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Mulamkunnathukavu, Thrissur - Kerala - 680 581

Phone: Office-0487-2201768, 2200244,

Director:2201312; Fax:0487-2201062

e-mail: kila@md2.vsnl.net.in; website: www.kilaonline.org



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Editorial

Effective functioning of the Local Self Governments is crucial for local economic development and social justice. With the advanced and timely information systems, the transparency and accountability system are also in place. At the same time democratic decentralization has always been mistreated and distorted. The trust in the system is yet to be improved for the better utilisation of spaces. This will have implications in the effective utilisation of funds and other resources.

When compared to its counterparts in the country, the Local Self Governments in Kerala enjoy a very stable source of revenue. With the launching of Peoples' Plan Campaign for ninth plan 1997, the State Government has been devolving considerable portion of funds from State's exchequer for participatory planning. This varies from state to states it is up to the state government to decide up on the extent of devolution in Local Governments.

Strengthening of pillars of fiscal decentralisation viz. expenditure assignments, revenue assignments, intergovernmental transfers, and borrowing is one of the areas that requires special attention across the country. This shall be coupled with better financial management regime - practical oriented budgeting and scientific accounting - in place. Some of the articles in this issue are dealing with these in particular. Areas such as Role of Youth in Panchayat Raj, women participation etc. which are also are vital for vibrant local governance covered in this issue.

Chief Editor

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**Fiscal Devolution and Own
Tax Revenue Mobilization:**
Evidence from Grama
Panchayat in Kerala

The paper focuses on some of the important issues related to resource mobilization in the context of devolution of lump-sum plan grant-in-aid under the decentralisation in Kerala. Resource transfers create an income effect, as the income of the recipient government increases. This can act as a disincentive for the recipient government. By analysing the trends in tax and non-tax sources and the tax effort, this paper point to need for rationalisation of tax structure.

Shaheena.P*

* Associate Professor, Department of Development Economics, College of Co-operation, Banking and Management, Kerala Agricultural University, Vellanikkara, Thrissur.
email : shaheenap@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Kerala embarked on decentralised planning in the state with a 'big bang' financial devolution as a starting block for the decentralisation process by devolving 35 to 40 percent of the state Plan outlay to local governments (LGs). Augmentation of resources from above resulted in a dramatic turn - around of the fiscal fortunes of the LGs to the extent that the ratio of LG expenditure to that of the state escalated from 5.3 percent in 1994-95 to 16.6 percent in 1997-98. Resource transfers from upper to the lower tiers of government can have a dampening effect on the revenue mobilization of the recipient government. This is especially true in the case of non-matching unconditional grants, which have income effect but do not alter relative prices of public and private goods. This paper traces the trends in traditional sources of revenue, and presents some preliminary observations on the fiscal impact of large-scale devolution of grants from the State Government of Kerala on the own revenue mobilization, of all gram panchayats (GPs) in Kerala using secondary sources of data.

A number of studies have looked into the budgetary effect of transfers in the context of international transfers and federal grants. These studies argue that the transfer of inter governmental grants alters the recipient's budget constraints and results either in a higher public outlay or in the fungibility of resources (Bahl and Pillai, 1976, Gibson, 1980). Variations in the impact of different types of transfers were emphasized in the celebrated study of Heller (1975), Pack and Pack (1990). They argue that fungibility depends on the characteristics of the grant.

2. Data Sources

Time series data on LG finances was collected from Administration Reports of Panchayats (ARP) from 1980-81 to 1995-1996. The data collected by State Finance Commission (SFC) II and IV are used. Aggregate data on own revenue mobilisation from 1997-98 to 2003-04 is not available. Due to the non-availability of time series finance data at the local level, the period of analysis (for assessing the trends in Own Tax Revenue (OT)) is broken into three- from 1980-81 to 1990-91 (Sub Period I- pre untied grant) 1990-91 to 1997-98 (Sub Period II- post untied grant period) and 2003-04 to 2008-09 (Sub Period III- a decade after decentralisation experience). Data for the last sub-period is not comparable as the data is available for 921 GPs out of 999 GPs. We trace the trends in the tax revenue mobilization to ascertain if there has been any significant change prior to and after the introduction of decentralized planning which is followed by analysis of the impact of grants on OT mobilization by the GPs.

3. Trends in Own Tax Revenue Mobilization

The present section traces the growth trends of important taxes and the aggregate tax revenue of all the GPs taken together in Kerala. A declining trend in all the important sources of tax revenues has set in since the early 1990s, much before the large-scale devolution of plan grants to the local bodies. Total own tax revenue has tended to decline from 1991-92

onwards almost coinciding with the period of devolution of untied grants (Shaheena 2003). Having observed a trend of decline in the revenue mobilization during the 90s, we need to examine its relative significance in the nineties as compared with the previous decade. Absence of data during the intervening period from 1997-98 to 2003-04 precludes us from testing for statistical significance in the rate of change in tax revenue mobilization for the last quinquennium taken up for analysis.

Time series data from 1980-81 facilitated a comparison of growth in tax revenue during the pre and post untied grants and lump sum devolution. Period-wise estimates of growth rates of different taxes are presented in Table .1. It is seen that growth rates during both the sub periods are statistically significant with a lower rate of growth during the 1990s' as compared with 1980s'. This could be a reflection of the declining tax effort consequent upon the untied plan grant in aid to GPs in Kerala since 1989-90 onwards. It is pertinent to note that the declining trend in tax revenues has started much earlier than the introduction of decentralized planning and devolution of plan grants.

Table 1: Rate of growth in tax revenue (1980-81 to 1998-99)

<i>Revenue Source</i>		<i>Period</i>	<i>Rate of Growth</i>	<i>DW</i>	<i>R²</i>
Building Tax	Period I	1980-81 to 1988-89	8.06*	2	0.74
	Period II	1988-89 to 1998-99	-0.20*		
Profession Tax	Period I	1980-81 to 1990-91	6.55*	1.9	0.91
	Period II	1990-91 to 1998-99	-0.13*		
Entertainment Tax	Period I	1980-81 to 1989-90	2.24*	2.12	0.95
	Period II	1989-90 to 1998-99	-0.31*		
Total Own Tax	Period I	1980-81 to 1991-92	3.69*	2.16	0.80
	Period II	1991-92 to 1998-99	-0.09*		

Source: Shaheena 2008

Note: * Significant at 1 Percent, Second SFC of Kerala collected data only for 976 GPs. Annual growth rates for the two sub-periods have been estimated using the kinked exponential method suggested by Boyce (1987).

In order to ascertain whether there was deceleration in the growth rate after the sharp escalation in plan grant-in-aid since 1996-97, a test for deceleration and acceleration would have been appropriate. Given the short period under consideration, however, it is not possible to conduct such an exercise. Therefore, the average annual growth rate in the 1990s for three sub-periods is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Average Annual Percentage Growth in Tax Revenues (1990-91 to 1995-96 and 1996-97 to 2008-09)

Tax Revenue	Annual Average Growth Rate (2004-05 prices)		
	1990-91 to 1995-96	1996-97 to 1998-99	2004-05 to 2008-09
Building Tax	-4.80	-5.10	1.24
Profession Tax	-2.71	2.22	7.42
Entertainment tax	-10.45	-3.85	-2.16
Advertisement Tax	N.A	N.A	33.82
Total Own Tax	-3.41	-4.41	3.66
Non Tax	-14.10	7.81	9.66

Source: Computed on the basis of data collected by the SFC II and IV of Kerala

Note: Advertisement Tax shows a high growth as it was meager in the first two sub periods.

It is seen that total own taxes declined at a marginally higher rate after 1995-96. It is to be noted that rate of growth of tax revenues turned positive for all taxes except entertainment tax. Total tax revenue recorded almost 4 percent growth during sub-period III and the rate of growth of individual taxes except entertainment tax turned positive.

4. Revenue Mobilisation and Plan Grants

Tax revenue mobilisation is determined both by tax base and tax effort. As regards tax base no erosion has taken place except probably in the case of entertainment tax. There is therefore prima-facie case to say that the decline in tax mobilisation (sub period II) could be due to declining tax effort. Examination of trends in tax effort based on ratio own tax to of the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) and by observing the trends in effort based on Aggregate Regression method during the first two sub-periods, it was found that the tax effort declined in the immediate post decentralisation period (Shaheena 2008). The buoyancy of the taxes also declined. Due to the paucity of data a regression was not done to estimate buoyancy of OT of LGs during sub period III. Available evidences shows that the buoyancy during the sub-period III is higher than the sub-period II. Ratio of own revenue to NSDP during 1998-99 was .0051 which improved to .014 in 2008-09.

Table 3 Buoyancy of Own Taxes of GPS (Tax/NSDP Ratio)

	Building Tax	Profession Tax	OT	NT	OR
2004-05	0.006	0.004	0.011	0.008	0.013
2005-06	0.006	0.004	0.010	0.008	0.013
2006-07	0.006	0.004	0.011	0.008	0.015
2007-08	0.006	0.004	0.010	0.009	0.014
2008-09	0.004	0.004	0.009	0.009	0.014

Source: Computed on the basis of data collected by SFC II and IV of Kerala

The SDP from construction, Trade, hotels and restaurant, and service sector forms the tax base for LG taxes. To gauge the whether the taxes at LG level has responded to the changes in the macro variables, a comparison of the rate of growth of both sets of variables were done. It is evident from the table that the growth in various sectors of the state's economy is not fully reflected in the OT mobilisation at the local level. During the reference period the expenditure recorded a growth of 16 percent.

Table 4 Relative changes in GP Taxes and State's Economic Indicators from 2004-05 to 2008-09 (at current prices)

Macro Indicators	AAGR	LG OR	AAGR (GP)	AGR(LGs)
NSDP	14.52	Building Tax	6.80	9.14
Primary	10.58	Profession Tax	13.61	15.58
Construction	19.55	Entertainment Tax	3.14	-2.13
Trade, Hotels & Restaurant	17.76	Others	6.15	-6.29
Services sector	16.18	Total Tax	9.43	9.96
States OT	15.66	Non-Tax	9.66	16.25
		Expenditure by GPs	15.57	

Source: Computed from SFC-IV data

Note: OT= Own Tax revenue, OR =Own Revenue, AAGR= Average Annual Growth Rate: Growth rate estimated at current prices, AAGR (LGs) is inclusive of the tax mobilisation by Urban Local Governments.

It could be concluded that during the phase immediately after decentralised planning, the OT mobilisation decelerated. Nonetheless the mobilisation improved in the recent times though it hasn't kept pace with the growth of the economy and the growth of local level expenditure. Per capita revenue mobilization is lower than their potential. Generally, LGs are entitled to levy very few taxes which are much less elastic than state and central governments. And very often, the proximity to the populace prevents them from levying even those few taxes that they are authorized to levy. Further, the narrow tax base, lack of administrative machinery and absence of guidelines to levy new taxes acted as the major hurdles in own revenue mobilization by LGs.

The analysis of the impact of grants on revenue mobilization during the first two sub-periods using a time series regression brought out that, the mobilization of the revenue from major own-taxes is significantly and positively related to their respective bases. The analysis also reveals that the coefficient of dummy for plan grants is negative and statistically significant. This gives empirical support to the argument that a large lump sum untied grant acts as a disincentive for augmenting mobilization of tax-revenues. What could be observed was that the devolution of plan grants did not seem to have encouraged own resource mobilization of the GP system (Shaheena, 2003). A cross section analysis on the impact of Plan grant too did not provide empirical support to the hypothesis that the grants in aid has a strong relationship with the own tax revenue collection and its variation across the GPs in Kerala. It is the level of development

(*Ibid*) that directly explains the tax collection of GPs. Positive association between revenue mobilization and level of development could be gauged from Table 5.

Table 5 per Capita Own Tax Revenue and Levels of Development

Category of GP	Development Index (range)	Per Capita Own Tax Revenue Classes (amount in Rs) 2008-09						Total
		<50	50.1-100	100.1-200	200.1-300	300.1-400	>400	
Least Developed Panchayats	0 <pd<..0527	90 (69.2)	32 (24.6)	6 (4.6)	2 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	130
Less developed Panchayats	0.0527<pd<0.1461	211 (43.8)	217 (45.0)	48 (10.0)	6 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	482
Moderately Developed Panchayats	0.1461<yd<0.2226	12 (-31.6)	22 (-57.9)	4 (-10.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	38
Relatively Developed Panchayats	0.2226<yd<0.2825	0 (0.0)	1 (-14.3)	1 (-14.3)	2 (-28.36)	1 (-14.3)	2 (-28.6)	7
	Total	313	272	59	10	1	2	657

Source: Computed on the basis of data collected from various sources. For Development Index (Shaheena (2003)

Note: Pearson's Chi-square 350.371 is significant at 1%

It was, however, revealed that plan grants is not an unequivocally significant factor in explaining the inter GPs variations in revenue mobilization. It is possible that in Kerala non-economic factors also held sway over the efficiency with which revenue is mobilized by the GPs. These include political, social and region-specific, historic tradition etc (which is beyond the scope of the present analysis). However both the tax-capacity and tax-effort are primarily dependent upon the level of development, which is facilitated by the transfer of untied plan grants though it has a tendency to encourage laxity on the part of the LGs in expanding the tax base and increasing tax-effort to tax-revenue mobilization.

Even after almost two decades of decentralisation, the staff pattern in GPs is the same as that existed in the early 1980s. The tax field work was virtually disrupted in most of the GPs adversely affecting the collection. An evidence of the above causal connection has been the positive relationship that we identified between per capita emoluments and staff and inter panchayat differences in per capita tax and non-tax revenues (Shaheena, 2008).

5. Conclusion

The analysis of decentralised planning and devolution of untied Plan grant in aid to the GPs does not categorically lend support to the view of dampening effect on own tax revenue mobilisation by the recipient Government (based on secondary data). Even with the existing structure of taxation, the development in the economy is resulting in an increased revenue mobilisation. However the revenue mobilisation by GPs is far below the potential. Very few GPs have taken concerted efforts to tap

the potential (Govt. of Kerala 2010). An array of highly potential taxes including advertisement tax and minor taxes and non-tax revenues are left underutilised and totally untapped. The practise of giving exemption, laxity in collection and accounting, accumulation of arrears, slackness in maintaining registers etc. still plague the system. Therefore though the empirical analysis points to a positive association between levels of development and tax capacity the untied grants seems to have encouraged laxity in expanding tax base. Such possible adverse impact could be countered through appropriate tax and revenue system and built in incentive in devolution scheme.

The SFC II and IV of Kerala made recommendations for the rationalisation of tax structure which would lead to a better and more scientific assessment of taxes and mobilisation. Both the Commissions have incorporated tax effort in to inter se distribution criteria. Design of the tax system is central to revenue mobilisation and delay is on the part of the state government in rationalising the structure. It is left to the government to take measures to implement the recommendations at the earliest. □

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For enquiries, e-mail : kilajournal@gmail.com

Towards Scientific and e-Accounting in Panchayats of Kerala

Being the fore-runner of decentralisation, Kerala has introduced a wide range of reforms viz. political, administrative, and fiscal. Fiscal decentralisation is the crux of decentralisation according to 'finance follows function' rule. Kerala is the only state in the country having separate budget window for the Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs); including setting up a fiscal transfer system as the vertical share of local governments. With the fiscal decentralisation, there has been quantum jump in the amount of funds handled by the Panchayats, calling for efficient finance management. In view of this, Govt. of Kerala (GoK) have introduced a scientific accounting system in the Panchayats. Also, initiated e-Accounting by introducing a software entitled 'Saankya'. This article highlights the initiatives by Kerala on Accrual Based Double Entry System of Accounting (ABDESA) and Saankya implemented in the Panchayats.

Dr.J.B.Rajan*
Biju.S.K**

* Assistant Professor, KILA Mulamkunnathukavu PO, Thrissur-81, email:jbajan07@gmail.com

** Assistant Professor, Govt. College, Kanjiramkulam PO, Thiruvananthapuram-581, email: bijubodheswar@gmail.com

1. Backdrop

The decentralisation, more particularly fiscal decentralisation, after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) of India necessitated efficient finance management. In a landmark judgment in *Almitra H. Patel & Anr V. Union of India*, the Supreme Court expressed concern on the weak financial reporting system in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and ordered the Government to develop guidelines for a full cost based accrual accounting system for ULBs. (Supreme Court, 2000). The Eleventh Finance Commission (EFC) observed that the formats and procedures for maintenance of accounts of LSGIs that were prescribed decades ago need to be changed and more systematic and scientific method of accounting to be introduced. (Govt. of India, 2000). In pursuance of the observations of the Supreme Court and recommendations of the EFC, Government of India (GoI) initiated reforms in accounting of ULBs. Accordingly, the Department of Expenditure of Ministry of Finance, GoI has entrusted the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to prescribe the formats for the preparation of budget and keeping of accounts of all ULBs in India. The CAG has constituted a Task Force in February 2002 to evolve appropriate accounting formats for the ULBs. (Govt. of India, 2007a, Govt. of India, 2007b).

