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Kerala Institute of Local Administration
Mulamkunnathukavu P.O., Thrissur – 680581
Phone: 0487-2207000 (Office), 0487-2201312 (Director), 2201062 (Fax)
e-mail: info@kila.ac.in
Website: www.kila.ac.in

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Editorial

This volume of the KILA Journal of Local Governance consists of a vast exploration of various aspects of local governance. Lack of proper interaction between municipal administration and people is one of the major problems that curb the smooth functioning of decentralization. This can also lead to loss of peoples trust in local bodies. 'The article on Russian experiences highlights this. At the same time, there exist some efficient local bodies which take a lot of efforts to ensure development of people like the Nedumangad Block Panchayath in Kerala, which has done a lot of developmental activities aimed at the welfare of the people and development of the society. In order to take up these welfare measures, there is a need for an efficient system of finance management which regulate and allocate monetary resources. The implementation of such developmental activities will also help in meeting the sustainable development goals as defined by the Brundtland Report of 1987. Each local body should keep in mind these goals while they take up certain developmental activities like construction of buildings, roads etc. and make sure that this does not threaten the ecosystem so that both 'development' and 'sustainability' can go hand-in-hand.

Health care systems are also a vital part of local administration especially in a country like India where people do not get access to better health care which deeply affects the demographic trends. Decentralization of health care system can help in providing opportunities to the poor and the downtrodden who cannot afford it.

The laws and rules regarding Panchayat Raj Institutions were made in 1993 and within this time span, our society, economy

and polity has underwent many changes and hence, these laws should be reformed in such a way that it boosts the development of our country and its people. The analysis of various regions reveals the fact that in terms of resources for development, Gram Panchayats are always left behind the other two higher levels. So, it is necessary to allocate funds and resources so that they get opportunities to develop the existing drawbacks.

The current system of local administration draws its energy from the efforts of a vast section of the society including officials and elected representatives. So, it is the duty of the officials to be aware of their responsibility and to work towards the betterment of the people and development of the society. Each and every citizen of India is entitled to enjoy certain fundamental rights but many of these get violated due to the corrupt system. So, it is important that the governments strengthen the Panchayat Raj Institutions and help it to implement its developmental programmes as these bodies are the backbone of administration of our country at the local level.

Chief Editor

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1

Interaction between Municipal Administration and the Public in Russia: Social Organization and Chances

This paper explores the problems of interaction between Municipal Administration and the Public in the Republic of Bashkortostan - one of the greatest and most developed subnational units of the Russian Federation (RF). A lot of problems in municipal management are associated in Russia with under estimation of the role of interaction between local self-managements and the public. Under modern radically new conditions, authorities do not understand peculiar features of working with different population categories. The confidence of the public of a municipal unit to municipal authority is engendered not by these bodies themselves, but rather by existing managerial relations. The reason for people's alienation from Municipal management is mostly explained by insufficiently rapid rates of accelerating civil liberties and creating organizational conditions of the civil participation. In the present structure of administration, a large-scale socio-cultural interaction of the subject and object of management is not possible, without reconstruction of the system of Municipal institutions with dominating hierarchical organizational structures of linear-functional type, and an authoritative style of decision making.

Akhmetianova Rimma Anasovna*
Zaripova Liliya Mavlitzyanovna**

* Bashkir Academy of Public Administration and Management under the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan Russian Federation, Ufa, e-mail : ahmrimma@gmail.com

** Oktyabrsky branch of the State Petroleum Technological University, e-mail : lilyabert31@mail.ru

1. Introduction

Local self-government forms part of the civil society, in which citizens have the right to participate in developing, making and implementing managerial decisions on the issues of local significance. The country's history and the features of people's mentality are of special importance in establishing the institution of local self-management in a single country (North, 1993). There is the following regularity: the morepeople are rational, the more they prefer the bottom-up state-building to the top-down principle, and vice versa (Zulkarnai, 2014).

Bashkortostan is situated and is developing on the junction of two cultures, two civilizations and two continents. Eurasian origin, characteristic of Russia in general, is especially vivid in Republic is a multi-ethnic republic represented by about one hundred nationalities with approximately 61.9 percent of the population residing in urban areas. Republic is part and parcel of Russian Federation it go into Russia 460 years ago. The Constitution and laws of the Republic of Bashkortostan correspond to Russian Federation ones. It means that Russian Federation and Republic of Bashkortostan have one and the same legal system. To some extent Bashkortostan is typical subject of the RF, because it is rather independent, far from the center but still closely connected with it and adapted. Republic of Bashkortostan shares social and cultural space with Russia, which mean common history, language, traditions, life style and mentality. A lot of problems in municipal management are associated in Russia with under estimation of the role and importance of interaction between local self-management bodies and the public. Under modern radically new conditions authorities do not understand peculiar features of working with different population categories and neither can nor wish to treat the public as an equal partner. The confidence of the public of a municipal unit to municipal authority bodies is engendered not by these bodies themselves, but rather by existing managerial relations. The reason for people's alienation from municipal management is mostly explained by insufficiently rapid rates of accelerating civil liberties and creating organizational conditions of the civil participation.

2. Municipal Administration in Russia

In Russia, the system of local self-government has several historically determined key features that in one way or another still continue to define the pattern of interaction between municipal authorities and the public. Thus, Russia is characterized by a special type of municipal management based on the state's will, not on the activity of citizens (Khalikov, 2010). In Russia local management has turned into an instrument of power over administrative units (municipalities) that cannot in itself foster the promotion of civil activity (Lankina, 2001). In the Russian model of municipal management managerial decisions

are imposed top down. The role of a municipal community is reduced to approving the decisions made by higher echelons (Sheludkov, Rasskazov, Farahutdinov, 2016). A special feature of the current situation lies in expanding formal possibilities for Russia's population to participate in the execution of local management and decreasing in the level of their demand. In practice, the interaction at a local level is often formalized and executed only by virtue of duty in the forms that are insufficiently open and available for citizens (Khairullina, Kurashenko, 2014). A lot of problems in municipal management are associated in Russia with underestimation of the role and importance of interaction between of local self-government bodies and the public. Under modern radically new conditions authorities do not understand peculiar features of working with different population categories and neither can nor wish to treat the public as an equal partner. The confidence of the public of a municipal unit to municipal authority bodies is engendered not by these bodies themselves, but rather by existing managerial relations. The reason for managerial absenteeism of the Russia's population is mostly explained by insufficiently rapid rates of accelerating civil liberties (Polanyi,2001) and creating organizational conditions of the civil participation and also by people's alienation from municipal management because of bureaucracy and corruption.

Under these circumstances local bodies in fact act as monopolists in terms of making decisions and rendering municipal services to public. In modern practice, basic administrative functions are exercised by one of the subjects while another subject, that is public, is isolated from making managerial decisions. Thus, local governments do not take into consideration the demands and needs of the public. Russian society can be compared with broken hourglass: leaders do not exploit and oppress lower classes, do not even manage them - they just ignore them (S. Holmes, 1997). In current Russian conditions the population refuses to participate in the solution of issues of local importance because it does not see any possibility to change anything, at the same time population clearly realizes the activity risk and price. There is a growing tendency, on the one hand, not to take responsibility, on the other hand, to require care, social protection and other guarantees from the municipal authorities.

3. Discussions

According to the data of sociological research population realizes that the local authorities are not independent and do not have financial freedom. According to 30.1% of the respondents welfare of the municipality depends on the federal government, and 22.8% of the respondents think that it depends on the regional authorities, and only 25.9% of the respondents believe that it depends on the administrations of municipalities.

Currently, local self-government in Russia does not have solid economic foundation and is completely dependent on the allocation of resources between federal center and the regions. According to the majority of respondents (58%), these bodies are not independent, do not have the necessary financial resources that could be employed for the implementation of municipality interests. At the same time 28% of the respondents think that citizens can influence the decisions of local authorities, and 68% do not think so. 36.4% of the respondents do not understand what and how to make the most important decisions on the vitae functions of the municipality in which they reside. 11.3% of the respondents assessed the activity of local government as positive, 39.9%-as satisfactory, 48.8%- as a negative. Only 37.9% of the respondents declare their decision participate in local self-government activity. Modern mechanisms of social interactions between municipal authorities and population do not contribute to the growth of public activity and civil initiatives of the population of the municipality.

In modern conditions, Russian society is highly fragmented and consists of various segments. The changes that have taken place in the country greatly changed the social structure of Russian society, but did not lead to the formation of mass middle class. The majority of the population continues to exist within traditional model of life and is characterized by low level of social mobility. It is characterized by a limited rational behavior, which is characterized by the desire to enjoy the benefits of modern civilization, which is not accompanied by the desire to change life. Only those people who have housing, reliable occupation that is financially secure future may become citizens able to learn the rules of democratic participation in local self-government (Beck, 2001). On the other hand, there are groups of great social and administrative activity. The basis of these groups is educated and wealthy people young and middle aged, many of which are focused on the post-materialist values, or the values of self-expression. They implement rational model of behavior. Specificity of Russia is in the fact that the most active and viable part of the population is unable to implement active strategies of behavior. Because the workable part of the society lives under constant psychological pressure spending much of its life energy to maintain tolerable living conditions for themselves and their families. The data shows that the answer for the question freedom of choice and control over own life from the municipal administration is no choice at all. Out of the total only 7.4 percent stated that a great deal of choice, 4.1 percent expressed that they don't know and very negligible percent (0.2%) response said no answer and the same percent are missing. Remaining a big chunk of response (88.1%) are firmly believes that there is no freedom of choice and control over own life.

Thus, managerial participation is determined both by external and internal factors. Among external factors related to public are social

environment peculiarities, such as long-term isolation of public in the conditions of functioning of paternalistic Soviet state, low level of the local population living standard, luck of middle class population, insufficient motivation and ability of local governments to get public involved in self-administration, local governments apprehensions for the loss of their power and authority.

