
(2008) 05 P&H CK 0031
In the Punjab And Haryana At Chandigarh

Gram Panchayat	Vs	APPELLANT
State of Punjab and Others		RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 14-05-2008

Acts Referred:

Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 — Section 3

Citation : (2009) 153 PLR 218

Hon'ble Judges : K.S. Garewal, J; Daya Chaudhary, J

Bench : Division Bench

Judgement

K.S. Garewal, J.—There is no village in India, that does not have a rich or legendary history of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village Rama might have rested under this pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatama himself, on one of his many pilgrims through the country might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present and the gods mingle with men (Raja Rao in his introduction to "Kanthapura").

We have before us a number of petitions (C.W.P. No. 3976 of 2008 Gram Panchayat Panj Garaian v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4156 of 2008 Jatinder Singh and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 6156 of 2008 Gram Panchayat of village Siryewala v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 5692 of 2008 Gram Panchayat Piareana v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 6602 of 2008 Par minder Singh and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4643 of 2008 Tarsem Singh v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4092 of 2008 Gram Panchayat Village Sabhra v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4068 of 2008 Gram Panchayat Miaonwal v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 3850 of 2008 Raj Pal Singh Bedi v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4311 of 200 Gram Panchayat Sohian Kalan v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 6473 of 2008 Kuldip Singh and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 5975 of 2008 Joginder Singh v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 3765 of 2008 Kulwant Bir Singh and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 6461 of 2008 Manjit Singh

and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors. C.W.P. No. 4106 of 2008 Preet Pal Singh v. State of Punjab and Ors and C.W.P. No. 4069 of 2008 Hira Lal and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Ors.) concerning constitution of new Gram sabhas by separating them from already established Gram Sabhas.

2. Section 3 of the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 entitles the State Government to declare any village or group of contiguous villages, with a population of not less than two hundred, to constitute a Gram Sabha area. However, this provision also has a proviso that a new Gram Sabha area should be constituted by taking into consideration its physical distance from the main village or villages, as the case may be and other relevant facts.

3. The Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 is a comprehensive enactment which establishes a three tier Panchayati Raj system in the State of Punjab. The Act provides for elected bodies at the village, Block and District levels, in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution (Seventy third Amendment) Act, 1992. This is to encourage greater participation of the people and more effective implementation of rural development and Panchayati Raj system. The above mentioned constitutional amendment introduced Article Part IX for the Panchayats by enacting Article 243, 243-A to 243-0. Article 243 defines a Gram Sabha to mean a body consisting of persons registered in the electorate" rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of the Panchayat which has been defined as an institution of self government constituted under Article 243-B for rural area.

4. The Supreme Court of India in State of Punjab v. Tehal Singh and Ors. (2002) 131 P.L.R. 347 (S.C.) laid down certain principles of law holding that provisions of Sections 3 and 4 of the Act for declaring territorial area of a Gram Sabha did not concern the interest of an individual citizen or a particular resident of that area. The declaration u/s 3 made by the Government was general in character and not directed to a resident of a particular area. A Gram panchayat was entrusted many general functions and numerous other powers and duties (Section 30 of the Act).

5. The Supreme Court held that making a declaration u/s 3 of the Act determining the territorial area of a Gram Sabha and thereafter establishing a Gram Sabha for that area was an act which was legislative in character. Therefore, rules of natural justice were not required to be observed. Furthermore, the provisions if the Act did not provide for an opportunity of hearing to the residents before any area falling under a particular Gram Sabha was excluded and included in an another Gram Sabha. The residents could not complaint regarding denial of an opportunity of hearing before declaration was issued.

6. However, the position would be different where the house of a particular resident of an area was sought to be excluded from an existing Gram Sabha and included in another Gram Sabha. Since the action of the Government was

required to observe principles of natural justice.

7. Having revisited and carefully examined the judgment of the Supreme Court in Tehal Singh's case we are in a better position to appraise the arguments raised by the various writ petitioners. We shall now proceed to discuss the respective cases village wise, but would like to preface our decision with a few introductory words.