The Task Force Report submitted in December 2002 contained the budget and accounting formats for ULBs with appropriate codification and classification of budget and accounts heads. The Task Force also recommended that the ULBs should adopt the Accrual Based Double Entry System of Accounting (ABDESA). To provide a generic frame work of Municipal Accounting and a simplified toolkit to the ULBs for recording the accounting entries, the Ministry of Urban Development supported by the CAG formulated the National Municipal Accounts Manual (NMAM). The NMAM includes not only the formats but also the accounting concepts, conventions, principles, procedures, and codification in connection with the preparation of accounts of ULBs in India. In tune with this, the Government of Kerala (GoK) introduced ABDESA in ULBs during the financial year 2007-08 (Govt. of Kerala, 2007) and subsequently to the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) too.

2. Towards Scientific Accounting

In pursuance to the NMAM, the Government of Kerala has developed Kerala Municipal Accounts Manual (KMAM) for the ULBs of Kerala. The KMAM contains the required formats, procedures, accounting entries, periodical statements, and reconciliation procedures. With the technical support of Ferguson & Co; GoK has piloted ABDESA and an accounting software in six ULBs (Four Corporations and two Municipalities)¹. But the software was not a

comprehensive one and ULBs faced difficulties to integrate the receipts made in front office. In the context of continued technical difficulties faced, Information Kerala Mission (IKM) has shouldered the effort of designing software for Municipal accounts. They have piloted an alternative accounting software in Calicut Corporation and Alappuzha Municipality. On successful completion of it, the application of software entitled SAANKHYA was up-scaled to all the 60 Municipalities and Five Corporations in Kerala.

The evaluation report on decentralized experience in Kerala states that Accounting and data retrievability at the PRI level are very weak. To rectify this, (a) LSGI accounts must be integrated with general plan accounts in their format, content and timeliness and (b) maintenance and flow of information (forward & backward) including reporting of financial and physical progress needs to be computerized forthwith, (Government of India 2006). In response to this report and recognising the importance of ABDESA and its successful implementation using SAANKHYA in ULBs, GoK has replicated the same with some modifications in the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) too. The KMAM as a backdrop, GoK framed Kerala Panchayat Accounts Rules (KPAR) and enforced it w.e.f. 2011-2012. (Govt. of Kerala, 2011a). This Rule provides a comprehensive picture about the accounting system, accounting of expenditure, investments, specific grants and funds, preparation of financial statements and formats of accounts and reports. GoK also issued an order prescribing the accounting policies and codification structure for the accounting of the Panchayats. (Govt. of Kerala, 2011b). This order mandated the PRIs to maintain their books of accounts on accrual basis under the double entry system of accounting.

2.1. Comprehensive Books of Accounts

Under ABDESA, the PRIs have to maintain separate books of accounts as below, to serve the purpose of eliciting exact accounting information.

- (a) Cash Book for recording daily cash transactions,
- (b) Bank Book for recording daily bank transactions,
- (c) Journal Book for recording Transactions other than cash and bank.,
- (d) General Ledger and Sub ledger for recording classified version of different accounts
- (e) Vouchers for supporting proof for the transactions and
- (f) Financial statements for measuring the performance

Maintenance of separate book of accounts facilitates systematic accounting of every transaction, by category, and helps to elicit timely accounting information. These are not made possible under single entry system of accounting.

2.2. Funds Envelope

As prescribed under Section 212 of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 all money received by the Panchayat shall constitute a fund called the Panchayat Fund. The funds received by a Panchayat are divided into seven categories viz. category A - Development Fund, B - State Sponsored Schemes, C - Maintenance Fund, D - General Purpose Fund, E - Centrally Sponsored Schemes, F - Own Fund, and G - Loans. (Govt. of Kerala, 2006). The ABDESA captures all such funds and provides funds envelope so that overview of funds are made available instantly.

2.3. Incomplete to Complete Record

The hitherto followed single entry system of accounting (SESA) prepares only Receipts and Payments Accounts; which is equivalent to cash book. The single entry system provides only cash receipts and cash payments only; leaving accounting information like performance result and financial position that are relevant and material for any institution. Hence SESA is considered as incomplete records. As against this, ABDESA prepares three statements viz.

- (i) Receipts and Payments Accounts - to know the receipts and payments of cash and cash balance at the end of financial year,
- (ii) Income and Expenditure Accounts² - to know the performance result of surplus (excess of income over expenditure) or deficit (excess of expenditure over income) during the financial year, and
- (iii) Balance Sheet - to know the financial position, i.e. the assets and liabilities at the end of financial year.

ABDESA captures dual aspect of every transaction, based on the 'Duality' concept of accounting; which states that every transaction has two aspects viz. receiving of a benefit and giving of a benefit and are respectively termed a 'Debit' and 'Credit'. The basic principle followed is that every debit must have a corresponding credit and vice versa. Thus for every transaction, one account is debited and the other is credited. Since two accounts are created for every transaction with equal amount, but in opposites of debit and credit, checks and balances are made possible based on the information of tallying of accounts.

Also accrual basis of treating transactions, records all the incomes and expenses as and when these become due and not on the basis of receipts. Put it in otherwise, the total amount due as income for a given accounting period is the income for that period and not the actual amount received during that period. Likewise the total amount due as expense for a given accounting period is the expense for that period and not the actual amount spent during that period. The actual basis, on the other hand, treats only transactions of actual receipts and actual payments. This curtails the information on outstanding expenses and accrued incomes and also that the real surplus/deficit during the accounting year cannot be assessed. ABDESA on the other hand provides complete picture of income and expenditure, irrespective of whether they are received or paid and that it also helps better credit management.

3. e-Accounting Initiatives

Along with accrual based accounting, e-accounting also reached momentum both at national and state level.

3.1. PRIASOFT

PRIASOFT, acronym for Panchayati Raj Institutions Accounting Software, was introduced for PRIs by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj (MoPR), GoI in order to ensure timely preparation of accounts and automatic validation of accuracy. This software was piloted in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and then implemented in those states. This web-based software follows the formats prescribed by the CAG. In due course, States such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Utter Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and West Bengal have also implemented PRIASOFT. (www.priasoft.nic.in). However, Kerala searched alternative software, as PRIASOFT follows cash basis of accounting as against accrual basis of accounting in the State.

3.2. SAANKHYA

Information Kerala Mission (IKM) has developed accounting software entitled 'SAANKHYA' for ABDESA. GoK also mandated SAANKHYA application software in PRIs. (Govt. of Kerala, 2010). This application software helps in entering of daily transactions, generation of monthly statements, and preparation of annual financial statements. The easy and quick generation of financial statements made possible through SAANKHYA is helpful in timely financial reporting and financial control. The SAANKHYA software was also integrated with SULEKHA and SUGAMA, respective softwares³ for project planning and preparation of estimates for public works.

Till 31st March 2013, ABDESA and SAANKHYA was implemented in 1128 (98.6%) out of 1144 PRIs in Kerala. (IKM, 2013). With the implementation of this, it is easy to submit all financial statements before May 15 every year for auditing; which was much delayed earlier⁴. The successful implementation of ABDESA and SAANKHYA in PRIs is made possible through intensive and systematic capacity building programmes.

4. Capacity Building

Capacity Building (CB) is essential for introducing a new system so as to enable the functionaries to perform their tasks efficiently. In order to ensure smooth launching of ABDESA, KILA in association with IKM has designed and implemented a comprehensive CB programmes that helped to establish the system in place. The Directorate of Panchayat also provided organisational support for steering the CB efficiently.

(i) Induction Training

Before the introduction of ABDESA, KILA organised induction training at two levels: (a) induction training on Fundamentals of Accounting, and (b) induction training on KPAM and SAANKYA Software. Induction training on Fundamentals of Accounting (two days) targeted newly appointed Accountants of GPs; covering the basics viz. principles, concepts, and general procedures. KILA conducted 17 batches of induction training programme. Out of the 978 accountants, 817 attended the training. (KILA, 2012). This is followed by induction training for four Officials (Secretary, Accountant, and two Clerks) and two Elected Representatives (President and Vice President). The training of four Officials were for a duration of four days each, covering in depth the content of KPAM and computer practical on SAANKYA software. Whereas, President (being the Chief Functionary) and Vice President (being the Chairperson of Finance Standing Committee) are supposed to know only the changes in accounting system so as to steer the process. Hence their induction training was limited to one day, providing an overview of new system of accounting and the pre-requisites to be taken care of by them. During the year 2012-13, 3981 persons (3375 Officials and 606 Elected Representatives) were trained and the training still continues for rest of the officials. (KILA, 2013).

(ii) Handholding

Upon completion of the induction trainings, IKM launched the SAANKHYA software in the Panchayats and provided two days handholding for the staff to operate the software. The Accountant cum IT Experts⁵, trained on accounting and SAANKHYA software,

were appointed at Block Panchayat level so as to provide technical support for the Panchayats in the State. Also one Technical Assistant⁶ is appointed in each Grama Panchayat for handholding support to the staff for efficiently operating SAANKHYA software.

(iii) Refresher Training (Peer Learning)

After 3 months of launching SAANKHYA software, two days refresher trainings were conducted for the Accountants with the aim of clearing the doubts and sorting out the technical difficulties, if any. Peer learning methodology was adopted for the training. The participants were asked to bring financial reports generated on SAANKHYA and the same were vetted through participatory process. Till 31st March 2013, the Accountants from 650 GPs were imparted refresher training. This process enabled the participants to realise the mistakes and ways of rectification.

(iv) Refresher Training (Hammering Learning)

At the end of the financial year, second level of refresher trainings were conducted for the Accountants of Panchayats. The one day training was intended for driving the participants to prepare financial statements viz. Receipts and Payments Accounts, Income and Expenditure Accounts, and Balance Sheet.

5. Visible Change

Kerala witnessed visible change in the accounting system of Panchayats after the implementation of ABDESA with the help of SAANKHYA. Before the advent of ABDESA, PRIs prepared Receipts and Payments Accounts only as financial statements; providing information on total receipts and payments and cash balance, if any. In majority of cases, nearly two to three years annual financial statements (i.e. Receipts and Payments Accounts) has been pending which led to the pending of Local Fund Audit (LFA) too. The auditing became irrelevant as they are conducted after three or four years. By that time, there will be change in Elected Representatives due to election and/or transfer of Officials. Those in power would shed off the onus of discrepancies if any, found at a time when the others were in power. Also with the limited information of cash receipts and payments, assessment of performance result and financial position - two core objectives of accounting - were not possible.

The accounting work was the most neglected one in the PRIs and no staff would like to shoulder the responsibility. But with the implementation of ABDESA, a proper system is in place. The GPs, for example, availed the services of Accountants by upgrading Senior Clerks; with clearly defined responsibility. There is no pending of accounting work as the PRIs can close the accounts at the end of the day. Complete accounting information is available viz. cash

position (through Receipts and Payments Accounts), performance result (through Income and Expenditure Account), and financial position (through Balance Sheet). Because of double entry system, checks and balances and timely interventions are made possible. Computerisation of accounting reduced the burden of work, timely generation of reports, and providing up-to-date information. ABDESA ensures time bound and objective auditing as the account books are up-to-date and accurate.

6. Conclusion

State Planning Board had highlighted in Economic Review 2007 (Govt. of Kerala, 2008) that the lack of proper accounts in time is one of the major issues in the financial administration set up. The document further says that lack of systematic accounting and auditing is found to be a serious shortcoming in local bodies. It also suggests the need for a clear system of accountability to public. The introduction of ABDESA with SAANKHYA in the panchayat of Kerala is a leap towards efficient financial administration, accurate financial data base, timely and complete financial reporting, and transparency in public reporting. The successful launching of this computer based accounting system is influenced by timely, systematic, and multi-level capacity building programme conducted with the collective involvement of KILA, IKM, and DoP. The introduction of ABDESA with SAANKYA in general and in capacity building strategy in particulars are replicable models for efficient and effective finance management that the other States to emulate. □

Notes :

- ¹ Trivandrum, Quilon, Cochin and Thrissur Municipal Corporations and Thalasseri and Cannanur Municipalities.
- ² In the case of business concern it is termed in Profit and Loan (PxL) Amount
- ³ IKM has developed softwares for different functional areas; totaling 17 in number.
- ⁴ As per Kerala Panchayat (Accounts) Rule 2011- section 62(5), it is mandatory that every LSGIS should submit their Financial statements before May 15 every year for auditing.
- ⁵ Through KLGSDP, IKM has received recruited 152 Accountants Cum IT Experts with the funding support from Kerala Local Government Service Delivery Project (KLGSDP). a project funded by World Bank.
- ⁶ As per G.O. No.(RT) 1772/2012/LSGD dated 27/06/2012, GPs are required to recruit Technical Assistant for handholding support on the IKM softwares including Saankhya.

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Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Youth in Panchayats, Kerala

Active involvement of youth can provide a strong support for the Local Governments. Importance of an enabling environment, wherein both the local Governments and the youth come together and function as 'partners in development', needs no emphasis. In this context, the research study of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Youth in Panchayati Raj was taken up by RGNIYD. As part of the study, 75 young elected members and 225 young citizens were contacted from 24 Grama Panchayats, who were drawn from four Blocks of Thrissur district of Kerala. As a summary of the study, this paper brings out valuable insights towards mainstreaming the issues of youth so as to enable more and more active and constructive minded youth to bring good governance to the grassroot level.

Dr. K Gireesan*

* Faculty Head, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Youth Affairs (PRIYA) Division, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development Govt. of India (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur - 602 105, Tamilnadu, Mob: 09445400855, email: gireesankollengode@gmail.com

1. Background

Passing the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) was a defining moment in the history of decentralisation of political power in India. Devolution of powers and responsibilities enabled the Local Self Government institutions to formulate plans aiming at local economic development and social justice. These amendments have resulted in changing the dynamics and equations of power significantly in the country at the cutting edge levels. They have enabled the local governments at different parts of the country with the power and authority to function as 'units of self government', though with varying levels of initiative, drive, interest and capacity.

It is imperative that youth assume an important role in the systems, institutions and practices of local governance. The programmes initiated and implemented by the local Governments should take care of the specific needs, concerns, interests and priorities of youth from the geographical area. In addition, the local governments could utilize the competencies, dynamism, energy and skills of youth in planning, implementing and monitoring of programmes/projects. To make this happen, more and more youth should participate themselves in the activities of the local Governments. Youth organizations, both political and non-political, could play a crucial role of recruiting able youth to the development politics of local governance system. In addition to extending support to the local Governments in its functioning, youth can also become the 'change agents' aimed at bringing good governance at the grassroots.

In this context, the research study of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Youths in Grama Panchayats was taken up by RGNIYD. 'Right type of Knowledge' about the powers, functional domains and responsibilities of the Panchayat Raj system would help them to imbibe 'Right kind of Attitude' which can eventually lead towards the adoption of 'Right way of Practice' to enhance involvement and participation of youth in the system. Assessment of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of young elected members of GPs and young citizens was made on the following aspects :

- * Panchayat Raj System and Structure,
- * Functions of GP,
- * Elections of PRIs,
- * Finance of PRIs ,
- * Service Delivery System of GP,

- * Grama Sabha,
- * Poverty Alleviation Programmes,
- * Public Redressal Mechanisms,
- * Right to Information Act, and
- * Youth Association in Panchayat functioning

2. A Brief of the Study Area

Kerala has a more active political society as compared to the rest of India. It is one of the states which have an effective and efficient Panchayat Raj System. Budget provision and devolution of funds, followed up with the decentralized planning (widely known as People's Plan Campaign) gave the required impetus to the empowerment of Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in the State, in a great way. Kerala has pioneered in evolving a comprehensive participatory methodology for planning, which was visualized as a powerful tool for community mobilization and participation in the local planning exercises. Several years of experience in democratic decentralized planning and local development, in the State, brought out a number of positive outcomes like grass root level planning and implementation of various development programmes, introduction of three component plans like Women Component Plan (WCP), Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) at the local level. The study was carried out in Thrissur District of Kerala. Data collected from 75 young elected members and 225 young citizens were contacted from 24 Gram Panchayats drawn from four Blocks (Ollukkara, Puzhakkal, Kodakara and Chalakudy) of the District.

3. Major Findings

This section deals with the key findings of the assessment of knowledge, attitude and practice of the respondents.

3.1. Assessment of Knowledge of Young Citizens

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of knowledge of young citizens on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- About 40% of the young citizens have complete knowledge on the pattern of reservation followed in PRI election. Most of the young citizens (88 %) projected the need for reservation for youth in PRI elections.
- Only a very small segment of young citizens (9.9 %) were aware of the sources of income for GP.
- More than three-fourth of the young citizens (78 %) indicated that Grama Sabha could be viewed as the Village Parliament.