As for the internal factors of low public activity, mention can be made of insufficient level of its competence in dealing with local problems, prevalence of exploitative psychology and parasitic inclinations of public, its distrust towards the authorities. Of all the forms of public participation in municipal administration recommended by the Federal regulation 131 of 06.10.2003 "On general principles of municipal administration in the Russian Federation" the most common are municipal elections (84.8%), Public meeting (47.2%), and public hearings (42.5%). The other forms like citizen survey, territorial public self government, popular initiavtive, participation in political rallies and demonstrations are preferred less for considering the public participation in municipal administration in Russia.

The mentioned forms are directed to the stages of decisions, working out and adopting, with the application initiative coming from government bodies (except for people's applications).

Other forms of participation are not so frequently used in municipal institutions. Thus, in the choice of the forms of public participation in exercising self administration, government authorities are oriented to those forms which are secured by law while the initiative of public as the major subject of local self-government and its administrative activity are more of formal character.

4. Inference

Based on the research we classified social groups: 1) people who are apathetic, not interested in participation in local government because they are interested in their professional career, or a subculture. For such people, the events taking place "outside" of their world, including the problems of local community are distant, incomprehensible, boring and meaningless; 2) isolated from participation in local government are those who believe that, regardless of whether they participate or not decisions are made by people who are in power 3) citizens who have lost faith in their own possibilities due to the loss of identity with a particular social group. Feeling their own lack of purpose and power, these people think of social changes as being in unpredictable and uncontrollable, and the authorities are unable to somehow respond to their needs; 4) trust local authorities are citizens who refuse to participate in local government because they believe in law, stability and validity of the decisions of the local government.

5. Conclusion

In these circumstances it is necessary to develop a new paradigm of management, namely, a large-scale socio-cultural interaction of the subject and object of management, which seems hardly possible, according to the research data, without reconstruction of the system of municipal institutions with dominating hierarchical organizational structures of linear-functional type, and an authoritative style of decision making. The improvement in efficiency of local governments is directly related with the improvement of subject-object managerial relations in the field of rendering municipal services and dealing with local matters. The development of municipal governments in Russia should be mainly oriented to public participation in all the main stages of managerial decision making; working out complex programs of socio-economic development of municipal bodies; improvement of the legislation aimed at more accessible forms of local democracy and simpler organizational-legal procedures; forming of the middle class in municipal institutions; securing financial-economic all-sufficiency of municipal institutions; keeping the public informed about the work of local administration and self-government possibilities; strengthening accountability of local governments to public; wider basis of social partnership between municipal institutions, non-commercial organizations and business community.

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Development Initiatives of Nedumangad Block Panchayath

The Community Development Blocks in Kerala played a very important role in the socio-economic development of Kerala during the three decade period 1960-1990. But the second tier Block Panchayats formed after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment failed to do justice to the responsiblities mandated to them. However, the Nedumangade Block Panchayat initiated many people friendly development and welfare activities during the last three years 2016-18. It is hoped that the documentation of these activities would encourage other local Governments to take up similar people friendly projects.

Dr. M Kuttappan *

* Former Director of Economics & Statistics Department, Government of Kerala, Ph: 9074119672
e-mail: mkcentrop@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Block Panchayath as such in Kerala is an institution created as part of the implementation of the 73rd Amendment to the Indian constitution. Article 243-B of the constitution states that "there shall be constituted in every State Panchayaths at the village, intermediate and district levels". The intermediate tier is named in differents states as Taluk Panchayath, Mandal Panchayath, Panchayath Union, Panchayath Samiti, Block Panchayath etc. As there are Community Development Blocks, for a group of village panchayaths in Kerala, the Kerala Panchayath Raj Act 1994 termed the intermediate tier as Block Panchayath. Here it is important to remember that the Community Development Blocks under the control of Rural Development Department of Kerala played a very important role in the socio economic development of the State during the three decades period 1960-1990.

2. Role of Block Panchayat

Although Block Panchayath (BP) is a constitutional body, there are differences of opinion among experts about its necessity. The Sixth Report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission on Local Governance stated Clearly a mandatory intermediate tier panchayat would be redundant in Kerala"(2007). N R Madhava Menon, former Director of National Judicial Academy remarked that the three tier need to be simplified by a two tier structure by the abolition of the intermediate level of Panchayath" (Menon 2016). Recently the Arunachal Pradesh Government decided to abolish the intermediate level Panchayath in the State. The Committee for Evaluation of Decentralized Planning and Development headed by Prof. M A Oommen in its report justified the continuation of Block panchayat in Kerala considering the comparatively very high size of the average population of about 24000 in a Grama Panchayath and around 17 lakh in a district Panchayath(GOK 2009).

Now, besides mandatory civil functions, local governments (LGs) are given the mandate of "Economic development and social justice" within their jurisdiction. In the economic field, development of agriculture and allied sectors is the most important responsibility of village and Block panchayaths. Among the functions listed for Grama Panchayath in Schedule 3 of Kerala Panchayat Act are the cultivation of waste and marginal lands, soil protection etc to ensure optimum utilization of land, establishment of nurseries, cattle development, diary, poultry farming and the management of Krishi Bhavans. Similarly the important functions listed for Block Panchayath in Schedule 4 of the Act are farmers training programme, arrangement of agricultural inputs, mobilization of agricultural loans, conduct of agricultural exhibitions, running of veternary polyclinics etc. In order to understand the functioning of the BP's Oommen committee

visited few BP's and held discussions with concerned functionars. The committee also commissioned few experts to carry out case studies in few Grama Panchayats , Municipalities, and Block Panchayats. On this basis the Committee found that the BP's in general failed to do justice to the general responsibilites mandated to them. The Block Development Officer's under the control of Rural Development Department is posted as secretary of the BP. Development Programmes implemented through the Block Development Officer are not integrated with the Block Panchayat Programmes. As such elected members of Block Panchayat have no control on these programmes. Moreover they have a feeling that they do not command the respect that a member of Grama Panchayat enjoys among the people. The Committee in its report redefined the role of Block Panchayat and recommended that it should serve as a Resource center for planning, technical advice and assistance to Grama Panchayats in plan preparation and identification of individual priority projects. The Committee wanted Block Panchayat to serve as a data bank for planning for all the three tiers Panchayats. In this context, the author of this paper in a study on Database for Local Governance pointed out the need for restructuring the statistical machinery in the state, in such a way as to generate reliable data at panchayat and municipality level and their aggregation at Block, District and State levels. In the restructuring process the BP has to supervise the statistical units in the Grama Panchayats and provide necessary guidance for them. (Kuttappan, 2017).

While assessing the impact of decentralized governance on economic development in Kerala, it is important to remember that the People's Plan Campaign during 1996-97 was organized in the background of a crisis in the commodity producing agriculture and manufacturing sectors. It was to activise these sectors that the local governments were directed to earmark 30 to 40 percent of their plan funds to productive sector. But an analysis of the various indicators of agricultural development in Kerala during the last two decades (1996-97 to 2016-17) revealed a dismal picture. The contribution of agricultural sector to the Gross State Domestic Product registered a sharp decline from 20 percent to less than 10 percent. According to Economic Review 2017, agricultural sector witnessed declining growth rate during the last few years (GOK, 2018). The land utilisation has incresed in cultivable waste from 67410 ha in 1996-97 to 101379 ha in 2016-17; and in fallow land from 84870 ha in 1996-97 to 127538 ha in 2016-17. The land utilisation has decreased in net area sown from 2268610 ha in 1996-97 to 2015482 ha in 2016-17; and in area sown more than once from 752610 ha in 1996-97 to 568518 ha in 2016-17. The total cropped area also decreased from 3021220 ha in 1996-97 to 2584000 ha in 2016-17. (Govt. Of Kerala, 2017).

In a democratic system, the quality of governance and development

depends to a great extent on the capacity of elected representatives in discharging their mandated powers, authority and responsibilites. They must be efficient enough to take suitable policy decisions, to coordinate and direct development activites with the cooperation of the bureaucracy and the public. The officials of local governments and transferred institutions have to become technical and administrative advisors and implementors of policy decisions emerging from elected representative. It is in the above background an attempt is made in this paper to discuss the various initiatives of Nedumangad Block Panchayat (NBP) during the last three years 2016-2018.

3. NBP as a Role Model

Nedumangad Block Panchayath (NBP) is one of the eleven Block Panchayats of Thiruvananthapuram district and comprises of five Grama Panchayaths of Karakulam, Aruvikkara, Anad, Panavoor and Vembayam. The Block with a population of 1.76 lakh is divided into 13 divisions, each represented by an elected member. In the five Grama Panchayaths there are 98 elected members. Besides, three divisions of Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayath are from this Block. Thus there are a total of 114 elected representatives to take care of the development activities. The Nedumangad Block Panchayath under the Attingal Parliament Constituency is covered by parts of Nedumangad, Vamanapuram and Aruvikkara Assembly constituencies. The Block Panachayath with a geographical area of 123.5 sq.km is bounded on the west by Thiruvananthapuram city corporation, on the east by Vellanad, south by Nemom and north by Vamanapuram Block Panchayaths. Topographically it is located mainly in the midland region of the State. Tenkasi -Thiruvananthapuram road and Killiyar river pass through the Block. The office of the Block Panchayath is located at Pazhakutty which is 13 km away from District Collectorate and 17 kms away from the State Secretariat.The Block area is rich in bio-diversity with large number of species of plants and animals. Major crops cultivated are coconut, rubber, tapioca, plantain, jack, mango, pepper and arecanut.

