

Zilla Parishad

- (a) President—elected from among the directly elected members of Zilla Parishad.
- (b) Vice President—elected from among the directly elected members of Zilla Parishad.
- (c) Members—
 1. Members directly elected from the Zilla Parishad constituencies of the district.
 2. Presidents of the Anchalik Panchayats.
 3. Members of House of People and Member of Legislative Assembly.

Functions of the Panchayati Raj Bodies**Gaon Panchayat**

1. Preparation of Annual Plans for the development of the Gaon Panchayat area.
2. Preparation Annual Budget of Gaon Panchayat.
3. Mobilisation of reliefs in natural calamities.
4. Removal of encroachments on public properties.
5. Organising voluntary labours and contribution for community works.
6. Maintenance of essential statistics of villages.
7. Such other development works as may be entrusted.

Anchalik Panchayat

1. Preparation of Annual Plan in respect of the schemes entrusted to it by virtue of the Act and those assigned to it by the Government or the Zilla Parishad and submission thereof to the Zilla Parishad within the prescribed time for integration with the District Plan.
2. Consideration and consolidation of the Annual Plans of all Gaon Panchayats under the Anchalik Panchayat and submission of consolidated plan to the Zilla Parishad.
3. Preparation of Annual Budget of the Anchalik Panchayat

and submission to Zilla Parishad for approval within the prescribed time.

4. Performing such functions and executing such works as may be entrusted to it by government or the Zilla Parishad.
5. To assist the government in relief operation in natural calamities.
6. Such other development works as may be entrusted.

Zilla Parishad

It should be the function of a Zilla Parishad to prepare plans for economic development and social justice of the district and ensure the co-ordinated implementation of such plan.

Standing Committees

Gaon Panchayat

There are three Standing Committees, which are:

- (a) Development Committee.
- (b) Social Justice Committee.
- (c) Social Welfare Committee.

Members

Each committee shall consist of not less than three or more than four members elected from among the elected members of the Gaon Panchayats.

Functions

The Standing Committee shall perform the functions which are relating to the development of the rural areas and its people to the extent powers are delegated from the Gaon Panchayat.

Anchalik Panchayat

Three committees, they are

- (a) General Standing Committee.
- (b) Finance, Audit and Planning Committee.

(c) Social Justice Committee.

Members

Each Standing Committee shall consist of such number of members not exceeding six including the Chairman, as may be specified by the Anchalik Panchayat and chosen by the Anchalik Panchayat from amongst its members.

Functions

The Standing Committee shall perform the functions which are relating to the development of the rural areas and its people to the extent powers are delegated from the Anchalik Panchayat.

Zilla Parishad

There are four committees, which are:

- (a) General Standing Committee.
- (b) Finance and Audit Committee.
- (c) Social Justice Committee.
- (d) Planning and Development Committee.

Members

Each Standing Committee shall consist of such number of members not exceeding five including the Chairman as specified by the Zilla Parishad from amongst its members whose terms will be one year at a time.

Functions

Standing Committees shall perform functions to the extent, powers are delegated to them by the Zilla Parishad.

Gram Sabha

“Gram Sabha” means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of “Gaon Panchayat”. The Gram Sabha has been designed to be the place where villagers will discuss development issues, plan accordingly,

initiate development programmes and select beneficiaries for the schemes.

Functions of Gram Sabha under Assam Panchayat Act, 1994: Gram Sabha shall consider the following matters and may make recommendations and suggestions to the Gaon Panchayats:

1. The report in respect of development programme of the Gaon Panchayat relating to the preceding year and development programme proposed to be undertaken during the current year;
2. The promotion of unity and harmony among all sections of society in the villages; and
3. Such other matters as may be prescribed.

Functions

- Mobilising voluntary labour and contribution in kind and cash for the community welfare programmes.
- Identification of beneficiaries for the implementation of development schemes pertaining to the villages.
- Gram Sabha shall meet from time to time but a period of three months shall not intervene between any two meetings.

Sources of Income for Panchayats

- (a) Share in land revenue.
- (b) Local rates.
- (c) Revenue earned from the settlement of hatt, fisheries, etc.
- (d) House taxes and other taxes as specified in Assam Panchayati Raj Act.
- (e) Fees for providing amenities, cess and tolls.
- (f) Contribution and grants.
- (g) Fine and penalties.

Rural people has got a noble duty to ensure that the Panchayati Raj bodies can mobilize resources from the above sources so that these bodies can work for the socio-economic development of the areas.

Reservations for Women

73rd Amendment of the Constitution in the year 1992 reserved 33 per cent seats for women in Panchayats. Accordingly, the provision has been incorporated under Assam Panchayati Raj Act. This provision is a major move towards strengthening the position of rural women. The introduction of women in sizable numbers into the new Panchayat could bring significant changes in the functioning of these grassroots level institutions. Involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions is expected to bring qualitative change in the matters relating to health nutrition, children welfare, family care, drinking water, etc.

Reservations for SC/ST

There is a mandatory provision for reservation of seats for SC/ST in every tier of Panchayati Raj System. The reservation for SC/ST is an another significant aspect for development of disadvantaged groups in the rural areas.