- Most of the young citizens (90.2 %) were aware of MGNREGS but only (48.9 %) were aware of IAY and SGSY. This may be due to the extensive awareness sessions and environment building measures launched as part of the MGNREGS across the country, making use of different media.
- Majority of the young respondents (70.7 %) had some knowledge about the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. And, more than three-fifth of the respondents (62.7 %) viewed RTI as a mechanism for getting information on panchayat budget and annual report.
- Just more than three-fourth of the Young Citizens (76.9 %) indicated that their panchayats initiated certain specific programmes benefitting youth. Income generation programmes, training and awareness programmes, distribution of sports items, coaching for entrance exams and promotion of rural libraries were some of the programmes indicated by them.

3.2. Assessment of Attitude of Young Citizens

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of attitude of young citizens on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- Most of the respondents (96 %) indicated that Gram Panchayat is the government nearest to the people and could meet the local needs.
- More than four-fifth of the respondents (80.9 %) had a favourable attitude towards reservation for women in PRIs and highlighted that it is essential.
- Less than one-third of the respondents (31.1 %) indicated that they have contested the PR elections in the past, but failed to succeed. However, it is significant to note that more than half of them (50.7 %) expressed their interest to contest again, which is a reflection of their positive attitude towards the PRIs.
- Majority of the young citizens (62.7 %) indicated that the grants received by the GP from the government are being utilized for the benefit of the people.
- A small segment of the respondents (7.42 %) opined that active participation of young people will definitely improve the functioning of Grama Sabha.
- Majority of the respondents (53.4 %) were not sure, whether the benefits of the poverty alleviations programme reaches the poor in the desired manner.

- More than four-fifth of the young citizens (87.1 %) indicated that the PRIs are not corrupt.
- Majority of the young citizens (70.7 %) viewed that Right to Information (RTI) was able to bring transparency in panchayat finance and functions.
- Regarding the assessment of attitude of the respondents on youth participation in panchayat functioning, the average score could be rated at 5.81 points on a scale of 10 points.

3.3. Assessment of Practice of Young Citizens

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of practice of young citizens on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- Majority of the young citizens (64 %) indicated that the performance of the candidate is the major criteria for casting vote in panchayat elections. It is interesting to mention that majority (59.2 %) preferred to vote for a young candidate, if good candidates are contesting.
- More than four-fifth of the young citizens (83.1 %) remarked that their family pays tax to the Panchayat regularly. And a significant segment of them (46.7 %) viewed social audit as the mechanism for bringing out the irregularities in the implementation of the programmes, which is a positive aspect.
- Majority of the young citizens (70.2 %) indicated that they could serve as a watchdog against corruption and could play an important role in enhancing the service delivery system. Linking the Public Distribution System with the GPs and routing of items of Public Distribution System through GP would be very effective to improve the service delivery, as suggested by majority of the respondents (79.6 %).
- It is noted that the Grama Sabha meeting does not have the necessary quorum, as indicated by nearly one-third (32 %) of the young citizens. More than two-third of the young citizens interacted (69.3 %) indicated that they have attended the last Gram Sabha meeting, which is a positive sign.
- Participation of young citizens in poverty alleviation programmes has been rated at 5.17 points which could be graded as 'Average' only.
- Practice of young citizens on accessing public redressal mechanism has been rated as 'Below Average' at 2.93 points.
- Practice of Right to Information by the young citizens could be rated as 'Below Average' at 3.66 points.

- Assessment of practice of young citizens on youth participation in panchayat functioning bring out that just less than half of them (48.4%) witnessed youth or youth clubs organizing protests against social evils or against the act of corruption by GPs. Only a small segment of respondents (43.1 %) indicated that they played any role in implementation of development programmes like mobilizing support of the community, reporting irregularities to the GP, etc. Significantly, more than half of the respondents (55.1 %) were involved in campaigns during the elections.

3.4. Assessment of Knowledge of Young Elected Members

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of knowledge of young elected members on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- More than four-fifth of the young elected members had knowledge of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, standing committees and 11th Schedule, which is a positive aspect.
- Majority of the respondents (53 %) were aware of the functions of GP.
- Most of the respondents (94.7 %) were aware of the relevance of Panchayat Samithi (Intermediate level) in the locality.
- Just more than two-fifth of the respondents (41.3 %) were aware of the percentage of seats reserved for women.
- Just more than one-fourth of the respondents (26.7 %) knew about the authority for holding the PR elections.
- Majority of the respondents (56 %) were aware of the sources of income for GP.
- Majority of them were able to indicate the minimum mandatory meetings of Grama Sabha and the quorum.
- Majority of the young elected members were aware of various aspects of MGNREGS, the flagship programme.
- More than four-fifth of the Young Elected Members (84 %) were aware about the public redressal mechanism in PR system, though, many of them had only partial knowledge.
- Most of the young elected members (90.7 %) were aware about the RTI Act, 2005.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (84 %) indicated that their panchayats have some specific programmes for youth.

3.5. Assessment of Attitude of Young Elected Members

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of attitude of young elected members on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- Almost all the respondents (92 %) identified Panchayat as a grassroots level organization and opined that there is no alternative to it as the basic structure.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (85.3 %) opined that Grama Panchayat is the appropriate forum for meeting the immediate needs of the public.
- Just more than four-fifth of the young elected members (81.3 %) highlighted that the elections to PRIs is free and fair.
- More than four-fifth of the respondents (88 %) mentioned that the grants received from the government is being utilized for the benefit of the people.
- Two-third of the young elected members (66.7 %) highlighted that RTI has its impact on improving the service delivery system of PRIs.
- Just less than four-fifth of the respondents (78.7 %) indicated that more participation of young people will rejuvenate Gram Sabha.
- Almost all the respondents (93.3 %) had a favourable attitude towards the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes by the GPs.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (85.3 %) had a positive attitude towards PRIs while indicating that the institutions are not corrupt.
- Most of the respondents (90.7 %) indicated that Right to Information (RTI) is beneficial to the general public.
- Just more than three-fourth (76 %) highlighted that RTI guarantees transparency in functions and finance of the PRIs.
- More than four-fifth of the respondents (82.7 %) were associated with youth organisations before becoming elected member of PRIs.

It is noted that only in the aspect of finance of PRIs, the assessment of attitude of young elected members could be rated as 'Excellent'. Regarding Grama Sabha, their assessment of attitude could be rated as 'Average' only. In most of the remaining aspects, their attitude could be rated as 'Above Average'.

3.6. Assessment of Practice of Young Elected Members

Some of the important findings noted from the assessment of practice of young elected members on Panchayati Raj are given below.

- Four-fifth of the respondents (80 %) indicated that PRIs could effectively network with NGOs and CBOs which could optimize and strengthen their functioning.
- Majority of the respondents (54.7%) mentioned that SHGs support PRIs in the functioning.
- More than two-third of the young elected members (67.1 %) indicated that Panchayat needs to promote income generating activities and provide training to youth on self-employment, to enhance Panchayat-Youth interface.
- Majority of the young elected members (61.3%) opined that performance of candidate is the major criteria for casting vote in elections to PRIs.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (82.7 %) indicated that they preferred to vote for a young person.
- Most of the young elected members (85.3 %) mentioned that their family pay tax regularly to the panchayat.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (86.7 %) expressed that routing PDS through the PRIs is an important way to ensure service delivery system.
- Just less than half of the respondents (49.3 %) indicated that youth serve as the watch dog against corruption and in improving the service delivery of PRIs.
- Almost three-fourth of the respondents (74.7 %) mentioned that women take part in Grama Sabha in large numbers and express their views.
- More than four-fifth of the young elected members (85.3%) indicated that they have participated in the social audit organized by the Panchayat.
- Less than three-fourth of the young elected members (73.3 %) have persuaded/guided the villagers to use RTI for seeking information from Panchayat and other sources.
- Less than three-fourth of the young elected members (73.3 %) have witnessed any youth or youth club organizing a protest against social evil or an act of corruption.

4. Suggestions

Based on the assessment of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Panchayati Raj among the young citizens and young elected members, certain specific suggestions, general suggestions and policy suggestions to strengthen Panchayat-Youth interface are being made.

4.1. Specific Suggestions

Certain specific suggestions for enhancing participation of young people in the functioning of PRIs are:

- Young elected representatives need to be oriented on specific areas like service delivery system of GP, finance of PRIs and Grama Sabha. This will enable them to make necessary interventions and equip them to contribute towards strengthening of the system.
- There is a need to enhance practice of young citizens in certain critical areas like public redressal mechanisms, right to information act, poverty alleviation programmes, etc.
- Young elected members need to develop a more favourable attitude towards Grama Sabha and youth association in panchayat functioning. They should work towards enhancing youth participation in Grama Sabha and other programmes/ activities of PRIs.
- Towards enhancing Panchayat-Youth interface, PRIs need to take up skill development programmes and capacity building sessions for youth; organise training sessions preparing for competitive examinations; provide technical, financial and marketing support for self-employment ventures; promote income generating programmes; organize programmes for promotion of art, culture, sports and games; etc.
- Conduct mapping of the resources in the locality for youth development.
- Take up a 'Youth Status Study'² in the area to get the first hand information regarding the needs, concerns, issues, problems and priorities of youth in the area by taking inputs from young citizens, members and functionaries of non-political organisations like Youth Clubs, Mahila Mandals, etc., and inputs from key functionaries of Youth Wings of political parties.
- Analyse the initiatives and interventions for youth development made by the PRI and other development organisations in the area leading to 'Youth Budgeting'³ at the local level.

- Based on the youth status study and mapping of resources, prepare a 'Panchayat Level Youth Development Plan' (Draft) which can be discussed in a 'Special Grama Sabha for Youth'. After incorporating necessary changes, the document can be placed in the GP committee for necessary approval and follow-up.
- Initiate a 'Youth Resource Centre' which will function as the nodal centre for youth development in the locality.

4.2. General Suggestions

The suggestions for enhancing involvement of young people in the programmes/ activities of PRIs are:

- Ensure registration of all youth organizations with the GP.
- Encourage and support formation of youth organisations in the locality.
- Organise awareness sessions and capacity building programmes for the functionaries of youth organisations.
- Invite them for the meetings and consultations for plan preparation; sent the official communication in advance to enable them to attend the meeting and actively participate.
- Explore the possibilities of convening 'Special Grama Sabha for youth'.
- Include members of Youth Organisations in different working groups constituted at the PRIs in connection with the formulation of plans/ programmes/projects.
- The village elders needs to have faith and trust in the young people and entrust them with more responsibilities.
- Utilise the dynamism, energy and skills of young people during the implementation of various programmes, projects, and other activities.
- Entrust the youth organisations for monitoring of programmes and projects.
- PRIs to guide and support youth-initiatives and youth-led initiatives.

4.3. Policy Suggestions

Some of the policy suggestions to strengthen Panchayat-Youth interface are:

- Form a 'Sub-Committee on Youth Development' in each GP⁴, headed by the President of Gram Panchayat, which will meet

at regular intervals to review the initiatives and interventions for youth development in the area.

- Make necessary provisions for allocation of specific percentage of plan funds for youth development. Similar to Special Component Plan (SCP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and Women Component Plan (WCP), possibilities for a 'Youth Component Plan'⁵ during the budget allocation to the Local Government Institutions could be explored.
- Make constitutional provisions for reservation of seats and positions for youth in the Local Governments at various levels.

5. Conclusion

It is hoped that this article will be an addition towards 'Mainstreaming youth in local governance', aiding towards the empowerment of local government institutions. It is expected that the findings and suggestions of this document will generate a discourse among the policy makers, practitioners, academicians, researchers and other stakeholders, and enable them to bring in new strategic initiatives and interventions for enhancing youth participation in local governance. It is hoped that this article will provide certain vital inputs to the stakeholders towards the development of 'Youth-friendly Panchayat' and 'Panchayat-friendly Youth'. It is hoped that this will immensely contribute towards enhancing better understanding of 'Local Government - Youth Interface', and support initiatives and interventions for ensuring 'Good Governance at the Grassroots' with more active participation of youth. □

Note : This article is based on the study carried out by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNID), Sriperumbudur. The study report was published by RGNID in December 2012 and author was one of the editors.

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New Forms Of Partnership in Urban Governance

New forms of governance are emerging in Indian cities, in which two major processes are observed: an attempt to bring the government closer to the citizens through decentralisation and formation of Ward Committees, Area Sabhas etc. There is also movement 'out from the government', where the government works with the private sector and civil society groups in providing services to its citizens. The local governments are opening up new arenas, termed as 'invited spaces'; which they are using as an opportunity to move policy implementation and formation outwards by involving other actors. The paper seeks to analyse the new forms of partnerships evolving in Indian cities for service delivery within the theoretical frame of urban governance.

Anurima Mukherjee Basu*

*Assistant Professor (Planning and Public Policy), CEPT University, Ahmedabad – 380009, India. email: anurima.mb@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The issues in governance concern the forms of cooperation between the state, private sector and civil society. This trend has been termed as a shift from 'government' to 'governance' or as a move from 'old governance' to the 'new governance' (Davies, Jonathan S. and David L. Imbroscio, 2009). In 'Government' or 'old governance' there is a clear separation between the public and the private sphere. The 'new governance' is associated with the rise of networks and the blurring of private-public boundaries, in which the government works together with other types of organizations – civil society organizations as well as the private sector in different forms to take decisions and deliver services.

The nation-state, the formal authority for decision-making in most countries is under challenge by the complexity of problems in public policy, diversity of interests, and ineffectiveness of established systems to respond to it. Governance theory gained ground as part of a global trend towards focusing more on the role of civil society in the pursuit of public goals (Stoker, 2005 as in Davies, Jonathan S. and David L. Imbroscio, 2009). The complexity of challenges that local governments face today, it is imperative that they have to mobilize citizens and involve local knowledge in public policies.

The paper tries to analyse the new partnerships evolving in Indian cities within the theoretical frame of urban governance. It looks into the processes by which urban local governments are engaging with multiple actors for governance and service delivery. The paper focuses on how inclusive these new governance arrangements are with respect to the urban poor/other marginalized groups and to what extent they are able to exert influence in the governance process. The analysis is based on a review of the literature available on the subject and case studies documented and published.

2. New Forms of Partnerships in Urban Governance

Discussions on the new forms of urban governance are focused on the partnerships between the government and other types of organizations – civil society organizations as well as the private sector in different forms to achieve public policy goals. It is assumed that inter-organizational networks – urban platforms of various kinds – provide a better opportunity for citizens groups to voice their issues and requirements (Stoker, 2000 as in Baud and Wit, 2008). As a result there are attempts to institutionalize participation of citizens and citizen groups in the functioning of local governments through formal/ legislative mechanisms, like local citizen councils in Latin America, Ward Sabhas in the case

of India. There also has been a proliferation of inter-organizational networks; where the government partners with civil society organizations and private organizations; especially in delivering services. Citizen participation in urban governance aims to bring the government closer to the people, thereby giving an opportunity to be a part of the decision making process; more so for the marginalized groups. Partnerships with the private sector and NGOs in basic services is assumed to enhance efficiency in service provision, quality of service, better coverage and inclusion of marginalized groups, enhance accountability of service providers to citizens and tackle local problems.

Citizen participation in governance has long been recognized as one of the main components of good governance. This is especially true at the local level where it is assumed that increased engagement will create direct routes of accountability with local authorities, thereby improving local public service delivery and generating better local-level policies to tackle poverty.

Democratic decentralization is often seen as a means for strengthening local democracy by increasing the 'spaces' for greater participation of people in local governance processes (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001, Baud and Nainan, 2008). This view assumes that decentralization helps citizens to participate in local governance both through elected representation and through interaction between government and civil society organizations (CSOs).

New forms of urban governance are emerging as a result of this and a change is noticed in the way local governments are functioning; from mere service provision to collaborative work with the private sector and citizens. There is an opening up new arenas, termed as 'invited spaces'; which the local governments are using as an opportunity to move policy implementation and formation outwards by involving other actors i.e. NGOs, the private sector and community based organizations (CBOs) (Baud and Wit, 2008, Cornwall 2002). In the literature, a distinction is made between 'invited spaces' and 'claimed spaces'; where the former is created by the state to invite the civil society and its representatives (NGOs, CSOs etc) to participate in the matters of the government and the latter created by people or citizens themselves through popular mobilization. The state led community participation structures are usually apolitical while the 'claimed spaces' are more organic as they evolve out of popular social mobilization. At the local level, there is a variety of institutions emerging out of government initiatives, citizen's initiatives and those by civil society organizations. These various institutions and 'spaces' have the potential to foster new partnerships in local governance by

facilitating continuous involvement of ‘marginalized groups’ at the community level.