3.1. Initiatives of Organic Farming

After the 2015 Local Government Election held in the first week of November, the Block Committee assumed charge on November 7th. The Committee decided to work as a complementary tier to the first tier Grama Panchayats and to ensure maximum participation of people in the governance and development process. It is important to note that after the 73rd amendments there is a general feeling among the people that the 152 Block Panchayats in the State are inactive. It is in this context the people friendly development activities carried out by the Nedumangad Block Panchayat received public attention. It is hoped that the documentation of sincere activities of this block

would encourage others to follow similar activities. Considering the declining importance of agriculture in Kerala and to reduce the dependence on pesticide laden vegetables and fruits produced from neighbouring states, the Block Panchayat Committee under the leadership of its President Sri. B Biju decided to initiate a massive programme of organic farming in all the five Grama Panchayats under its jurisdiction. The Committee also realised that to attract more people into the agricultural sector, farming has to be intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding. On this basis the various initiatives taken for organic farming are detailed below.

3.1.1. Model Organic Farming in the Block Premise

To set a model and to learn by doing, the Block Panchayat decided to cultivate vegetables in about one hectare of land owned by the Block adjoining its office. It was a cultivable waste land with miscellaneous trees and bushes. The Block Committee members and officials of the block advanced funds to meet the cost for clearing the land and for cultivating five items of vegetables viz, ladies finger, cowpea, bittergourd, snake guard and cucumber. Even family members of the Block Committee , officials and some activists participated in the labour force required for farming. Only organic manures and organic pesticides were used for the cultivation. The vegetables produced were sold to local households and from the sale proceeds of vegetables, the amount advanced by the members and employees of the block was returned. This is a good example of people's participation in planning and development and resource mobilization.

3.1.2. Training Centre for Organic Farming (Jaiva Krishi Pariseelana Sevana Kendram)

On the basis of the rich experience from the organic farming of vegetables in the premise of the Block Office, the BP initiated a project to achieve self sufficiency in vegetable cultivation in all the five Grama Panchayaths of the Block. For that purpose the Committee established Jaivakrishi Pariseelana Sevana Kendram, a Training Center for organic cultivation to impart training to farmers. It was registered as per the Travancore – Cochin Charitable Societies Act 1955 and the centre started functioning from November 2016. Around 400 organic cultivation groups were formed in 5 Grama Panchayats and these groups were registered with the Kendram. Members of these groups were given training for different type of organic cultivation to sensitize the importance of organic farming to the people. A short handbook was published and distributed to the groups.

3.1.3. The Block Level Nursery

For popularising organic farming the Centre got sanction from the Agriculture Department for starting a nursery for the production

and distribution of quality seedlings. The Department also provided financial assistance of Rs. 7 lakhs for the nursery and poly house under the Vegetable Development Programme during the financial year 2016-17 .With this more than 20 lakhs of seedlings were produced and distributed. Further Rs.10 lakhs was sanctioned from the MLA fund for the construction of an office. Along with the nursery there is an incubation centre for the production of value added agricultural products, a diary unit and a poultry farm.

3.1.4. Organic Farming through Growbags

In the background of fast declining number of persons engaged in agriculture, the consumer households have to think seriously about supporting and sharing the responsibility for increasing agricultural production in the State. Realising this fact the Block Panchayat launched a scheme to popularise vegetable cultivation in growbags. This scheme was implemented during 2016-17 with the cooperation of Grama Panchayats, the Panchayat level Service Cooperative Banks (SCBs) and Krishi Bhavans. This scheme is intended to those without land for farming and those interested in the cultivation of vegetables through organic farming. For implementing the scheme, Block Panchayat allotted an amount of Rs.10 lakhs during 2016-17. Each Grama Panchayat has to share Rs. 1 lakh and the beneficiaries contribution is Rs. 5 lakhs. Thus the total cost of the scheme is Rs. 20 lakhs. A total of 1000 units, at the rate of 200 units for each panchayat, were formed. One beneficiary will have a maximum of only 2 units. Each unit will get 25 growbags each costing Rs.80 to Rs, 2000 per unit. Each unit will have 25 growbags filled with soil and vegetable seedlings of Chilli, Ladies finger, Tomatoes, Brinjal. Those who cannot raise their own fundcan avail interest free loan from SCB.

3.1.5. Bio Village without Waste/ Barren land

On the basis of the experience of organic vegetable cultivation in one hectare of block land, the Block Panchayat decided to bring all possible waste/ barren land under cultivation. During 2017-18, Block decided to bring the cultivation in 10 hectares of private land. The local residents have agreed to give land to Block Panchayat without rent for a period of 3 years. From this cultivation the Block Panchayat earned a profit of Rs. 3.73 lakhs during the year 2017-18, out of which an amount of 1.73 lakhs was credited to the own fund of the Block.

3.1.6. Fallow less Panchayat

On the basis of the direct cultivation by the Block, Block Panchayat in association with Grama Panchayats decided to bring all cultivable waste/barren land under cultivation in a phased manner. As part of this project it was decided to form 40 groups, each with 5 to 20 members. In the first phase the scheme was implemented in three

Grama Panchayats of Karakulam, Panavoor and Aruvikkara. From these panchayats one ward each was selected for implentation. From each ward waste/barren lands were identified by the representives of Block Panchayat, selected group representatives,Grama Panchayat and Agricultural Officers of concerned Krishi Bhavans. They have identified 10ha from the Karayalathukonam ward of Karakulam Panchayat, 11ha from Meenilam ward of Panavoor Panchayats and 9.5 ha from Kalathukal ward of Aruvikkara Panchayats. The team identified the requirement of the land owners and feasible crops such as vegetables, tubers, banana,pappaya etc, and placed before the Block Panchayat Comittee for the approval. After getting the approval the cultivation was entrusted to the groups. They were given the seeds and planting materials from the nursery of Nedumangad Block Panchayat.

3.1.7. Vallam Nira Project

Another important project launched by the Block Panchayat is Vallam Nira (full of basket) during 2016-17. This project is aimed at to achieve self sufficency in the production of vegetables especially during festival season such as Onam and Christmas. This was implemented through groups of the five grama panchayats. Households with atleast 10 cents of land are encouraged to cultivate vegetables through organic method. The seeds and seedlings and manures were distributed through the Jaiva Krishi Pariseelana Sevana Kendram of the Block Panchayat.

Prior to the implementation of the scheme 4200 kudumbasree groups, each comprising 5 to 20 members were formed. For the implementation of the project Jaiva Sabhas in 98 wards were organised with the help of peoples' representatives. Out of 28000 persons attended the Jaiva sabhas, 21000 were Kudumbasree members. The Nedumangad Block Panchayat is the first LG in the State to organize organic Jaiva sabha for vegetable and flowers cultivation. Around 1500 monitors, one each for one or two units were entrusted to coordinate and supervise the implementation of the scheme. Four types of vegetable seedlings, curry leaf, agathi, kudampuli, neem and three flowering plants (sooriyakandhi, kuttimulla, vadamulla) were distributed. They were distributed in two phases. In the first phase it was distributed to the beneficiaries by Community Development Society (CDS), Area Development Society (ADS), and elected members of Block and Grama Panchayats. In the second phase they were distributed to the wards which convened Jaiva Sabhas. The scheme is being monitored and reviewed regularly by the Block Comittee with the help of Officers of Agricultural Department.

The surplus vegetables and flowers from households collected by the monitors, are sold in the shops and stalls arranged by the kendram. Apart from making the area self sufficient in vegetables and flowers, it

provided employment opportunities for a large members of women in the five panchayats.

3.1.8.Anganwadi Organic Village

Our constitution envisages the goal of welfare state for India and the Directive Principles of State Policy give the necessary sanction for implementation of various social welfare programmes under the aegis of the State. Now after the 73rd and 74th amendements of the Constitution, the implementation of various welfare programmes and schemes and welfare institutions are brought under the control of local governement. Children constitute the nations future human resource. The National Policy on Children 1974 provided a framework for the development of various services to children before and after birth, during the period of growth to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. It was on this basis a comprehensive scheme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was started in 1975 and now it is one of the flagship programme of the Government of India. The scheme aims at early childhood development by providing an integrated package of service such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral service, health and nutrition education, and pre-school education to children less than six years along with pregnant and lactating women. It is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented in Kerala by the Department of Social justice. The scheme is implemented through a network of 33114 Anganwadi Centres, each managed by an Anganwadi worker (Teacher) assisted by a Helper. As per the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act (KPRA), Anganwadi centres are transferred to village panchayath and as such 164 Anganwdi centres located in the Nedumangad Block Panchayath are under the control of the five village panchayath. Even though Kerala has impressive human development indicators and an effective system for child related service the latest National Family Health Survey 4 (NFHS-4) revealed that one third of children in the age group 6 months to 6 years are anaemic. Also among children below 5 years, about 20% are stunted and 16 percent are waisted. Apart from the normal intervention, specific programmes should be planned and promoted at micro level to suit the local condition. It is in this context that the Block Panchayat initiated a programme named “Anganwadi Organic Village” during 2016 to improve the nutrition status of children admitted in the Anganwadi centers. The specific objectives of the programme are the following:

1. Reduce the status of anaemia among children in the age group 6 months to 6 years.
2. Include safe and harmless vegetables in the daily diet of the children.
3. Increase the interest of children and parents towards natural foods.

4. Promote the culture of organic farming by avoiding toxic chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
5. Create awareness among children regarding organic farming and to ensure community participation for the smooth functioning of Anganwadi centres.

3.1.9. Strategies Adopted

At first the Anganwadi Centers (AWC's) were directed to identify atleast one cent of land within their premises or in a nearby place for organic farming. Next stage is to prepare the identified suitable land for vegetable cultivation by applying organic manure and avoiding chemical fertilizers. For this they have to seek the advice of officials of agriculture and soil departments. Third stage is to procure suitable vegetable seeds from the Krishi Bhavan and plant them scientifically. They have to follow the systematic method in the application of organic manure and pesticides and irrigation. The harvested vegetables have to be used to prepare food for morning, mid-day, and afternoon meals for the children. The AWCs have to continue the cultivation of vegetables of various variety suitable to different climatic condition so as to produce the required organic vegetables throughout the year. The scheme is implemented in 164 Anganavadi centres, 2 bud schools for differently abled children and 20 lower primary schools. Here it is important to note that Horticulture Therapy (HT), which focusses on people–plant connection, is very important for the physical, mental and social well being in the case of differently abled children and also for the aged people. Various activities (tending the plants) of Horticulture increases their fine motor skills,improves coordination and balance,gives them a sense of independence and an environment to interact with others. The motto of HT is "towards ability from disability".

