leaders is foremost and imperative. Most of the local body leaders are first time elected members in the panchayat system. They are elected because of the reservation system in India; therefore, they are from marginalised communities— scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, other backward caste and women. They do not have adequate skill to discharge their duties in the governance of the gram panchayat. Therefore, capacity building and development and skill training are prerequisites for running the panchayat properly. Involvement with elected officials is another important prerequisite for local governance success. Capacity building is

critical in areas such as accounting, budgeting, and monitoring when elected officials have complete responsibility for deciding what work to do and raising funds for it, whether through taxes or other means, are improvements possible in a challenging financial scenario. In India, the total number of PRIs members were 3187320. In Odisha, the total elected representatives were 107487; out of these, their women elected representatives were 56,627. (Ministry of Panchayat Raj of India, 2020) Such a huge number of the elected representatives have participated in the local governance process after enacting the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1993 in India. The effectiveness of programmes and policies aimed at uplifting the rural population depends on the capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The irony is that this is an area that is largely ignored. While many Ministries have adequate resources for capacity building and training (CB&T), due to a lack of strong commitment and a defined plan of action, utilisation has been low and sluggish. Institutions involved in the work have also frequently failed to perform as they should

have. They are, of course, limited by a lack of autonomy, motivation, and other variables. (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, 2011)

Review of the Literature

Narayana(2005) conducted a study on capacity building on the elected representatives in Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where the ward members' perceptions of their powers and obligations reveal a lack of understanding. Local governments are viewed as simple implementers of higher government schemes/programs in Madhya Pradesh and as mere intermediaries in Tamil Nadu. The local government status of panchayats is well understood only in Kerala. A lack of knowledge of the elected representatives of the PRIs has hampered participation in schemes/programs, local development planning, and budgeting. As a result, the development of panchayats as local self-government has been sluggish. Therefore, the study suggested that it is essential to train the elected representatives regarding the governance of the panchayat system in India. Pal (2003) revealed that the training should be provided in a decentralised way, allowing each elected representative to take part in the course. Furthermore, it would be preferable if the training was reserved solely for female elected representatives so that they could have meaningful interactions with the trainers. For improved performance, training should be given to all elected representatives shortly after the panchayat elections. He found that in the state of Haryana, where the elected representatives had not been enhanced their capacity building after getting the training. He suggested that frequent training and strategy of the training schedule need to modify as per the need of the elected representatives.

Nayak(2006) drew the field study from the Haryana state and found that the Haryana Panchayat act has given more power to the bureaucrat than the elected panchayat elected representatives. The elected representatives could not ask the question of the government official; thus, there is a need for the state panchayat act to give more power to public representatives. Moreover, the elected representatives revealed that there was no link

between training and the practical problems they had been faced. The panchayat members think the training programme will solve all their practical problems. In reality, it was not a solving camp, and they lost their interest. Thus, the training programme should be organised with respect to practical and match the field in the gram panchayat.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- (1) To understand the gram panchayat elected representative's learning experience and outcome after attending the training programme organised by the SIRD and PR.
- (2) To review the existing programmes on the capacity building programmes for the elected representatives in the panchayat system in India.

Training Institute for the Elected Representatives in India

In India, the training institutes for the elected representatives of the PRIs constitute in all states of the country, so that cascading mode of the training would impart them for effective functioning of the panchayat system. Each state has their state-level institution named the state institute of rural development and panchayat raj. Under the state, the institute has network extension training centres (ETC) work at the regional level. There is the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Hyderabad, at the national level to coordinate all-state institutes to function correctly. The institution's network is highly deficient in its institutional capacities in terms of fulfilling the catering needs of the training. (Venkatesu, 2016 pp243)

Concept of the Capacity Building

UNDP(2010) defines capacity as the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner'. Capacity development is thereby the "process through which these abilities are obtained, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time". (Cited in Venkatesu, 2016) World Bank(2009) defines "capacity development is a locally driven process of learning of leaders, coalition and other agents of change that brings

about changes in sociopolitical, policy-related, and organisational factors to enhance local ownership for and effectiveness and efficiency of effort to achieve a development goal". Without the capacity building of the elected representatives pertaining to govern the panchayat administrative, the goal of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act to achieve economic development and social justice would be difficult in the PRI.

