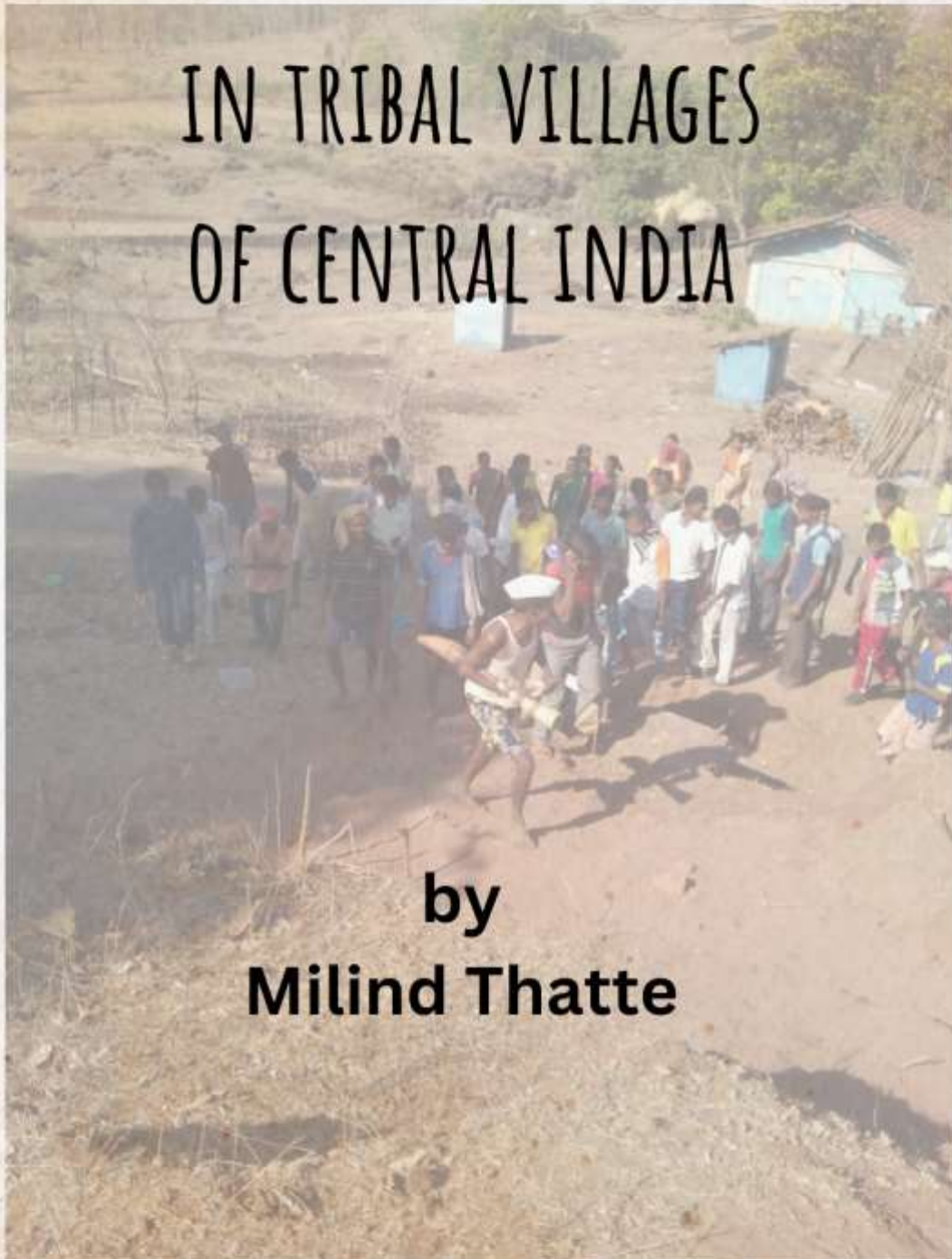


TRADITIONAL SELF RULE

IN TRIBAL VILLAGES
OF CENTRAL INDIA



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(TRIBAL ETHOS & ECONOMICS RESEARCH)

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A study by TEER (Tribal Ethos & Economics Research) Foundation



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1. Background

The Scheduled Tribes have traditionally been forest-dwelling and forest-dependent communities. They have gone through the transition from being hunter-gatherers to shifting cultivators to land-holding farmers. This transition albeit has been slower when compared to other communities mainly in the plains and valleys of great rivers. The forest-dweller's lifestyle is way different from a plain-land farmer's. The differences are mainly in: 1) challenges faced when living in or around a forest, 2) shifting cultivation, 3) use of human and animal energy, 4) dependence on hunt, 5) dependence on food and cooking fuel from forest, 6) support systems in times of crisis etc. These differences have developed a lifestyle and a set of ethos of inter-human relationships as well as human-nature relationships. This set of ethos is often called tribal culture or traditions. But the basis of these ethos is the lifestyle; which is contemporarily part-farmer part-gatherer part-hunter.

The living of a tribal village is based on such homogeneity of lifestyle and ethos of its inhabitants. The inhabitants – despite of whether they belong to different tribes or even castes – are deeply interdependent. They depend on each other in matters of basic needs; like housing, earning food, ensuring decent last rites and so on. This interdependence gives birth to and keeps alive their community institutions. These institutions are generally in the form of a general assembly – very close and near identical to what is called 'Gramsabha' in the Constitution of India (73rd amendment). Hence when self-rule for a tribal village is considered, it is a symbiotic grafting of constitutional provisions on an already existing village assembly.



This study seeks to identify whether this traditional self-rule system exists and if it does, how does it function.

2. Introduction to study

Objective:

The study proposes to document traditional laws/rules practiced in select tribal villages of the western tribal belt i.e. spread over four states – Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan to bring forth better possibilities of synthesis of traditional governance and constitutional government for the larger goal of “sustainable development with ease of governance”.

2.1 Introduction to study area

TEER conducted this study in four states; viz. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. These four states make a continuous cultural belt with Bhil being the most populous and common tribe. These four states are home to more than 50% scheduled tribes’ population in the country.

Our team identified two districts from each state so as to cover a wider variety of tribes and geosocial conditions.

State	District	Tribes
A. Gujarat	1. Narmada	Tadvi, Wasava, Bhil
	2. Mahisagar	Wagdiya, Damor, Dholi, Pargi
B. Maharashtra	3. Nashik	Mahadeo Koli, Kokna, Warli
	4. Nandurbar	Bhil, Pawra
C. Madhya Pradesh	5. Dhar	Bhilala, Patelia
D. Rajasthan	6. Dungarpur	Damor (Bhil), Parmar (Bhil), Dindor, Katara

2.2 Research sample and tools

It is observed that villages highly exposed to urban or market forces tend to lose or weaken their culture of interdependence and their community governance systems. TEER team selected villages that were far from towns, highways, market-places, and Panchayat offices. These villages had at least over 90% tribal population.

Our team of investigators (including at least one woman and one local tribal youth) visited five villages in each district. The tool used to gather data about traditional self-rule was a semi-structured Focus Group Discussion (FGD)¹. The group of tribal villagers consisted of both men and women. We conducted separate FGDs for men and women where it was culturally appropriate to do so.

Our team used structured questionnaire and individual interviews tools to assess the awareness of citizens and Panchayat functionaries about PESA act and rules. This is elaborated in another chapter of this study.

The findings and analysis presented in this chapter is entirely based on FGDs conducted in the sample villages.