The opening up of ‘invited spaces’ by the state enables participation of civil society in equitable distribution of resources and local level planning processes. The assumption is that such processes open up opportunities for improved service delivery and inclusive governance, and has positive implications for the poor and vulnerable. However, though decentralization increases opportunities for participation, but there is always an inherent risk of ‘elite capture’. It has been observed that decentralization may often empower the already powerful actors, thereby disempowering the poor, marginal or socially excluded actors, that is; it may lead to ‘elite capture’ (Baud & Wit, 2008)

3. Partnerships in Urban Governance in India

In India, two major processes are observed: the movement to bring the government closer to the citizens through decentralization and the movement ‘out from the government’, where the government works with the private sector and civil society groups in providing services to its citizens (Pierre and Peters, 2000 as in Baud and Wit, 2008). The decentralization processes initiated by the landmark legislation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA), which came into force in 1992; marked the beginning of an era of participatory urban governance. It provides constitutional authority to the urban local bodies to function as institutions of self government and legitimizes people’s participation for inclusive governance, through the formation of the Ward Committees¹.

Efforts to institutionalize and enhance people’s participation in urban governance are strengthened more recently through the enactment of a Community Participation Law²; which is one of the mandatory reforms under JNNURM³. The Community Participation Law is aimed at strengthening municipal governments by institutionalizing citizen participation by introducing the concept of *Area Sabhas* (consisting of all registered voters of a polling booth) in urban areas. These measures are expected to bring the local government closer to the people and provide scope for inclusion of marginalized and excluded groups.

After the 74th CAA, most states have made confirmatory legislative amendments to the state Acts. Provisions for Ward Committees have also been provided but the mere existence of the legal provisions does not guarantee democratic participation of people in matters of urban governance. The GoI under JNNURM is now encouraging creation of *Area Sabhas*, in line with *Gram Sabhas* in rural areas to increase opportunities of people’s

participation in local governance. The Government on the other hand is also opening up to private, semi-private organizations and in certain cases with NGOs in the form of partnerships to ensure better delivery of services.

3.1. Participation of Citizens in Local Governance

The Ward Committees are expected to serve as an effective forum for interaction of people with the ward Councilor and brings in transparency and accountability in local governance. The Act specifies that adequate representations should be given in the WCs to different sections of the population in the area; including weaker sections, women, NGOs and voluntary agencies.

Following the Act, many cities have created Ward Committees but there are vast differences across cities and between the Ward Committees in one city and in most cases, they have only been given limited powers and funds (De Wit et.al. 2008). Moreover in many cities, ward committees have been formed with a jurisdiction of more than one ward, representing a large number of people. It is only in Kerala and West Bengal where the state legislations have prescribed one ward committee for each ward. In many places, the WCs formed actually perform the functions of a zonal committee – like in Mumbai, where there is one WC for 3 wards covering a population of 1.4 lakhs and WCs with 15 wards covering a population of 8 lakhs (Sivaramakrishnan, 2006). The average population covered by each WC is too large to ensure any proximity with elected representatives. In Bangalore each WC covers an average population of 1.53 lakh. Though West Bengal has one WC for each ward, in Kolkata a WC represents a population of about 40,000, which is also quite large. This did not serve the purpose of bringing the local government in close proximity to the people; as participation in such large population becomes quite impossible (De Wit et.al. 2008). As a response to this, the government is encouraging formation of Area Sabhas, in lines with its rural counterpart, the Gram Sabha, for each polling booth in an urban area. All registered voters residing in the polling booth will be members of the Area Sabha. The purpose is to involve citizens in municipal functions like setting priorities, budgeting provisions, exerting pressure for compliance of existing regulations, and other matters of local governance.

Researches done on the Ward Committees do not show a very encouraging picture (De Wit et.al. 2008, Sivaramakrishnan, 2006). In most of the states, membership of the WCs is not open to the civil society or NGOs/CBOs. Even in states where it is open, it is mostly on the basis of nomination by the Councilor or ULBs. Thus participation in WCs is subject to approval by the elected

representatives/ municipal officials, which is itself against the spirit of open participation by citizens. In a comparative study of WCs in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal, Sivaramakrishnan (2006) points out that it is only Kerala that has a broad spectrum of categories which is open for membership in WCs.

Neighbourhood associations, known by different names in different cities (Resident Welfare Associations or RWAs in Delhi, Advanced Locality Management Groups (ALMs) in Mumbai) are increasingly taking on a new role as active citizens groups interacting with the local government and its representatives for local development issues. These associations have been promoted by local governments in most cases through the implementation of participative schemes, as one of the defining virtues of good governance.

Studies on such neighborhood associations have pointed that these associations serve as platforms for activism of the 'middle class' for the 'middle class'; they are a feature of residential colonies and are absent from slums. (Lama-Rewal, 2007). In the case of ALMs⁴ in Mumbai, studies have found that ALMs are mostly concentrated in the wards with higher and rising income levels or in colonies with old communities like the Christians, Parsis. (Zerah, 2007). Baud and Nainan (2008), also finds ALMs being concentrated in mostly middle-income wards of the city. Similarly, in the case of Delhi, studies point out that participation in associational activities is skewed quite heavily towards those with higher levels of education and income. (Harriss, 2005). In Delhi, under the Bhagidari⁵ scheme, the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) are registered as 'bhagidars' or partners of the government in matters of local governance. The three primary stakeholders in the Bhagidari scheme of the Delhi Government are the market/trader and industrial associations, bureaucrats of the municipal, state and central government departments that operate in Delhi and registered RWAs in DDA approved residential colonies. The Bhagidari scheme thus excludes almost 69% of Delhi's population living in slums and unauthorized colonies and also tenants from this unique scheme of 'citizen-government partnership' (Ghertner, 2011). Similar findings are reported in studies of other metropolitan cities like, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore (Lama-Rewal, 2007; Kundu 2011).

The neighborhood associations involving middle-class groups are expanding their claim to both political and public space, often excluding 'unwanted people'. This is evident from the political aspirations of RWAs in Delhi and Mumbai (Lama-Rewal 2007, Zerah, 2007) as also the issues that are taken up by them: mostly

relating to cleanliness, environment, prevention of encroachments, removal of hawkers and slums. These associations have been found to be directly working with the executive wing of the local government, ignoring the councilor, as they suspect that the councilor favour the urban poor (Lama-Rewal, 2007). This parallel system creates a power tussle in the local administration, between the elected representatives and the local bureaucrats; as the latter are more inclined towards the middle-income, educated people (Singh and Parthasarathy, 2010).

It is widely recognized that the poor negotiate their relationship with the local governance through the channels of the elected representatives and the lower bureaucracy; what is referred to as the 'politics by stealth' (Benjamin & Bhuvaneshwari, 2001). The poor vote more in India, surpassing the wealthier groups and they are able to use their political networks to negotiate the governance process for favorable outcomes (Harris 2005, Ghertner 2011). However, it is these political channels of communication between the urban poor and the local government through the elected representatives and lower bureaucracy; that is being disrupted and delinked by the new partnerships emerging between resident associations and the local government.

3.2 Participation of Private Sector in Delivery of Services

In a study of the Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project, a project that aims to extend piped water from the Cauvery to over two million residents in peri-urban Bangalore, Ranganathan et al (2009) finds a serious disconnect between the model and technical, social and economic realities on the ground. The project is based on a commercially viable model in that it leverages state loans, grants, debt raised through municipal bonds and almost 35% of the total projects capital expenditure to be recovered from beneficiaries as cost-recovery. The authors argue that the project treats users of water as 'consumers', and even then fails to deliver the minimum entitlements guaranteed to a consumer who has paid for the service; i.e. even after paying for the beneficiary contribution, many areas have not received water supply, owing to delay in project implementation.

Koonan and Sampat (2012) review three pilot PPP projects of the Delhi Jal Board, which is aimed at increasing the 'efficiency' and 'financial sustainability' of the water supply utility by reducing non-revenue water (NRW) and providing improved water supply to the project area round the clock (24x7). The study reveals the surreptitious methods adopted by the Delhi Government and Delhi Jal Board in pushing for privatization of water services without proper consultation with the local people.

4. Conclusion

Even if democratic decentralization increases opportunities for participation, elite capture is a reality and a risk. The risk is more in settings where the elected representatives have to represent a very large heterogeneous population; as in the case of Ward Committees in most Indian cities. The chances of capture are more where there are structural inequalities, illiteracy, lack of information and awareness among the population, a low degree of organization and interest in the participation. The presence of powerful local associations representing elite groups who pursue their agenda of local development with the local elected representatives and officials makes it difficult for the poor, who may not be organized enough to negotiate their case. Studies from Indian cities reveal that the local government is more keen to partner with the local associations that represent middle-class and upper-class property holders. It is mostly these local associations who participate in the matters of the local governance and give their opinions – which may not represent the issues and problems of the poor inhabitants of the same area. Often such local associations work directly with the officials bypassing the local elected representatives.

In partnerships with the private sector for delivery of services, one of the strongest critiques have been that they treat the citizens as ‘customers’ and ‘clients’, thus refusing them the entitlements and rights of a citizen. It is an attempt to depoliticize the governance system and restrict rights of citizens only to those of a customer of a service. In this scenario, it is often the poor who are worst hit, as they are not lucrative ‘customers’, owing to their poor paying capacities. Thus in most cases, PPP models based on cost-efficiency find it difficult to provide coverage of services to the poor areas. The major difference between services provided by the government and by a private provider is that, while all legal citizens have a right over government services, it is only the ‘customers’ (as defined in the project concerned) that has a right over the services provided by the private sector. Often the design of these programmes excludes the poor as eligibility is defined in terms of paying capacity as users or evidence of property ownership. Local governments have to devise ways to define and design programmes that are more inclusive of the poor. □

Notes :

¹ Article 243S of the Indian Constitution makes it mandatory for any urban local body having a population of three lakhs or more to constitute a Wards Committee, consisting of one or more wards.

² Community participation law is a mandatory reform under JNNURM, to be enacted by the State Governments receiving funds under JNNURM. It aims at institutionalizing citizen participation in urban governance through Ward Committees and Area Sabhas.

- ³ The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India launched in 2005, aiming at encouraging reforms in urban governance and fast track planned development of identified cities.
- ⁴ Advanced Locality Management (ALMs) are registered micro-level institutions representing one building or a group of buildings covering one or two lanes, mostly in residential areas and committed to organize door-to-door collection of garbage. ALMs were set up by the Department of Solid Waste Management of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) as an alternative strategy to expand services and reduce costs.
- ⁵ Bhagidari is a programme launched by the Delhi Government in 2000 that seeks to 'devise institutional forms of citizen-government partnerships and increase the efficacy of existing representational forms of participation'. <http://delhigovt.nic.in/bhagi.asp> accessed on Nov 8, 2012.

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**The Dilemma of
Decentralization:
“The Problem” of
Development Discourse in
India**

While decentralization and “power to the people” seems to be vouched for and encouraged at the national political arena, the implementation of decentralized governance has not come without bias. The paper discusses the success story of decentralized governance in Kerala, only to make a more stark comparison with the contradictory developmental path that the State is taking up with regard to the North-Eastern states of the country.

**S. Harikrishnan and Suraj
Gogoi ***

*Authors have completed M.A. Developmental Studies from TISS, Mumbai, 2012.

1. Introduction

The Kerala State Human Development Report 2005 establishes that for a successful developmental path to be drawn, it is important that there be *effective public action*¹ (*Government of Kerala, 2005*). There is little debate on the need and impact of the radical changes brought about in governance in India in this regard, by the 73rd and 74th Amendments in the Constitution. Decentralization was introduced in India to achieve a holistic development of different communities and regions within the Indian polity. It was envisioned to bring about radical empowerment to the local bodies of governance, and inundated the local levels of Government with administrative, developmental and fiscal responsibilities. (Vijayanand, 2009). While in one part of the country, a struggle against a MNC in Plachimada began drawing the contours of the power of local self-government with regard to their responsibility to public welfare the hue and cry of the local people questioning the abetted exploitation of resources in another part of the country is falling on deaf ears. (Bijoy, C. R. 2006). Two decades after the all-important amendments were passed, their performance and impact needs to be discussed, and maybe improved.

This paper tries to argue that while decentralization and “power to the people” seems to be vouched for and encouraged at the national political arena, the implementation of decentralized governance, has not come without bias. It does not make a case against decentralization, or try to suggest that democratic deepening would not succeed in the North-East. But it argues that the mode of development being taken by the State with regard to these areas is problematic, and in the absence of a functional institutional decentralized system or involvement of the locals, this path of development needs to be assessed and the failure to promote democratic decentralization needs to be questioned. Very briefly, the paper discusses the success story of decentralized governance in Kerala, only to make a more stark comparison with the contradictory developmental path that the State is taking up with regard to the North-Eastern states of the country.

2. Decentralisation – Kerala’s Success Story and Comparative Lessons

Enough literature has been dedicated to the success story of decentralized governance in Kerala. Harilal, Chaudhuri & Heller (2007) concluded that the irreversible changes in the importance of Local Governments brought about in Kerala by decentralization have built new institutions and new channels of participation have been opened up. The success story of the implementation of decentralization in Kerala has its dynamics in the local polity and

comparatively stable agrarian relations and arrangements. Bardhan (2002) suggests that decentralization can be successful only if participatory development is increased. It is the absence of this notion of decentralization that makes the developmental processes in the North-East disputed and widely contested. An argument in this paper is that fundamental logic of decentralisation is questioned in the state policy in the approach to development of North East. One of the main reasons for the decentralisation and local empowerment reform in Kerala was the understanding that local people are the best judges of what's good for their environment.³ In contrast, the idea of decentralization has two dimensions of neglect that impede its implementation in the North-East: (a) non-inclusiveness of local people, and (b) failure to account for the diverse and distinctive dimensions of local economies.

District Planning Committees (DPCs) play an important role in local governance. As compared to the functioning of DPCs in Kerala which is so people centric and has bottom up approach, the North-Eastern states show a stark difference. Assam has functional DPCs but only in the non-sixth scheduled districts. While DPCs were set up in Arunachal Pradesh only in 2011, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland are "exempted" from constituting DPCs and Tripura has just one functional DPC. (Deshpande & Chakravarty, 2011)

The "Look-East Policy" that is propounded by the Indian State for the North-East is "backward bending" in terms of its natural resources donor was formed to initiate fast-track economic and infrastructural development. Many highways, trans-Asian railways and gas pipeline and big dams in Arunachal Pradesh have been a part of this Policy. The vast landscape that these mega dams will cover will have catastrophic effects on the area. Through the Look East Policy the idea is to integrate the India's North-East with the South-East Asian economies and hence "open-up" the space for all possible exploitation. From such a development the people of north-east are not going to benefit. Their say in the matter is minimal, and their protests are being ignored. In other words, the idea of development does not tune in with the political economy of the "local region."

3. The "Problem" of the Developmental Discourse

Ashis Nandy rightly points out that knowledge in post-colonial societies have been an imperialism of categories (Nandy 2001). The historiographies of the life worlds have to be reconstructed and have to be viewed as more than a 'known' category. The fifth and the sixth schedule provides for the space of scheduled areas under which the tribals are given the separate laws for governance and administration. North-east is also included in the scheduled

areas. This provision allows them to preserve their distinct identity, history, customary practices and traditional beliefs. It also gives control of natural resources over which the tribes have the rights traditionally. But such a right has been violated through the massive construction for infrastructures and other expropriation. The oil extraction and dams are classical example of such a discourse.

How will the Indian state restore and rehabilitate the different communities of Arunachal Pradesh who have different land arrangements and rights? The material basis of political-economy has become more resounding which includes peoples, institutions and lived praxis, that gets linked more to other spaces and thereby producing politics of spatiality (Guha 2011). This gives us a new picture of how contemporary nation-states are contested and controlled (ibid). We should also not negate the disciplinary society which is emerging in terms of the nation-state. Development became unaccountable and politics of disorder took an ethno-nationalistic turn among different groups of North-East on one hand and the state came hard at the people to create a consensus of an integrated territory in geography. Within this political hamlet, development was introduced. This did not seem to go well like elsewhere where the idea of the nation is being forced upon with such developmental ease. Hence in order to understand the notion of decentralization and to look at its failure or success, one has to understand the social history of the region and of the people.