The Endeavour of the Capacity Development for the PRIs Leader in India

Based on the seventh round table conference in Jaipur, the Indian government's ministry of panchayat raj developed a National Capacity Building Framework (NCBF) in 2004 to strengthen decentralised governance, recognising the ground reality of these new social groups as a lack of experience in managing local bodies. The basic objective of the NCBF is to help panchayat elected representatives to improve their knowledge and abilities so that they can better fulfil their obligations to the panchayat. It seeks to expose them to the mechanisms of executing numerous programmes fairly, namely cutting across caste and gender disparities. Through the Panchayati Raj system, the Framework's programmes will help a panchayat's elected representatives to grasp their own conditions and discover solutions to their difficulties. It will allow them to think creatively about minor but major acts they can do or help others.

The NCBF came into operation in 2006 with a comprehensive and inclusive approach. It provided a comprehensive guide to planning and implementing the capacity development investments for the local government for the first time. Under the NCBF, the government of India introduced two national-level programmes called Backward Regionals Grants Funds (BRGF) and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY)

The BRGF was launched in 2007. The unique features of the BRGF are (a) facilitating the panchayat and municipalities to lead the process of tackling chronic regional backwardness through participatory planning, decision making and implementation and monitoring; (b) untied fund for the developmental gap, which is being identified

by the community through the participatory method; (c) spending 11 percent of the total allocation for capacity building and supporting staff. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has been implementing the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY) since 2006-07, intending to support States in capacity building and training (CB&T) of ERs and PRI functionaries. The scheme aims to upgrade panchayat elected representatives' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to perform their responsibilities towards better the panchayat. The Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) was launched in the Union Budget 2016-17 with the goal of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions' capacity to deliver on the SDGs. Poverty, public health, nutrition, education, gender, sanitation, drinking water, livelihood creation, and other key local development problems that the country faces fall within the purview of Panchayats. As a result, the Panchayats have been identified as a prominent actor in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The objectives of RGSA is to "develop governance capabilities of PRIs members to deliver on the SDGs and enhance panchayats' capabilities for inclusive local governance with a focus on optimum utilisation of available resources and convergence with other schemes to address issues of national importance".

Training Centre for the PRIs Members in Odisha

Under the administrative control of the Odisha Government's Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department, the State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj is a State Level Training Institute that caters to the training needs of elected representatives as well as functionaries of 3-tier Panchayati Raj institutions. Through interconnected activities such as training, exposure trips, workshops, and research, it also aids in the capacity building of rural development functionaries, persons from civil society organisations, and other stakeholders. Director, SIRD&PR, is in charge of the state's three extension Training Centers, which are located in Bhubaneswar, Kalahandi, and Keonjhar. In collaboration with SIRD&PR, the ETCs are currently providing training to elected representatives of 3tier PRIs

in their respective districts, as well as panchayat executive officer(PEO) and Gram Rajgar Sevak (GRS).

Methodology of the Study

The study is based on empirical work, and the field study was conducted in five blocks of the Balangir district in Odisha; therefore, the blocks are Balangir, Muribahal, Loisinga, Gudvella and Deogaon. The primary data was collected through interview schedule, group discussion, and observation of training programmes. Considering the distance-wise, the blocks were selected for the study; that is, Muribahal was selected high distance—90 km from district headquarter, the Gudevella block has undertaken a middle-range distance—50 km from the district headquarter. Deogaon was

35 km from headquarter. Further, the Balangir block was located in municipalities, and the Loisinga block was located 25 km from the headquarter of the District, which was a low distance range from the district.

The respondents were the elected representatives—ward members, naib sarpanch and sarpanch of the gram panchayat. Due to the heterogeneous population of the elected leaders, disproportionate stratified random sampling was adopted to select the gram panchayat leaders by classifying the SCs, STs, and OBCs. Within five blocks, 37 gram panchayats were covered in the study out of 317 gram panchayats of the district. The following table 1 shows the number of respondents who participated in the interview.