8. The Supreme Court in Tehal Singh's case had also taken the precaution to consider the physical location of the various areas which were being formed into a new Gram Sabha. The Hon'ble Judges had seen the map of the Gram Sabha and found that there was a colony which was partly contiguous to one village and came to the conclusion that this was sufficient compliance of the provisions of Section 3(1) of the Act.

9. Therefore, while examining the cases of the different new villages we have also closely examined the physical locations of the various areas as depicted in the maps filed with the petition as submitted by learned Counsel and relevant social, historical and geographical factors which may be relevant to that particular area.

10. Every village in rural India has a special place in the hearts of the people belonging to that village. Most villages have an ancient past and some are linked to a saint, a warrior or a freedom fighter. Villages are the seat of rural cultural and have great heritage which must be preserved if our rural areas are to survive and prosper. Division of a village without any justifiable reason would strike at its very soul, divide the people, introduce an element of tension and in some cases tend to disturb the peace. The Indian Diaspora is also very proud of its roots in India. People living in foreign lands immediately warm up when they meet a person from their village or town or even a nearby, village or town. This forms a bond of friendship and helps them to better cope with life.

Our village-wise discussion is as follows:

Panj Garahian

Tehsil Batala, District Gurdaspur, (C.W.P. No. 3976 of 2008)

11. The petition has been filed by Gram Panchayat stating that the village is 100 years old, there has never been any dispute in the panchayat. It was on political considerations that the Panchayat has been bifurcated and Gram Panchayat Panj Garahian Chardi Patti has been formed. The representation has been signed by 987 members of the Gram Sabha and has been attached as Annexure P-1. Apparently some voters had moved an application Annexure P-2 asking for separation of Gram Sabha because development work was not being carried out nor the facilities granted by the Government were provided to them. They stated that maximum number of persons in Chardi Patti belonged to Scheduled Caste.

12. The site plan of the village showed that the division would leave only the

residential area marked ABCD in Panj Garahian. Rest of the area where Anganwari, Dharamsala, Panchayat Ghar, Primary School, Hospital, Co-operative Society, Telephone Exchange, Veterinary Hospital, Gurudwara were to go to Panj Garahian Chardi Patti. The site plan also shows that village has come up on both sides of the main road from Batala to Sri Gobindpur and the road is the only dividing boundary between Panj. Garahian and Panj Garahian Chardi Patti.

13. We are not convinced that the State Government had adequately considered these factors while passing the impugned notification creating a new Gram Sabha for Panj Garahian. We would like the Government to reconsider its decision as regards creation of the new Gram Sabha because the new Gram Sabha area is not separated from the main village and there were other relevant facts which indicate that creation of the new Gram Sabha is not necessary.

Cheethe Kalan.

Block Jandiala Guru, Tehsil and District Amritsar (C.W.P. No. 4156 of 2008).

14. The petitioners are three residents of Cheethe Kalan who are complaining against the formation of a new Gram Sabha area to be known as Gurbax Singhwala. The Gram Sabha of Cheete Kalan has facilities like High School, Primary Health Centre, Veterinary Hospital, Co-operative Societies and three Gurdwaras. On the other hand the newly created Gram Sabha of Gurbax Singhwala is a small community. The petitioners have mentioned many other factors to challenge the new Gram Sabha but the fact remains that Gurbax Singhwala is at a distance of 2 Kms. from Cheeta Kalan. It has a separate and distinct community. In the reply filed by the Deputy Commissioner, Panchayat it was stated that the new Gram Sabha area from Gurbax Singhwala has 246 members.

In this case we feel that separation of Gurbax Singhwala from Cheete Kalan is justified and does not call for any interference.

Siryewala.

Tehsil Phool, District Bathinda, (C.W.P. No. 6156 of 2008).

15. The petitioner is the Gram Panchayat of Siryewala, new Gram Sabha which has been created is Siryewala Khurd. The site plan shows that the entire village is one compact block. The village falls on the Baja Khana to Bhagta Bhai Ka road. Habitation is largely on one side of the road and the residences of members of the village community belonging to various castes are intermingled. In the reply filed by the respondent it has been stated that separate Gram Sabha had been Constituted for Siryewala Khurd because the residents were facing difficulties in the development of their area. Nevertheless we find that the two Gram Sabhas are very close to each other and are separated only by a road.

