

Article 40 of the Constitution under chapter 'Directive Principles of State Policy' (Part IV) lays down that "the State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". According to this directive, efforts have been made to revitalise the units of self-gvoernment. Measures have been undertaken for delegating, developing and decentralising the power and authority to the village panchayat. The Community Development Projects and the National Extension Services were the earliest efforts, after independence, to prepare people to share the powers in the organization and management of their affairs. Though the official machinery was created to guide and assist the planning and the implementation of the community development programme, the main responsibility for improving the socio-economic conditions in the village was to rest with the people themselves. Consequently, the people's participation in the planning and the execution of the programme was considered a vital aspect of community development and was sought by setting up advisory boards and committees consisting of non-officials at the district and the block levels respectively (Government of India, 1952).

The programme, however, had only limited success in involving the people in the planning and implementation of the programme. The Block Advisory Commit-

tees, created to enlist popular support and participation in the programme, lacked capacity, vitality and power to represent people's points of view. They were often found unrepresentatives of some important sections of the local public. The district boards lacked both the tradition and resources to take up massive developmental work. (Maheshwari, 1963:8). The village panchayats were also found ineffective to mobilize the masses in support of the programme. Implementation of the programme through *ad hoc* bodies like *Vikas Mandals*, etc. was also attempted, but the popular participation enlisted through them was also not adequate.

It was, therefore, realized that there was a need for creating representative and democratic institutions to evoke local interests and excite local initiative in the field of development. The Second Five Year Plan emphasized the need for creating within the district a well organized democratic structure of administration in which the village panchayats would be organically linked with popular organizations at the higher levels. In such structure, the functions of the popular body would include the entire general administration and development of the area. Consequent to this, a Study Team on Community Projects and National Extension Services was appointed in 1957 by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of late Balwantrai Mehta to study the extent of participation of the people in the programme and suggest an institu-

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tional structure which would link the local level institutions to the institutions at the block, district and state levels. The Team felt that it is not practical to link the village panchayat directly to these existing bodies (ad hoc bodies, district boards, etc.). Therefore, a separate set of institutional arrangements would have to be statutorily created which would provide for a meaningful and effective participation of the people and which would take charge of developmental works in the several areas. The Team suggested a three-tier system of institutional arrangement, namely, the *Panchayat* at the village level, the *Panchayat Samiti* at the block level and the *Zilla Parishad* at the district level to which the entire developmental work should be transferred (Committee on Plan Projects, 1957: 5-13).

THE RATIONALES FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

Three basic rationales can be identified for the creation of Panchayati raj institutions.

1. *To make community development programmes relevant to the needs, and problems of the people.* One of the criticisms of the community development programmes was that a large number of programmes were organized in rural areas without due regard to the needs, interests and life style of the rural population. In other words, lacking in basic involvement of the people, programmes were found generally inappropriate, fragmented and unsuitable to the life style of villagers. Consequently, some of the programmes failed to make any lasting and positive impact on the condition of poverty; and a majority of the villagers remained poor, living in an atmosphere of apathy (Poston, 1962).

It was, therefore, considered important

to involve the rural population in the programmes in order to obtain a realistic perspective on the appropriateness and effectiveness of community development programme — a perspective free from biases stemming from considerations of careerism and public relation needs of the departments and their personnel. It was argued that the villagers were in a best position to define their own needs. The Study Team consequently observed that "so long as we do not discover or create a representative and democratic institution which will supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local projects conforms with the needs and wishes of the locality, invest it with adequate power and assign to it appropriate finances, we will never be able to evoke local interest and excite initiative in the field of development" (Committee on Plan Projects, 1957: 5).

2. *Transfer Decision-Making Authority to Villagers regarding developmental work.* Another rationale of Panchayati raj is to transfer decision-making authority to villagers and their elected bodies regarding developmental matters. Though the Second Five Year Plan stressed the need for creating within the district a well organized democratic structure of administration in which village panchayats should be organically linked with popularly elected organizations such as district boards, whose functions would include the entire general administration and development of the area, administration of justice, and certain functions pertaining to the revenue administration, the district boards had neither the tradition nor the resources to take up this work. They had also been handicapped by having too large a charge to receive their detailed attention. The