Table 1: Gender, social category and designation of the Respondents

Designation	SC		ST		OBC		UR		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Sarpanch	5(1.6)	11(3.6)	4(1.3)	3(1)	5(1.6)	6(2)	2(0.7)	1(0.3)	37(12.1)
Naib Sarpanch	2(0.7)	4(1.3)	2(0.7)	2(0.7)	9(2.9)	8(2.6)	0	0	27(8.8)
Ward Members	42(13.7)	52(17)	19(6.2)	37(12.1)	30(9.8)	58(19)	1(0.3)	3(1)	242(79.1)
Total	49(16)	67(21.9)	25(8.2)	42(13.7)	44(14.4)	72(23.5)	3(1)	4(1.3)	306(100)

Source-Field Survey, 2019

Above table 1 shows that selected elected representatives from gram panchayats within five blocks in the Balangir District. Out of the 306 elected leaders, 12.1 percent are sarpanches, 8.8 percent are naib sarpanches,

and 79.1 percent are ward members, the disproportionately social group from the SCs, STs and OBCs. Only 1.3 percent of elected representatives were undertaken for the case study method.

Table 2: The universe of the study area and total ward members with their reservation of five blocks of Balangir District

Name of the Block	Total GP	SC	SC (W)	Total	ST	ST (W)	Total	OBC	OBC (W)	Total	UR	UR (W)	Total	Total WM
Loisinga	20	14	27	41	16	30	46	26	40	66	58	28	86	239
Balangir	25	23	32	55	26	42	68	31	50	81	60	32	92	296
Gudvella	13	12	17	29	21	26	47	17	25	42	21	12	33	151
Muribahal	22	19	27	46	27	36	63	27	45	71	43	26	69	249
Deogaon	26	25	36	61	24	39	63	38	53	91	59	37	96	311
Total	106	93	139	232	114	173	287	139	213	351	241	135	376	1246
Balangir District	Total GP	SC	SC (W)	Total	ST	ST (W)	Total	OBC	OBC (W)	Total	UR	UR (W)	Total	Total WM
Total	317	344	345	689	435	435	879	512	513	1025	607	607	1214	3798

Source- District Panchayat Office, Balangir, 2019

Above table 2 indicates that the Balangir District have 3789 ward members from social

categories in total, and the selected five blocks have 1246 ward members in the district,

according to the panchayat election 2017. There is a total of 50 percent of women ward members in the district. It shows that women are from the marginalised communities; they

entered the gram panchayat governance. Out of the 1246 ward members from the five blocks, 269 ward members participated in our interview.

Table 3: The universe of the study area and total sarpanches with their present social category of five blocks of Balangir District

Name of the Block	Total GP	SC	SC (W)	Total	ST	ST (W)	Total	OBC	OBC (W)	Total	UR	UR (W)	Total	Total
Loisinga	20	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	5	7	3	2	5	20
Balangir	25	3	2	5	2	2	4	5	7	12	2	2	4	25
Gudvella	13	1	3	4	1	3	4	1	2	3	1	1	2	13
Muribahal	22	1	3	4	4	3	7	5	2	7	2	3	5	22
Deogaon	26	1	4	5	2	3	5	4	4	8	5	3	8	26
Total	107	8	14	22	11	13	24	17	20	37	13	11	24	106
Balangir District	Total GP	SC	SC (W)	Total	ST	ST (W)	Total	OBC	OBC (W)	Total	UR	UR (W)	Total	Total
Balangir District	317	26	34	60	32	40	72	44	49	93	53	395	92	317

Source- District Panchayat Office, Balangir, 2019

Table 3 demonstrates a total of 317 sarpanches in the district and selected five blocks to have 106 sarpanches from all categories. Moreover, there is 51 percent of the women sarpanch in the district, according to panchayat election, 2017. Out of the 106 sarpanches from the selected five blocks, 37 sarpanches participated in our interview.

Findings of the Study

(1) The following experiences sharing during the interview: (1) It was conveyed by each elected representative that the training session which was taught to them was helpful because after getting training, they learned a bit about the main provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 and their powers and responsibility given in the Odisha Panchayati Raj. Moreover, they could get exposure to the Gram Panchayat Development Plan, which is a planning process at the gram panchayat to achieve economic development and social justice. However, practically, the GPDP process was not implemented. Most of the ward members revealed that the bureaucrats executed the GPDP process at the block panchayat. One observation found that all sarpanches were participated in formulating the GPDP process. No other elected

representatives were involved in this decision-making.