We are not convinced that the Government had adequately considered this factor. If the development in one area was inadequate the solution is not to

separate that area but to ensure that the panchayat pays more attention to the underdeveloped parts of the Gram Sabha area. We would like the Government to reconsider its decision as regards creation of a new Gram Sabha, for Siryewala Khurd.

Piarecma.

Block Ghal Rhurd, District Ferozepur (C.W.P. No. 5692 of 2008)

16. This petition has been filed by Gram Panchayat to challenge the formation of new Gram Sabha for Basti Piareana @ Jhungia. It is stated that this was done due to ulterior motive of Mohinder Singh and Shingara Singh of their village who wanted to create problems. According to the petitioner the distance between two Gram Sabhas is not 1.5 Kms. but only about 3 acres. The petitioners have not placed on record any site plan. In the reply filed by the respondents it has been stated that the population of Basti Piareana @ Jhungia is about 870, it is at a distance of about 1-1/4 Kms. from Piareana. Site plan with the written statement shows that the two villages fall on the Ferozepur- Moga G.T. Road and are indeed separated by 1.5 Kms.

Consequently, we feel that the separation of Basti Piareana @ Jhungia from Piareana is valid and justified and does not call for any interference. Mangwal Block Sangrur, District Sangrur (C.W.P. No. 6602 of 2008).

17. The three petitioners are residents of Officer Colony, Mangewal and have prayed for the constitution of a new Gram Sabha. According to the petitioners of the Officer Colony falls on the Dhuri Patiala bypass. It consists of Blocks A, B, C, C-I, D, E and F. However, Block F is not a part of Gram Sabha Officer Colony Mangwal but attached to Gram Sabha of the neighbouring Rampura Basti. The petitioners are seeking the separation of Block F from Rampura Basti and attaching to Officer Colony, Mangwal. The request of the petitioners is genuine because F Block is after all a part of Officer's Colony and it is essential for the welfare of the residents of all the Blocks that they come under the same Gram Sabha because they share common facilities like water supply, electricity etc. If one Block is attached to a different Gram Sabha there may be a clash of interest or lop-sided development. Therefore, we would like to recommend to the Government to consider attaching Block F to Officers' Colony, Mangwal.

Vithwan

Blowk Sri Hargobindpur, Tehsil Batala, District Gurdaspur (C.W.P. No. 4643 of 2008)

18. This petition has been filed by a resident of Vithwan urging that Gram Sabha Gopalpur detached from Vithwan in 2002, be again merged with Vithwan. The distance between the two Gram Sabhas is about I Km. In the reply filed by the respondents reliance was placed on resolution dated March 24, 2008 passed at a special meeting of the Gram Sabha Gopalpur (Annexure R-1) wherein Gram Sabha has unanimously resolved that Gopalpur be kept separate from Vithwan

and should be not merged with the latter village. On the other hand the Gram Sabha of Vithwan also met on March 29, 2008 and passed on unanimous resolution that they have no objection to the separation of Gopalpur (Annexure R-2).

Under these circumstances we are not inclined to interfere in this petition. Petition is hereby rejected.

Sabhra (Sobhraon)

Tehsil Patti, District Tarn Taran (C.W.P. No. 4092 of 2008)

19. This petition has been filed by the Gram Panchayat of the village and Lambardar to oppose the restructuring of the Gram Sabha into five different Gram Sabhas to be known as Gullewala, Killa Sham Singh Attari, Jyoti Shah, Nawan Killa and excluding these areas from the main Gram Sabha of Sabhra.

This is a historic village where a fierce battle was fought between the Sikh Army under the command of General Sardar Sham Singh Attariwal and the forces of the East India Company. The battle took place in February", 1846 and Sikh Forces showed exemplary bravery. Battle of Sabhraon is a landmark in the history of Punjab and General Sham Singh attained martyrdom on the battle field. This is a relevant historical fact vvhich should not be overlooked.