4. Digression from the Standpoint of Law and Society

The Look East policy is in direct contrast with the idea of decentralization. The participation in the affair of this development is nowhere found among the local people rather the only participation seen is in displacement. The amount of life world destruction will be enormous and their habitat will be affected and certain tribal groups will have no space for articulation. The rehabilitation is far from reality and as promised. Scholars like Sanjib Baruah (2002) believe that the decision to invest on infrastructure should be based on 'social rates of return'. The critical question here is whether the control over land, ideas, resources and people would remain in the hands of the Indian state, which continues to privilege pan-Indian views (Biswas and Ahemed 2004).The local economies are by-passed by a long margin. This is where the notions of non-state spaces, world of the third and instrumentalization of disorder become important to the apparent reality caused by development of this nature. The inflow of funds to North-East has increased since the Indo-China War of 1962, but there has been increase of poverty, much higher than national standards. Question arises why the level of poverty and livelihood

hasn't improved with increase of funds? The development of the region has an agenda of national security. The national security approach is reproduced at various levels of governance all the way to the local level, affecting state and non-state actors. The narrowness of the national security results in very narrow agenda of development, sustained by patronage politics and militarization of society which in no way meets the need of the people.

5. Conclusion

Recent times have seen exploitation of resources in different parts of the country as it embarks on a journey of "fast-track industrialization". The displacement and dispossession of a large number of locals during this process exposit a spatial imagination of capital with a neo-liberal state as its ally. Arguably, this alliance has led to an inevitable reconstruction of the fundamental elements of relation, power and control. In other words, the current developmental path with neo-liberal flavour without the inclusion of the locals may prove successful, but would not sustain. The contestation for space with the logic of capital often exploitative in nature, driven by elitist actors from below or/and other have led us to the theatre where conflict have risen to social movements against such logic (Guha 2011). As evident, decentralization has undoubtedly has the potential to bring about radical changes in the functioning of democracy at the local levels; but it has been observed that the exceptionally successful cases on substantive democracy would involve a long history of social mobilization. Thus, it would suffice to say that one of the major challenges that impede the functioning of a uniform decentralized democracy deal with the "historically conditioned dynamic relations among broadly constituted social actors". These factors drive not just the *making* of democracy but also the *deepening* of democracy. (Heller, 2000) □

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**Gramapanchayats and
Continuing Education
Centres in Karnataka :**
Where Rubber Hits the
Road

The strong grass root democracy is one of the founding stones for success or failure of any literacy programme. The fundamental aim behind Continuing Education Centre (CEC) is to provide opportunity for the neo-learners to learn new things to upgrade their literacy skills acquired under Total Literacy and Post Literacy Programmes. Basically one CEC will be setup to cater to the need of population of 500-2000 with a voluntary teacher (Prerakas). Grama Panchyaths (GPs) are assigned to manage CECs in each village. For every 10-12 CECs, a nodal centre has been established. This is a summary of paper findings of a study conducted in selected districts of Karnataka and bring to light the experience of GPs in administering Continuing Education Centres (CECs).

Dr. Nanjunda*

* Faculty, UGC-CSSEIP, Mysore University, Mysore-06, Karnataka, Mobile : 09880964840.
email: anthroedit@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Karnataka has the fourth highest percentage of literacy amongst the states in India. Total literacy programme in the state has been undertaken in war foot manner in Karnataka. Today Continuing Education Programme has been implemented in all districts of the state while Adult Education Programme was started in 1941 in India. In 1988 Jana Shikshan Nilayam was started as a part of National Literacy Mission programme. Each Nilayam had Prerakas whose function was to conduct literacy programme for non-literates. Also they were assigned to facilitate discussion over many current social issues, and to conduct Cultural programmes, occasional courses etc. Between the years 1990 to 2000 the total literacy campaign was implemented in all the districts of Karnataka and through this programme around 60, 00,000 people become literate. In the year 2001 continuing education programme started focusing on the literacy skills of the neo-literates. The basic aim behind continuing education programme was to provide opportunity for the new literates to learn new things and the consolidation of the literacy skills. Basically this center was setup to cater the need of the population 500-2000 (Venkatesh, 2009).

As a part of post literacy programme, for the first few years the central government would bear the expenditure of the CECs and later State Government should support. Though the programme was supposed to start before 1998. But due to the problems including identification of locations, hiring Prerakas (teacher), providing infrastructure etc, it took considerable time to start this programme officially. As a part of Continuing Education Programme, village literacy committees were formed which had members including local Gram panchayaths, SHGs members, NGOs neo-literates and other experts. This samithi is assigned the task of managing the center. Also the chairman of the local Grama panchayath (GP) is the president of the samithi. The Prerakas also had to play a major role in terms of taking major decision about the management of the entire center. From 2004 onwards continuing education centers were brought under the administrative jurisdiction of respective GPs and that GPs had to allocate Rs. 25,000 for implementation of literacy programmes at the respective villages.

Also GPs should help the CECs to start simple vocational courses. Further, GP's were assigned the task to reach the target of 85% of literacy rate in their respective areas and Karnataka Govt. had assigned Zilla Saksharath Samithi to release grants on time to the Grama panchyaths focusing on all continuing educational centers. Also GP's were expected to frame sub committees to prepare action plans. The major plan behind handing-over the management of CEC to GP's is to mobilize the community through the elected

representatives as they are sensitive to the needs of the people and can strongly influence the community. This current study provides insights about the functioning of G P's in selected districts of south Karnataka.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

To study the efforts of Grama Panchyaths in managing the Continuing Education Centres, the challenges, facing and explore potential of Continuing Education Centres.

2.2. Study Area

This study has been conducted in the selected Gram Panchayaths of Mysore, Coorg, Chamaraj nager and Hassan Districts of Karnataka state.

2.3. Sampling Design

A total of 50 Gram Panchayaths members have been surveyed. Gram Panchayaths were selected using simple random technique based on the progress reports available in the concerned Zilla Panchayaths

2.4. Data

Primary data has been collected through survey method with a pre tested interview schedule and focus group discussion. Secondary data about the programmes and their coverage has also been collected from published sources.

Separate focus groups interviews were conducted with the members other than the samples of the study viz. community leaders, local influential persons, media personnel and local religious leaders. Government functionaries were also interviewed on the Govt. policies for the promotion CECs.

3. Results and Discussion

Among the respondents, 30% of them are illiterate, while 12% of them had studied up to high school. Whereas 14% of them had studied up to higher primary and 45% of them up to primary level. The dissatisfaction on the part of respondents in managing the CEC are 48% fund not realized on time, 42% - lack of expertise, 24% lack of resources, 22% caste based political interference and misuse of funds. The diversion of funds which come as a hindrance in managing the CEC was also highlighted Regarding stock purchasing, 22% of the elected representatives said that stock purchasing has been stopped because of shortage of funds. Unwanted purchases, misuse of funds during purchase, and poor

quality of material purchase has also been in the list. Upon an enquiry on the success and failure rates of CEC following opinion were registered-18% only partial success,28% complete success,46% very little success, eight percent completely failed. Prerakas too had their set of reasons towards inefficient functioning of CECs. They said that there was lack of efforts to enroll neo learners so as to sustain the activities of the CEC. They complained of not getting their meager salaries on time.

Community members' opinions too were gathered as part of the study who too expressed their anguish over the non-functioning of the CEC. Many were not at all aware of CEC and its functions while a good number of them (42%) demanded adequate funding and non-interference of caste based politics for effective functioning of the CEC.

The strong grassroots democracy is the main reason why continuing education programme has been so successful in many parts of the state. The implementation of educational programs through CECs has to be primarily undertaken by Gram Panchayat which has to be incorporated under their local plan. But in the wake of non-availability of standing guidelines for the Gram Panchayats on the administration and financial management of CECs the study has found that GPs are unable to manage them properly. Also there is no proper direction for Zilla Saksharatha Samithi to release the money neither to CECs nor regarding the appointment of Preraks. Also they are not being paid on time and their payment is too meager. In the wake of lack of strict guidelines on hiring of the Prerakas and their honorarium structure many GP Prerakas are not taking the classes regularly and are instead involved in local politics. Some G P members were found to be taking some commission even from Prerakas honorarium. In many cases Prerakas were being paid twice or thrice in a year! Even though there is a provision for involvement of local NGOs in CECs programme, GP's are not interested to involve local NGOs. Quite interestingly many of them were not aware about the existence of CECs.

Lack of proper guidelines to form subcommittees has led to most of the GPs not finding it necessary to form the subcommittees. Also it is found that Gov't has not given any proper guidelines to frame sub-committees. The study also revealed some of the facts regarding the infrastructure facilities to run a CEC. In many GPs there was lack of adequate space to run CECs centers while in some places it was hard to find proper light and ventilation. In majority of the cases the reading materials given to the neo literature were inappropriate and inadequate. In some of the remote villages GP have not established CECs. In many cases GPs did not

have even enough space to keep their stock safely and was therefore gathering dust after being dumped in a corner. It was also found that there were no separate guidelines to purchase reading materials. There is no proper agency to evaluate the success and failure of the CECs. Only four percent of GP's have taken some initiatives to implement creative programme for neo-literates through CECs.

4. Conclusion

It goes with an iota of doubt that CECs can play an important role in improving the literacy standards of the members of Gram Panchayats. Therefore clear guidelines, adequate funds and proper infrastructure should be provided to ensure that CECs can perform to their best. Elected representatives should be given orientation so that they understand the due importance of the same. Zilla Saaksharath Samithi should also be well informed to handle CECs activities while sub-committees can manage day to day business of the CECs. Revision of fund allocation and its speedier disbursement should be undertaken at the earliest. In some GPs members were found misusing CECs money for their personal interest. Such cases of fraud should be taken into tough hands. Action plan is also required to implement and create awareness about literacy programmes at each village level with the help of NGOs. Scientific survey has to be conducted to identify the non-literates and to bring them to CEC soon. Also proper involvement of the elected members of the GP is required for the success of the CEC programme. GP should seek Local NGOs help to use their knowledge, skill and experience.

Overall the study brings forth a hard hitting fact that result based monitoring and accountability is key to the effective functioning of local self-Governments and that unless efforts to enhance the educational and literacy levels of the several men and women is drastically improved as cannot boast to being leaping ahead in our development agendas. □

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**Human Security
Driven Rural
Development :**
An Inquiry in the
Context of Bangladesh

It is evident that absence of people centric and sustainable rural development planning poses a serious threat towards ensuring human security. With this notion as the focus, this paper examines how human security issues are focused in the development policies and programs in rural Bangladesh, and how people's movement and local community initiatives responded to the threats through innovative approaches to human security at the local and community level. It is revealed from the civic opinion that, human security has not been on the top of the agenda of the Local Government in Bangladesh.

Mohammad Tarikul Islam*

* PhD Researcher, Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh. email: tarikul.islam81@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Human security is key to the survival of human being at all levels. The objective of human security is to safeguard human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillments. The concept of human security was initially articulated in the first United Nations Development Program published Human Development Report (Human Development Report 1994). Strategies of Human Security involve Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community Security and Political Security (New Dimensions of Human Security 1994).

Community participation in the rural development programs in Bangladesh is low whereas most community organizations are inactive and lack sense of belonging to development programs. Community members largely look forward to get help and aid from outsiders, and several programs are overlapping and redundant. There are also issues of illogically occupying forest land while chemicals are used unwisely, and potassium and bombing have been used for fishing. These forms of rural development consequences led to human insecurity in rural Bangladesh.

This paper presents a critical analysis of rural development experiences of Bangladesh. The paper also directs it efforts towards analyzing the current rural development initiative in the light of human security based on civic opinion.

2. Rural Development and Human Security Nexus

Human security is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenge the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. A decade ago, the United Nations Development Programme introduced the concept of human security in its 1994 Human Development Report. Strategies of Human Security are associated with Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community Security, and Political Security (New Dimensions of Human Security 1994).

Rural development in general denotes economic development and community development actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighborhoods, remote villages and the countryside. Economic activities typically relate to the primary sector production and processing of food and raw

materials. Rural development actions particularly aim at the social and economic development of the areas.

One of the primary aim of the rural government policy is to develop the undeveloped villages. Rural development aims at finding the ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people themselves so as to meet the required need of the rural area (Phongphit2001).

Human security forms an important part of people's well-being, and is therefore an objective of development. It could also be said that relations between rural development and human security reflect in different ways as indicated below:

- o First, human security and rural development are both people-centered. They challenge the orthodox approach to security and development i.e. state security and liberal economic growth respectively. Both treat human as agents and believe that they should be empowered to participate in the course.
- o Second, both perspectives are multidimensional. Both address people's dignity as well as their material and physical concerns.
- o Third, both schools of thought consider poverty and inequality as the root causes of individual vulnerability.

The nature of the relationship between human security and rural development is contested among human security advocates. It is believed that a human security approach propel the development thinkers to move above and beyond this legalistic approach to get at the underlying sources of inequality and violence which are the root causes of insecurity in today's world (Muktasam, 2007).

3. Human Security in the Rural Development of Bangladesh

Rural development in Bangladesh has been equal to agricultural development in a broader sense, where agricultural sector remains as an important part of the Bangladesh's rural development. Farmers mostly working in the agribusiness sector especially, with the input from industries that offers chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides are a threat to Human Security. Union Parishad is entrusted upon responsibility to address these issues properly.

In general, the right to the security of one's person is associated with his/her liberty and includes the right to seek habeas corpus, if one is imprisoned unlawfully. Rights to security of person can

guard them against lethal conduct of anti-social elements, and can be used in regard to prisoners' rights as well. The formal justice system in Bangladesh is under tremendous pressure with much workload and inadequate number of officials and staff to dispose the cases. As a result, the case backlogs add up to the existing pending cases and at present it stands on about half a million cases. It creates a negative impact for the rural poor and vulnerable group of people who cannot afford the expenses of cases and do not have clear understanding of how to get access to justice in the upper courts on some issues that could be easily resolved at the local level (Fazlul1998).

The Ministry of Local Government Division (LGD), UNDP and the European Commission jointly have undertaken a programme titled 'Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh' to providing support to the justice system through this project in 500 selected Union Parishads (UP) of the country in 2010 (Local Government Division 2010). It also intends to develop capacity of the village court members, elected representatives and support staff. Motivation programme were carried out in order to sensitize all concerned on the role and functions of village courts and their benefits on the overall justice system (Kamal 1992).

Human security initiatives, which offer relevant NGOs the opportunities to enjoy the kinds of flexible, multi-dimensional support which many of them have only dreamed about, will therefore attract a number of innovative and experienced NGOs (World Bank 2008). In short, while NGOs are still likely to be most concerned with the essentials of improving human development, becoming involved in human security initiatives would help them to strengthen as organizations and to reinforce and extend the contribution that they are able to make to the people with whom they already work.

Bangladesh is a disaster prone country and disaster vulnerability possesses a threat to human security. Human security is at risk as disaster renders the community shelter less, unfed, sick, impoverished, and displaced. The existing structure has formal provision of disaster network upto union level. In this structure, the line agencies actually participate under the coordination of either UNO (the upazila administrative head) or at union level through the coordination of Union Parishad Chairman (which is an elected position). Resilience capacity of community and utilization of their indigenous way to cope with disaster helps UP to face the challenges of natural disaster.

With regard to political security, it is obvious that the benchmark set for political security are coming across the discussion of civil society organizations but impact of this is not remarkable.

Mainstreaming women through gender specific policies is an acknowledged precondition for achieving meaningful development in any developing country like Bangladesh.

The present government is committed to introduce Citizens' Charters in public agencies. The initiative, however, has not yet been proved to be successful to bring any remarkable change in the public service delivery. One key reason for this is the top down approach in which the Charters were produced without any involvement of the local-level service providers as well as service recipient. Most common types of irregularities in distributing safety net benefits are that many Union Parishads lack the knowledge about policy of safety-net program (Social Services) and its implementation process. Union Parishad has many functions which are closely related to environmental programs. In fact, Union Parishad plays a significant role in ensuring social security for the people living in rural Bangladesh. Union Parishad has two types of social security programs like social assistance and social services.

Rural Police institution under Union Parishad is a useful adjunct to constitute a link of Thana officers with villages through the hajira (attendance) system of rural police in the Thana. Modern Community Policing functions where all elements in a community, both official and unofficial, conceive of the common good and combine to produce social climate and an environment conducive to good order and happiness of all those living within it. The aim of a modern Community Policing should be based on consent and understanding of common good, the creation of a community of neighborhood free from fear and uncontrolled delinquency and politics and crime control would be its primary aim. In respecting the dignity of the individuals, nobody should be regarded as unworthy of its concern.

Rural Bangladesh has set a good example of communal security through co-existence of people having different religious background in peaceful and harmonious manner. The present government has revived the constitution of 1972 resulting re-establishment of secularism as the state principle. The term secularism refers to the governmental practice of indifference towards religion. Secular politics attempt to prevent religious philosophies or bodies from influencing governmental policies. The Constitution of Bangladesh prohibits discrimination against members of a particular religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

In the rural area, economic security work emphasizes on family's economic improvement, community-level system reform, and comprehensive neighborhood transformation. While different

neighborhoods require different approaches, it directs its efforts to integrate family economic success strategies with community-based economic engines and the interests of local public and private investment leaders. Rural people are experiencing difficulties due to unemployment, health hazard, growth of population, and excessive price of daily commodities.