- (2) Education is an essential tool for elected representatives in the functioning of the gram panchayat. This was the opinion of the Sarpanch of Jamut gram panchayat (GP), Gudvella Block. She said that since elected representatives have to handle various essential functions concerning decentralised planning, governance, and development; therefore, the elected representatives should be educated. If an elected representative is not qualified with education, she/he would practically be a tool in the hands of the local bureaucrat. She expressed that women are less educated than male leaders, who can perform better than illiterate leaders. Due to less education among the elected leaders in the gram panchayat, the local bureaucrat exercises all functioning of the gram panchayat.
- (3) Sarpanches of gram panchayats pointed out that they faced problems in arranging the estimates of various social developmental activities they carried out because neither they nor the panchayat executive officer (PEO) had the requisite technical skills in this regard. In the training programmes which was imparted to them, the estimation procedure of various works was not covered in training scheduled. In

other words, we can say the budgeting procedure of the gram panchayat, which how to prepare the budget in the panchayat, was unaware of it. They faced this as a significant obstacle in the execution of their role. Most of the elected representatives revealed that they had not been trained to conduct gram sabha and other meetings and maintain panchayat records and accounts.

- (4) When the researcher asked whether the elected representatives had gone through the Odisha Panchayat Act and Odisha gram panchayat guideline book, only a few among them said "yes". Most of the elected representatives had admitted that they had received the Odisha gram panchayat guideline book at the training centre. Further, most of them replied that the guideline book was not following by the GPs in the implication of various provisions of said book and act of the state. Owing to the low education of the PRIs members, they could not understand the book's suggestion.
- (5) Panchayats have yet to receive adequate functions, finance, and functionaries. While there was a lot of controversy over panchayat empowerment, most of the elected representatives agreed that little substantial was devolved to panchayats. Only two programmes, the 14th Finance Commission grant and the fourth state finance commission funds, are directly devolved to the gram panchayat. The PEO and sarpanches utilise the funds as mentioned above without informing the ward members and naib sarpanch. Based on these two grants, they prepared the GPDP without involving the ward members and villagers of the gram panchayat. Consultation with the BDO, they prepared the annual plan of the GPDP and uploaded it in the website of the plan plus, now it is called e-gramswaraj. Even most of the sarpanch and ward members had never visited such a website that the Government of India designs. The study found the most of the elected representatives were unaware of the total annual budget of the gram panchayat.
- (6) It has mentioned in the annual report of the SIRD and PR of Bhubaneswar(2019-20)

that at least 3 times on different modules during their tenure continues to organise training programmes for the elected representatives of the PRIs members through DRDA with the support of NGOs in various location across the state. However, the three times of training in five years for them is not sufficient for them. Arguably, many concepts of the panchayat would be left out in the schedule of the training centre. The elected representatives replied that no exposure visit of the elected representatives had been done to equip with necessary skills and smooth management of various schemes and to organise exposure visits inside the state.

- (7) Most of the elected representatives revealed that they had been taught about the GPDP and the role and responsibilities of the PRI leaders in the functioning of the gram panchayat. Nevertheless, they forgot most of the concepts above topic and the GPDP was not appropriately implemented. Only sarpanches and PEO prepare the annual planning of the GPDP without involving the Ward members and citizens of the GPs. The study found that the topics such as budgeting, auditing and managing the infrastructure and resources have not been covered in the schedule of the training programmes.

Conclusion Remarks

The frequency of the training schedule should be organised more times, at least 4 times annually, so that the elected representatives can run the panchayat activities without hurdle. The training should be imparted for 5-6 days to cover important subjects on the functioning of the panchayat. The concept of gender discrimination, caste issue, social group, communication skill, team building and conflict management, delegation, coordination and time management should be included in the training programme's agenda; therefore, the elected representatives gain the personality development in the governance of governance the gram panchayat.

In Odisha State, there is now just one institute, SIRD and PR, and three extension training centres (ETCs), which cater to the training

needs of non-officials and officials of panchayat raj institutions. The current infrastructure is insufficient to provide regular training to 107487 elected members and local authorities on panchayat matters. Two more training centres, one in the western part of the state and the other in the southern part, may be

established for this purpose, not only to provide training to all panchayat functionaries in the lower and intermediate tiers of the Panchayati Raj system but also to generate relevant literature as reading materials for elected representatives of the PRIs.

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बाल कवि बैरागी

काव्य सुमन

कुछ तो सोचा ही होगा

कुछ तो सोचा ही होगा
रस्ता बनाने वाले ने,
वरना सोचो ये दुनिया
जीने के लायक क्यों होती?