**ROLE OF PANCHAYATS IN HUMAN
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

- (a) Panchayati Raj Institution should ensure development of human resources by providing weak and underprivileged opportunities like education, training, basic health services necessary for their growth and development.
- (b) Panchayati Raj Institutes should ensure that all the sections of the society particularly weaker section including women and girl child get adequate opportunity for developing human resource potential.
- (c) Panchayat can play a major role in development of human resource for weaker section by disseminating information on special development programmes for them.
- (d) PRIs should encourage voluntary groups and local agencies in effective implementation of human resource development programmes.

Role of Panchayats in Social Mobilization and Participation for Development

Panchayati Raj system has provided avenues for facilitating people's participation at the grassroots level in the following ways :

- (a) Gram Sabha will provide an open forum for discussion on various village level development activities thereby ensuring people's participation.
- (b) Representation of weaker sections in the decision making process.
- (c) Empowering rural women through an induction of one-third reservation in the Panchayati Raj bodies.

Panchayati Raj System and Micro Level Planning

Planned development being an essential feature of Indian economy, Panchayati Raj Institutions have to play an effective role in the preparation of planning for socio-economic development of the rural areas. Each tier has got responsibilities to plan for the socio-economic development of the rural people as per their felt need.

Ongoing Rural Development Schemes

1. *Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana*

Notwithstanding the impressive progress that has been by the country on different fronts, poverty continues to be a matter of serious concern. The effect of large percentage of the poor on the country's development is obvious. The situation needs to be redressed quickly. It is in this context that the self-employment programmes acquire significance. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is the single self-employment programme for the rural poor. Launched on April 1, 1999 the programme replaces the earlier self-employment and allied programmes—IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY and MWS, which are no longer in operation. SGSY is an innovative and carefully thought-out Yojana. It takes into account all the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier self-employment programmes. It offers the perfect balance of credit and subsidy.

SGSY aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor. It is rooted in the belief that the rural poor in India have competencies and given the right support can be successful producers of valuable goods/services. Persons assisted under this programme will be known as Swarozgaris and not beneficiaries. A significant aspect of SGSY is that every family assisted under this programme will be brought

above the poverty line in three years and, therefore, the programme aims at creating substantial additional incomes for the rural poor. Subject to availability of funds, it is proposed to cover 30 per cent of the rural poor in each block in the next five years.

2. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Rural Road Connectivity is not only a key component of Rural Development in India, it is also recognized as an effective poverty reduction programme. Notwithstanding the efforts made over the year, at the State and Central levels, through different programmes, about 40 per cent of the Habitations in the country are still connected by all-weather roads. It is well known that even where connectivity has been provided, the roads constructed are of such quality that they cannot be categorized as all-weather roads. The Prime Minister of India announced it on 15th August, 2000.

The objective of the Government is to provide road connectivity, through good all-weather roads, to all Rural Habitations with a population of more than 500 persons by the year 2007 (end of the 10th Five-Year Plan). The primary focus of the Programme will be on construction of new roads. However, upgradation (to prescribed standards) of existing roads will be permitted to be taken up under the programme so as to achieve connectivity through good all-weather roads. Extension of existing roads to the SC/ST Habitation in the village would also be covered under upgradation. Upgradation would, however, not cover repairs of existing roads.

The rural roads to be taken up will, by and large, be surfaced roads (black topped/cement concrete). However, depending upon the soil conditions, all-weather roads may also be gravel roads, but with all necessary cross-drainage structures.

3. Employment Assurance Scheme

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched on 2nd October, 1993 for implementation in 1778 identified backward Blocks of different States. The Blocks selected were in the drought prone areas, desert areas, tribal areas and hilly areas. Later, the scheme was extended to the remaining Blocks of the country in phased manner. At present, the scheme is being implemented in all the rural Blocks of the country. The programme has been restructured from 1st April, 1999.

As its name suggests, the primary objective of the EAS is to provide gainful employment during the lean agricultural season in manual work to all able bodied adults in rural areas who are in need and desirous of work, but cannot find it. The work may be either on farm or on other allied operations or on the normal plan/no-plan works during such a period. The secondary objective is the creation of community, social and economic assets for sustained employment and development.

4. Rural Housing

Housing is vital for human survival and, therefore, essential for socio-economic development. The need for improved housing is most acutely felt among the rural poor. As part of the efforts to meet the housing needs of the rural poor, Indira Awaas Yojana was started in May 1985 as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. From 1st January, 1996 it is being implemented as an independent scheme.

The objective of Indira Awaas Yojana is primarily to help construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable *kutcha* houses of members of SC/ST, freed bonded labourers and also non-SC/ST rural poor below poverty line by providing them with grant-in-aid.

5. Credit-cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing

The Credit-cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing has been conceived for rural households having annual income upto Rs. 32,000 to enable or facilitate construction of houses for all households who have some repayment capacity.

6. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana

Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) is the restructured, streamlined and comprehensive version of the erstwhile Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). It has been launched on 1st April, 1999. It has been designed to improve the quality of life of the rural poor by providing them additional gainful employment. The primary objective of JGSY is the creation of demand-driven village infrastructure including durable assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustained employment. The secondary objective is the generation of supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in the rural areas.