The success of this project depends on inter-departmental convergence and public participation. Here it is important to note that for each AWC, there is a welfare committee of which the ward member of the L.G is the Chairman and Anganwadi Worker the Convenor. The committee has to ensure inter - deparment convergence and public participation.

Besides the above activities in organic farming, the Block Panchayat implemented following welfare schemes:

1. Amruthamgamaya – Jeevana – Health care of aged people
2. Reksha –early detection and intervention of cancer
3. Jyothirgamaya – Koumara – Health care for adolescent girls.

Nedumangadu Block Panchayat conducted social audit of all the projects during the financial year 2016-17 and 2017-18 to evaluate the initiatives of the Block panchayat.

The Block panchayat received the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat

Sashaktikaran Puraskar from Govt.of India, Ministry of Panchayath Raj 2016-17, for its outstanding efforts of the successful and effective implementation of programmes namely Anganawadi Organic Village, Geo Informatics system, Mobile governance, Waste management, Organic farming Training and Service Centre and ISO certification. Various Awards from Agriculture Department, Govt. of Kerala for the promotion of organic cultivation in the Block Panchayath. State award for intervention of Block Panchayath in ICDS functions from Social Justice Department, Govt. of Kerala for the year 2016-17.

4. Conclusion

The intermediate tier Block Panchayat is relevant in Kerala, in view of the large size of population in a Grama Panchayat and District Panchayat. But the distinction between the working of Block and Grama Panchayat is not clearly understood not only by the people in general but also the functionaries. A cursory look at the various initiatives of Nedumangad Block Panchayat shows that it is overstepping into the functions of Grama Panchayat. However, as institutions of local self government, these initiatives are justified. A careful review of the various initiatives of Block Panchayat during the last three years shows that it has initiated one project after another in quick succession without waiting for the stabilization of a project. Therefore an in-depth evaluation study of these projects has to be carried out for their replication in other local governments.

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3

Principles of Fiscal Management in Kerala: Model Urban Local Governance

The institutional fundamentals of modern public audit were introduced by Napoleon Bonaparte by the creation of cour des comptes (court of audit) in the year 1807. The system introduced was the first of its kind in the field of expenditure control system which is followed by the modern economy. The Court of Audit is a quasi judicial authority empowered with the public finance auditing. Likewise, the Indian system has the Controller and Auditor General. The public finance is therefore regulated through a quasi judicial mechanism, which ensures the independent auditing of income and expenditure. The court of audit system in the local government is the State audit department, Accountant General and the performance audit which regulates the fiscal management in local governments. The present article analyses the principles of fiscal management through internal checks and balances by the local government itself apart from the independent organised auditing system.

Toby Thomas, B.Sc., LL.M.*

* Municipal Secretary, Chalakudy, Ph: +91 9496141437, e-mail: advtoby@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The very existence of a State system depends on the financial autonomy, an essential attribute of State function. The optimal collection of taxes and other revenues along with the management in the expenditure side is a mandate for the effective functioning of a State. Therefore, the public finance is an everyday matter which has to do with the Government. The authorisation of spending is done by Parliament in the case of Central government, legislatures in the case of State governments and council in the case of Local governments. The prerogative of house is also known as "power of purse."The power of purse in the decentralised urban governance rests with the Municipal Council. The fiscal management is therefore the prime responsibility of Council which is through budgetary financial control. The budget is therefore an important document for money management in local government. The budget primarily manages the fiscal system through planning, recording all fiscal transactions and performing procedures and auditing.

2. Budget and Budgetary Control

The financial plan which is essential for the existence of an organised system has receipts and expenditure part,

a. Revenue receipts

Revenue receipts are the income for the local self government and are recurring in nature. The revenue receipts include taxes, licence fees, cess etc.

b. Capital Receipts

Capital receipts will be a liability and should be re-paid by the local government. Borrowing is an example of Capital receipts.

c. Revenue Expenditure

The expenditure which never creates any assets or reduces the existing liabilities of a local government is known as the Revenue Expenditure. This includes expenditure incurred for the day to day working or maintenance of the organisation like salary, pension or other administrative expenses and they are recurring in nature.

d. Capital Expenditure

The expenditure which creates assets and reduces the liability of the local government is a capital one. The infrastructure buildings, land acquisition, repayment of loans etc are the examples.

The budget performance is the measurement of financial transactions marked over a financial year in the above mentioned heads. The fiscal management in a local government is controlled by the budget or in

other words budgetary control. The budget is therefore a mode of regulating the economy which has the reflections of social and political philosophy followed by the ruling party. Due to scarcity of financial resources, the political economy of a local government highly depends on the efficacy of budget system, as a tool for fiscal management. The urban local government system in Kerala follows a surplus budgeting as per section 286(2) (b) of Municipalities Act, which allows for a cash balance of not less than five percent of the revenue of the Municipality at the end of the year. (Government of Kerala, 1994)

3. Constitutional Outline

The Constitutional scheme of local government budget is provided under Article 243 W (d), which mandates the Legislature of a State by law to provide for constitution of a fund for crediting all moneys received on behalf of a municipality and for the provision to withdraw such moneys from the fund so constituted. The provision is alike to the consolidated fund of India and States under Article 266, where all revenues received by the Central and State governments, all loans raised by the issue of treasury bills, loans or ways and means advances and all moneys received in repayment of loans by that governments forms a single account. Clause 3 further provides that the appropriation from the consolidated fund shall be in accordance with law. The procedure for appropriation is the budgeting and the authorisation of budget by the house of people through law. (Government of India, 1950)

4. Statutory Outline

The Municipalities Act has specific provisions for the constitution of fund for crediting all moneys received on behalf of a municipality, called 'Municipal Fund' under Section 283. The fund consist of (a) taxes, duties cess and surcharge levied, the rent from properties, fees from licences and permissions and its income from other miscellaneous items; (b) share of the taxes levied by the government and transferred to the municipality and the grants released to the municipality by the government; (c) grants released by the government for the implementation of schemes, projects and plans formulated by the municipality; (d) grants released by the government for the implementation of the schemes, projects and plans assigned or entrusted to the municipality; (e) money raised through donations and contributions from the public and non-governmental agencies. The municipal fund is subject to the fetters under Section 309, where the Government has the power to restrict the access to fund in certain circumstances. The Constitutional as well as the statutory scheme mandates that the amount credited shall be spent by a procedure stipulated by the law. The fiscal management in the local government is entrusted with different statutory entities. (Government of Kerala, 1994)

5. Council and the Power of Purse

The conjoint reading of Sections 29 and 287 of the Act entrusts the administration of the Municipality with the council, the highest forum with the power of purse along with the authorisation of budget which says that, the budget estimate prepared by the Standing Committee for Finance shall be laid by its Chairperson before the council for its approval before the end of the first-week of March at a special meeting of the council after an introductory address of the Chairperson regarding the developmental and welfare activities intended to be undertaken and implemented by the Municipality. The council as the custodian of purse have the prerogative to refer the budget estimate back to the Standing Committee for Finance for further consideration and resubmission with alteration, if any suggested by the council as provided under Section 288 of the Act. The council is obliged to finally pass the budget estimate before the beginning of the financial year under Section 289 of the Act. The failures on the part of the council result in the breakdown of the local government system, where no amount can be spent from the municipal fund. The impasse further attracts the Section 64 of the Act, where the government can dissolve the Municipality for the financial crisis. Further the provision under Section 22(3) mandates that every resolution passed by the Standing Committee shall be placed in the next meeting of the council which have power to modify the same if found necessary. The Standing Committees are therefore controlled or closely monitored by the council which have the ultimate authority in distributed subject matters along with the financial overriding powers, which in turn guided and regulated by the collective wisdom of the elected council. (Ibid)

6. Finance Standing Committee

The Standing Committee for Finance is the 'sentinel on the qui vive' of the Municipality which controls and manages the 'purse' on behalf of council. Section 22 says that the Standing Committee for Finance in Town Panchayat, Municipal Council and Municipal Corporation shall prepare and present the budget estimate before the council under Section 286. The Standing Committee for Finance after considering the proposals from other standing committees and the mandatory requirements under the Act such as poverty alleviation fund under section 284 of two per cent of the revenue receipts of the municipality for implementing poverty alleviation programmes in the municipal area, shall prepare budget estimate of the receipts and expenditure of the Municipality for the next year. The budget estimate so prepared shall have the provisions for the payment of all instalments of principal and interest of loans, as they fall due and a minimum five percent cash balance of the revenue of the Municipality at the end of the year. (Ibid)

Section 293 of the Act further says that the working balance shown in the budget should not be less than five percent of the current year's

estimated receipts excluding the receipts from endowments government grants, contributions and debt heads. The estimated receipts should be detailed and real and apparent differences, if any, from the actual receipts of the last year should be accompanied by detailed notes and explanations. It shall also include necessary provision for all fixed charges and discharge of debts. The Act further make provisions for supplementary and revised budget for the authorisation of money to be spent from the municipal fund and also provisions for unavoidable emergent circumstances, where the amount can be spent which is not provided in the budgetary estimates. The provisions are similar to the supplementary demands for grants and revised estimates by the Parliament and the State Legislature. (Ibid)