सुम खोज सधरे उठते हो
और रोज रात को सोते हो,
जब भी कोई मिलता है
अपना ही रोना रोते हो,
मे रोना-धोना बंद करो,
कुछ हँसना-गाना शुरू करो,
बैसाक मरने को आर हो,
पर बिना जिंघे तो नहीं मरो।
इन पेड़ों से, इन फीलों से
कुछ बत्ता सीख लो जीने की,
वरना ये हँसमुख हरियाली
इतनी सुखदायक क्यों होती?
वरना सोचो ये दुनिया
जीने के लायक क्यों होती?

निस्सार कहो, नरवर कह दो,
पर जीवन आखिर जीवन है,
इसमें ही मोर, पपीहे हैं,
रसरंग भर अपनापन है,
यदि सार नहीं होता ये तो
क्यों निस्सार कहाता ये,
इसकी, उसकी, कड़वी, मीठी,
क्यों कर गाली खाता ये?
धन्यवाद दो उसको जिसने
यह उपहार दिया अनुपम,
वरना अपनी ही जहरा
इसकी संवाहक क्यों होती?

वरना सोचो ये दुनिया
जीने के लायक क्यों होती?

आप जिसे दुःख कहते हैं,
वह क्यों फिरता मरस-मरस,
इतना शक्तिमूल होकर भी
क्यों कहलाता बेचार?
वह भी अपने सुख की खातिर
आप चलक जा जाता है,
मुझको मेरा सुख दे दो,
कहकर झोली फैलाता है।
हर दुःख का भी अपना सुख है,
जो छिपा आपके भीतर है,
यह छम्क छैया सुख-दुःख की,
अपनी सुर गायक क्यों होती?
वरना सोचो ये दुनिया
जीने के लायक क्यों होती?

इस दुनिया में इस जीवन को
जी लेना एक तरस्या है,
पता नहीं किसने समझाया
जीवन एक समस्या है।
संसार बनाने वाला अपना
राजु नहीं है, साथी है,
जब-जब भी तुम हँसते हो
उसकी बाँछे खिल जाती है
और को उसने उम्र नहीं दी
यह भी एक करिश्मा है,
वरना खुशियों की उम्र भला
इतनी उन्नायक क्यों होती?
वरना सोचो ये दुनिया
जीने के लायक क्यों होती?



THE GANDHIAN IDEA OF THE PANCHAYAT AND ITS
RELEVANCE TO THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN INDIA

Dr. J. Rani Ratna Prabha*
Sudam Tandi**

ABSTRACT

The Panchayati Raj Institution is a vibrant organisation that encompasses various social issues to deliver public services under the domine of the Indian panchayat system. It is the old arrangement in which Mahatma Gandhi contributed his philosophical ideas for the betterment of village panchayat, and those ideas are even relevant to the 21st century. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and top targets of Sustainable Development Goals pass through in delivering social services through gram panchayats. The subject of a panchayati Raj, Gram Swaraj, Role and duties of Gram Panchayat that Gandhi drempt before independent India and its application to the present scenario has been correlated with India's current concept and functioning. Further, it describes Gandhian's perspectives on primary education, sanitation and hygienic, and economic swaraj. This paper establishes the link between Gandhi's stance on the Panchayat and sustainable development goal where the gram panchayat plays a vital role in achieving social indicators in India. The paper's finding suggests that the Gandhian view on the gram panchayat is relevant to contemporary Panchayat with a specific loophole. Notably, the global united counties adopted 17 goals on social and ecological issues. Thus, Gandhi's ideas were more relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve social indicators such as water and sanitation, economic development, employment opportunities, and poverty eradication.

Keywords : Panchayat, village swaraj, sanitation, education and sustainable development.