Coming to the site plan of the village we find that the five Gram Sabha areas, which have been marked in the plan, are closely attached to each other and the boundaries are marked by lanes running through the village. Gram Sabha areas are not at any distance at all from the main village.

Keeping in view the location as well as the historic past of this village we would like to recommend that the State Government should reconsider its decision and refrain from breaking up a historic village into five different Gram Sabhas.

Miaonwc

Block Nurmehal, Tehsil Phillaur, District Jalandhar (C.W.P. No. 4068 of 2008)

20. This petition has been filed by the Gram Panchayat to resist the creation of a separate Gram Sabha known as Mianowal Poorvi. The petitioners have mainly pleaded that the ssparation is being done at the instance of the sitting M.L.A. who belonging to the mling party because Miaonwal traditionally voted for the Congress party. In the reply filed by the respondent it has been stated that a link road from Phillaur-Talwan Road to Partap Pura passes through the village dividing it into two parts. The Eastern side of the village has 750 votes while Western side has 830 Votes. The distance between the two Gram Sabhas is equal to the width of the road which is only 22 feet.

Here again is a case where a Gram Sabha is being created, not because it is at any great distance from the original Gram Sabha, but for other considerations. Therefore, we would like to recommend the State Government to reconsider the

creation of Gram Sabha Mianwal Poorvi.

Sadakpur Veeran

Block Bhunerheri, Tehsil and District Patiala (C.W.P. No. 3850 of 2008)

21. This petition has been filed by a resident of Sadakpur Veeran who is complaining against the separation of Sadakpur Veeran from Maqbulpur Bheni and its attachment to Budhmore. We have seen the site plan and find that both Sadakpur Veeran and Budhmore lie between the rivers Tangri and Markanda before their confluence. Maqbulpur Bheni is 10 Kms. from Sadakpur Veeran across the river by road. The distance between Sadakpur Veeran and Budhmore is a mere 2 Kms. Therefore, we feel that there is justification in attaching Sadakpur Veeran to Budhmore by separating it from I Maqbulpur Bheni. We find no merit in this petition and the same is dismissed.

Sohian Kalan.

Block Majitha, Tehsil and District Amritsar (C.W.P. No. 4311 of 2008)

22. The petitioner is Gram Panchayat of Sohian Kalan. It has been pleaded that the village is an old village where the Panchayat has been in existence since 1952 and regular elections are being held after every five years. However, due to political influence of the sitting M.L.A. the village has been bifurcated and another Gram Sabha known as Abadi Varpal has been formed.

Counsel for the petitioner has argued that the village is the ancestral village of Bhai Kanhiaya Ji and four soldiers from the village fell in the first World War. In their memory carved stones have been placed in the village. It is a village where there exists a Mandir, a Gurdwara and a Masjid under one roof which shows tolerance exhibited by the village community.

According to the location plan it is seen that the village falls on Amritsar to Fatehgarh Churian road. It is a large village which has Senior Secondary School, Stadium, Veterinary Hospital, Post Office and several Gurdwaras.

In the reply filed by the respondents it has been stated that residents of Patti Varpal and Behka had represented for separation of their Gram Sabha because entire grant are spent in the Sohian Kalan and they never got their due share. The new Gram Sabha which has been formed is at a distance of 2 Kms. from Sohian Kalan. It is geographically separate and a compact area.

This may be the ancestral village of Bhai Kanhiaya Ji but there is no reference to this village in the biographical note of Bhai Kanhaiya (1648-1718) on page 43 Volume 2 of the Encyclopedia of Sikhism published by Punjabi University, Bhai Kanhiaya belonged to Sodhra District Syalkot, he served with 9th and 10th Gurus. After leaving Anandpur Sahib he returned to Sodhra and died in 1718. Perhaps the petitioner is referring to some other saintly figure known by the same name. Nevertheless the village has displayed a fine tradition of tolerance that people belonging to three faiths worship under the same roof. However, the

fact remains that the newly created Gram Sabha is at a distance 2 Kms. from Sohian Kalan. It is obvious that development of the new Gram Sabha area was suffering on account of the distance and would be certainly benefited if it is created as a separate Gram Sabha. Therefore, we find that this is not the case in which the creation of the new Gram Sabha should be prevented. Under the circumstances we are not inclined to interfere in this petition. Petition is dismissed.