Figure 1 conducting FGD in a village

¹ The template used for FGD given in annexure A

3. Summary of findings

Gramsabha or village assembly is not at all new or alien to a tribal village. All ‘truly tribal’² villages have traditional village assemblies. There are certain features of this assembly as an institution and certain roles that it plays as a functioning system.

3.1 Features of traditional Gramsabha

- a. Assembly meets on festivals and on occasions that demand its meeting. Festivals are like permanent predefined dates of Gramsabha that ensure a minimum frequency of people assembling together. It is common in Indic traditions to have a foundation of faith to all rules and regulations. It is commonly observed throughout the states of our study that there are at least two community festivals 1) before the sowing of seeds, 2) near the harvest of crop. People come together for these festivals in a celebrative mood full of positive energy and make certain decisions. The assembly on pre-monsoon festival decides the wage rate for the year and lending-borrowing of seeds to each other. The assembly on post-harvest festival decides when to let cattle stray and about the rules of weddings.
- b. It is observed that people do not have bureaucratic nomenclatures for these assemblies; they do not call it ‘yearly mandatory assembly meeting’. Agenda is not distributed in advance. It is either decided during the assembly or is already known to everyone. There is no bar on any new issue being brought up in such assemblies.
- c. The traditional Gramsabha can meet any time a demand rises. This demand usually comes during a crisis or a dispute. Crisis could be in the form of a natural calamity or conflict with a predator animal. Disputes are usually over land boundaries and marital disputes. There are also other petty criminal matters that may come before the assembly.
- d. The traditional Gramsabha does not intervene in a dispute unless one of the disputants approaches it. The assembly for dispute resolution is called by different names like Wadāli, Bidahā, Jājam, but the most common is Panchayat or *Panch baithak*. This assembly invariably sits in an open space where everyone

² By ‘truly tribal’ the authors mean villages which are not urbanised and have a traditional lifestyle

can attend/ hear/see the proceedings. There are elderly people who mediate towards resolution of the conflict. These people are not elected, nor do they belong to a particular family/clan/or tribe. They are elders from all the communities respected and trusted by the disputing parties. They are called by a certain nomenclature; e.g. *Bhanjgadiya, Wadāli, Aagewān, Panch* etc. This is not a permanent title. They are identified so only when playing the role. It is observed that many villages have a register or notebook where they keep written records of such assemblies and the verdict they gave. There are some permanent titles of village leaders in some regions; e.g. Patel, Tadvi, Karbhari – but these traditional functionaries do not take decisions in isolation. They often function as convenors of the assembly.

- e. The conflict resolution assembly is paid by the disputants. They pay in terms of bottles of home-brewed liquor, or chai-biscuits, or soft drinks, or in terms of jaggery (gud) distributed to the entire assembly. This is paid after a conflict is amicably solved. If a guilty party is levied a fine, a certain proportion of the fine goes to village common fund. The payment to assembly varies across regions, but it is known to all villagers how much one has to pay if a matter goes to the village assembly.
- f. People probably therefore have a mid-way mechanism of conflict resolution before taking the matter to traditional Gramsabha. There is a long tradition of the three levels of traditional assemblies for conflict resolution; namely Kul (family), Phalya (hamlet), Panch-kosi (group of neighbouring villages). If a conflict is not solved in Kul panch assembly, then only people will go to higher levels with higher costs.
- g. The assembly has a system of calling its meeting. The traditional Gramsabha nominates a person (called Balāi or Kāthya in some regions) who would go door to door either playing a drum or simply shouting aloud asking people to come for the assembly meeting. This person is paid in terms of grains or liquor or money usually annually on a festival date.
- h. The traditional Gramsabha has its fund. It is generated through cash contribution of all the households in the village. This contribution is always equal for all. This is collected for festivals. But balance or saved fund is kept secure and is spent as decided by the assembly. Everyone in the village knows how much fund was collected and how much balance remained. It has become

common – with the advent of education – to write these income-and-expenses in a notebook and read it aloud during the traditional Gramsabha.

- i. This assembly is composed of all the tribes/castes in the village. Men and women both participate. There is no bar on attendance based on caste or gender. When an assembly is convened to settle a dispute; the matter at dispute is the pivot on which people (women and men) decide whether to attend. It appears at times that women abstain from certain assemblies, but they attend the assembly when they are concerned about the issue. Villagers in a MP village told us that women talk a lot during dispute resolution assemblies. Villagers in a MH village said more the women in an assembly higher are the chances of aggravating the dispute. Both statements – although gender-biased – clearly indicate that presence and participation of women is an accepted common norm.
- j. Traditional Gramsabha draws its legitimacy from the natural bonding of trust and interdependence in the village community. Interdependence is reflected in basics like community help in times of mourning after death or in preparing for a wedding. Whether it is funeral or wedding, it does not remain a family or household function but becomes a village function. People from all households in the village help a wedding home with filling of water, cooking food for guests, contributing liquor for the function, contributing money to cover expenses of the wedding and so on. Village support in mourning begins with contributing wood logs for the funeral and extends up to 12 days after death supporting the mourning family with cooked food, money, and liquor.
- k. Interdependence is also observed in farming chores. All areas covered in this study have the practice of pooling labour – working on each other’s farms by rotation without taking monetary remuneration. This practice is called Handeliyu, Paltha, Lāhma, Hathādu and so on in various regions. It was only some villages in Rajasthan that reported this practice as bygone because of mechanisation of farming.

3.2 Role played by traditional Gramsabha

- a. Rules and regulations set by the traditional Gramsabha are viewed as customs. They are not written but are known to everyone in the village. Such rules are also consciously upgraded by the Gramsabha.
- b. Most tribal areas have rain-fed farming. Very little irrigation potential is realised. The Kharif (or monsoon) crop is most vital for food security of the

village. The villages follow a practice of cow herding till these crops are harvested. People often migrate in search of work after the first crop is harvested or even before the harvest as required. One able-bodied person from each family has to stay in the village for cow herding. It is not affordable to spare one person for this work for the entire year. The community takes a decision when to let cattle loose without cowherds. Festival of Sāti in western Ghats of Maharashtra or of Dhāman-Māl pooja in Gujarat mark such dates of letting cattle (or rather cowherds) free. There is no fixed date for this festival, it is fixed by the village elders during the month of Ashwin. They consider the status of harvesting in the village, make sure the weakest can complete their chores within a given time frame and then declare when the village shall have Saati pooja.

- c. How community upgrades this rule could be seen in an irrigated village in Gujarat where they let cattle stray after Mahashivratri (i.e. in April). They take two crops and hence would not let cattle stray till winter (Rabbi) crop is harvested.
- d. Commons or community property resources is a domain of traditional Gramsabha governance. Riverine fish is such resource. Most common governance practice is to decide when not to fish. Villages with major rivers avoid fishing during Chaumāsa (four months of monsoon), whereas villages with seasonal rivers avoid fishing after Chaumāsa. Some villages have a practice of building a community fishing place; i.e. constructing rock-and-bamboo barricades in the river wherefrom every family gets an equal share of the catch. Some villages with longer duration rivers mark a festival in summer as a cut-off date; viz. Akshay Tritiya when all the villagers fish together and nobody fishes after that day. This ensures everyone getting a fair opportunity to fish.
- e. Rajasthan villages have lakes as major sources of water. Purity of lakes is usually watched meticulously by the village assemblies. If somebody is found littering near a lake, the assembly would penalise such act. Wells and channels in rivers are also protected in a similar manner in other states. A God or goddess near a water body is the common way of protecting it and also ensuring the village contributes labour in maintaining the water body on the day of annual festival of the deity.