Introduction

The dream of Gandhi was a very decentralised Indian political community, with villagers having broad political and economic autonomy. His innovative idea is "gram swaraj" (village self-rule), which envisaged a string of the self-sufficient village republic. He believed that interdependent within the village through the political and economic network; thereby, it would generate a self-reliant village republic. For Gandhi's village vision, every village ought to be under complete democracy, freedom of its neighbours for its vital requirements. Yet, dependence was a necessary prerequisite for fulfilling all the other needs. (Kuldeep, M.2013 pp.4) Gandhi's notions about decentralisation and panchayat means, essentially, the village

community's self-rule and the minimum role of the state and the centre. He envisioned the organisation as an Indian polity based on the communitarian principle, in which power flows from the village to the districts, then upward to the provinces (States), and finally to the centre. (Bondhpadhya et al. 2003 cited in Kuldeep, M.2013 pp-6)

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act's imperatives reflect the actualisation of Gram Swaraj's vision by Mahatma Gandhi that he portrayed in Young India in 1925. Gandhi penned: "true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre, but it has to be worked from the bottom by the people of the very village". True Swaraj would be attained not by the acquisition of power by a few but by the acquisition of the ability by all to resist the abuse of power. Swaraj can be

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achieved by instilling in the people a way of their ability to regulate and control authority. (Rewadikar, Nailini, 2005 pp-289) However, yet the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, there remain many flaws in the proposed schemes of democratic decentralisation. The paper will examine how Gandhi's vision on the Panchayat is relevant in the contemporary. Gandhi defines Swaraj in terms of an individual as well as a nation. Swaraj of people refers to "the sum total of the self-rule of the individual". In terms of national swaraj, it is the "sum total of all activities which go up to build an ideal state based on moral force".

With the passage of time, the gram panchayat is undergoing change in its way of function and transparency. Gandhian's perspective on Panchayat and its link with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, in this context, the paper will review whether it is pertinent in the present form of Panchayat Raj Institution in India. The Panchayati Raj experiment, which implemented with zeal and vigour in India's countryside, is the right step towards Gandhiji's 'Village Swaraj'. He supports India's panchayat system, believing that rural India could become a socio-economic asset if it implemented a scientific approach while also strengthening national defence forces against foreign invasion. The ideas of the Panchayati Raj are not regarded as a sentimental proposal based on medieval notions. Alternatively, it is a new modern economic and political thinking, which West would indicate this system is now viewed as pivotal to establish democracy on a stable foundation. (M.K Gandhi, 1962 pp-3)

Methodology

This paper is based on the secondary literature and reviews of various journals and books on Gandhian perspective of gram panchayat and its link with sustainable development goals in India. This paper also examines how India's Government is taking the initiative toward the panchayat system evaluation in contemporary association with Gandhi's vision.

Gandhi's view on Village Panchayat

Village Swaraj is also a village panchayat, a realistic manifestation of non-violence in political,

economic and sociological matters. Gandhi suggests that the village administration is governed by a Panchayat, which consists of five people who are elected annually by adult villagers with minimum qualifications. As pertinent to mention, he prescribed the ideas of minimum qualification of the elected representatives, which is not relevant in contemporary, now reservation system introduced focusing on the marginalised communities who have been discriminated historically over centuries. There will be no system of penalties decided upon by the Panchayats.

Panchayats are to be served their duration of office by legislative, judicial, and executive guidelines. (M.K. Gandhi, 1962 Pp-44). In the vision of Gandhi, Panchayati Raj is a true democracy. The Panchayati Raj programme is a thoroughly political, autonomous, economic, non-violent unit. Thus, Gandhi says, "Freedom must start at the bottom. Every village would then have complete powers as a republic or Panchayat.

Gandhi's suggested the following rules for village workers' guidance to develop village panchayats in Pre-independence Days.

1. Without the written approval of a provincial congress committee, no panchayat should be formed at the village level.
2. The Tahsil Committee should recommend that a Panchayat be elected by a public meeting called by drums' beat.
3. Such Panchayat should be without criminal competence
4. It can effort to solve civil proceedings if the parties refer to discuss in Panchayat to their disputes
5. No Panchayat should be allowed to impose fines; the only penalty his moral authority, absolute impartiality and behind his civil decrees the parties involved willing obedience
6. The subject should describe in the Panchayat: the co-education without discrimination of gender in the village, sanitation and hygienic, medical and health care needs, the maintenance and cleanliness of village wells or ponds, the elevate off and the daily wants of the so-called untouchables.

Panchayats in Independent India

Independent means the people of India are sole power where those who rule must depend on the will of the people; they have to be servants of the people and work according to people's choice. (M.K. Gandhi, 1962, pp-80) He believed that Swadeshi as the rule of life. For women empowerment, respect every woman as a free human being does not sympathise with a wife, sister, and mother.