Kohala

Tehsil Zira District Ferozepur (C.W.P. No. 6473 of 2008)

23. Four residents of village Kohala have filed this petition to oppose the creation of the new Gram Sabha known as Kothe Sant Baba Gurbax Singh. It has been pleaded that the Gram Panchayat has been functioning in the village since 1952, elections were held after every five years but the separation of the new Gram Sabha is at the instance of the local politicians. Kothe Sant Baba Gurbax Singh does not have a separate definite abadi or a group of abadies with a population of 200 voters. Therefore, formation of the new Gram Sabha is neither viable nor necessary. In the layout plan of Kohala which has been shown to us it is found that many hpuses attached to the new Gram Sabha are in the amidst of village Kohala and the residence are intermingled in such a way that no line of separation can be drawn.

In the reply it has been stated that the new Gram Sabha is 1 Km. From the existing Gram Sabha and both area are separated. 272 members of the new Gram Sabha have represented for the separation of their Gram Sabha.

We have seen the layout plan and find that although the residence of some persons belonging to the new Gram Sabha may be located in Kohala but the abadi of the new Gram Sabha has not been shown in the layout plan. If the new area is at a distance of 1 Km. And there is inter se political rivalry in the village, it is obvious that the people belonging to the new Gram Sabha were left out from the development work in Kohala and for this reason demand separation of their Gram Sabha area.

Under the circumstances we are not inclined to interfere in this petition.

Umarwal Billa.

Tehsil Nakodar, District Jalandhar (C.W.P. No. 5975 of 2008)

24. This petition has been filed by the Sarpanch of the village pleading that Gram Sabha area of Umarwal Billa was very large. In 1994 two Gram Sabha areas were separated from Umarwal Billa namely Daryawala Billa and Mehatpurwala Billa. Now, a separate Gram Sabha for Kangwala Billa has been formed.

The petitioner has also placed on record affidavits of about 16 individuals protesting against the new Gram Sabha known as Kangwala Billa In the site plan filed with the petition it is difficult to discern the location of Kangwala Billa but in

the affidavit it has been unanimously proclaimed that the new Gram Sabha areas has been separated at the instance of Baljinder Singh Kang, Sarpanch, whose residence is away from the village and who is interesting in becoming Sarpanch of the new Gram Sabha. We are not inclined to interfere in this petition because the petitioner has not been able to show nearness of the new Gram Sabha to their village. If the new area is at some distance from the village that is sufficient for formation of a new Gram Sabha. This petition is dismissed.

Ghoman.

Block Sri Hargobindpur, District Gurdaspur (C.W.P. No. 3765 of 2008)

25. This petition has been filed by Ex-Sarpanch of the village and three others to challenge the separation of the Gram Sabha area of Pachwareke. According to the petitioners the decision is a political one and is not justified.

The petitioners have placed on record site plan of the spot which shows that Pachwareke is at a considerable distance from Ghoman. Although the distance is not mentioned in the petition yet in the reply filed by the respondents it has been categorically stated that the distance is 2 kms. We do not find any justification to interfere in this petition. Petition, is dismissed.

Wadala Granthian.

Block Kadian, District Gurdapur (C.W.P. No. 6461 of 2008)

This petition has been filed by three residents of Wadaala Granthian to oppose the formation of a new Gram Sabha to be known as new Wadala Granthian. According to the petitioners, site plan of the village shows that Wadaala Granthian falls on the Batala to Quadian road and residential houses of persons belonging to the new Wadaala Granthian and that of the old village are all intermingled in the village abadi. This is probably because of the new village is not clearly demarcated or separated by any great distance. This case is similar to the case of Panj Grahian and we would like to recommend the Government to reconsider its decision regarding creation of the new Gram Sabha because development in the area has to be integrated and shall only be successful if all plans are implemented together in a uniform way. Two separate Gram Sabhas run by two separate Panchayats would pull in different directions and cause unnecessary dislocation. Therefore, we recommend that Government should reconsider its decision.

Bargari.