chairmen and members of the district boards were not in a position to give any considerable portion of their time to the affairs of such a vast area. The very size of its charge, therefore, necessitated the delegation of a very large area of authority and discretion to its own officers, the effect of which was to replace state officers drawn from larger cadres by officers of limited experience in restricted fields. Further, the linking of village panchayats directly with the district boards was not easy and practical since a district consisted of hundreds of village panchayats. The block advisory committees generally appointed to represent people's perspective in the community development programme did not have enough powers and authority to make decisions on developmental matters of their areas. The district planning committees were further powerless and ineffective. The Study Team, therefore, recommended a single representative institution, called panchayat samiti, to take charge of all aspects of developmental work in the block area. The panchayat samiti was recommended as a statutory and elective body with comprehensive functions in the area of development and with authority and sources to discharge these functions (Committee on Plan Projects, 1957: 67). Thus Panchayati raj institutions seem to be designed to create a power base for the people in rural areas by providing them control over programmes, funds, jobs, information and by granting them legal, constitutional and official status (Banfield, 1961; Dahl, 1960: 24-42).

3. *Value of Participatory Democracy.* India is one of the largest democracies in the world. Panchayati raj is considered a foundation of participatory democracy in India. Jay Prakash Narayan, one of the well-known commentators of Indian democ-

racy, observed, that it is a matter of great satisfaction that in our country a beginning has already been made in laying the foundation of participatory democracy in the shape of Panchayati raj or what was called at first "democratic decentralization" (Narayan, 1970: 75). S. K. Dey pointed out that in Panchayati raj system the people of India would govern themselves through their representatives in institutions from the panchayat to the parliament and thus the democracy would travel from Lok Sabha to Gram Sabha. Panchayati raj thus reflects the concept of inter-connected democracy from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha (Dey, 1961: 4-16).

ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

The Study Team recommended a three tier organizational structure for the Panchayati raj: *the village panchayat* with elected representatives of the adult population at the village; *the panchayat samiti* consisting of the sarpanchas of panchayats in the block area at the inter-mediate level; and *the zilla parishad*, with chairmen of panchayat samitis as ex-officio members at the district level. The pattern of democratic decentralization was first adopted in the country by Rajasthan on October, 1959, and second by Andhra Pradesh on November, 1959. Maharashtra adopted it on 1st May, 1962. By now, the majority of the states in the country have adopted and implemented the recommendations of the Study Team.

An examination of the organizational structure of the panchayati raj institutions in various states reveals that, though the ideals and basic objectives of the institutions are identical in all the states, their powers, mode of representation of the people, and the nature of interrelationship among them are not uniform (Mahesh-

wari, 1963: 25; Dayal, 1969: 37-39; Narayan, 1970: 106-112; Jathar, 1964: 58-102; Government of Maharashtra, 1961). Variations among these institutions have been observed frequently in respect to the unit of devolution — at some places it is the district, while at the other places it is the block, or tehsil —, and the mode of representation, which in some states is through direct election, while in other states it is through indirect election or by both. For example, the state of Rajasthan adopted the Panchayati raj pattern suggested by the Study Team in toto and accordingly made panchayat samiti the most powerful body by making it responsible for the planning and the execution of all the developmental programmes. The zilla parishad is only a supervisory and coordinating body. A special feature of the system is that the zilla parishad cannot modify the budget proposals of the panchayat samitis, though it can return with a suggestion to modify them. Another feature of the pattern is the total exclusion of the officials from the membership of both the samiti and parishad. The panchayat samiti consists of directly elected sarpanchas of village panchayats in the area, the representatives of Scheduled Castes, Tribes, and Cooperatives (Dayal, 1970: 37-44; Jathar, 1964: 87-90). The state of Andhra Pradesh has provided planning and executive powers to both the panchayat samiti and the zilla parishad. Developmental programmes of all the departments of the government including maintenance of minor irrigation, welfare of Backward Classes have been transferred to the samiti and the parishad. The parishad has supervisory powers in certain areas, while in others it has executive powers. The mode of representation to the panchayat samiti and the zilla parishad in Andhra Pradesh is similar to the mode adopted by the state of Rajasthan. The

pattern adopted by Maharashtra is different from both Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. The zilla parishad in Maharashtra is the most powerful body. The main functions of the zilla parishad are planning and execution of all developmental programmes, primary, basic and secondary education, distribution of fertilizers, agricultural implements, improved seeds, etc. Thus, the zilla parishad is a strong unit with wide powers and responsibilities. The mode of representation to these bodies in Maharashtra is also different from Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