In order to get consolidated impression about the essence of human security driven rural development approach in Rural Bangladesh, the study attempted to conduct civic opinion survey following convenient sampling. A total of 100 persons irrespective of caste, profession, religion, gender, education and political parties were interviewed from Dhaka city as well as from one of the villages (Mahmudpur village) of Mymensingh district in Bangladesh in the month of November 2012.

From the survey findings, it can be seen that out of total number of respondents 80 % have opined in support of human security driven rural development programme in order to ensure sustainable development for the rural people of Bangladesh while only 15 % respondents have partially agreed on the query. On the other hand, five percent have disagreed explaining that the confrontational politics poses serious intimidation towards building consensus and mutual trust among the political parties on the issue of sustainable development and therefore, human security driven rural development approach is not pertinent in the country like Bangladesh.

4. Rethinking Rural Development in the Light of Human Security

The following steps could be considered in mainstreaming human security in rural community development:

- o Involving local community in policy development and implementation – from village level, to national and regional level.
- o Revitalizations of local community organizations and institutions, promote effective community networking.
- o Creating awareness, improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes in incorporating human security for all development stakeholders, from grass root level to the international level. Human security and human development should adopt adaptive management approach to rural development that is characterized by continuous action learning at the community and the government levels.

- o There is a need for paradigm shift in Government in that development is an empowering process through which local peoples voice out their ideas and opinions, and making their decisions on their life. Local community with their own wisdom could participate in the development in meaningful ways.
- o The needs for more research in policies and programs on rural development & human security (how to promote human security or reduce human insecurity)
- o Formation of Human Security Committee (HSC) under the auspicious leadership of Union Parishad (UP) could add value towards promotion of human security. At local level, people's participation towards rural development process can be accelerated throughout this initiative. The main objective of HSC will be to ensure participation of community so that local Government will be able to address the core problems related to human insecurity. The proposed HSC will come into function based on the principles of social capital, social service and self-motivation and voluntarism. Councilors will sit together to discuss the emerging issues and come up with unanimous decision to cope with that problems.

Mainstreaming human security to the existing mainstream rural development approaches is a must. Neglecting it means inviting more risks and fears to the existing lives and livelihood of rural community. The paper suggests for the important of mainstreaming human security in every policy development and implementation through community and key stakeholder participation. So, time has come to rethink about rural development approaches to ensure human security in rural Bangladesh. □

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South Asia School of Local Governance

The school set up by KILA will be a haven for elected representatives and officials of South Asian countries, such as SriLanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan, to assimilate and disseminate inputs on democratic decentralisation and local governance.

**Women Empowerment
through Participation
in Panchayat Raj
Institutions :**
Successful Case Studies
from Tamil nadu

This paper analyzes the impact of women's participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Tamil Nadu towards the process of women's empowerment. The study on the participation of women in local governance plays a pivotal role in the advancement of women. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. The paper examines how change in agents i.e. reservation and participation of women in local governance are raising consciousness of women's issues and bringing about the changes in the institutional structures and processes influencing the governance discourse in itself.

V. Stephen*
Dr.A Relton**

* Ph D Scholar in Social Work

** Associate Professor and Head, P.G. and Research Department of Social Work, Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli – 620 017

1. Introduction

In the recent past, the political life of rural women has gained considerable attention due to factors like women's reservation, increased awareness and legislative measures like 73rd Amendment of constitution, which has affected the role of women in local governance. The present study seeks to explore the participation of women in local governance with special reference to women of rural areas in Tamil Nadu.

The enforcement of 73rd Amendment has paved way for the empowerment of women. However, reservation can only be regarded as the first step in this direction. It is necessary to create a proper social, economic and political condition to enable women to participate effectively in the local Government institutions without endangering the positive values of the prevailing family system. Nonetheless the act has ushered a new era in which the villagers can at least try to decide their own destiny (Mohanty, 2002).

Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. The changes taking place in the realm of women's empowerment due to 73rd Amendment is important for understanding of the differences between traditional and modern social structure. The study tries to examine and elucidate that how change in agents i.e. reservation and participation of women in local governance are raising consciousness of women's issues and bringing about the changes in the institutional structures and processes influencing the governance discourse in itself. So the study of women in local governance is an important aspect of the changing society especially in making women's empowerment a reality.

Women's empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire due recognition in par with men, to participate in the development process of the society through the political institutions. So, what is the significance of empowerment through Panchayati Raj? According to the document on Women's Development (United Nations 1985), women's role in the political process has virtually remained unchanged since independence. Broad-based political participation of women has been severely limited due to various traditional factors such as caste, religion, feudal attitude and family status. As a result, women have been left on the periphery of political life. It is against this background that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act came to provide them an opportunity to take active part in decision-making process at the local level.

Devaki Jain (1994) in her analysis of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment writes that the main intention of the policy makers behind this reservation is two-fold, one is the democratic justice and second is resource utilization (human). She further states that as half of the population are women, the country's development cannot be achieved without the proper participation of woman.

Women elected to panchayats on the basis of quotas have often been labeled as 'proxy women', because they could be placed in the local council as stand-ins for their husbands, who might even participate in the meetings in their place. In other parts of the world as well, women in politics, especially those elected through quotas, might be seen as 'token women'. Research on 'quota' women has revealed many cases of purely symbolic representation of women, especially if the women elected have no power base in a constituency of their own, in the parties or in strong movements outside the political institutions.

The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties. The absence of operational guidelines and terms of reference for female elected representatives, the limited capacity of the female elected representatives to operate in public institutions of this nature, the lack of awareness over their roles and responsibilities, the systematic discrimination and biases by male elected colleagues all these are seen as factors impeding women's meaningful participation in local government. However, there are also many success stories of women who felt totally isolated and powerless in the beginning but eventually gained confidence and influence.

To obtain in-depth information about how the women are participating and performing their role in Panchayat Raj Institutions as elected women representatives case study method was relied upon

2. Case Studies

2.1 Case Study 1

Ms. Dhanalakshmi w/o Mr. Senthilkumar aged 33, is a ward member from Semipalayam Panchayat, Palladam Block from Tiruppur District. Her educational qualification is +2, and she is currently pursuing her BSW in distance education. She started her career as a field level staff of an NGO in Tiruppur district. Her husband is working in a private company nearby their locality. She got married sixteen years before and has two daughters and is living in an extended family with her mother in law and husband. She is not affiliated to any political party. She was elected from the

ward which was reserved for women. Totally seven candidates contested and she got 151 votes out of 250 polled votes. Her family members and the general public supported her and motivated her to contest in the local body election. Though she started her career as a grass root level worker, she has equipped herself with the requisite knowledge to become a trainer for all Panchayats. She now trains the elected representatives of her district on the implementation of Government schemes. She puts forth a humble request to her colleagues, who have been elected in PRIs, to act on their own. She is concerned that in most of the training sessions the male counter parts from the family are participating instead. She also suggested that awareness generation on the importance of their role, motivation from all levels, attitudinal change on the part of women and Government can curb proxy representation of the elected women representatives.

2.2 Case Study 2

Ms. J. Stella Mary aged 34 hails from Tiruchirappalli district. She is a ward member of Alunthur Panchayat in Manikandam Block. She is elected for the first time from her ward which is a reserved constituency for women. She has studied upto 12th Standard. Her family's occupation is agriculture. She is married and has three school going sons. She feels privileged to have been elected from among the four contestants, who happen to be her close relatives. On her taking charge of office she has displayed information boards in all streets of her ward encouraging the public to air their grievances regarding public affairs and ensures need based sorting out of those issues at the earliest. She did not get any training on PRI systems but has taken her own efforts to learn from various sources the requisite knowledge for better sensitization of the public regarding schemes and welfare measures of the PRI. Since she does not have any political affiliation she has the autonomy to implement her societal initiatives. Her husband is supportive to all her Panchayat level activities. He enthuses in her a sense of confidence and is a constant source of motivation to her, resulting in her enhanced participation in Panchayat and block level activities for the betterment of her ward people. She emphasized the need for pertinent trainings to women representing the PRI in order to equip them with the required skill set that would ensure not only their own empowerment but also the empowerment of the women folk in their community.

2.3 Case Study 3

Ms. Jesumary aged 52, is the Panchayat President of Michelpattinam Panchayat, Mudukulathur Block in Ramanathapuram District. Her husband is an agriculturist and two of her sons are married and one son is doing his engineering.

This is the 4th consecutive term for her in office and ever since she contested in 1996 she has tasted only success in the local body elections. She did her PUC from Fathima College, Madurai and commenced her career as a volunteer in Ariyoli Iyyakkam (Adult Education Programme). Her father was a social activist who inspired her to contest in local body elections. In 1996, she was elected unanimously, as an unopposed candidate for the presidentship. Initially her family rendered a helping hand in her Panchayat level activities, later she developed self confidence and started using her know-how and skills for decision making. Her dedication and tireless contribution for the welfare of her panchayat members have won her more than 10 National and State awards, which stands as a testimony for her outstanding performance in local governance. Her endeavors saw her panchayat to reach the magical mark of 100 % attainment in 'rain water harvesting', 'Sanitation' and 'Small Savings'. She was awarded the Nirmal Gram Puraskar National award for an "Open Defecation Free" village as all the houses, Government and private institutions including schools and Anganwadis had a sanitary toilet of their own. She also received the Uthamar Gandhi Award for her performance in terms of revenue collection and implementation of innovative projects both of which stands out as stellar performances among the many feathers in her cap. In 2003, World Bank invited her to participate in an International conference on sustainable water management held at USA for her outstanding performance in rain water harvesting. She readily participated and shared her experience in local governance to the international delegates. She has undergone several trainings on PRI from NIRD, SIRD and RIRD which played an instrumental role in her success. Now she has become a trainer and motivator for other Panchayat Presidents in southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Government has recognized her Panchayat as model training cum exposure visit centre for other panchayats. Time management, participatory planning, decision making and self confidence are the key to her success.

3. Participation Barriers

Power relations that prevent women from participating in decision-making, operate at many levels. Through the case studies it has been observed that the role of women in local bodies / politics has been limited by factors such as:

- cultural and social norms that restrict women from participating in local body elections;
- perceptions of men as more competent leaders and decision-makers;

- lack of recognition that women's views need to be equally valued;
- lack of capacity building and economic dependency
- lack of legal mechanisms and normative frameworks that protect women's rights and their equality with men;
- political platforms that do not address women's concerns;
- higher rates of illiteracy among women; and
- Public and private forms of violence against those active in politics.

4. Improving the Participation of Women in Local Governance

The following points were suggested by the participants for the betterment of the elected women's participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions:

- Frequent capacity building programmes for the elected women representatives of rural local bodies.
- Inculcation of self worth and decision making capacity among the elected women representatives.
- During the conduct of the block level meetings and other trainings only the elected women representatives of rural local bodies should be entertained. The relatives and family members should not be allowed to give proxy representations. The government machinery should strictly adhere to this norm if they are committed to the cause of women empowerment.
- The Government should take necessary steps to stop the involvement of family members of the elected women representatives in the routine day to day functioning of rural local bodies.

5. Conclusion

The concept of grass root level democracy for women in self governance at both rural and urban levels has not lived up-to the mark in our country. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment seeks to radically alter the power relations in the villages by reserving seats for scheduled castes, tribes, backward classes and women. However, in the absence of proper education, training and economic independence, these groups are unable to assert themselves. Illiteracy, poverty and unemployment impair the very process of participatory development in our country. However there is no

denying of the fact that though the provision of reservation of seats for women has been manipulated by their male counterparts – mostly their husbands – it has certainly empowered the women to some extent. They are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and responsibilities and are asserting themselves in certain cases. If the suggestions to improve the elected women representative's participation are effectively considered and implemented by the Government machinery – especially with regard to preventing proxy representatives – it would pave the way for women's political empowerment and down the line ensure the empowerment of women in all walks of their lives. □

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Certificate Programme in Local Governance

(For Elected Representatives of Local Governments in Kerala)

The Certificate Programme in Local Governance, an unique initiative of KILA, aims at development of knowledge, skills, and attitude required by elected representatives of Local Governments in Kerala for effective involvement in local governance and development. This six months programme intends to transform the practitioners of local governance into professionals. The learning by the participants of the programme will benefit the Local Governments not only during their tenure but also in future as agents of local development.

**Social Protection of
Persons with
Disabilities through
Community Based
Rehabilitation -
An Analysis**

There exist a large disparity between rural and urban population in rehabilitating and mainstreaming of People With Disabilities (PWDs). But we can overcome these obstacles through Community Based Rehabilitation and thereby we can ensure rights and social protection of the PWDs effectively. For the social protection and reinstatement of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs), Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha, has conducted a Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme for PWDs in 44 wards of three gramma panchayaths of Ernakulum District. The results of the study discussed in this paper reveal that, there is a remarkable improvement in the mainstreaming of PWDs especially in the areas of health, education, livelihood and rights and advocacy.

Sr.Kochurani P.J*
Dr.Lizy James**

* Ph.D Scholar, Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha, Kerala, Pin-686 661, Tel Nos-9495382034, 0485-283454. email:sr.ranjose@yahoo.in,

** Puthupparambil, Kanakkary P.O, Kottayam, Kerala, Pin-686 632.
email:lizyjames2002@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedom on an equal basis with others. The Constitution of India applies uniformity to all citizens of India irrespective of their physical impairment. Article 15 sections (1) & (2) and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantees all rights to the PWDs. Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and National Trust Act 1999 describe the definitions and ensure the rights of PWDs. PWD Act 1995, chapter 1, section ii (f) states that: those persons with above 40 % disability as certified by authorized government medical officers can avail of benefits from the government. Chapter 5, No. 26 (a): every child with disability shall have right to free education till the age of 18 years and has access to free, adequate integrated education in government/private schools". Chapter 6, No.33: 3% of vacancies in government shall be reserved for people with disabilities for employment. Chapter VIII No. 47 (1): No establishment shall dispense with, or reduce in rank, an employee who acquires a disability during his service. Chapter VIII 47(2) "No promotion can be denied because of impairment." Chapter 14 No.16 says about punishment for fraudulently availing any benefit meant for persons with disabilities. Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within general community development for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all children and adult with disabilities. (ILO, UNESCO, WHO, joint position paper 2002.)

For the social protection and ensuring the rights of PWDs, Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha conducted CBR programme for PWDs in 44 wards of three Gramma Panchayaths namely Pallarimangalam, Pothanicad and Nellikuzhy of Ernakulum District in Kerala since 2002. The major aim of this work was to bring all types of PWDs in the mainstream of the society. The objectives of the study were to promote the health of PWDs, ensure the quality education for children with disabilities (CWDs), enhance the capacity to the livelihood programmes of the PWDs, and enable the PWDs to achieve their rights and advocacy. This paper analyse the fourth objective of the main study, which is to enhance the capacity of the Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), PWDs and the community to take up responsibilities and address the issues and ensure the rights of PWDs through CBR. In order to achieve the above objective Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha formulated specific objectives as given below. There exist a large disparity between rural and urban population in rehabilitating and mainstreaming of PWDs. E. Helander (2002) says the CBR seeks the integration of the interventions of all relevant sectors - educational, health,

legislative, social and vocational - and aims at the full representation and empowerment of people with disabilities in rural as well as the urban areas. In rural areas, provision for health, education, livelihood and rights & advocacy have serious limitations. But we can overcome these obstacles through CBR and thereby we can ensure rights and social protection of the PWDs effectively. PWDs including women and severely disabled are denied access to health care, education, livelihood, employment, rights and advocacy and also excluded from social activities. The disabled often cannot resolve personal and social issues by themselves. Moreover, very few diagnostic and intervention services are found in remote areas. To tackle the above mentioned issues Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha has adopted CBR for empowering the PWDs. This paper is trying to look at the role of CBR in empowering the PWDs and how it will contribute knowledge, practice, and evidence to social workers, Government officials, rehabilitation specialists, and other agencies working in the field of disabilities.

2. Methodology

The present study is conducted at three Grama Panchayaths of Ernakulam district, in Kerala State. An intervention programme commenced with five phases, first phase was for nine month and other phases were for two years. The services were for screening, detection, assessment, skill & vocational training, job placement and income generation programmes for PWDs at the grass root level. The researcher and the CBR staff of the NGO worked together and conducted a door to door survey in the targeted Panchayaths. Awareness programmes and motivational camps were initiated in the villages to sensitise the PWDs, family members and community about CBR and the importance of the formation of Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) in the Panchayaths. Then the PWDs were mobilized to form different DPOs and each DPO consists of the range of 9-20 members. Thus, the study is based on the PWDs of the 44wards of the three Grama Panchayaths, namely Pallarimangalam, Pothanicad and Nellikuzhy of Kothamangalam Taluk, Ernakulum District in Kerala and conducted the CBR programme in these Grama Panchayaths. These Panchayaths are rural in nature and educational status of the people is also very low. Majority of the people as well as the PWDs are mainly engaged in household work, daily wage labours and some were unemployed or underemployed. Their participation in decision making process even at village level was quite invisible.