7. Finance Standing Committee and Budgetary Control

The budgetary control is with the Standing Committee for Finance under Section 22 of the Act. The provision makes it a mandatory function to supervise the utilisation of the budget grants and watch carefully the timely assessment and collection of taxes, fees, rents or other sums due to the municipality. The provision further empowers the committee to inspect the accounts, watch carefully the release of the grant by the Government and its utilisation, conduct monthly audit of the accounts and shall verify whether any amount prepared to be expended by the municipality is within the budget provision approved by the council and the sufficiency of fund for this purpose. A close perusal of the role of Standing Committee for Finance delineates the essential requisites of a sound fiscal management such as inspection of accounts, monthly auditing and the verification of spending with the budgetary provisions. Therefore the role of Standing Committee is worth mentioning in the decentralised fiscal governance. (Ibid)

8. Other Standing Committees

The role of other Standing Committees is to submit their proposals after taking into consideration the estimate and proposals prepared by the secretary and the officials dealing with the respective subjects under Section 286. The Act further makes provisions for the delegation of financial power to the Standing Committees to accord financial sanction as per the Section 217. The financial competency of Standing Committees in a Town Panchayat to a sum of twenty- five thousand rupees, Standing Committees in a Municipal Council to a sum of fifty thousand rupees and Standing Committees in a Municipal Corporation to a sum of one lakh rupees. The role of Standing Committees is subjected to the control and regulation under Section 22(3). (Ibid)

9. Role of Chairperson in Fiscal Management

The role of chairperson in the fiscal management is the power devolved as the head from the council. Section 15 empowers the chairperson to meet the contingent expenses in the course of administration

and the authorisation of payment and repayment of money relating to Municipality. The provision further endue the chairperson with emergency powers to direct the execution of any work or performance of any act for the safety of the public and may also direct that the expenses incurred for the execution of such work or performance of such act be paid from the fund of the Municipality, subject to ratification by the council. In so far as the financial powers of the chairperson are concerned, the powers are at par with the financial powers of the council, in other words no limits. Chairperson also has the power to inspect all records of the Municipality, which in turn a control in the fiscal matters and other aspects. Section 18(7) deals with the delegation of financial powers of the chairperson to the secretary to meet the administrative expenses as mentioned under section 15. The chairperson also has the power to place the budget estimate proposals prepared by the secretary before the council, before the beginning of the ensuing year in the event of failure or omission or delay in the preparation of the budget estimates by the Standing Committee for Finance. (Ibid)

10. Role of Secretary in Fiscal Management

The secretary of a Municipality is the executive officer appointed by the government for the administration of a local government. The role of the secretary is that of an advisor to the council along with executive powers to implement the resolution of the council and standing committees. Section 49 empowers to incur the expenditure authorised by the council or the chairperson, subject to the budgetary provision, make payments authorised by the Municipality, either by cheque or in cash, maintain and keep the accounts as to the receipts and expenditure of the Municipality, responsible for the safe custody of the Municipal fund. Section 50 provides for the incurring of an expenditure not exceeding Rs 25,000 out of the municipal fund after informing the chairperson. The secretary on or before the fifteenth day of January each year prepares and submits to the Standing Committee concerned, a budget containing a detailed estimate of receipts and expenditure for the ensuing year and shall also submit proposals, if any, necessary or expedient to vary taxation or to raise loans. (Ibid)

11. Accounting and Auditing

Article 243-Z of the Constitution of India makes provision for the maintenance of accounts by the municipalities and the auditing of such accounts. Section 295 of the Municipal Act deals with the accounts and audit in the Municipality. The local government in Kerala adopted the accrual based double entry account system by the introduction of Kerala Municipal Accounts Manual with effect from April 1, 2007 and the Kerala Municipality (Accounts) Rules, 2007. The accrual based system is a Generally Accepted Accounting Principle (GAAP) and there

are other International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) like IFRS9, IFRS15 and the latest IFRS16 in operation. The budgetary allocation, incomings and outgoings are generally marked in the account book as income and expenditure. The entry in the book is based on the standards of the double entry system which also makes provisions for marking the assets, liability, expense and income. The basic principle of double entry accounting is that in each and every transaction, two accounts will be affected. One account will be debited and the other will be credited based on accounting rules. The fiscal management therefore directly linked to a proper accounting system. The trial balance in the double entry system ensures the correctness of the journal as well as the ledger entries made. The Act makes provision for performance audit under section 56(5), where the administration, works and schemes implemented in the municipality is audited periodically. The State audit department is the statutory auditor under the Municipalities Act. (Ibid)

12. Conclusion

The social inclusion, development and other welfare activities through participatory decentralised urban governance substantially depend on a healthy fiscal management system which ensures the equitable distribution of resources. The socio-political priorities during the five year mandate demands a planning for short term as well as long term goals by a document called budget. Therefore, the socio-political system prevalent in the local government necessarily reflects the ideologies and priorities of the Ruling. The municipal fund is utilised to meet those ends. The control over finance through budget is therefore a pre-requisite to achieve the priorities mentioned above in a 'local government priority set political economy.'

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4

Role of Local Governments in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Perspective

Sustainable development is the way of sustaining finite resources that would meet the fundamental needs of the human being. Though the terms 'sustainable development 'are not newbie, have become Attractive, when the member states of United Nations, on 25 September 2015, have given assent to on one of the most blazing issues: Sustainable Development Goals for the period of 2015-2030. The SDGs are backed by MDGs which were in execution from 2000 to 2015.Now, to achieve those goals the governments of the nation mostly rely on local government. All of SDGs have destinations that are directly or indirectly related to the regular activities of local and regional governments. This paper addresses the questions What is the role of local governments in achieving SDGs, How does local governments relate to implementing of SDGs and What sorts of initiatives would local governments can take to implement SDGs?

Muhammad Saidul Islam*
MD. Badiul Alam**
Kabir Hossain***

* Masters, Governance and Development Studies, Jahangirnagar University Dhaka, Cell: +8801684347666, e-mail: saidulcu7@gmail.com

** Lecturer, Cox's Bazar International University, Ph.D Researcher, Sakarya University Turkey e-mail: mdbadiulalam.cu@gmail.com

*** Honours, Public Administration, University of Chittagong Chittagong, Cell: + 8801753331204 e-mail: kabirhossain124686@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The member States of the United Nations consented on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Post-2015 Development Agenda on 25 September 2015. The SDGs build on the global agenda Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that was pursued from 2000 to 2015, and will guide global action on sustainable development till the year of 2030. The SDGs are a cause for celebration by local and regional governments over the world. Bangladesh is one of those countries that demonstrated outstanding success in MDGs implementation. Again, local government was one of the foremost stakeholders that kept significant contribution to ensure MDGs in Bangladesh. Interestingly all of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local and regional governments. So, it can be said certainly that local government would keep countless role in the implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh.

2. Conceptualization of Local Governments (LGs)

The constitution of Bangladesh defines LG as bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law. 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh in which Article 59 specifically states that "local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law" (The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2004: 43). LG is a combination of various elements. These elements include a local statutory body, local inhabitants electing and controlling that body, limited autonomy in the sense that state governments in a federation and central government in unitary system give them a limited freedom to perform their functions prescribed by law, a recognition of distinction between local and non-local services, and power to levy local taxes. As Bangladesh follows unitary government, it enjoys limited autonomy provided by central government. In Bangladesh LG includes local administration (nominated by central government) and local self-government (elected by local citizens).

3. Conceptualization of Sustainable Development

3.1. Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is defined as a process of meeting human development goals while sustaining the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. While the modern concept of sustainable development is derived most strongly from the Brundtland Commission Report it is rooted in earlier ideas about sustainable forest management and twentieth century environmental concerns. "the "environment" is where we live; and "development" is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot. The two are inseparable." (Brundtland Report,1987). As the concept developed, it has shifted to focus more on economic development, social development and environmental protection for future generations.

3.2. The Goals

On 25 September 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Official Agenda for Sustainable Development has 92 paragraphs, with the main paragraph (51) outlining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and its associated 169 targets. This included the following goals:

Goal-1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal-2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal-3 Ensure healthy living and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

Goal-4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning+ opportunities for all.

Goal-5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal-6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal-8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal-9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Goal-10 Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal-11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal-12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal-13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal-14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas mind marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal-15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal-16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal-17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

4. Role of Local Governments (LGs) to Achieve SDGs

4.1. Local Governments to achieve SDG 1

As SDG 1 focuses on poverty, it requires well-planned, coordinated and multiple responses. LG is directly related to local people and an established state organization. It will be able to ensure local basic services like water and sanitation and make people key partners in the achievement of SDG1. "We can also play a role by developing local economic development strategies to create jobs and raise incomes, and by building the resilience of our communities to shocks and disasters." (UCLG, 2015)

4.2. Local Governments to achieve SDG 2

End hunger through food security and improved nutrition and durable agriculture is the concern of SDG 2. Local and regional governments' management of natural resources in rural areas, particularly land and water, underpins food security for the surrounding territory. LGs can assist agricultural production and local economic growth by strengthening transport infrastructure and markets to promote local food chains.

4.3. Local Governments to achieve SDG 3

Promote well-being and ensure healthy lives for all ages are the provision of SDG3. And LGs can also lower infant, child and maternal mortality by ensuring clean water and sanitation services. In urban areas, LGs can address this by slum improvement programmers and by increasing access to basic services for the urban poor. LGs can play an important role in identifying local needs, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS activities across departments, and coordinating prevention and response activities. Many LGs provide education and information and services to prevent HIV/AIDS. LGs can use urban planning and public transport to reduce air pollution, foster healthy lifestyles and prevent deaths from road traffic accidents. Since nature plays an important role in healthy life, LGs may reduce deaths caused by water and soil pollution through effective natural resource management and environmental protection.

4.4. Local Governments to achieve SDG 4

Primary level education in almost all countries throughout the world is a direct responsibility of LGs. This means SDG 4 could be well achieved by LG. It can find out the barriers in achieving primary education as it works at rural level. By considering this aim LGs could provide inclusive and equitable education for all to make people workable for that time being. LGs are particularly well-placed to reach out to vulnerable and marginalized individuals and communities and to ensure they have access to education and training that meet their needs.