Block Kotkapura, District Faridkot (C.W.P. No. 4106 of 2008)

26. This petition has been filed a resident of village to oppose the trifurcation of Bargari into Bargari, Rulia Singh Nagar and Dashmesh Nagar. The distance of these two newly proposed Gram Sabha from the main village is hardly 500 meters and at some points the two proposed Sabhas are separated from Bargari only by a lane. Site plan of Bagari has been placed on record. This village falls on

Kotkapura to Bathinda road.

In the reply filed by the respondents it has been stated that Bargari is a big village with population of 10,000 and is spread over a distance of 7 Kms. It was felt that the existing Gram Sabha finds it difficult to manage the village with large population and thus new Gram Sabhas of Dashmesh Nagar and Rulia Singhwala have been carved out. The new Gram Sabhas were carved out on the basis of the resolution passed by the Gram Sabha of Bargari on January 17, 2008 where under it was stated that on account of the size of the village Sarpanch felt it difficult to carry on common development works. The village was 12 Krns. from one end to the other. It was the Gram Sabhas which has resolved that two Gram Sabhas be constituted to be known as Dashmesh Nagar and Rulia Singhwala (known after renowned freedom fighter). Alongwith the reply the representation of 705 residents of Dashmesh Nagar and 133 of village Rulia Singhwala have been placed on the record.

We are of the view that in the present case no interference is necessary because Gram Sabha of Bargari has passed resolution and the residents of both newly carved Gram Sabha areas have supported the division. This petition is dismissed.

Jibber

Block Gurdaspur, District Gurdaspur (C.P.P. No. 4069 of 2008)

27. This petition has been filed four residents of the village out of whom two are members of the Panchayat. It has been pleaded that major population of the village comprised of Bhatt community while the remaining are Sikh Harijans and Christians. The Government has proposed two separate Gram Sabha areas, new to be known as Dash-mesh Nagar, on the basis of the influence exercised by the sitting M.L.A. The site plan of the village shows that the area of Dashmesh Nagar is in integral part of the village abadi of Tibber and the two areas are only separated by a street.

In the reply the respondents have stated that a number of residents of Dashmesh Nagar have represented to the Government for separation of their new Gram Sabha because Panchayat Tibber is unable to look after their interest. It has been stated that Dashmesh Nagar is a separately situated in a compact area which is a considerable distance from the existing Gram Sabha. However, this is not correct because the B.D.P.O. Gurdaspur in his communication dated April 15, 2008 has categorically stated that "the distance between the Gram Panchayat Tibber and the newly constituted Gram Panchayat Dashmesh Nagar is 0 K.m. Meaning thereby that only street bifurcate newly constituted gram Panchayat Dashmesh Nagar and the old Panchayat Tibber which is acting as boundary between the Panchayat.

28. We feel that in the present case we would like to recommend the Government that Dashmesh Nagar should not be separated from Tibber because separation would disrupt the development over all as the two areas are very

closely connected as shown in the site plan, and would require development in an integrated way which may not be possible if they fall under two separate panchayats.

29. We would like to conclude by observing that we have very carefully considered the directions of the Supreme Court in *State of Punjab v. Tehal Singh* (supra) and also certain essential cultural and historic factors, under "other relevant facts" mentioned in proviso to Section 3(1) of the Act. The physical distance between the Gram Sabhas has also been seen for reaching our conclusions in the cases of respective villages.

Furthermore, there must be physical separation before a Gram Sabha is separated. If a Gram Sabha is going to remain physically contiguous to the original Gram Sabha and joined to its parent then how will its birth as a new Gram Sabha achieve any objective. Many developments in a village have to be done in an integrated manner. If Gram Sab has remain closely attached to each other, division would certainly hamper development. In a few villages we have also examined historical factors which we feel are important and should not be overlooked or lightly brushed aside. The State Government shall reconsider the constitution of the new Gram Sabhas before the elections are held, keeping in view our observations in respect of six villages-Panj Garahian, Siryewala, Mangwal, Sabhra, Miaonwal and Tibber.

30. The respective petitions stand disposed of in view of the orders recorded by us while discussing the cases of the respective villages/Gram Sabhas.