- f. Forest is a resource that is pivotal the life of tribal villages. The bureaucratisation of forests for last seven generations has enormously degraded the village assembly's domain over forest. Despite this degeneration of traditional self-rule over forest and the imposed alienation from forests, some customs have survived. Villages have a traditional way of marking their boundaries and these boundaries include forest area. Villages in western parts of Maharashtra have a tradition of *Rawāli* when all men stay in the forest for a week. The priests and these men circumvent the traditional boundaries of forest and village in the night in a galloping dance to the tunes of *Tarpa*. Villages in Rajasthan (Dungarpur) conduct a *Bhairav* pooja and circumvent the village-and-forest boundary sprinkling the blood of a sacrificed goat.
- g. The village community follows certain rules or norms of how and how much to take from the forests. This is found most commonly in taking medicinal herbs from the forest. A variety of customs are observed that clearly restrain the extraction; e.g. 1) offering *sindoor* and *agarbatti* to a medicinal tree before taking its leaves or skin, 2) de-skinning a medicinal tree only as much is possible with one sway of the blade or of the size of palm of the taker, 3) not touching a tree when the taker's shadow falls on it, 4) taking fruit or leaves with single hand and walking away without looking back, 5) plucking a medicinal herb before sunrise without passing motion.
- h. Hunting albeit illegal in current times has been in the tradition. One must understand that all traditional hunting is for food. Hunting for food is a law of nature and hence could not be detrimental to nature till the point of collapse our sprint for urbanisation has brought us to. Tribal hunters could hardly be held responsible for this collapse. One of the respondents in this study told an interesting story. He said, "I used to be a drunkard. My son-in-law persuaded me to follow a Guru and give up alcohol and meat. I said give me a year to prepare. I ate fish and meat regularly which I could get from the river and forest without needing any money. But to give it up, I planted and nurtured fruit and vegetable plants for a year and half. Then I was assured of ample food and I told my son-in-law now I am ready to give up meat and drink." This story brings up a fundamental truth. A common tribal villager needs his fish and hunt for enough nutrition. Hunting for food has reduced over times because: 1) increased awareness about it being illegal, 2) reduced availability of hunt in forests that have degraded. As researchers, we have looked at hunting as a community governed activity and not as a crime under colonised

law. Respondents avoided speaking about hunting but spoke of it as a past tradition. We could gather from these responses that there were many rules / restraints that the village assembly had decided upon.

- i. It was observed that certain seasons and days are marked as non-hunting periods. The month of Shrāvan, the days of full-moon and no-moon, festivals of Navratri, Mahashivratri etc. are non-hunting times. Some tribes have a certain tree or animal as their clan icon. They do not hurt or consume these iconic species. For instance, Warli tribes in western Ghats keep their Kula-dev Hirwa in a cone-shaped box made of bamboo. There is a particular species of Bamboo used by each Kula (family). People belonging to that Kula do not eat the shoots of that species of Bamboo. Different families use different Bamboo. Thus everybody can eat some species of bamboo and avoid some.
- j. The traditional Gramsabha in the beginning of farming season – marked as a festival – decides the wage rates. In some villages, it is the first farmer who hires local labour deciding the wage rates for the year. It must be understood that both these processes have a negotiation between the employer (farmer) and employees (labour). Both belong to the same village and many a times to the same community. There is a possibility that the roles swap; i.e. a farmer hires labour for harvesting his paddy. Once his harvesting is done, he is free and willing to go as labour to another farmer’s crop. One of the labourers he had hired would be an employer for him next week. Hence when the wages are decided upon, people tend to draw a mean acceptable to both sides, for many of them are members of both sides. This negotiation may happen either in the festival assembly or when a farmer is hiring in the beginning of a new farming year. Once the rate is fixed, nobody pays higher or lesser than the rate.
- k. Equal contribution is a significant sign of equality in certain matters. Whether it is for festivals or for mourning or in wages.
- l. Labour pooling and paying labour in kind is prevalent. Lending of seeds is also without money. It is not uncommon to take a forest produce (e.g. gum) to local haat and get barter returns (pulses, onions, sault etc.). The village economy is not entirely monetised yet. It is a merit when people offer each other services without keen measurements of the services. It is a demerit when people sell farm or forest produce in a market without being able to determine the right price. People deal with government and market with extra caution because both are seen as monetised.

3.3 Historical evidences of village self-rule

Indian as well as non-Indian historians have written volumes about village self-government in India. This section is an attempt to connect the dots in the field findings of this research and what has existed in various periods of history.

The authors have found during this research that all villages have a system of assembly for conflict resolution and that such assemblies are facilitated by 'elders'. The recognition of 'elders' is a distinguishing characteristic of the traditional Gramsabha.

The inscriptions of King Dharasena II of Vallabhi empire (Gujarat) mention 'Mahattara'(महत्तर) i.e. village elders as a part of government. Naosari plates of King Dadda mention 'Mahattaradhikarika'(महत्तराधिकारिका) as village officers appointed from amongst the Mahattara.

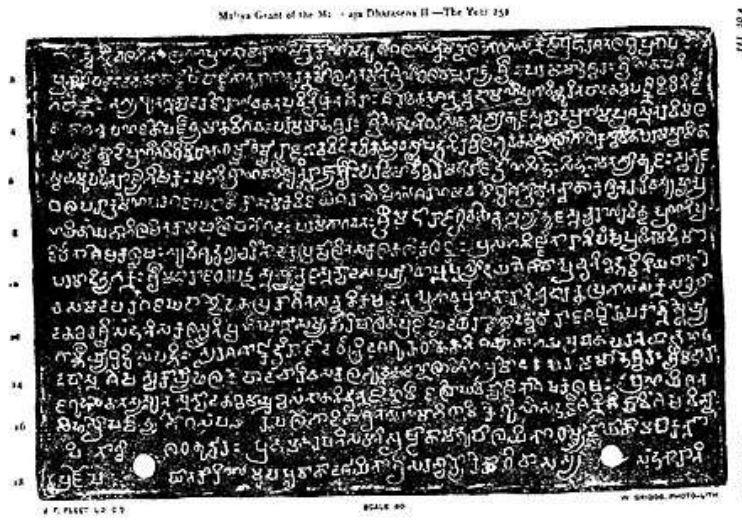


Figure II: Maliya inscription of Dharasena II (571 CE) (Image source: Wikipedia)

Kautilya's Arthashastra identifies 'Gram-Vridhdhas' (ग्रामवृद्ध) as vital for conducting government at village level especially in matters of land boundaries, tax collection, maintenance

of water bodies and so on.

The Mahabharat identifies presence of elders as a sine qua non for an assembly (सभा) to be meaningful. It further defines elders as those who speak and uphold law and morality³.

These evidences suggest that the village assembly led by elders is a tradition enrooted for thousands of years.