The table No. 1 presents the data on different patterns of Panchayati raj in States based on the devolution of executive powers and the mode of direct election of the representatives to Panchayati raj institutions.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

In terms of scope, the First Five Year Plan drew a distinction between social services and welfare services. In the broadest sense, social services under the plan include the subjects of education, health, housing, labour welfare, rehabilitation of displaced persons, welfare of Backward Classes and social welfare. Of these, the last two together constitute the common field of welfare services. While social services constitute an investment in the betterment of human resources in general, the welfare services are designed to enable the underprivileged or handicapped sections of the community to rise as close to the level of the normal community as possible. While social welfare services are today primarily rehabilitative in their approach, they will not be able to attain their objectives unless they are accompanied by preventive and constructive measures. In planning our welfare services, one has to take a long term view of welfare

TABLE 1

PATTERN OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN STATES OF THE UNION BY LOCATION OF EXECUTIVE POWERS AND DIRECT METHOD OF ELECTION IN NINE STATES*

State	Method of Election				Executive and Supervisory Powers			
	Panchayat Samiti		Zilla Parishad		Panchayat Samiti		Zilla Parishad	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Executive	Supervisory	Execu- tive	Super- visory
Andhra Pradesh		—		—	+	—	+	+
Assam	+			—	+	+	—	+
Bihar		—	+	—	+	+	—	+
Gujarat		—	+	—	+	+	+	+
Tamil Nadu		—		—	+	—	—	+
Maharashtra	+		+		+	+	+	+
Orissa		—		—	+	—	—	+
Punjab		—		—	+	—	—	+
Uttar Pradesh		—		—	+	—	+	+

* The other states have not been included because of the lack of availability of information and due to the non-existence of some of the Panchayati raj institutions. The chart is based on the data published in 1964 (Jathar, R. V., *Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India*, Dharwar; Institute of Economic Research, 1964, pp: 58—99).

KEY: + Presence of direct election, executive and supervisory powers.

— Absence of direct election, executive and supervisory powers.

needs which emerge as a result of rapid socio-economic development. It is, therefore, necessary to include the welfare services for the following broad groups as a part of social welfare: (a) Socially under-privileged groups: (i) Orphans, widows, unmarried mothers, women in moral danger, aged and infirm, (b) Women and Children, (c) Socially maladjusted: Beggars, prostitutes, delinquents, newly discharged persons from correctional and non-correctional institutions, (d) Physically and mentally handicapped persons, (e) Economically under-privileged such as destitutes and unemployed (Committee on Plan Projects, 1959: 19-20). In other words, social welfare services are intended to cater to the needs of persons and groups who, by reasons of some handicaps, social, economic, physical disabilities, are unable to

avail or are traditionally denied the amenities and services provided by the community. The term social welfare services refers to the field which offers services for those who need special care (Dubey, 1971).

After independence, the founding fathers pledged to make India a welfare state. Consequently, the Government directly shouldered the responsibility for the development of welfare services in the country. Thus, State Governments established the Directorate of Social Welfare to develop and promote social welfare programmes. The Central Government also sought to develop and promote voluntary organizations as major instruments for implementing social welfare programmes. In the beginning of the First Five Year Plan, however, the voluntary organizations were not suitably equipped to discharge this

responsibility adequately. Generally, the efforts of voluntary organizations were isolated and, to a large extent, uncoordinated. The services initiated by them were not always sustained. The paucity of resources had also been increasingly felt. It was, therefore, considered necessary to provide a specialized agency which could help the voluntary organizations with financial and technical assistance to dovetail their efforts in the common national plan. Thus, the Central Social Welfare Board was set up in August, 1953, for this purpose by the Central Government and allotted Rs. 4 crores in the First Five Year Plan for grants-in-aid to voluntary social welfare organizations for strengthening, improving and extending the existing activities in the field of social welfare and for developing new programmes and carrying out pilot projects. The Board was predominantly composed of non-officials who have had actual experience of field work in promoting voluntary welfare activities. One of the contributions of the Central Social Welfare Board was the creation of an organizational machinery right from the centre, to the district and village levels for the execution of social welfare programmes within a year of its establishment. The Central Social Welfare Board also requested the State Governments to constitute State Welfare Advisory Boards for purposes of better coordination of welfare activities at the state level and the coordination between voluntary organizations.

SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES UNDER PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

The introduction of Panchayati raj has offered new dimensions to the programme of social welfare and welfare of Backward Classes. Panchayati raj is not just a system of civic administration, but also a system of inter-linked statutory organizations for

promoting development and welfare programmes for the rural population of the country. It is also visualized as a system of democratic institutions of the people, chosen by them and answerable to them. Further it is intended to make the government which determines major programmes of development and welfare responsive to the needs and wishes of the local people. Thus, Panchayati raj with its various statutory institutions and voluntary organizations has become a very important instrument of social welfare (Nanavatty, 1961-62: 5). Consequently, in many states, most of the schemes relating to social welfare and the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes have been transferred to these institutions.

Thus, in the state of Maharashtra, the following social welfare programmes have been transferred to the panchayat samitis and the zilla parishad: (1) Educational development of Backward Classes, including measures relating to grant of scholarships, freeships and examination fees to backward class students and establishment and maintenance of hostels and schools for them, (2) Economic development of Backward Classes, (3) Removal of untouchability, (4) Programmes for welfare of Backward Classes including women's and children's welfare programmes or projects, establishment and maintenance of Balwadis, holding social meals, provision of houses for backward class persons, provision of drinking water wells etc., and (5) Training of Backward Classes, including organization of training camps and technical training and training in improved methods of hereditary occupations. The Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961. Under the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and the Zilla Parishads Act, 1959, the following social welfare pro-

grammes for Backward Classes have been transferred to panchayat samitis: (1) Maintenance of government aided hostels for Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes, (2) Strengthening the voluntary organizations of social welfare and the coordination of their activities, and (3) Propagation of temperance, prohibition and social reforms. (The Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959). In the state of Gujarat, a Taluka Panchayat (Panchayat Samiti) is entrusted with the following social welfare programmes. In the sphere of women's welfare, taluka panchayats are entrusted with the duty of implementing of schemes for women's and children's welfare and maintaining women's and children's welfare centres, educational centres, craft centres and tailoring centres. In the sphere of Backward Classes' Welfare, it provides hostels for students of Backward Classes — Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; implements schemes of rural housing; establishes beggar homes; sponsors voluntary institutions of social welfare and coordinates their activities; and launches propaganda for prohibition and against drug addiction. The District Panchayats have been assigned the following welfare responsibilities: (a) to provide necessary assistance and encouragement to the work of institutions of social welfare; (b) to conduct necessary social welfare activities in the district; and (c) to arrange fairs and festivals other than fairs and festivals arranged by the State Governments. (The Gujarat Panchayat Act, 1962).

In Andhra Pradesh, upto November, 1959, all the programmes relating to social welfare were being implemented either through Governmental agency or through voluntary organizations. In November, 1959, the Panchayati raj was introduced,

and autonomous, statutory and popularly elected bodies were constituted at village, block and district levels. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Samitis and the Zilla Parishads Act of 1959 has transferred to panchayat samitis at the block level, which is nearer to the people, the following social welfare programmes, previously administered by the departmental officers: (1) Management of hostels subsidized by the Government for the benefit of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes, (2) Implementation of rural housing schemes, (3) Maintenance of diseased beggars and control of vagrancy, (4) Promotion of voluntary social welfare organizations and coordination of their activities, (5) Propagation of temperance and prohibition, and (6) Removal of untouchability added by section 25 of the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads (Amendment) Act, 1961, implementation of programmes related to women and children and, in particular, to the establishment of women and child welfare centres, literacy centres, crafts and dress making centres, etc. (The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959).

IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES UNDER PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

The organizational units dealing with the implementation of the welfare schemes at the district and the block levels are the zilla parishad and panchayat samitis. These bodies work through various subject matter committees; and there is generally a social welfare committee which deals with schemes for social welfare. The Social Welfare Committee, therefore, is the main organizational unit in Panchayati raj institutions responsible for the schemes of Backward Classes and Social Welfare

(Dubey, 1971). For example, in Andhra Pradesh, a separate Standing Committee has been constituted for social welfare with a majority of persons from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as its members in every panchayat samiti and zilla parishad which is in-charge of all social welfare programmes. Every panchayat samiti is required to review once in a quarter the progress made in the implementation of schemes relating to social welfare entrusted to it. Similarly, the zilla parishad is required to watch and review, at least once in a quarter, the special measures taken for the benefit of the under-privileged sections of the population (Laksmi-narsiah, 1965-66: 200).