Since the beginning of the CBR programme (2002), detailed documentation has been done at each and every phase and maintained by both organization (Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha)

and the DPOs for ensuring the effectiveness of the activities of the programme. The documents have in-depth information about the PWDs, family members, key organisations like Panchayath Raj Institutions (PRIs) Primary Health Centres (PHCs), and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) with regard to their participation in the CBR programme. Moreover, survey was taken to collect data regarding the needs and problems of PWDs, meeting with PRIs, Sarva Siskha Abhiyan (SSA) officials, conducted DPO meetings, block level federation meetings, quarterly review meetings of the project with stakeholders and using Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005. Documents on all the above mentioned meetings were used for collecting data for this paper.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Supporting community systems to Enhance PWDs Capacity

The first phase included the training of the CBR staff and collected the base line data of the target group of the area to determine the prevalence of disabilities and the needs of PWDs. The intervention programme to the PWDs with the active participation of the community was done in five phases for nine years.

The data of the three grama Panchayaths indicates that the Locomotor disabilities (151-OH) are more prevalent than other disability across the area followed by mental retardation (140-MR) and hearing impairment (97-HI) and the least count was autism (6) and cerebral palsy (5-CP) across the study area. It can be substantiated that the need of CBR and to get the rights of PWDs.

Through the CBR, Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha could form 28 DPOs with the purpose of improving the socio-economic status, developing capacity and ensuring the rights of PWDs. Through self-development and social action programs PWDs could to get their rights and took part in decision-making processes within and outside the family. 28 DPOs are formed in 44 wards of the three Gramma Panchayaths namely Nellikuzhy, Pallarimangalam and Pothanicad and 388 PWDs took the membership of these groups. Three DPOs were formed in first phase itself and 15 DPOs were formed in Phase II and in later phases formed 10 DPOs. Regular meetings were being held once in a week and the members of the DPOs actively participated in the group activities.

It was evident that family members of PWDs could improve economically, socially and, mentally through the participation and interaction in the group. Through the motivation and follow up of the CBR personnel, better interaction and learning among the PWDs are promoted. It has helped them to increase self-reliance and social integration. The information reflected from the reports maintained

by both organizations that Nirmala Sasan Muvattupuzha and the DPOs and the feedback from the communities helped the researcher to keep track of the progress of the programme.

3.2 Attitude About Disability

Sensitization programmes and training programs were conducted to the PWDs, Panchayath members, Kudumbasree members, family members, and the community about PWD Act-1995, National Trust Act-1999, RTI Act-2005, Mental Health Act-1987, Panchayath Raj Act-2005, Rehabilitation Council of India Act (RCI Act) 1992, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2002 and so on.

PWDs and community members are now actively engaged in the community activities and participate in Panchayats meetings as well as working groups. Information on PWDs was transferred to the community through the Kudumbasree members. Quarterly review meetings were organized in each Panchayat. The Panchayat representatives, PHC doctors, PWDs and their family members actively participated in review meetings. 525 PWDs received basic entitlements and social security schemes in different levels such as medical board certificate, pension, EMS housing scheme, travel passes, poverty alleviation schemes, BPL ration cards, micro-entrepreneurship, grants for livelihood and subsidy loan from PRIs and assistive devices from Kerala State Handicapped Welfare Corporation and so on. These are some of the examples of attitudinal change of the community related to disability.

3.3 Strengthening DPOs for Promotion of Advocacy and Networking

Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha formed one Federation of PWDs with nine members in April 2007. Each month the Federation meeting was conducted in different Panchayath and discussed various issues related to PWDs and community. The federation members, PWDs and family members attained adequate knowledge about various issues and the rights of the PWDs. They were empowered and strengthened for functioning independently. With the initiation of federation members and DPO leaders, celebrated World Disabled Day at District level since December 2007 with the help of community, PWDs, their family members, general public, political leaders, cine artists, advocates with disabilities and other NGOs in the area. It is named as "Vikalang Sangamam", "Ability Utsav" and so on. At DPO level, they organised human chain, common meetings, and exhibition of the products which they made.

424 PWDs participated in Special Grama Shabha in the year 2011-12 within the project area. At present 21 PWDs became the

members of the working groups, 12 PWDs are working as the Area Development Society (ADS) members in concerned Panchayaths. 239 PWDs are working under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) out of 361 PWDs registered with MNREGA. We encouraged the 'Sarva Shiksha Abayan' (SSA), Anganwadi and primary teachers for right based inclusive education, and training for the children with disabilities.

3.4 Ensuring the Social Protection and Rights

The CBR programme, helped the disabled people to get their rights from various government schemes. By collaborating with various NGOs, CBOs and professionals in different fields and organizations could provide various medical services, financial assistance, social support and services to the PWDs. In the project area, the three panchayaths have been utilizing three percent of the total fund for the development and augmentation of PWDs. 12 PWDs and staff participated in the federation leaders training programme at Welfare Services Ernakulum at the district level. Letter was sent on 3.10.2010 to Kerala Chief Minister related to the amendment of the PWD Act and actions are being enforced. Attended State level consultation meetings at Thiruvananthapuram for draft of PWD Act at vernacular language. The PWD leaders raised many issues in the Grama Panchayath, Block, District, and State level for getting medical board certificate, increasing pension (Dharna at Ernakulum Collectorate on 2.12.2005), against the exploitation of postmen, appointment of doctor in Govt. Hospital on 30.7.2007, psychiatric care, for strengthening inclusive education, revolving fund to DPOs from grama panchayath and DPO leaders managed to get Government Orders to Panchayath and conducted Special Grama Sabha. It was evident that incidents of human rights violations and atrocities caused to PWDs have been significantly reduced after the formation of DPOs in the project area. Monthly Panchayath level advocacy meeting and quarterly block level meeting by PWDs. Eighteen DPOs received the revolving fund from PRIs out of twenty six DPOs registered.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study reveal that, there is a remarkable improvement in the mainstreaming of PWDs in the areas of rights and advocacy. Mainstreaming of the PWDs is definitely a difficult task but quite possible if the government, NGOs and the community work together. The public and the government have to work in cooperation to make this happen, especially in the areas of education, health, employment and for their rights. We must see to that the PWDs have equal opportunities in climbing the social ladders. Thus CBR is a planned strategy, which is implemented

through appropriately trained staff to meet the needs of disabled within the community, so that the PWDs can have full participatory and contributory life. The study recommends applying the CBR programme in every Panchayath for mainstreaming the PWDs with local resources. The last but not least we must ensure that each and every individual makes his contribution to the society. □

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Focus of Entrepreneurship for Local Economic Development

The major focus of entrepreneurship is the overall economic development of the nation, by creating wage opportunities but this too facilitate the accumulation of wealth. Poverty alleviation has been one of the primary agenda of the Government of India. Unless poverty alleviation programs and policies are supported by robust entrepreneurship development initiatives that promote livelihood generation, eradication of poverty will remain a distant dream. This paper tries to explore the possibilities of entrepreneurship in local economic development

V.S. Sukumaran*

* Senior Associate Faculty at EDI of India, KILA campus, M.G.Kavu - Thrissur-Kerala Ph : 0487-2206242. email : vssukumarna@ediindia.org.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been considered the backbone of economic development. It has been well established that the level of economic growth of a region to a large extent, depends on the level of entrepreneurial activities in the region. The myth that entrepreneurs are born, no more holds good, rather it is well recognised now that the entrepreneurs can be created and nurtured through appropriate interventions in the form of entrepreneurship development programmes. (Government of India 2007). In the pre-industrialization economy, it was basically the cottage industry which was prominent. The system was self sufficient and had vertical integration. The skilled artisans produced the products, as per their skill and marketed the same in the nearby towns. As a result lot of artisanal guilds has evolved. However, the process of industrialization led to the emergence of 'capital' for doing the business. Presently, it is digital/information economy, where the core competency is 'outsourcing'. These further advancement has given new vistas to entrepreneurship. Innovation and technology are playing a crucial role in entrepreneurship.

2. Understanding Entrepreneurship

Innovation has been considered as one of the primary aspects of entrepreneurship. Economist Baudeau (1771) and Schumpeter (1939) made innovation as the central theme of their theory. According to Schumpeter, development implies carrying out of new combination of activities, which is basically a creative one. In his view, the concept of new combination leading to innovation covers introduction of new goods with which consumers are not yet familiar, introduction of new method of production, opening of new market and conquest of new source of supply of raw material. McClelland (1961) emphasizes the need for achievement and taking moderate risk that are the basic premises for entrepreneurial motivation. He stressed the middle childhood as the formative period of entrepreneurial attitudes. Parents imposing high standards of excellence in early childhood allowing them to attain it without interference, and real emotional pleasure in their attainment short of overprotection and indulgence, are the environment which helps to develop entrepreneurial mindset. This develops in certain individuals, a need for achievement: which indicates little interest in routine as well as high risk tasks, desire to undertake tasks of moderate risks, where the skill counts, desire for responsibility and concrete measure of task performance are considered.

The new entrepreneurs should come from non-traditional groups, thereby breaking the monopoly of dominant business communities

and diversifying the entrepreneurial resource base of the country. This has been achieved in India through the well structured and validated entrepreneurship development programmes (EDPs). EDP has been adopted as a major tool for promoting new enterprises. Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India's EDP model has been adopted by various developmental agencies for creating new enterprises. Further various developmental agencies has also introduced different models for new enterprise creation.

3. Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation

Economic empowerment of the poor is the major concern for developmental agencies as well as governments. Since independence, various programmes -Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) to National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) or Development of Women and Children in Urban Area (DWCUA) to Swana Jayanthi Sahari Swarozgar Yojana (SJSRY) were introduced by various Governments that came to power. All these programs are backed with subsidies, though it could make some ripples but could not achieve the desired result. Even the advent of micro credit/micro finance, where the credit flow has been introduced, as lack of financial access was considered as the major bottleneck for starting business by poor, the significant improvement in the result could not be achieved. This is mainly because, the developmental initiatives were confined to starting the units. However no support was given for the survival of the unit.

Potential entrepreneurs might not have any business acumen, business orientation, motivation, and may be unaware about the environmental conditions. Due to the economic compulsion, they venture into entrepreneurship. It is therefore necessary to provide proper escort/mentoring support even after establishing the unit. Support for marketing, system development as also intermittent motivation may be provided to sustain these enterprises. One should initiate a poverty alleviation programme with livelihood and skill mapping of the locality. An appropriate questionnaire may be prepared for data collection. This will help the agency to understand the sources of their present livelihood, opportunities available in the area as well as skills of the individual to tap these opportunities. It may be advantageous for the agency, if they can identify potential buyers for the products to be manufactured.

The identification of opportunities is one of the crucial factor in initiating micro enterprises which can primarily be based on availability of resources, skills and the need or demand for it. Resource based: Resources may be natural, which includes marine, forest, agriculture, etc. which has to be identified to explore the options for value addition. If one move up in the value chain,

innovative business opportunities will emerge. In a place where the availability of coconut is abundant, one can think of various coconut based opportunities. Nevertheless developing appropriate business model even for those business at the micro level is a challenge.

One can identify business opportunity based on the existing skills available locally. For eg one with computer proficiency can start a software unit while those one with tailoring know-how can start garment manufacturing unit. Once the business opportunities are identified, one may need to prepare probable business opportunities and understand its viability. A developmental agency who is involved in micro enterprise development for local economic development will have a basket of viable business opportunities. A workshop could be organised which can invite participation from different stakeholders such as Technical Institutions, potential buyers, developmental agencies, local body representatives, entrepreneurs etc. It will provide opportunity to explore possibilities of linking business with ones skill-set.

An Entrepreneurship Orientation Program will help the participants increase their confidence level through making them understand the required managerial intricacies. During this programme, efforts may be made to develop a bankable project report.

- Need based technical training : Depending upon the product identified, and as per the need of the potential market, appropriate skill training may be imparted to the participants. Further, their support may be sourced, as and when required, to stabilize the quality of the products.
- Developing physical infrastructure : If the entrepreneurs do not have the capacity to invest in land and building as well as plant and machinery local body can provide facilities for physical infrastructure. This may be either a 'Business Incubator' or 'Common Facility Centre'. A business incubator's main purpose is to produce successful firms that will make the programme financially viable and self-sustainable. The key factor for the success of a business incubator is its acceptance by the local business and the ability of the local community to generate new entrepreneurs. It has been proven over the years that when enterprises are created they draw up on the local resources including the human resources. This in turn ensures the utilization of hitherto untapped or unidentified resources thereby optimizing the wealth creating abilities in the local community. To ensure that the Local Economic Development Incubator (LEDI), Entrepreneur is able to sort out teething problems the

services of experts on a retainer ship basis should be provided to the enterprises. By providing physical infrastructure, the potential entrepreneurs reduce the cumbersome procedural activities such as getting licences, electricity, etc.

- **Enterprise Establishment:** The facilitating agency needs to provide proper attention at this stage. The license from local body, identifying machinery sources, raw material sources, etc. Should be done at this stage. The facilitator should act as a mentor to the potential entrepreneurs which will increase their confidence level.
- **Mentoring and escort services :** An effective mentoring and escort services can play a crucial role in tackling any issues that are raised after the establishment of the business. Interventions may be made to reduce the conflicts in the group and create a conducive environment in the unit. If it is group enterprise, proper care should be made to maintain the transparency in account keeping and regular meetings.
- **Performance Improvement Programme(PIP):** PIP programs will motivate and challenge the entrepreneurs to set new targets and achieve better results. Mind set of those entrepreneurs who does not aim high and has 'survival syndrome' may be changed to take the enterprise into a different height through PIP programs.

It goes without an iota of doubt that under the mandate given to the Panchayat Raj Institutions, they may facilitate in creating an environment conducive for business and developing an entrepreneurial culture in the local area. The flow of adequate funds and manpower resources to create the LED Incubator would essentially be the role of these institutions.

4. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is the engine for economic growth. Hitherto, promotion of entrepreneurship, especially for poverty alleviation program, was concentrating only in setting up of the unit. This first generation entrepreneurs, without any experience in business, find it difficult to successfully manage the same. Follow up support with market linkage will provide additional advantage.□

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Performance of Nirmal Gram Puraskar: A State-wise Analysis

Government of India has been promoting sanitation coverage in a campaign mode to ensure better health and quality of life for people in rural India. To add vigour to its implementation, GOI launched an award based incentive scheme for fully sanitized and open free Gram Panchayats, Blocks, Districts and States called Nirmal Gram Puruskar (NGP) in October 2003. Results of the study show that Kerala has made remarkable progress in eliminating the practice of open defecation. It is very clear from the number of GPs -980 out of 999 GPs – who were awarded NGP in Kerala. This paper has made an attempt to analyses the performance of Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) in India during the period 2005-2011.

Manikandan A.D*

* Research Scholar (Economics), School of International Relations and Politics, Mahatma Gandhi University, Priyadarsini Hills P.O, Kottayam, Kerala. Mobile: 09567466821, email: alungal09@gmail.com,

1. Introduction

According to the Millennium Development Goals Report (United Nations, 2012), 'the number of people using improved drinking water sources reached 6.1 billion in 2010, up by over two billion since 1990. China and India alone recorded almost half of global progress, with increases of 457 million and 522 million, respectively.' But still today 'Eleven per cent of the global population – 783 million people – remain without access to an improved source of drinking water and at the current phase, 605 million people would still lack coverage in 2015.' In fact, water, sanitation and hygiene are key players in determining both health and disease, for example, 4.1 per cent of global diseases can be reduced, if people have an improved source of drinking water (UNICEF&WHO, 2011). But many people don't have access to safe drinking water all over the world. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 2.6 billion – over 40 per cent of the world's population – don't have access to basic sanitation and more than 1 billion people still use unsafe sources of drinking water.

Quite surprisingly, nearly 60 per cent of those practicing open defecation live in India' (626 million) followed by China (14 million) and Brazil (7 million). The proportion of people using toilet in some of the Indian states is noticeably low which includes Andhra Pradesh (10 per cent), Chhattisgarh (10 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (15 per cent), Tamil Nadu (33 per cent), and West Bengal (34 per cent) (Government of India, 2011). It is to be noted that inadequate human waste disposal will lead to health and environmental hazards (The MDGs Report 2012). Taking note of the same, the Government of India has launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1998. The main objective of TSC is to eliminate the practice of open defecation in rural areas and to ensure safe disposal of night soil, domestic liquid and solid waste. The expected outcomes of this programme are decrease in incidence of water and sanitation related diseases like cholera, diarrhea, typhoid, and so on, improvement in health; and provide dignity and privacy to rural women and also enhance the attendance and enrolment of girls in schools and thus, contribute to improvement in the quality of life (Government of India, 2006)

According to the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS), TSC is a comprehensive programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with the broader goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation. To give potency to the TSC, in October 2003, Government of India has initiated an incentive scheme named the 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar' (NGP) (George 2009). This Puraskar will be awarded to those "open defecation free" Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). They are named Nirmal Gram Panchayats,

Blocks, and Districts. The individuals and organizations are also eligible for this prize based on their contribution for full sanitation coverage. This paper analyses two important things: firstly, the performance of NGP between 2005 and 2011 and secondly; the proposed budget outlay for NGP in Twelfth Plan Period-2012-2017.