³ न सा सभा यत्र न सन्ति वृद्धा न ते वृद्धा ये न वदन्ति धर्मं। नासौ धर्मो यत्र न सत्यमस्ति न तत्सत्यं यच्छलेनानुविद्धम॥ (Udyog Parva 35:49)

A British officer in 1915 writes – in his book on Village government in India – his rationale of why elders were so important in a traditional Gramsabha, “The Indian village community was, rarely a community in arms, like the Teutonic; and there was not therefore the same inducement to assign importance to the younger men. All that was required was civil wisdom, for which they resorted to a close group of village elders.”⁴

The traditional Gramsabha as found in our field enquiries comprises of all tribes/castes in a village. It is defined so in an 11th Century text ‘Mitakshara’ as an assemblage of persons of different castes and professions but residing in the same place (भिन्नजातिनां भिन्नवृत्तिनां एकस्थाननिवासिनां समूहाः पूगाः). Pooga was the term used for a village assembly.⁵ The term changed to Gota (गोट) in post-Mughal Maratha rule; but its nature remained the same.

Lord Elphinstone – a British governor towards the fall of Peshwa rule – garnered information from his Collectors regarding the nature of village governments. William Chaplin (Collector of Dharwar) ... in replying to the question by Elphinstone as to who was eligible to sit as a panchayat member, he said ...: "All castes are eligible, provided they are men of good sense and probity"; and to another query he replied: "Persons of the greatest respectability often accepted the duty."⁶ (Franks, p. 11)

The all-encompassing multi-caste multi-community nature of village assembly for conflict resolution is also highlighted by judgements of such Gota (or Panchayats) recorded in Maratha papers. The judgement of the village Panchayat in Babaji Javaji Vs. Babaji Baji delivered in 1673 CE is signed by 23 Patels, 10 Chougulas, 4 gold-smiths, 1 carpenter, 1 potter, 2 shoemakers, 6 Mahaars, and 1 Mang.⁶

One of the respondent villages in Rajasthan told our team that there were three levels of conflict-resolution assemblies. Similar three levels are mentioned in Mitakshara as: Kula, Shreni, and Pooga. It is not only 11th century evidence, but also seen in the last Maratha king Chhatrapati Pratapsingh’s code in 1836 CE where he exhorts people to approach these levels of assemblies before bringing a case to the royal court.

⁴ (Matthai, 1915) p.11

⁵ (Altekar, 1927) p.39

⁶ (Altekar, 1927) p.43

The traditional Gramsabhas as found in our field study have their fund – generated from the cash contributions of the people. They also keep a record of that fund and use surplus for community activities. This kind of village fund existed commonly in all the villages in the pre-colonial times.

As recorded by a British officer in 1915, “The village communal fund known as *Samudayum* (is) still met with in some of the Tamil-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency. ... and the objects to which its proceeds are devoted are in the main similar (to those in the north). The feeding of the poor is one of the principal objects of the fund, other objects being the repair of village tanks, the erection of drinking water-ponds, and the celebration of festivals at the village temple. The chief sources of the fund are the sale proceeds of the fruits of trees on village land held in common, of the fish in the village tanks, and of the thatching grass which grows on the foreshores of tanks.” (Matthai, p.73)

It is evident from numerous sources that the village functioned as a self-reliant unit delivering some functions of the welfare state as well. It came easily and rather naturally because people knew each other well.

The Royal Commission on Decentralization in India presented so in the British Parliament in 1909: “the foundation of any stable edifice which shall associate the people with the administration must be the village as being an area of much greater antiquity than (the new administrative creations) and one in which people are known to one another and have interests which converge on well-recognized objects..” (*Parliamentary Paper, 1909 (Cd. 4360), pp. 238-9*).

This wisdom is yet to dawn on our contemporary bureaucracies especially of the Panchayat Raj departments of states.

3.4 Panchayat Raj and traditional Gramsabha

The 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India brought a three-tier Panchayat Raj Institution (PRI) system to the entire country. The Art 243M in this amendment specifically mentioned: “Parliament may, by law, extend the provisions of this Part to the Scheduled Areas and the tribal areas referred to in clause (1) subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in such law...” [243M(4)(b)]

Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act or PESA Act was consequently passed by the Parliament in 1996. The fifth schedule states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand,

Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Odisha, and Telangana barely implemented the PESA act in its true spirit. The spirit is in syncing the constitutional Gramsabha with the traditional Gramsabha that already exists.

The 73rd amendment provides for Panchayats at 1) Zilla level, 2) intermediate level i.e. Block/Mandal/Janpad/ Tehsil/Taluka, and 3) village level. The definition of village in this matter is critical. The said amendment defines village: “village means a village specified by the Governor by public notification to be a village for the purposes of this Part and includes a group of villages so specified.” [243(g)]

The states have tended towards recognizing a group of villages as a village for the purpose of constituting a village Panchayat. The bureaucracies have considered a sizable population as the prime factor for establishing a unit of government i.e. Gram Panchayat. Tribal areas considering the inaccessibility of terrain and dispersed dwellings have invariably received so-called Group Gram Panchayats.

The said amendment defines assembly of all the voters in a village i.e. “Gram Sabha means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level” [243(g)](*emphasis added*) The Gramsabha is thus expected to be at the village level; but when the states play with the definition of a village the Gramsabha too becomes a body to function at the level of Gram Panchayat (i.e. a group of villages bundled).

The villages jostled and bundled into a Panchayat have nothing in common. It is not rare to find villages in a Gram Panchayat divided by mountains, forests, and valleys. It is not only physical disconnection, but the social disconnection that renders such Panchayat ineffective as a self-government for the villages within. The meeting of Gramsabha is held most commonly at the Panchayat office and citizens in the far-off villages barely attend it. The Panchayat buildings are small enough not to have space for sitting if all the voters really turn up for a Gramsabha meeting.

PESA act is a landmark legislation on many fronts, but the most fundamental change it seeks to bring is the definition of village and consequently the level of Gramsabha. It clearly says: “a village shall ordinarily consist of a habitation or a group of habitations or a hamlet or a group of hamlets comprising a community and managing its affairs in accordance with traditions and

customs” (Sec. 4(b)) The emphasised words matter because such conditions can be certified only by the adult citizens or voters of that village. The concept of ‘community’ and the idea of ‘managing affairs’ is defined neither in the statute nor elsewhere. Customary law or traditional self-rule is not codified and hence it is a prerogative of the people inhabiting the village to decide whether they constitute a village. When defining a village is in the hands of people so is the sequel i.e. constituting a Gramsabha. Sec 4(c) says: every village shall have a Gramsabha.

The landmark change PESA brings is this: bringing Gramsabha to the hamlet freeing it from the bundle at Gram Panchayat. The lawmakers recognized that there exists a system of self-rule at the level of hamlet/habitation which includes all the people in that habitation irrespective of tribe/caste/gender. That this system of self-rule manages affairs vital to people’s livelihoods and social life. That this system resolves conflicts. That this system is self-sustaining. This recognition is evident from the powers PESA vests in a Gramsabha.

The states have failed disastrously in syncing the traditional Gramsabhas with statutory Gramsabhas. The bureaucracies have viewed Gram Panchayat more as a unit of administration and not as a unit of self-government. The same attitude is extended to Gramsabha. Gramsabha is perceived by the State as a body to be controlled and managed by the Panchayat administration. This is evident from how even convening the meeting of Gramsabha is also kept under control of Panchayat bureaucracy. The agenda of Gramsabha is overwhelmed by issues draining from ‘above’. While traditional Gramsabha is used to evolving its agenda during its meeting, state rules insist on a prior written agenda. The governments have not recognised nor accommodated the traditional system of a village assembly of calling its members to the meeting. The traditional Gramsabhas have a system of collecting cash contributions and keeping a transparent record of the same. The state does not trust the Gramsabha with any funds, nor do the Panchayats show any transparency in monetary transactions.