4.5. Local Governments to achieve SDG 5

For gender equality and the empowerment of women through non-discriminatory service provision to citizens and fair employment practices, LGs can act as an approach. LGs are on the frontline of identifying and tackling violence and harmful practices against women. Urban planning (particularly the creation and maintenance of public spaces) and local policing are both essential tools in tackling these issues. LGs also have a role to play in providing services to women affected by violence. Regional and LGs and rural municipalities can identify and tackle barriers to women's equal access to land control and ownership.

Getting more women into elected office at local level is a top priority in terms of empowering women, both as a goal in its own right, and because local politics is often the first step to regional and national office. Female leaders in LG can challenge gender stereotypes and set an example to young girls.

4.6. Local Governments to achieve SDG 6

To have access to pure water and sanitation are basic human rights, and it is a usual responsibility of LGs ensuring continual access to these. The challenges involved can vary hugely at sub-national level, particularly between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the main challenge is often a lack of access to basic services in informal settlements, or high prices and a lack of quality control of water from private vendors. In rural areas, water may be free, but it may involve long journeys to and from the source, and may be contaminated. LGs have a role to play in improving water quality through environmental protection measures. LGs are ideally placed to support participatory management of water and sanitation by communities, including slum-dwellers.

4.7. Local Governments to achieve SDG 7

The key points of SDG 7 are affordable and clean energy for all. Energy among vulnerable groups in our communities, LGs can contribute to energy efficiency directly by investing in energy efficient buildings and green energy sources in public institutions (government offices, schools,etc.) and by introducing sustainability criteria into our procurement practices. Such initiatives can have the added advantage of reducing public spending on energy. In cities, local transport and urban planning LGs are often best placed to identify gaps in access to affordable policies.

4.8. Local Governments to achieve SDG 8

LGs can generate growth and employment from the bottom up through local economic development strategies that harness the unique resources and opportunities in our territories. LGs can identify

children at risk of child labor and work to ensure they attend school. We can also work in partnership with the informal sector to improve their working conditions and social protections, and to encourage formalization, where appropriate. LGs can act as an example in providing safe and secure working environments, and in guaranteeing equal pay for equal work. We can also include these practices as part of our procurement criteria when working with the private and third sectors. LGs are best placed to work with communities to assess the benefits and costs of tourism in our areas and to develop strategic plans to ensure activity in this sector is sustainable.

4.9. Local Governments to achieve SDG 9

Developed infrastructure is the sign development and better life standard. As LGs of Bangladesh, the executive body of nation's infrastructural development, by making LG innovative and well-trained about building and repairing activities sustainable development would be possible. LGs can include the promotion of small-scale industry and start-ups in their local economic development strategies, taking into account local resources, needs and markets. We can identify gaps in access to ICT and the internet in our communities.

4.10. Local Governments to achieve SDG 10

What is a blessing for one sector of people is a curse for other sectors of people in a society. These days, due to the effect of globalization and open market economy, poorer become poorest and richer turns to richest and these trends offer an unstable society. As most people in rural areas are farmers, they have little money to cultivate their lands. That's why farmers have to go to landlords for financial support and at the end of the season farmers pay almost their whole income as due debt to land lords. To bring farmers into a quality life, LGs could offer them agricultural necessities like seeds, fertilizer, cash money etc. This would ensure that farmers would be self-sufficient and rates of inequalities would reduce strikingly.

4.11. Local Governments to achieve SDG 11

Human happiness is closely related to safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable settlements. Again, development of this sector depends on city government and LG. So, urban mayors and commissioner's mist develop strategic plans to prevent their growth and work with slum-dwellers to improve conditions and provide basic services where slum already exist. City governments must regulate land and housing places to guarantee the right to housing to poorest residents. These authorities also have responsibility to take care of green-public spaces transport, and sustainable solid waste management.

4.12. Local Governments to achieve SDG 12

Local bodies can assist short supply chains, thereby reducing transport and carbon emissions by educating, training, local planning and land

management. LGs would involve them in means of productions with general people, local industry owners and business personals. They provide ideas, strategic plans and financial support to produce goods and services that are needed for the local inhabitants.

4.13. Local Governments to achieve SDG 13

Although climate changes and its horrible effects are common for almost all countries throughout the world, developing countries like Bangladesh suffers the most from such destructive changes. The Inter-governmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) has termed Bangladesh as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world due to climate change (IPCC, 2007). It is matter of joy that in the crisis history of Bangladesh, LGs have been keeping an auspicious support in local lives. So, for a better and healthy environment, LGs could through seminars, symposiums, training and variety of programs, protect environment of their regions.

4.14. Local Governments to achieve SDG 14

Both urban and local activities are responsible for rivers and ocean pollutions. The rivers of Bangladesh are the worst victim of pollution. Untreated waste is thrown into the river as most of the industries have no Effluent Treatment Plant. According to an industrial survey conducted by Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies, only about 40% industries have ETPs. In 10% industries, ETPs are under construction and about 50% industries have no ETP establishment. That is, more than 50% of waste generated by the industries eventually goes to the rivers untreated, (BCAS, 2009). Besides, around 80 per cent of the pollution in the ocean comes from local-based activities. To reduce this pollution, LGs can appreciate local farmers not to use much chemical fertilizers to take waste management steps for all local dwellers.

4.15. Local Governments to achieve SDG 15

LGs are in a unique position to coordinate the partnerships with the private sectors and communities that are necessary at local level for the complex task of protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reserve land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. Local and regional governments should ensure that biodiversity. So here community- based participation and management facilitated by LGs, is a powerful tool to halt biodiversity loss and prevent extinction, and land and forests degradation.

4.16. Local Governments to achieve SDG 16

Goal 16 demands LGs to become more pragmatic and accountable to our citizens. This calls us on increase public's access to information to tackle corruption. LGs have headed the way in experimenting with new forms of participatory-decision making fir decades, for instance,

participatory budgeting and planning. This goal requires LGs to expand these efforts and become even more responsible to our communities.

4.17. Local Governments to achieve SDG 17

LGs are in an ideal position to encourage and facilitate partnerships between public bodies, the private sectors and civil society in our communities. LGs have been collaborating internationally municipal movements. Bangladesh LGs are ready and willing to take a seat at the global table. So, reliable local data will be an essential tool to take care of sub-national variations in progress and in targeting resources to make sure that no-one is left behind.

5. Recommendations

Below measures can be taken to accelerate the roles of LGs in SDGs implementation:

- The role of LG in achieving the SDGs should be fully funded and a clear formula for sufficient financial resources developed in partnership with central government.
- LG should be empowered to raise revenue locally towards achieving the SDGs, both through enhanced local tax collection, as well as new through new revenue sources including new local taxes, and being able, where appropriate, to raise bonds and enter into public-private partnerships etc.
- Allocations of national budgets to LG should be increased to support the localization of the SDGs, particularly in deprived and post-conflict areas.
- Central government should take over to ensure effective implementation.
- Taking considerable measures to make local denizens aware about SDGs.
- To ensure LG preference in the case of decision making to implement SDGs in the local level.

6. Conclusion

LG is a sub-governmental organ or body created by the central government or Act of Parliament to be in charge of political administration of a locality or a local unit in a state.

LG has a vital role to play in the leave-no-one-behind agenda, ensuring that the basic services are accessible for all marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including women, the poor, youth and minority groups. If the financial requirements for materializing the SDGs can be made available by central government or empowering the LGs to

raise revenue through tax collection or through loan, the attainment of these goals is not a big task. The effective monitoring of the attainment should be reserved by the central government and provide necessary inputs and knowledge to the LGs in planning and implementation of projects equip Bangladesh towards the attainment of SDGs.

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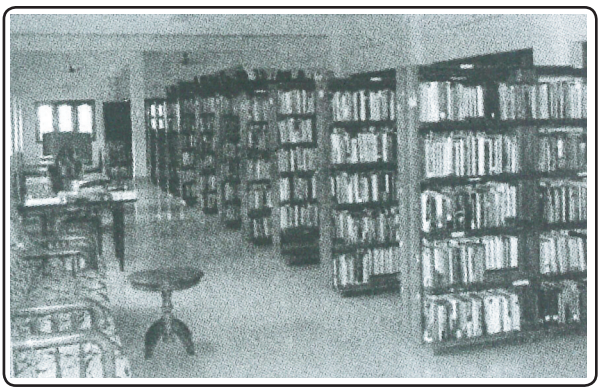
KILA Library

KILA library has a collection of over 10,000 books and over 200 journals, focused on KILA's thrust areas. The collection of books and periodicals of the Library is focused on the themes of Panchayati Raj, local governance, participatory planning, poverty alleviation, rural development, urban development and management. It has full-fledged information centre on local governance, with state of the art facilities like computer and Internet. With this purpose, a new library complex has been constructed.



As part of computerization of Library, KILA installed KOHA software in the Library. An online Digital Repository for local Governance has also been created by KILA and the website is www.dspace.kila.ac.in.

5

Decentralization of Health Care Systems and Outcomes: Correlation and Paradox

India is currently witness for Two trends that have the potential to significantly improve the health of its rural people. The first is the increasing general feeling that the system of the quality public health services is in crisis. And the second is India's courageous and strong efforts to reinforce the voice of the rural poor through the decentralization of health services. It is argued that these two apparently separate trends that can converge to generate real reforms in the health sector in India. Also it gives potential for the increased accountability that local governments can provide. Thus efforts at rural health decentralization have been undertaken within the context of strengthening accountability in health governance structures. Furthermore, the closeness and nearness gives better supervision and implementation of any health programmes. This article is based on the authors field experiences and concludes that decentralization of the health services brings the health programmes nearer to the needy people thereby providing provision them to react more efficiently and successfully to the local needs and preferences as soon as possible but required change is required in the PRI system for this.