Gandhi's view on human labour that the machine cannot displace human labour. Labour occupies a superior position in the human cultural family. Presently, in the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Rural Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), it is strictly prohibits using the machine to do work. He emphasises that human labour helps to earn a livelihood, strengthening the body and mind. MGNREGA, Paragraph 22 of Schedule-1, establishes that "as far as practicable is concerned, works accomplished by the programme implementing agencies shall be performed by using manual labour, and no labour displacing machines shall be used". (MGNREGA, 2005) However, there may be tasks that cannot be done by manual labour in the execution of works, where the machine's use may become necessary for preserving the quality and durability of the results. Nevertheless, the MGNREGA has permitted the use of the machine with a specific condition.

Gandhi denounces the caste feeling, anti-caste and out-caste in the village. He strongly prohibits the untouchability system in the village. However, the untouchability could not remove in the village, and it is still there. In the present, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, did not mention the removable caste discrimination practice in the village, not inserted as in clause or section or sub-section, which the Panchayat can prohibit to remove untouchability.

Gandhi's view on the role and duties of the Panchayats

It is the responsibility of the Panchayats to revive the dignity and honesty of the people. Panchayat can settle village dispute without spending money, also ensure speedy justice, neither police nor the military

required. The Panchayat's role is to take care of cattle improvement to increase milk production in the village. Harsh treatment to the cow is a slow death, which is far worse than outright killing. It is uncivilised unawareness to denounce the Muslims for cow slaughter. Land development and nurturing foodstuff is a vital duty of the Panchayat. By creating organic compost, animals, and human beings' excreta produce the manure; thus, land fertility increase and a clean environment will develop in the villages. He was against the cinema house. Instead of it, the Panchayat should organise an indigenous game for entertainment. The gram panchayat's role is to banish the intoxicant of drinking (alcohol) and drug in the village. If there is still some evidence of untouchability in their village, the Panchayat should remove it. Panchayat should spread fraternity among the Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and other religion. Only then it will demonstrate the independent among people in the village.

Gandhi's perspective of local-self government and village swaraj

Gandhi thought that our inner strength and the ability to combat the heaviest odds are the basis for self-government. He emphasised individual self-government or self-rule. With the support of the devolution of the village's power, Gandhi realised that village people's power is the prime objective of the Panchayat, which leads towards the democratic objective of representation and accountability process. Gandhi's perspective on the village was based on the dynamic decentralised system; the village is a platform where a conducive environment can create to articulate for participatory self-governing citizenship. (Taqiuddin, Md, 2019)

The concept of self-government as used in Hind Swaraj has a dual meaning in Gandhi Philosophy. First, it means the self-rule of the individual. Second, it means self-government. It is political independent achieved and maintained through self-determination. In the first sense, Swaraj is a necessity for human life's right at a personal level. In the second sense, it is necessary for the right political ordering of a modern nation. (G. Viswanathan, 2016) Gandhi's swaraj seeks to build democratic decentralisation from below. He believed in

morals, local politics. The village is totally free from the administrative controls of the centre, state or any other agency. Every individual of the village will be able to control their political, social and economic life through the structure of swaraj. Gandhi wanted to establish a republic on a cooperative basis.

Sustainable development goal and gram panchayat

It marks a significant step towards transforming our world, the 2030 agenda, for 193 countries, including India, in September 2015. Then, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was drafted as a blueprint to achieve this. The 20230 Agenda is an inclusive plan of action for people, prosperity and the planet. The 2030 Agenda consist of 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to motivate global action on issues serious to humanity and the earth within 15 years, viz.,2030. This applies from January 2016 for action to achieve; the deadline for the SDGs is 2030. The gram panchayat of India and the SDGs are interconnected, inseparable and the three dimensions of sustainable development are balanced: economic, social and environmental. People, Planet, Peace, Partnership and Prosperity, are the 5 Ps of SDGs. The two objectives of India's Panchayati Raj system envisaged ensures grassroots economic development and social justice. The PRI has a crucial role in the social welfare scheme's implementation and function, which many of the SDG targets within the purview of the Panchayat subject.

As per the Eleventh Schedule of Article 243 (G) of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the following 29 focus areas fall within the Panchayati Raj Institution's responsibilities. The 29 subjects include development on human development index: Agriculture, land improvement, irrigation and water management, animal husbandry, fisheries, social forestry, minor forest production, small scale industries, khadi and cottage, rural housing, cultural activities, market and fairs, sanitation and health, women and child development, family welfare, social welfare, public distribution system, drinking water, fuel and fodder, road and communication, electrification, non-conventional energy, poverty alleviation programme, education,

vocational training, non-formal education, libraries, and community asset. So, the paper analyses the Gandhian concept of various social issues and links with SDG and the role of the gram panchayat for SDG.