The system of Panchayat Raj was expected to be a system of self-government. It has failed to be so in scheduled areas because it did not accustom itself to an already existing system of self-government. It created a separation – in the minds of people – of the domains of State and Society. The traditional Gramsabha remained a community domain, while Panchayat and its Gramsabha remained a domain of the State. While people attend the traditional

assemblies with full numbers and vigour, the statutory Gramsabhas – forget free participation – barely touch the quorum required. People – if they do – attend the Panchayat Gramsabhas as aspiring receivers of dole. Whereas they act as equal participants in a traditional Gramsabha. People do a broad spectrum of things with ease and efficiency in the domain of traditional Gramsabha. But they have never been allowed to have that space in the statutory Gramsabha. This kept the statutory Gramsabha a weak and meek body never able to legislate nor control the executive. Alienating the Panchayat system from the traditional Gramsabha is a result of colonial mindset of state bureaucracies. The deliverance of services and the promise of democracy has suffered because of this apartheid in the PRI system.



4. Findings

Our findings across states indicate a certain areas or domains of community self-rule. These include the following. Needless to say, this is an indicative list not an exhaustive one.:

- a) Conflict resolution and mediation
- b) Traditions related to commons (fishing, forest resources, water sources)
- c) Collaborative action in farming
- d) Collective action in festivals and religious functions
- e) Marriages and divorces

4.1 Findings in Gujarat

4.1.1 Villages in Mahisagar district –

TEER team visited five villages in Mahisagar district. Following facts emerged from the discussions held with villagers:

Traditions related to commons

All the villagers fast on the day of Amlī Agiyaras (11th lunar date of the month of Falgun) i.e. 4 days before the festival of Holi (around March-April). All go to hunt a rabbit (or similar animal) in the evening. The hunt i.e. flesh is distributed equally to all families. The fast is concluded with the flesh as a gift of forest gods.

There is no hunting in the month of Shravan (July-August).

Some villages with perennial water bodies or big rivers in vicinity said they did not go fishing in the Chaumāsā (four months of monsoon). Villages with seasonal rivers fish only during Chaumāsā.

Lilo Hariyo or Charni is celebrated when the first green grass sprouts from earth at the beginning of monsoon. People worship Cheda Mata (village goddess) on this day by offering a goat or rooster.

People bring Mahua flowers, Tendu leaf, Gum of Dhawda, Teak and Sisam wood for making ploughs and building houses.

Collaborative action in farming

Akhatrij (Akshay Tritiya) is celebrated by worshipping and decorating the bullocks, by worshipping the earth, and by offering goat to village goddess. This festival is also known as Haláttaru or Halátro or Haládharu. (Haládharu literally means holding-the-plough.)

People give each other seeds that are to be returned in double after the harvest (or before next year sowing season). If farm implements are borrowed, that can be returned in terms of labour.

When the crop is ready for harvest, people offer the first ears of corn to the temple of Kuldevi Mataji (village goddess) near the village pond. The village gathers with contribution of milk, ghee, and rawa from each household.

Working on each other's farm by rotation is practiced and called 'Lāhma' or 'Hathādu'.

Four laddus made of clay are buried when burning the Holi. Each laddu is marked with threads identifying them with Ashadh, Shraavan, Bhadarvo (Bhadrapad), and Aaso (Ashwin) i.e. the four months of monsoon. Later by looking at these laddus, elders predict good and bad months of rains. Earthen pot containing water is also placed beneath Holi to predict whether water will be available for farming or if an epidemic will hit this year. Newly married couples circumvent Holi. ₹ 25 contribution is offered to Panch. Holi in general is a festival bringing everyone together.



Figure 3: conducting FGD in a village in Mahisagar

Conflict resolution and mediation

The village elders are called Panch and one of them is recognised as Patel. When land related or other disputes are brought before Panch, it is an open-door meeting with all adult villagers sitting for the Panch meeting. When they resolve

a dispute, they may impose a fine on the guilty. The money taken as fine is used to make a Prasad (sweet) and distributed to all villagers. If the dispute is not solved or if one of the parties disagrees with Panch decision, he/they may go to police station. Local police station is aware of this system. So, police often informally consult the Panch before proceeding on the case.

Some villages said that the conflict resolution meeting is open to all men and women. Some villages said only men speak in such meetings. Women speak only when asked for some information.

Arranging marriages and funerals

Once the bride and bridegroom agree, their parents meet and agree to arrange the wedding. Panch; i.e. village elders play a role after this. They decide the date and time of wedding. They decide what quantity of snacks, vegetables, grains would be required for the ceremony. The village has decided that in each wedding, the bridegroom's family shall gift the bride's family with 500 grams silver, 4.5 Tola (approx. 45 grams) of gold, and ₹ 135000. These figures were upgraded in 2014, earlier it used to be lesser. There is also a practice called 'Bajeda' wherein the boy's father gives ₹ 2500 to the girl's father. 1/5th of this goes to the Panch. They use it to eat or drink or buy goods for common use.

In case of husband-wife dispute, elders from both sides assemble in an open space. They hear both sides so as to decide who is guilty. The Panch do not get paid but get food and drink from the litigants. There is also a practice of inviting Panch from the woman's paternal village. If there is a *Chhuta-chheda* i.e. divorce, the husband has to pay a minimum of rupees one lakh to his divorced wife. If the woman wishes to marry another man, that man is asked to pay the ex-husband the expenses he incurred in the marriage.

When somebody dies, all households in the village contribute wood for funeral pyre and take out equal cash contribution for the last rites. Neighbours cook food for 3-4 days for the family of the dead.

Diwāsa is a festival around 2nd lunar date of Ashadh month (around August) when people worship Cheda Mata (village goddess). Equal cash and grain contribution is collected from all families for a mass meal (Bhandara) and other celebrations like dancing on drum beat etc is carried on.

4.1.2 Villages in Narmada district –

The research team visited five villages in the Narmada district. Following were the points that emerged from discussions with villagers.

Collaborative action in farming

Helping each other by rotation in farming chores or labour pooling is called 'Harani' or 'Handliyo'. The host farmer has to offer meals and no cash is required. The villagers practice this tradition by making groups of 10 to 15 neighbouring farmers. All 10 or 15 will go to one person's farm and finish his work within one day. Next day all 10-15 will go to the second farmer's farm and so on. The number of 10-15 makes perfect sense because the number of labourers required for completing one farmer's work is 10-15. And that the most fertile period for a particular farming chore is not more than 10-15 days thus ensuring that each farmer gets the benefit of labour pooling within that period. It is also observed that villagers with stable cash income (viz. government job holders and shop-keepers) have opted out of this system and are using machines for the chores. Their percentage however is small and hence the practice of Handliyo is effective even today.

Every year at the beginning of monsoon, people revise the labour rates. They consider inflation and affordability when increasing the rates. This is done on the festival day of Mātlyo Dev in the month of Jyestha (locally called Jeth). The day of festival is decided by the traditional Patel of the village after Mātli Bhaji (an edible shrub) sprouts in the forest. Once the labour rate is fixed in the assembly on Mātlyo Dev, nobody in the village can pay higher or lower than that.