Dr. D.C.Nanjunda *

* Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Mysore, Mysore 06, Phone : 09880964840, e-mail: ajdmeditor@yahoo.co.in

1. Panchayati Raj System

Panchayats in India have been in existence for centuries. During the British rule, Lord Rippon took the initiative of establishing elected local bodies in 1882. However, for the first time in the 20th century, it was Gandhiji who wished to revive the panchayats with democratic bases of their own and invest them with adequate powers, so that the villagers could have a genuine sagacity of 'Swaraj'. Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by the idyllic view of the village life and the village organization and formulated his ideas as a process for alternative polity of a free India. He observed that India lived in its villages and its development process should start with the village and the villagers. Gandhiji believed that such an institutional arrangement will provide an opportunity for the villagers to get involved in the planning, programme implementation and learning to play a catalytic role in achieving faster development of the village India. Due to Gandhiji's insistence, Article 40 was included in the Indian Constitution, that too in the Directive Principles of the State Policy, leaving the establishment of Panchayats to the discretion of the states (Bheenaveni, 2007).

Inadequate emphasis on tackling the problems of ill-health, particularly relating to nutrition, water supply and sanitation, environmental hygiene, housing, literacy and poverty alleviation, which were crucial to public health, was identified as early as 1946 in the Bhore Committee blueprint and that was accepted by independent India as a framework for health service development. The Bhore Committee (1946) also strongly recommended health education and community involvement in public health issues. But, with the compartmentalization of the ongoing efforts in these directions by different departments and ministries, the inter-sectorality of all these with basic health has been lost. Over the years, both the central and state governments initiated various measures to involve communities and stakeholders in the provision of basic healthcare services. But in reality, the community participation in grassroots level bodies was practically absent(Mohanty ,2013).

Experts conclude that overall improvement in health conditions of the rural people is only possible through PRIs which is a people based health care delivery system. It can provide effective services even at a low cost with greater accountability and equity. In 1994, the expert committee of the National Population Policy, headed by M S Swaminathan, suggested a paradigm shift and conceptualized population and health policies within the context of overall social and economic development agenda with greater devolution of authority and responsibilities to the panchayats. The committee pointed out that the people must have a central role in deciding how they would like to live. The development strategies must address the totality of the way the people live, think and work. The committee also suggested

that it was necessary to adopt the principle of 'think, plan and act locally and support nationally'.

The new National Population Policy (2000) reiterates the crucial role of the panchayats in planning and implementation of health and family welfare programmes in the rural parts. The planning tool recommended by the expert group for grassroots level social development was a socio-demographic charter. To be used at the village, town or city level, this tool helps the elected members of local bodies to priorities their basic minimum needs and develop feasible strategies for fulfilling such needs within a stipulated time. The grassroots level socio-demographic charter is to be based on a 'pro-nature, pro-poor, pro-women and pro-democratic choice' orientation to the developmental planning. The major aim of the socio-demographic charter is to assist the local communities to develop an action plan that will help in achieving and continuously improving the quality of life (Vyasulu nd Vijayalakkshm ,2011).

India at the present witness for Two dimensions that have the capacity to considerably improve the health of its citizens. First and foremost is the rising recognition that the structure of the public delivery of health services in India is in deep crisis. And the second is India's brave efforts to reinforce the voice of the rural poor through decentralization to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI). It is argued that that these Two presumably separate trends can converge to generate real reforms in the health sector in India through the potential for increased accountability that local governments can provide. The argument is that decentralization brings governments closer to people thereby allowing them to respond more effectively to the local health needs and preferences. In the health sector, decentralization has been explicitly conferred a crucial role in the chain of service delivery under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).Thus efforts at rural decentralization (73rd amendment) have been undertaken within the context of strengthening accountability in local governance structures. Moreover, closeness pushes enhanced supervision and enforcement. In the accurate outline of the health sector, a decentralized institutional apparatus that focus a bottom up, participatory system can positively assist to rectify some of the key failings in the health sector such as absenteeism and corruption by strengthening accountability through NRHM programme focusing decision space, capacity, accountability, strategic and operational planning, budgets governance, monitoring evaluation etc.

The studies have also found that one of the most difficult and inadequate part of devolution in Karnataka was devolution of functionaries. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation conducted a series of workshops in all the four regions of the country and it is no surprise that all the regional workshops have concluded that the states were not coming forward in transferring powers, functions and functionaries and have come out

with strong recommendations especially with regard to functionaries. They have recommended for having a separate and autonomous cadre of Panchayat bureaucracy. It has recommended for transfer of adequate staff and they should be placed under the control of the PRIs. Another important recommendation was that there should be no dual control of the health staff deputed to the PRIs (Rajashekar and Sathpathy, 2007).

2. Articulation of PRIs Engagement in Policy Documents

`The National Population Policy 2000 and the National Health Policy, 2001, include decentralization and convergence of service delivery at village levels and recognize the PRI as the agency responsible to ensure this. In 2001, the Planning Commission's Task Force reviewed PRIs involvement and found that currently the PRIs are not equipped to take on such planning and monitoring functions, nor is there a cognizance in the health system of the role of the PRIs. The Tenth Plan document also emphasizes the critical role and functions of the PRIs in the various development issues. Most experiences have been positive, but recognize that the enabling good environment for the panchayats to get strengthening in different aspects. The Kerala experience in strengthening PRIs, not immediately and completely replicable, but offers useful insights and lessons. Several factors influence the progress of decentralized planning and implementation of health projects, not the least being political will, and people's readiness to engage with the decentralization aspects(Vaddiraju nd Sangeeta, 2011).

It is generally opined that decentralization of responsibilities down to the local level and, in particular, engaging different segments of the Panchyati Raj system (PRI) can help to generate better responsibility in the Indian health care system. This is because efficient and answerable governance and enhanced delivery of the public health services is a by-product of booming health decentralization that has been coordinated with an appropriate vanguard plunder. In India the major step regarding policy of decentralization took place in 1993,with the adoption of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution. Enacted as a reply to preceding calls for better responsibility for the local governments, these amendments meant escalating the more autonomy of PRIs in some Indian states (Rothermund, 2008; Singh, 2008;Pahwa,2013).

3. Panchayati Raj Institutions and National Rural Health Mission

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was introduced in the year 2005. Implementation of the NRHM is significantly dependent on the good functioning of gram, block and district level Panchayats. 'At the District level a District Health Mission will coordinate NRHM functions. As the experts the key to NRHM success are: 1. inter-sectoral convergence, 2.community ownership steered through village

level health committees at the level of the Gram Panchayat, and well functioning of the public sector health system with the required support from the private health sector'. ASHA, (Accredited Social Health Activist), and some standing health committees like Village Health Committee etc have been created as a mechanism to strengthen village level service delivery system in the country.

Through NRHM, decentralization has further moved in two directions: (1) further delegation of powers and capital to local bodies, and (2) de-concentration of powers and resources to the districts and lower levels of health management system. Experts feels capacities of Panchayat Raj Institutions to manage the grass root health system focusing health systems, strategic and operational planning, budgeting, human resources, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation needs more enhancement. Also the degree of decentralization under the NRHM correlate strongly with the perceived decision space of the health officials and the PRI members at the district level and below

Next, Bossert and others, (2010) have opined that through NRHM, decentralization has additionally moved in two directions: (1) additional devolution of powers and capital to local institutions, and (2) de-concentration of powers and resources to the districts and lower levels of health administration. It seems first way was tremendously imperative in the circumstance of the local health problems and the remedies. More than a few approaches have been concurrently followed to meet these objectives: (a) empowering District and Block Level Samitis and RKS (Rogi Kalyana Samithi/HMS) at the facility level by providing them with increased institutional capacity and untied funds; (b) Creation of Village Health and Sanitation Committees in each village, which will be given consolidated grant per year to use on local crucial health priorities (Bossert and others, 2010).

As we are aware the National Health Policy (2010), focus on execution of the various public health related schemes and programmes channelizing only through PRIs and other public institutes. It was more pressing that the National Disease Control Programmes must be implemented through PRIs only. Also The Planning Commission had set up a special Task Force to appraise PRIs participation in a variety of public health sectors and to formulate frame work and the valid recommendations on commitment and participation of PRIs specific to each sector. The Task Force Report has fixed few chief functions for each of the tiers of the PRIs as part of NRHM programme stressing five major programmes - 1. Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), 2. Vector Borne Diseases control 3. Blindness control 4. TB Control Programmes 5. STD/AIDS etc. All these activities are proposed for focusing identification of people requiring immediate medical services, in partnership with the local health system and monitoring of village level health care personnel, and primary and secondary health care facilities. However, experts felt at present the PRIs are not well prepared/

equipped to carry out such assigned programmes (in NRHM) which is highly technically oriented and planning and monitoring functions at grss root level requires highly skilled workforce. Also there is a room that PRIs in health care system is systematically underestimated, under pinned and neglected by the higher level of health officials (Bheenaveni, 2007).

It is found that the accountability of giving excellence health service delivery is imperative and monitoring and evaluation are also very essential. Appointment of more qualified more experienced and trained person are more significant. It is very vital incapability building measure at the district, block, and village level. Authors felt capacity building for PRIs and NRHM officials and the health administrates must stress on escalating their acquaintance and essential supportive role for the local health efforts and promotion for immediate local needs. There is a space for increasing the local decision room particularly if additional uniform capacities can reach. Norms and the regulations for timely decisions connecting better responsibility to the local elected officials must be rationalized to decrease time and difficulty and augment the active local contribution or participation in various health programs assigned in NRHM (Vaddiraju and Sangeeta, 2011).