Gandhian Concept of Primary Education

Education for Gandhi intended to convert children from the village into model villagers. He was opposed to the prevailing education methods because they only had the value of information and were hardly practical, giving less importance to nationality and ethical living. He proposed primary education that was work-oriented, skill-oriented, and nationality-oriented. "By education, I mean an all-round drawing of the best in the body, mind and spirit of a child and a man". (M.K. Gandhi,1962 Pp-56) He suggested that training and handicraft of education will start from a child's education that enables to produce from the instant it begins its training. In 2009, the Indian government adopted the Right to Education Act, which enables each child to succeed in primary and elementary education. The State Government, with support from families and communities, will take on this responsibility. Goal 4: Ensuring inclusive and equal quality education and encouraging lifelong learning. Thus, the gram panchayat constitutes the School Management Committees (SMC) comprising local authority leaders, parents, and teachers will oversee the schools. In working together with the SMCs to ensure the quality of education with equity and fairness, Gram Panchayat, the community, and civil society play an important role. The sustainable development goal also placed educational development in rural areas.

Gandhian Concept of sanitation and Hygiene

Gandhi talked about the need to improve hygiene and cleanliness in the country while leading a non-violent campaign for India's independence from the British. Sanitation and hygiene are more important than political freedom. Gandhi said, "Near the village or dwellings, there should be no ditches in which water can accumulate. Where water does not stagnate, mosquitoes do not breed. The prevalence of malaria is low when there are no mosquitoes". Further, he said that "the streets and lanes of a village should be kept clean. To ensure a safe

water source, each village should have its waterworks". The village people should maintain cleanliness in and around the village, including public wells, tanks and rivers. (M.K. Gandhi, 1962, pp-179) The sustainable development goal directly link with the Gandhian perspective on sanitation and hygienic; presently, goal 6: Ensuring water and sanitation availability and environmental (water and sanitation) management for everyone.

India continues to have the world's most significant number of people, defecating in the open even after 70 years of independence. The Government of India launched on 2 October 2014 the Swachh-Bharat (SBM) mission to improve sanitation in the country. This mission's key goals are to eradicate the trend of open defecation, proper disposal of solid and liquid waste, and bring about behavioural changes among individuals. The campaign's goal is to finish the project by 2019, which marks Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary. (Government of India, 2017), It is a significant responsibility of Gram Panchayats to increase awareness of the importance of personal, home and community hygiene to improve health and development outcomes for the community.

Gandhian Perspective of Economic Swaraj

Gandhi wrote on many economic topics, such as consumer behaviour, trusteeship, charity, and work sanctity. These issues are typically in the human welfare tradition, but they do not match mainstream welfare economics. In Gandhi's opinion, not everyone's satisfaction with wishes leads to happiness. The demand of individuals for goods and services is not constrained. The more one gets, the more one like and yet remain unfulfilled. Multiplying one's everyday desires merely makes a person a slave to an infinite sequence of desires. His description of 'limitations of wants' is somewhat different from mainstream economics. Gandhi said, "Economic Swaraj can pave the way of Political Swaraj only when the economic system is decentralised and diffused, organised on a small scale and local basis and individuals are made an essential ingredient of the local economic process." Goal 8 directly link with economic development and growth, which Gandhi's vision was

express. Goal 8: Encouraging long-term, inclusive economic growth, full and efficient employment, and good work for all. Consequently, the gram panchayat has implemented various social welfare programme to eradicate poverty and create employment opportunity.

Concluding remarks

Gandhi's advocacy of the panchayat system provided the source of legitimacy for the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993. Panchayati Raj India's theme has a strong emotional attachment; the panchayat reform was initiated by the Indian government, which has a distinct Gandhian flavour. Gandhi saw Panchayats as a form of government that was least coercive, and people are decision-makers in the village. Gandhi's name was used in various panchayat schemes to derive Gandhi's idea and gain economic development and social justice. The gram panchayat's vital role is to carry out the role and responsibility to achieve Gandhi's vision and a sustainable development goal.

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