Akhatrij (also called Akshay Tritiya, 3rd day of Vaishakh month) i.e. around May is usually the day to begin ploughing – marked with worship of the bullocks and the plough. The ploughing in hard summer helps turn over the top-soil exposing the cocoons of pest for the birds to eat.

A month and half before the advent of monsoon, there is a festival when all households sow their seeds (sample) in a flat bamboo basket. They sprinkle water on it for nine days. Followed as a festival, this works as a germination test of the seeds. The sprouts on the ninth day are worshipped by unmarried girls in the village. People choose the sprouted seed varieties as regenerable seeds and use the same in sowing in the coming season. In case seeds of some farmers

fail to regenerate, people lend seeds to each other. The borrower has to return the seeds after harvest 1.5 times the borrowing. This practice is called 'Dodhiyu'.

50-60 (almost all) people go to Dev Dhāmañ Māl to worship the god on the full-moon day of Mārgshirsh (around December). Harvesting begins only after this worship. This also indicates that the village cattle may be let loose (without cowherds) a month after this festival.

Traditions related to commons

People take turns to patrol the forest. A couple of men take a round every day to protect the forest near village. Hunting is only for eating. Usually hunters eat the prey immediately after hunting, by roasting it. Pregnant or lactating female animals are not hunted. And no hunting in Shraavan month. Only dead and dry wood is brought from the forest and that too only for need and not for selling.

Once a year people put a flag on a certain tree in jungle and worship jungle gods. They dine in the forest that day.

People believe that wherever there is water, there dwells a Mataji (mother goddess). Hence, they follow certain restrictions near the water place. There is an Ambaji mata temple in village Nishal-faliyu near a dug well. People do not wear footwear around it and a woman during her monthly course is not supposed to go near it. This on one hand ensures the woman gets rest from the task of fetching water during her periods and on the other it is because the woman in periods is thought to be 'unclean'.

All households contribute a wood log for Holi. They go to forest 15 days before Holi and bring wood. They bury four laddus. Men keep certain vows for 5 to 10 days before Holi. They sleep in the farms away from their women, do not bathe-shave, nor cut hair and nails, nor wear footwear. They fast on the day of Holi and eat only after Holi is ignited. They are called Gosain or Baba for that period.

The elders fix an amount say ₹ 20 per household for the celebration of Holi. A certain amount from this collection is paid to the Gosain. Remaining amount is utilised for common purposes. Where to utilise this fund is decided in an assembly on the third day of Holi. The income-expense account of this village fund is recorded in written form and is read aloud in festival assemblies. Each village has a separate record like this.

Conflict resolution and mediation

Village elders (Aagewan) are the first to be approached by disputing parties in a village. When the elders sit in a hearing, women and men both assemble and speak freely. If they fail to bring up a satisfactory solution, the parties go to Sarpanch. If that too fails, then they go to court.

Some villages mentioned that in a conflict resolution meeting, most deliberation is done by men. Women speak depending on whether they have a stake in it. There is no bar on women speaking, but men do most of the talking.

All households from the village contribute wood logs for cremation of the deceased. Other families cook and provide food to the aggrieved family for the 12 days of mourning. People take turns to sit / accompany the family in the mourning period. On the 12th day, people contribute money and food grains to the mourning family.

4.2 Findings in Maharashtra

4.2.1 Villages in Nashik district –

TEER team visited four villages in Nashik district. Following facts emerged from the discussions held with villagers:

Collaborative action in farming

When people hire others in the village as farm labour, the wages are fixed by the entire village and they are commonly followed. The festival of Kowli-bhaji (in the beginning of monsoon) has a traditional village assembly where people decide the wage rates for hiring labour within the village. Currently it is reported to be ₹ 150 and afternoon meals. This wage rate was agreed upon four years ago. It will be revised whenever people feel inflation is rising. The decision will be influenced by other villages in the vicinity raising their rates. Nobody in the village will pay higher or lower than the rate fixed by the village assembly.

Sāti, a festival during the month of harvesting (Ashwin) also has a village assembly and there too villagers may consider revising the labour rates.

Pooling of labour especially during trans-planting of paddy, in making bricks, in pruning branches for Rāb (burning of sowing plot), and in farm bunding work – is a common practice. 10 to 15 farmers form a group and work on each farmer's farm by daily rotation. This system is called 'Pāltha'.

Traditional or indigenous seed varieties are used for millets and vegetables. These seeds are preserved by the farmers. 'Biwandi' is a system of lending seeds to others where the borrower is expected to return double the seeds in next season.

Traditions related to commons

Village Kathwadpada has a Sati-Asra temple near the rivulet and also a Krishna Mandir. The Sati-Asra goddesses are offered a goat and the Wagh-dev is offered a rooster on the day of Wagh-Baaras (12th date of the lunar month of Ashwin). Nobody wears foot-wear near the god places and the water body close-by is kept clean.

People fish together in the major river on the day of Akhāti (Akshay Tritiya). There is very shallow water by this day and people walk in the river bed holding shawls or sarees or fishing nets in their hands. This day is common for all, because after this day nobody will fish and there will be not much fish available in the river either. So to ensure that each family gets its last opportunity to fish (for that year), this day is observed.

Traditionally hunting is a group activity. Certain restrictions are followed by people while hunting: 1) hunting is done only on Tuesdays, 2) Peacock, tiger, monkeys are never hunted. After a hunt, the flesh is distributed equally among the participants. Common hunting equipment are home-made sling-shot and rope-traps.

Conflict resolution and mediation

Disputes are solved by a general assembly of the village where some elders facilitate the dialogue. Women have free and equal access to this assembly. In case a dispute is highly sensitive, people also invite elected GP members, Sarpanch, and Police-patil. If the disputants do not accept the verdict of this assembly, they are free to approach the police station or the Tanta-mukti samiti of Gram Panchayat. If there is a dispute between persons of two different villages, then Panch of both villages assemble at a central point or the GP Samiti is approached.

This assembly does not intervene unless one of the disputants approaches the Panch (elders). This party or the plaintiff has to pay ₹ 400 or so for tea and snacks for the Panch.

People in village Bhintghar reported something different from other villages. They said people try to avoid having women in dispute resolution assembly, because presence of women aggravates the argument. They however mentioned that there is no bar on women's entry in the assembly.



Figure 4 conducting FGD in a village in Nandurbar

4.2.2 Villages in Nandurbar district –

TEER team visited six villages in Nandurbar district. Following facts emerged from the discussions held with villagers:

Collaborative action in farming

When people hire others in the village as farm labour, the wages are determined by the first person hiring labour in monsoon. The people being hired are local, who perhaps will themselves be hiring next week. The wage rate rises depending on inflation and the rates of neighbouring villages. Once a certain rate is fixed in a village, nobody changes it during the year. Paid labour system is called 'Watkire'

Lahiya is a system of labour pooling. A group of villagers will work for each person in the group by rotation. This work is invariably to be finished in one

day. Many farm functions are carried out in this system; e.g. sowing, weeding, harvesting. There is no monetary exchange involved in this.

People help each other with seeds. Such loan of seeds is to be returned with 50% more seeds. There is a practice of taking seeds to Astambha Rishi mountain on the day of Laxmi Puja in Diwali.

Traditions related to commons

Some villages have *Nila Nandira* or *Wagh-dev* near the river bed. The heads of all families in the village follow certain restrictions or vows before the worship festival of Wagh-dev. Their restrictions include – non-eating meat, not sleeping on bed, not wearing Chappals, not sitting on Paat etc. More importantly, they do not eat anything born new in nature before this worship in August.