In Maharashtra, according to a recent amendment of the Zilla Parishad Act, each zilla parishad has now a separate social welfare subject committee presided over by a councillor belonging either to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe. The District Social Welfare Officer of the zilla parishad is the *ex-officio* secretary to this committee. There is no separate department for social welfare as such in the zilla parishad. There is only a branch for this subject in the General Administration Department of the zilla parishad under the control of the deputy chief executive officer (Evaluation Committee on Panchayati Raj, 1971: 144). There is no subject matter committee for social welfare at Panchayati samiti level in Maharashtra.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES UNDER THE PANCHAYATI RAJ

Nanavatty points out that although the logic of the welfare state gives to the panchayat and panchayat samiti some responsibilities as those to the Central and State Governments, the implementation of the concept poses many difficulties. These are:

- (1) lack of available data on the needs of social welfare in rural areas,
- (2) lack of financial resources required to develop welfare programmes,
- (3) inexperience in organizing welfare services,
- (4) lack of trained workers both paid and voluntary,
- (5) lack of proper leadership both in statutory and voluntary organizations,
- (6) domination of vested interests in the panchayat and panchayat samiti,
- (7) influence of village feuds and group rivalries, and
- (8) lack of trust of weaker sections of the village community in the capacity of the panchayat and its leaders to promote their welfare etc. (Nanavatty, 1961-62: 16).

A very little, if at all, portions of the zilla parishad's budget are allocated for the welfare of Backward Classes. The special schemes for Scheduled Castes, sponsored by the Government of India, are meant to be supplementary and are not intended to substitute for benefits of general developmental programmes to be derived by the Backward Classes. However, the experience indicates that Panchayati raj institutions do not allocate funds for backward classes' welfare from general developmental budget, and tend to replace special schemes for general funds. For example, in the state of Maharashtra, certain districts have practically spent nothing from their general grants on the development of Backward Classes. As regards the extent of expenditure incurred by the zilla parishads from their own resources, it is observed that while some of the zilla parishads have not provided any fund whatsoever from their own resources, the other zilla parishads are spending only marginal amounts from such resources. The Panchayati raj bodies have, therefore, not shown any particular anxiety and eagerness to utilize portions of their own resources for the development of weaker sections of the community. Nor have the office-bearers of these bodies made

any individual attempt to take up any special work or activity in these areas, designed to help Backward Classes (Evaluation Committee, 1971: 141). Further, no proportional representation of the Backward Classes in Panchayati raj institutions has been specified by Panchayati raj acts of the States of the Union. The hope that the Backward Classes would be represented in these institutions through the electoral process has not materialized. Those who get elected to the Panchayati raj institutions tend to be the people above the average in wealth. Even in the villages predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, money-lenders or caste Hindus manipulate to be elected to the positions of sarpanch. In isolated tribal areas, where in the past the money-lenders wielded only economic powers, the introduction of Panchayati raj has helped him to grab political power as well as providing him with a shield of respectability. Consequently, the representation of Backward Classes in the Panchayati raj institutions is very inadequate. A study conducted by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes indicated that out of 2,648 elected members in panchayat samitis in Orissa, only 148 or 6 per cent of the total were tribals though they constitute 20 per cent of the population in the State. Further, out of 307 chairmen of panchayat samitis, not a single one was Scheduled Caste and only 9, or 3 per cent of the total tribals. Among the vice-chairmen only 19, or 6 per cent of the total were tribals, and three, approximately 1 per cent of the total were Scheduled Castes (Srikant, 1961: 143). A recent study on the working of the Panchayati raj institutions in relation to weaker sections indicated that, out of 6,863 sarpanchas, only 35, or .05 per cent of the total belonged to Scheduled Castes. In the Taluka Pancha-

yat Samitis, the representation of Scheduled Caste was much less compared to their population in the State. In the District Panchayats, the representation of Scheduled Castes was merely 3 per cent (Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1964-65). In relation to the representation of Scheduled Tribes in Panchayati raj institutions, the study indicated that tribals are inadequately represented on village panchayats in the districts of Baroda, Broach, Surat and Bulsar. The representation of tribals in Taluka and District Panchayats was also very much below the proportion of tribal population in these districts.