2. Methodology

The main objective of the study is to analyse the performance of Nirmal Gram Puraskar by three - tiers. The study primarily relies on secondary data. To analyse the performance of Nirmal Gram Puraskar, the percentages of Grama Panchayats awarded NGP are calculated. The main source of data is the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS).

3. Performance of Nirmal Gram Puraskar

As per the MoDWS, 28002 Gram Panchayats, 181 Blocks (or Intermediate Panchayats) and 13 Districts have received NGP during the period 2005-2011. The selection of PRI or organizations like NGOs, CBOs, and SHGs is based on some of criteria viz. 1) All households in the PRI area must have access to and all members should be using individual toilets or community complexes; 2) Complete elimination of open defecation within the boundaries of the PRI. Nobody including floating population, defecates in the open and child faeces are disposed of in toilets; (3) All public water sources to have proper platforms and drainages around them; and (4) The PRI should not have applied and disqualified for NGP thrice during the previous years. (Government of India, 2010).

NGP includes the incentive amounts to PRI. Organizations and officials will get citations and trophies or mementoes only. While analysing the performance of NGP based on secondary data, it is found that over 28000 GPs have received NGP so far, which includes, 9523 GPs – more than 34 per cent of the total GPs- from Maharashtra, followed by Tamil Nadu (2385), Gujarat (2281), Madhya Pradesh (2068), Haryana (1578), Andhra Pradesh (1273), Uttar Pradesh (1080), West Bengal (1077), Karnataka(1069) and Himachal Pradesh (1011), Kerala (980), and so forth. But the NGP performance cannot be judged based on absolute numbers only but it should be measured in terms of ratio of NGP awarded GPs to total number of GPs in the state.

The share of GPs awarded NGP from 2005 to 2011 to the total GP in each state shows the coverage of NGP in the state. Over 98 per cent of GPs awarded with NGP were in Kerala and Sikkim. In other words, 980 out of 999 GPs in Kerala were awarded with NGP, and 164 out of 166 GPs in Sikkim have won NGP, followed by Maharashtra (34 per cent), West Bengal (32.14 per cent), Himachal

Pradesh (31.17 per cent), Haryana (25.64 per cent), Karnataka (18.99 per cent), Tamil Nadu (18.90 per cent), Gujarat (16.6 per cent) and so on. The performance of the poorest states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh is low in the coverage of NGP.

The number of Intermediate Panchayats or Blocks awarded with NGP between 2005 and 2011 shows that in Kerala, 117 Blocks were awarded NGP, followed by West Bengal (37), Maharashtra (11), Tamil Nadu (6) and Karnataka (6), and Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh has won only one Block NGP. Over 85 per cent of NGP blocks were in Kerala and West Bengal.

While analysing data of NGP awarded to the District Panchayats, it was observed that 8 districts, out of 14 districts, were NGP districts in Kerala. It shows that 8 out of 14 districts have been awarded NGP between 2008 and 2011. As far as Sikkim is concerned, all districts including, North, South, West and East Sikkim districts have been awarded NGP in 2008. In 2011, the NGP was awarded to three districts of which 2 districts were from Kerala state and one from Karnataka.

There is a significant difference in the proposed budget requirement for NGP between 11th and 12th Five Year Plan periods. For instance, the proposed budget requirement for NGP in the 11th Plan period was Rs.6000 crore while that of 12th Plan is just 2,200 crore. It requires further review and enquiry as to why has there been drastic reduction in the proposed budget for 12th plan as compared to the 11th plan.

4. Conclusion

This paper has made an attempt to analyse the performance of NGP and budget requirement for NGP in the 11th and 12th Plan periods. Results of the study show that South Indian states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are doing well while states like Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan do not seem to meet the mission of “open defecation free” regions. It can be said that NGP is an incentive to work hard for achieving “open defecation free” regions in PRIs. As far as budget outlays for NGP in the 11th and 12th Plan periods are concerned, there is a huge difference in the outlay between these two plan periods. It may be due to overestimation in the outlays in the 11th Plan period. It is important to note that nearly 206350 GPs - 89 per cent of GPs in India which are outside NGP is a cause for concern. To increase the effectiveness of TSC, following suggestions may be useful: 1) the convergence of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), and TSC should be promoted; 2) the awareness creation

in rural areas; 3) all rural development programmes, including MGNREGS, TSC, IAY, etc. for alleviation of poverty in rural areas should be effectively implemented; and 4) the enhancement of the coverage of an improved source of drinking water in rural areas. In a study conducted by CESS in the WASH Cost project mentioned that the factors that contribute to the success/ failure of the NGP villages, clearly brings out that the local leadership, governance, transparency with proper accounts and records and involvement of all the community groups play an important role in triggering the process of demand generation and continued monitoring and support from external NGO / CBO's seems very crucial for sustained behavior change.

Capacities of the community need to be built towards achieving good governance, operation and minor repair management, systems for cost recovery, etc. The community should take active responsibility in solid and liquid waste disposal systems with involvement in planning and designing. □

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**Improving the
Performance through
Decentralised Planning:
Experiences from
Jharkhand**

Experience shows that sustainable and equitable growths are more visible where people are in the centre of the planning and implementation of the programmes. Decentralized Planning, which follows this approach, has been conceived as an instrument of local self-governance to promote healthy and sustainable development. During the last two years, District Administration, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand has undertaken Decentralized Planning process in the rural areas of the district. The approach by its nature is participatory and inclusive. This paper explores how a people driven approach can bring quality change in the people's lives through comprehensive planning and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental objectives in both public and private decision-making.

Soumen Ray*

1. Introduction

Millennium Development Goals, set forth by the UN aims at achieving overall and sustainable development. Sustainable growth emphasizes on a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to development. It emphasizes not only on strong economic performance but also on intra-generational and intergenerational equity. It rests on integration and a balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals and objectives in both public and private decision-making. Thus achieving the sustainable growth requires a developmental plan in place for the deprived population, as they also contribute in shaping the common future of a society. Experience shows that sustainable and equitable growths are more visible where people are in the centre of the planning and implementation of the programmes meant for them. This has also come true in districts where a structured programme “Decentralized Village Planning” process is followed.

The District Administration of East Singhbhum in the state of Jharkhand in partnership with UNICEF India has implemented the Decentralised Planning Process (DCP) in the rural areas of the district. DCP is a people-driven approach that has brought about change in the quality of life of the people by involving them and making them partners for their own development efforts.

2. Decentralised Planning: The context

Past experience shows that programmes related to rural development initiatives have been most effective when there was an active involvement of the local community, both in designing the programme, monitoring and implementation (11th five year plan approach paper, planning commission, 2006). Decentralized planning at the district and local levels was for the first time intensely discussed during the Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plans (1980-90). The Government set up a working group on district planning under the chairmanship of C.H. Hanumanth Rao in 1982. The Working Group suggested a detailed prescription for organizing and planning programs at the district level relating to methodology, institutions and other prerequisites. During the preparation of the 11th Plan, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj constituted an expert group chaired by Shri Ramachandran to study and make recommendations, on formulation of district and sub-district plans at all levels for delivery of basic minimum needs at the grass-root levels. Followed by this the Planning Commission issued its detailed guidelines for district plans in the 11th Five Year Plan during 2006.

Decentralized planning has been conceived as an instrument of local self-governance to promote healthy development. It is

expected to facilitate effective people's participation, enhance degree of transparency and ensure greater accountability. Being closer to the people, the planning and implementation process is assumed to meet their preferences and needs (Braun and Grote 2002:90; Sangita 2002: 145; Breton 2002:41; Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000). Decentralized governance may be effective in those parts of the world, where people are active, vigilant, and participative. In such societies, civil society groups assume far greater roles in educating people and, ultimately, people themselves seek greater accountability from elected members and officials in meeting their immediate needs.

At present, most parts of the country are adopting decentralized planning through Panchayati Raj institutions. Empirical evidence from India show that it has succeeded, in very few states such as West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. While in these states, the efforts have initially been made by the State Governments while several UN agencies and non-government organizations too have supported the endeavor through numerous processes. However, in a country like India, in order to understand the dilemma of decentralized governance, the nature of the political process, political institutions, local organizations and their temperament towards development needs to be understood.

3. Decentralised Planning: East Singhbhum, Jharkhand

Carved out of southern Bihar as a new state of India in November 2000, Jharkhand was plagued by adverse initial conditions including low average income, very high incidence of poverty, and little social development (World Bank report, 2007). The East Singhbhum district is situated in the southeast corner of Jharkhand. For administrative purposes, the district is divided into two sub-divisions—Dhalbhum and Ghatshila and has eleven blocks—Golmuri-cum-Jugsalai (Jamshedpur), Potka, Patamda and Boram in Dhalbhum Sub-Division and Ghatshila, Musabani, Dumaria, Baharagora, Dhalbhumgarh, Chakulia, Gurabandha in Ghatshila Sub-Division. It has 231 panchayats and 1,669 revenue villages.

In 2010, the District Administration of East Singhbhum, in consultation with UNICEF decided to carry out Integrated Decentralized District Planning activity in line with the Constitutional 73rd Amendment. The whole process entailed planning at the village level in the form of Gram Sabhas, which went to the Gram Panchayat level. At this level, each Gram Panchayat consolidated village plans before submitting them to

the block for consolidation by the BDO and submission to the district. The next level was to develop a plan for executing functions and responsibilities after consultations with people. The entire initiative finally emerged as a Decentralized District Planning (DDP), a process that helped to achieve social development objectives with limited resources. The DDP involved activities like capacity building of stakeholders, collection of relevant data, analyzing, setting and matching priorities to available budgets, defining processes of implementation, setting and monitoring targets. The transformation of the process of district planning at the State and District levels was time consuming, making it imperative to operationalize this concept. Since it was an evolutionary process, some transitional phases were factored in.

(i) Pre-planning phase: Before initiating actual data collection, it was important to prepare the ground for it. The following steps were followed during the pre-planning phase:

(ii) Preparing a Plan of Action: This phase included stakeholders' analysis, problem tree analysis, developing result framework and log frames.

Three simplified data collection tools were developed and piloted during this period viz. i) Baseline Survey for Village facilities; ii) A sector-wise Village level Problem-Solution Grid and iii) Preference/ Demand of work mapping. The tools were finalized, after piloting was done in a few villages of the district.

Online GIS based software was developed to capture and analyze the data from the field.

As the activity followed a multi-dimensional approach and was implemented at several levels, a number of core committees were formed to oversee their activities as well as to ensure quality control at each level. In the absence of District Planning Committees (DPCs), adhoc Decentralized Planning Core Groups (DPCGs) were constituted to meaningfully finalize the decentralized district plan. The Committee was headed by the Deputy Development Commissioner while the District Planning and Monitoring Unit (DPMU) acted as a Planning Unit to support the core groups (DPCGs).

The Block Level Task Force (BLTF) was given the responsibility of executing the Decentralized Planning Processes. It was further supported by the Block Technical Team (BTT), which was given the responsibility to carry out the data validation and decision making processes. The entire process was headed by the Block Development Officer. On behalf of UNICEF, dedicated NGOs were provided with technical and manpower support to analyse preferences/needs of the local people and duty bearers and link those with existing scheme in a prescribed format. At the

Panchayat level, the Panchayat Support Group (PSG) was given the responsibility of executing the Decentralized Planning Processes. It was headed by the Mukhiya (Panchayat President) and supported by the Panchayat Sevak and NGO partners.

(iii) Capacity Building: As the concept of decentralized planning was new to the entire state it was pertinent to sensitize all the stakeholders in order to ensure quality outcome and sustainability. All officials of various concerned Government and non-government departments were trained through workshops at district and block level. Exposure visits were also conducted for key officials.

4. Village Planning

A minimum of two days exercise was carried out in the villages' with the participation of block level government officials in the planning process. In the presence of the BDO, officials from the implementing agency briefed village pradhans (village headman) about the planning.

On the first day of their visit to the village, preparatory tasks were undertaken by the CCs and Youth Volunteers. The CC with the Village Pradhan conducted meetings with various groups, influential people, village head and oriented them on the decentralized planning process, made a transect walk inside each village to understand the situation, filling all formats with the help of villagers through village level meeting and conducted PRA exercise. The last day mainly involved prioritization of sector-wise problems and filling the white sheets in the presence of Government officials at the block level to prepare the village plan. Each village plan was vetted by PRI members and was forwarded to the Block office for entry into the software.

5. Post Planning Exercise

At the block level the block technical team further verified the data and made necessary corrections, wherever required. The MGNREGA data entry operator at the Block level supported the data entry process. Once data entry and consolidation was over, the BDO ensured that the respective government officials at block level again undertook validation, rationalization of community preferences, provided exact unit cost for each activity, linking them to most appropriate Government schemes and departments of their sectors. During the process, the Block Development Officer also instructed the block level officials to identify and include activities proposed from block level along with the activities generated from the village and Gram Panchayat levels. Thereafter, a consolidated draft plan for the block (At Village, Panchayat, and Block levels, and forwarded to the District Planning and Monitoring Unit (DPMU)

for submission to the District Level Core Group. DPMU further analyzed the data and made necessary corrections, wherever required, without making any alterations to priorities as fixed by the villagers.

After the completion of the activity, the DDP was prepared with the support of an external agency and with the involvement of all stakeholders. The draft plan was shared at various platforms for comments and suggestions and the final plan was approved at the DPCG.

6. Aspirations by the Community

Around 94% of aspirations have been expressed around facilities, services and assets for community needs and for larger development of the villages. Respondents included 67% STs and 8% SCs. The emphasis being largely on the livelihoods sector, 18% of respondents expressed aspirations around employment (including participation in MGNREGS and SGSY), and 15% mentioned about minor irrigation facilities and 23% asked for improved rural infrastructure. A significant number of respondents' aspirations prioritized drinking water (16%), education (11%) and housing (10%). Finally, 7% respondents demanded electrification. Thus all the sectorial aspirations were consolidated to develop clearer roles for Department of Rural Development (DoRD). Education, Social Welfare and Health departments too emerged with significant future roles; though, not as dominant as DoRD.

All the indicators were further converted into GIS maps which helped in identifying the pockets, where government programmes are needed. They also helped to make the community understand their issues in various sectors. The basic idea behind making the GIS based website was to ensure that it should throw open the entire planning process to public and bring life to the ideal of decentralized planning in the state, which is otherwise struggling with its planning process.

7. Planning to Realisation

While enumerating the key considerations, budgetary trends and emphasis, future projections of financial outlays was reviewed and analysed. More importantly, before approaching the plan, a conceptual framework was developed keeping in view the poorest communities in the district by seeing their wellbeing. A priority grid was suggested which evolved from consultation with the villagers. Followed by the analysis, each department was asked to finalize the planned activities which were carried out in the blocks in consultation with the block administration. Around 1100 activities were completed during 2011, out of which 406 activities

were undertaken under health and nutrition, 221 under NREGA, 150 under education, 110 under infrastructure, 67 under civil rights, and 60 each under livelihood and energy.

8. Conclusion

It is evident that during the process, Gram Sabhas (GSs) emerged as a prominent body in need articulation. The methodology for participatory plan formulation at the GP level has ensured that the needs articulated by the GSs are recorded, processed, prioritized, projected and harmonized into an integrated plan for the village. However, the major gap observed is consolidation of urban plan with the rural plan which needs to be addressed to ensure completion of planning process.

Some of the major achievements under the decentralized planning call for a special mention. One, it encouraged participatory methodology at various stages. Second, it helped the people and their elected representatives understand and identify planning priorities. And, finally, it ensured transparency in the selection of individual beneficiaries of schemes based on some fixed criteria. Perceived as external factors, the emerging opportunities may be further consolidated into future strengths once weaknesses have been overcome and efficiencies improved. East Singhbhum with its location in the new state of Jharkhand has immense potential due to national priorities and its inherent contexts. With the decentralised planning implemented for the first time in East Singhbhum, the district is going to show a new road of development in future. The transformation of the process of district planning at state and district levels may take time; nevertheless, strengthening the district planning process is necessary to operationalize the concept of decentralized planning. The state government should therefore plan for a comprehensive evaluation of the whole approach, so that in the coming years this can be replicated across the state. □

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