Hunting is a dying practice as there are very few people left with hunting memories and skills. They used to hunt in groups and had the practice of equally dividing the meat. Fishing and catching of crabs is prohibited in the period between Mahashivratri and Holi

People identify certain water sources only for drinking, preferably a well. Nobody is allowed to wash vessels or clothes near such water body, nor do they wear chappals near it.

Conflict resolution and mediation

Villagers have a Panch system in place. Elders of both disputing parties sit at a distance from each other. The neutral elders walk to each side, hear from both sides, exchange what one side has told to the other. And then propose a solution. Women concerned with the dispute attend this Panch meeting, other women stay away. When a dispute is resolved amicably, both parties bring handful of Jowar grains and keep them before the village Pujari. They pour water over grains and declare the dispute solved. If this solution is broken, the disputants file a complaint at police station. Bifurcation of land between brothers is a common dispute before Panch. One village reported a contemporary dispute of someone putting an obituary status on social media instead of birthday wishes.

Villagers and elders are involved in deciding the wedding date for a bride from the village. The *Dej* is paid by the bridegroom to bride's family. A certain quantity of locally brewed liquor is offered to all village elders. This quantity is fixed by the village community. The *Dej* amount varies between villages even of the same tribe. It is decided by the village and not by the tribe. All households

help the wedding family by offering gifts of rice, sugar, money, vegetables, and liquor.

In case of consistent disputes and need for divorce in a couple, village elders (Gaon Panch) try to mediate. If mediation fails, they decide on divorce or *Kādimoad*. In case of divorce, the woman's father has to return Dej money to her husband. If she marries another man, that man has to pay Dej money to the divorced husband. Both men and women have the right to re-marry.

4.1 Findings in Madhya Pradesh

4.1.1 Villages in Dhar district –

TEER team visited five villages in Dhar district. Following facts emerged from the discussions held with villagers:

Collaborative action in farming

Padji is a system of labour pooling where 10-12 farmers form a group and work at everyone's farm by rotation. The host provides food to the labour, but no monetary payment is required. Atwāria is a system of hiring labour against food i.e. meat and drink. This system is rarely followed in current times as people prefer payment in cash. Some villages reported that corn or wheat can be offered to labour of a quantity of market price equivalent to the wages. (for instance, if the wages are ₹ 200 and the market rate of wheat is ₹ 20, then 10 Kg of wheat is given as wages)

The first person in a village hiring labour for grass cutting after monsoon decides the wage rate with negotiation with the local labour. That wage rate followed by all the people in the village for the entire year.

Traditions related to commons

Drinking water wells are protected by the community by installing a goddess (Jal-devi) nearby. People are expected not to litter near the water body.

Traditionally hunting and fishing is avoided on full-moon and no-moon nights and during festivals of Navratri and Gañagaur. People used to hunt in a group and used to share the catch equally. People who have become followers of a certain religious sect have become vegetarians and hence do not fish or hunt.

People in some villages come together for the festivals of Hanuman Jayanti and Govardhan Puja. The common element is equal contribution from all

households in terms of money and pulses, cooking together, and eating together.

Entire village contributes wood for funeral pyre. Villagers provide cooked food to the aggrieved family for 10-12 days after the death. Visitors' food is also taken care of by the villagers.

When taking a medicine from the forest (trees/herbs), the tree is offered Kumkum and rice grains in order to respect it. Almost all Kul / families in the village have a Kul-devi associated with a tree in the forest. That family never harms that particular tree.

Conflict resolution and mediation

When a dispute occurs, either of the disputing parties approaches Patel or Sarpanch. They convene village assembly for solving the dispute. This assembly has unrestricted participation of women and men from all castes/tribes. The village has a person nominated as *Balāi* who goes from door to door and invites all to the assembly. This assembly is facilitated by elderly people termed as *Bhanjgadiya*. The dispute resolution is called '*Jhagda todna*'. The assembly may charge the guilty with a fine. A share of the fine is taken by the assembly – usually used to buy a goat and distribute flesh to all those who participated in the assembly.

The assembly decides land matters as well as husband-wife disputes. In case a divorce is sanctioned by the assembly, a breast-fed child remains with the mother and all his living expenses have to be borne by the divorced father. If the father remarries another woman, grown-up children of the first wife shall stay with the father. If the divorced wife marries another man, she may choose whether to take her children with her.

4.1 Findings in Rajasthan

4.1.1 Villages in Dungarpur district –

TEER team visited five villages in Dungarpur district. Following facts emerged from the discussions held with villagers:

Collaborative action in farming

The harvesting of grass (post-monsoon) is usually the time when a village decides its wage rate for labour. The villagers are alternatively employees and employers. It is currently ₹ 250 to ₹ 300 per day. Once a wage rate is fixed for

the year, nobody pays higher or lesser. The rate is influenced by rates in neighbouring villages and by inflation. Closer the village to a town, higher the rate.

Elderly villagers said they used to follow Hudelu, a system of labour pooling to help each other. However, with the advent of tractors and other machinery this system has ceased to exist.

Traditions related to commons

Entire village comes together for Bhairav pooja at in the monsoon crop season in the lunar month of Bhadrapad. Each family pays equal cash contribution. This is used to buy a goat for sacrifice. The goat's blood is sprinkled over all the boundaries of the village and flesh distributed to all households as *Prasad*. The boundaries marked include the forest area in the village. Village Ratnawada has a Seetala-mata temple in the forest and people said it marks the traditional boundary of the village on one side. The annual festival of Seetala-mata is on *Siyara Saatam* (Seventh day of the Lunar month of Shravan; approx. August). People request the goddess's consent for cutting of grass in the forest. They offer coconuts and *agarbatti* to the goddess.

Village Tijwad has a fixed fine of ₹ 11,000 for getting drunk on festival days; especially on Holi. If anyone indulges into a brawl and refuses to pay the fine, that person's home is boycotted by the village. The fear of boycott works as a deterrent.

Village community decides how much of silver ornaments are to be given to a bride by the bridegroom in a wedding. This set of silver is equal in all the weddings in that village. People contribute *Māndwa* or *Notrā* (money or liquor) to the wedding family as gift.

The income and expenses details of the public contribution collected for the festivals is written in a notebook and read aloud on the day of the festival. The balance money is kept with a person called *Dhāni*. Everyone in the village knows the balance amount and where it is kept.

Drinking water bodies are protected by the community customs - of not wearing chappals, no washing of clothes or utensils near the water body. If anybody breaks these customs and throws garbage near a water body, the village elders shall convene an assembly and penalise the person. Village Lapidara people said they light a lamp on each water source (hand pump, well,

lake) on the dawn of Dhanteras (13th day of the lunar month of Ashwin, approx. October). This custom is called '*Ganga jagaana*' i.e. awakening the holy waters.

All the households in a village contribute wood logs for funeral pyre when a death occurs. Each family contributes certain cash to the aggrieved family so that they will not have to work for a few days and also bear the expense of funeral and last rites. This contribution is called *Hoal*.

Conflict resolution and mediation

Disputes are resolved before the village assembly. The assembly meeting is led by elders and they are called '*Wadali*'. Usually there is a *Jājam* or carpet laid down for such meeting. Hence the dispute resolution meeting is also called '*Jājam*' meeting.