The cooptation as a mode of involving the consumers of services which has been provided in most Panchayati raj acts has serious limitations. First of all, Panchayati raj leadership in coopting the backward classes' representatives to Panchayati raj institutions does not take into consideration the proportion of backward class population in the district. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, there is a provision in the act to coopt 3 to 10 scheduled caste members to the zilla parishads if no such member is selected. However, it has been reported that their representation is very much below the prescribed maximum number. For example, in Saharanpore District, although the Scheduled Castes constitute about one-third of the total rural population, only 5 scheduled caste members have been coopted to the Zilla Parishad, which has a total membership of 107. Likewise, in Hamirpur District, where the population of Scheduled Castes is one-fourth of the total rural population, only one scheduled caste member has been coopted to the Zilla Parishad having a total of 53 members. Similarly, in Pratapgarh District, where one-fifth population is Sche-

duled Castes, only 4 scheduled caste members who have been coopted to the Zilla Parishad which has 103 members (Moorthy, 1969: 88-105). Secondly, the middle class or the better off members of the Backward Classes are generally coopted to the functional committees to advise politicians on programmes. They generally tend to lack a realistic perspective on the appropriateness and the purposes of the programmes. They also lack enthusiasm and interest in protecting the interests of the Backward Classes. Consequently, the resources earmarked for particular schemes meant for Backward Classes are diverted to other general schemes without authority. In some cases subsidies meant for scheduled tribe persons are given to caste Hindus. (Srikant, 1961: 141). Whenever the representatives of Backward Class coopted in these institutions come from the real disadvantaged section of the community, they do not possess functional skills such as reading, writing and speaking for effective participation in the formal organization. Verba points out four main conditions necessary for an effective participation in formal organizations: (1) Resources such as information about the situations, issues, communication channels and rules of participation; skills in written and oral expressions; and material and social resources, (2) Motivation to participate, (3) Structural conduciveness, by which is meant the availability of formal participatory structures, the presence of regularized procedure, and (4) Cultural conduciveness as support of general norms of democracy (1967: 53-78). These resources are inequitably distributed among the Backward Classes—the most disadvantaged having the least of the resources. Consequently, they participate to a significantly lower degree than the advantaged. Thus, the interests

of Backward Classes do not get sufficient attention by the Panchayati raj leaders.

It will, therefore, be important to consider the following steps: (1) Panchayati raj acts should be amended to provide proportional representation to Backward Classes in Panchayati raj institutions. (2) In the matter of election of the Sarpanch, who holds a key position in executing schemes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it would be desirable if he is elected directly by the people and not indirectly by the members of the Panchayat. This is, perhaps, the only way which will ensure the full and active participation of the groups in the process of development, because, it will foster confidence in them that their representatives would have a say in matters of development. Moreover, on account of limited means and wide order of priorities, important local needs can be specifically met only through directly elected representatives (Moorthy, 1969: 96). (3) It may also be desirable to make statutory provisions in Panchayati raj acts requiring each zilla parishad to allocate funds from the general funds for the welfare of Backward Classes to the order of the proportion of the population of the groups in the district. (4) The voluntary agencies should organize a campaign for social and political education for Backward Classes to educate them about their rights and privileges. The idea that panchayat election should be free from politics seems naive and unrealistic in the modern world. Consequently, to deal with reality of the political world, Backward Classes should be given skills in political arena. (5) There should be a separate committee at the zilla parishad level to deal with the subject of social welfare. (6) The social welfare should be treated as a technical department and the officer-in-charge of this programme should be the Head of the

Department like other technical officers. (7) Some functionary should be appointed at the panchayat samiti level in those States where such functionary does not exist to look after the social welfare programmes. (8) The officer-in-charge of social welfare programmes at the zilla parishad level should be provided a vehicle to give him mobility to supervise the welfare programmes in the district.

At the national and state levels, it has been agreed that the government will assume the responsibilities of promoting

facilities of education, health and sanitation in cooperation with the help of the voluntary organizations and will promote the programmes of social welfare services through grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations. It is possible to assume the same approach to the development of welfare programmes at the village and block levels. The panchayat and panchayat samiti should recognize the voluntary organizations and entrust them with the responsibilities of promoting social welfare services (Nanavatty 1961-62: 15).

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