There are three types of dispute resolution assemblies:

- First, if the dispute is within a family or Kul, the Wadali of the Kul hold a meeting.
- Second, if this Kul meeting fails, then the village assembly is convened on the *Jājam*. This includes all the men and women belonging to all the castes and tribes living in that village or *Phalya*.
- Third, if the village *Jajam* is not able to solve the dispute, elders from all neighbouring villages – about 2-3 from each village – are invited by the disputing persons for a larger assembly.

When a dispute is solved, there is a monetary fine for the guilty. The Wadali consider the financial conditions of the guilty and decide a bearable amount for fine. Gud (jaggery) is distributed by the disputants to the entire assembly declaring that the dispute is over. Liquor is distributed in some villages on resolution of a dispute. The amount of liquor is pre-decided by the assembly.

Most villages reported that they keep a registry of the dispute resolution assemblies and their decisions.

Husband-wife disputes or cases of divorce are also settled by the Panch or Wadali. If the dispute is solved, a '*Rājināma*' or agreement to live amicably is written before the Wadali and jaggery distributed. If the case ends in a divorce – called *Chheda Phaadna* – then the husband has to pay a compensation to wife. If she marries another man, that man has to pay the ex-husband a compensation for the first wedding expenses. The woman has to return ornaments received from the divorced husband.

5. Annexure A: FGD template on traditional self-rule

जिला -	
ग्राम -	
फाला/पाडा/फालिया -	
गांव में कौन कौन सी जनजातियां हैं?	
गांव में अन्य जाति/समाज कौन से हैं?	
स्वशासन के पारंपरिक मुद्दे	
गांव में एक-दूसरे की खेती में काम करने या घर बनाने में मजदुरी का दर क्या है, यह मजदुरी का दर कैसे तय हुआ, कब तय हुआ, क्या सोचकर / किस आधार पर तय हुआ?	
जब मजदुरी का दर बढ़ाया जाता है, तब वह कैसे तय होता है?	
खेती में एक-दूसरे को मदद करने की क्या रीति है? किन चीजों में / किन कामों में कैसे मदद ली जाती है? पलधी/ पालथी/ हलमा/ अतवारिया जैसे - बारी बारी से एकेक परिवार का काम करने की रीति हो, तो पूरा विवरण लिखें.	
खेती के औजारों में, बीज/बियाणे में एक-दूसरे की मदद कैसे करते हैं?	
पानी के बारे में गांव के कुछ नियम या रीतियां है क्या? तालाब, झरने, कुएं, बावडी, आदि में क्या नहीं करना इस की कुछ रीति है क्या?	

<p>क्या तालाब या पानी स्रोत के निकट कोई भगवान है? यदि हो, तो उस के बारे में कौन से बंधन या पथ्य या परंपरा हैं? जैसे कि भगवान के कुएं में चप्पल नहीं पहनना, या उस में कपड़े नहीं धोना वगैरह... ऐसे कुछ नियम/ रीति हो तो लिखें.</p>	
<p>मच्छीमारी - मछली यदि पकड़ते हो तो, पकड़ने के लिए किन चीजों का उपयोग होता है, वे चीजें कहां से मिलती हैं, वह चीजें लेने निकालने में कुछ बंधन हैं क्या?</p>	
<p>मछली/खेकड़े कब नहीं पकड़ना या कैसे नहीं पकड़ना इस के कुछ संकेत / नियम / रीति हैं क्या? हो, तो विस्तार से लिखें.</p>	
<p>कुछ वर्ष पहले जब शिकार करते थे, तब कैसे करते थे? क्या शिकार करने कई लोग मिलकर जाते थे? शिकार पाने के / मारने के बाद उस का बंटवारा कैसे होता था? किस ने कौन सी शिकार नहीं करना, या कब किस की शिकार नहीं करना - इस के कुछ बंधन या पथ्य हैं क्या?</p>	
<p>गांव में कौन से त्योहार/ उत्सव/पूजा में लोग इकठ्ठा आते हैं? बरसात के पहले / बीज बोने या हल जोतने से पहले कोई पूजा/उत्सव होता है? क्या फसल कटाई / कापणी के बाद भी कोई पूजा/उत्सव होता है? ऐसे उत्सव होने तक कोई चीज नहीं खाना या नहीं पीना ऐसा कोई बंधन होता है क्या? वह बंधन या पथ्य का पालन कौन कौन करते हैं? इकठ्ठा आ कर क्या करते हैं? क्या सभी परिवारों से चंदा लिया जाता है? किस रूप में? क्या उत्सव में लोग बैठकर कुछ चर्चा भी करते हैं? क्या चर्चा में कुछ तय किया जाता है?</p>	

<p>विवाद सुलझाने की पारंपरिक पद्धति क्या है?</p> <p>इस पद्धति में क्या गांव के सभी जाति/जनजाति के लोग होते हैं?</p> <p>क्या इस में स्त्री व पुरुष दोनों का सहभाग होता है? क्या महिलाएं ऐसी विवाद सभा में बोलती हैं?</p> <p>कौन से विवादों का / झगड़ों का/ अपराधों का हल गांव की पारंपरिक रीति से किया जाता है? (उदाहरण लिखें.)</p> <p>यदि किसी ने गांव के निर्णय को नहीं माना तो क्या होता है?</p>	
<p>विवाह कैसे तय होता है? क्या लडके वाले लडकी के गांव आते हैं, क्या विवाह तय करने गांव के सभी लोग बैठते हैं / या उसी परिवार के बैठते हैं / या उसी जाति के बैठते हैं?</p> <p>विवाह का खर्च कौन करता है, दहेज कौन किसको देता है, कितना देता है, किस रूप में देता है (पैसा/ अनाज/ मुर्गी/ दारू/ अन्य वस्तु)</p> <p>कितना दहेज देना यह कैसे तय होता है, किसने तय किया कब किया? इस में बढोतरी होती है तो कैसे होती है?</p> <p>क्या गांव के बुजुर्ग / पंच / पटेल / तडवी / पाटील / सरपंच - इन का भी दहेज में हिस्सा होता है? क्या गांव की महिलाओं का हिस्सा होता है?</p> <p>गांव के लोग विवाह वाले घर को किस ढंग से मदद करते हैं?</p>	
<p>विवाह के बाद यदि पती-पत्नी में विवाद हो, तो घटस्फोट / तलाक / छेडाफाड / काडीमोड कैसे तय होता है? यह तय करने कौन बैठते हैं? इस में पत्नी को क्या मिलता है?</p>	

<p>पति यदि दूसरी पत्नी लाना चाहे, तो क्या होता है?</p> <p>पत्नी यदि पति को छोड़ कर दूसरे के साथ विवाह करना चाहें, तो क्या होता है?</p>	
<p>मृत्यू के बाद जलाते हैं या गाडते हैं?</p> <p>जलाते हैं तो लकडी और कफन की व्यवस्था कैसे होती है?</p> <p>गाडते है तो उस में गांव के लोग क्या मदद करते हैं?</p> <p>जिस घर में मृत्यू हुई, उस परिवार को गांव के लोग क्या मदद करते हैं?</p>	
<p>जंगल से कुछ भी लेते समय किन रीतियों का / बंधनों का पालन किया जाता है?</p>	

6. Bibliography

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ⁱ 'Panchayets under the Peshwas', by H. George Franks (published by the author, printed at Poona Star Press) date not printed