4. Conclusion

Further experts found that better link among health administrators; ASHA workers and NRHM, and the PRI officials may be important in removing vital problems for accountability and essential local holdup for various health actions. Experts felt existing system, norms, and bureaucratic system, corruption have been limited the ability and attentiveness of PRI officials are being troubled in taking essential and on time local level needy decision. It seems that negligence, corruption, nepotism caste discriminations, lack of strong monitoring system etc sometime playing a fundamental role in creating hurdles in the decentralized health care delivery system at grass root level today. It is learned that capacity building, among health officials, health workers, and PRI officials may have spread out effects in building up the more decision making and responsibility in the local health needs through NRHM. Experts have opined there is a need to focusing few areas where capacity building for grass root health policymakers must focus.

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6

Need for Capacity Building of PRIs in India: A Suggestive Action Plan

It is very essential to strengthen all elected representatives of all tires of local government. For the successful implementation and monitoring of developmental plan it is very necessary to all functionaries have such capacity. For that effective capacity development plan is needed. The decentralised planning needs to be supported with appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism as management tool for the development managers at all levels.

Dr. R. Chinnadurai*
Dr. R. Aruna Jayamani**

* Associate Professor NIRD & PR, Ph: 07731836611, e-mail: chinnadurai.nird@gov.in
** Assistant Professor NIRD & PR, Ph: 07660008020, e-mail: arunajayamani.nird@gov.in

1. Introduction

The recent declaration by the United Nation Organisation (UNO) on estimation of poverty included social well being dimensions like education and good health in addition to the economic parameters, which projects around 60% of people are in the clutches of poverty in India. It indicates, India has to make a number of unique and innovative initiatives to reduce and eliminate different forms of poverty. One of the major strategies could be decentralised planning to address the ground level issues specifically fulfilling the minimum basic needs of the people in rural areas. The bottom-up planning has been considered more appropriate in the largest democratic country like India which eventually has facilitated the process of decentralised planning. Given the population growth, vulnerable conditions of the rural people living below poverty line and resource constraints, planning at grassroot level is essential to achieve the need based sustainable development with people`s participation in a stipulated timeframe. Accordingly, the District, Block and Gram Panchayats have been empowered to prepare and execute local development plans for socio-economic development in accordance with the available resources, felt-needs and priorities, with focus on equity and social Justice.

The decentralised planning needs to be supported with appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism as management tool for the development managers at all levels. The conventional Monitoring and Evaluation system that focused on information collection exercise on physical and financial achievements for onward transmission has become less relevant in the context of decentralized development administration. People themselves need to take stock of the progress meant for them. The development personnel and elected representatives need to be oriented to participatory decentralized planning; implementation and Community based monitoring knowledge and skills to carry on their jobs more effectively. The local level institutions including government, people, community organisations as well as corporate institutions to be strengthened and capacitated to lead the development process and achieve sustainable development with social inclusiveness through good governance. In this context, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) holds prime responsibility undertaking all possible efforts for materialising the 'Village Swaraj' and alleviation of poverty.

2. Mandate of Capacity Building Institutions of PRIs

It is essential to evolve and disseminate methodologies in participatory decentralised planning for sustainable development, Conceive, design and organize training programmes and research activities with focus on participatory approach to Planning. The Capacity Development (CD) of PRIs has to be aimed to exercise capacity building in the field of planning, implementation, management and monitoring of development

initiatives at the grassroots level for the elected representatives and functionaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj through networking and partnerships.

2.1. Vision

The vision of Decentralised Planning is to be, creation of capacity of the stakeholders in long-term development framework through decentralisation and participatory governance at the Gram Panchayat level for transformation to a democratic, stable and prosperous society. The Vision reiterates the PRIs commitment to good governance, and create enabling environment to implement the decentralisation and establishment of a self reliant system of local governance with full ownership and participation of citizens in decision making to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind.

2.2. Strengthening of Capacity Building Institutions at the Grassroot.

It is prime need to provide exemplary training and to guide in Decentralised Planning for the elected representatives of the PRIs, officials working in the field of Rural development and Panchayat Raj, functionaries of the non-governmental institutions. It is also essential to provide consultancy services in the areas of decentralised planning to the state and central governments, affiliated institutions, professional and policy-making, and to the public. Those institutions can conduct training for the people and their representatives for participatory decision making and planning at the grassroots; conduct of people centric, field based, delivering of public policy and developmental research services; advocating for improved conditions to support better life of rural community aiming towards inclusive growth and development; and building a cohesive and collaborative, diverse environment that values and rewards innovation, productivity and critical thinking.

2.3. Task of Capacity Building of PRIs

Capability Building of various stakeholders of Panchayats is a complex task, as it involves large numbers - there are 28.5 lakh Elected Representatives, as well as a range of stakeholders such as panchayat functionaries including Panchayat Development Officers, secretaries, accountants, departmental officials work with Panchayats, members of Gram Sabhas etc. The challenge is to reach out to this diverse group while ensuring high quality, context specific trainings. Comprehensive outreach of capability building implies provision of appropriate training to Elected Representatives and functionaries at all levels of Panchayats, especially ensuring the inclusion of the cutting-edge level. For training the panchayats, the problems in front are in one hand covering huge number of elected representatives and functionaries

at three levels of Panchayats, on the other hand demand of diverse nature of subjects to different category of stakeholders like members of Gram Sabhas, departmental functionaries, and even experts, media and other groups. While institution based training remains important and the cascade mode as well as distance education are necessary to train large numbers.

3. Range of Stakeholders of PRIs need to be trained

(a) Elected Representatives

The training of elected representatives has been the core of capacity building efforts, they include ward members, Presidents and Vice Presidents at the Gram Panchayat level and members, Chairman and Vice- Chairman of the Block and Zilla Panchayats. Though all States have organized training of ERs, the extent to which SIRDs are able to outreach training to ERs varies.

(b) Core Panchayat Functionaries

The training of core Panchayat functionaries, who perform the day to day functions of Panchayats is also very important. Functional training on various roles and responsibilities within the legal purview is important for effective delivery of the basic services to the people.

(c) Gram Sabhas

For strengthening grassroots democracy, efforts have to be made to sensitize the village community at large, i.e. the Gram Sabha members – who are mandated to prepare local development plans and review the working of the Gram Panchayat through social audit and other means.

(d) Departmental Functionaries

The training of departmental functionaries can be undertaken in two forms. This is a demanding task, as the number of departments with which Panchayats are concerned is fairly large.

(e) Functional Committees and CBOs Associated with Panchayats

As the interface of CBOs with Panchayats grows, it will be necessary to ensure that they are adequately trained to perform their role in collaboration with Panchayats. As in the case of departmental officials, it would be important to form networks with departmental training institutes, as well as NGOs.

(f) Other Stakeholders that Support Panchayats

The support of policy makers, especially Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) and Members of Parliament (MPs), activists as well as of the media can be obtained by sensitizing them to Panchayats. Such programmes can be in the form of workshops, discussions etc.

3.1. Key Strategies for Training

In order to reach the large numbers of the PRIs, the state and district level CB institutions can adopt following key strategies:

- The cascade mode of training, whereby resource persons are trained, and they then provide training at multiple locations
- The use of distance modes of education, especially video conferencing and satellite communicate or SATCOM based training
- Creating Master Trainers in collaboration with state and below training institutions, academic institutes and NGOs to provide training as per a common framework.
- The use of media for capacity building, especially for the education of Gram Sabhas, is critical: radio programmes, publishing newsletters, wall posters, pamphlets etc. will yield better result in awareness of the people.
- The state governments can make more effective use of the television and folk media through partnership with local resource agencies and NGOs with appropriate strategies like inspirational songs, skits, street plays, puppet shows etc. to get the message across.
- To strike a balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, exposure visits for both officials and elected representatives will also be thought.

3.2. Domain of PRIs and Capacity Building

Because Panchayats are very important instrument of governance at the grassroots, the range of subjects to be addressed during training is quite large.The following sequence will give a glance to finalise the capacity strategy.

- A basic foundation course which covers legal provisions for Panchayats, management of the Panchayat, decentralized planning, financial management, revenue raising etc. needs to be provided for all ERs as well as core Panchayat functionaries and this should ideally be undertaken within six months of Panchayat elections.
- In the second year, ERs and functionaries may be exposed to thematic courses in areas such as provision of civic services, health, drinking water and sanitation, education, gender, child development, natural resource management, social justice and empowerment etc.
- Finally, around the third year of elections, refresher courses to reinforce learning and address emerging needs will be undertaken.
- In addition, a range of special courses will be also organised for

marginalized groups, for Panchayat functionaries dealing with specific sectors, in leadership, information technology and various themes of socioeconomic development are needed.

4. Outreach Methods for the capacity of PRIs

To reaching the large numbers of stakeholders in collaboration with State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs), resource institutions, NGOs and other support training institutes will implement the capacity building strategies. The main strategies proposed for maximum coverage include the following.

(a) Cascade Mode

The cascade mode of training enables decentralization of training to many locations, such as the district and block level, so that many training programmes can be conducted simultaneously, thereby enabling face-to-face training of large numbers. For this type of training, there is need to ensure that an adequate number of trainers is available, as well as appropriate locations. Usually, the trainers too have to be trained. Training through the cascade mode may be done institutionally, with the help of NGOs and district and block Panchayats.

(b) Distance Learning through SATCOM

In order to ensure wider coverage of stakeholders spread out in different locations, appropriate distance learning systems have been used. SATCOM training, used successfully by many SIRDs, it is proposed to collaborate with one of the Resource SIRD and planned contents will be infused. It allows outreach to a large number of trainees from a central location.

(c) Collaboration with NGOs and Academic Institutes

To expand outreach, several states that lack of adequate number of training centres at decentralized levels will be collaborated with NGOs to organize multiple training programmes. This involves selecting good NGOs and then Training of Trainers (ToTs) to undertake capacity building in a cascade mode. The selection of NGOs and rigorous monitoring are key aspects of this exercise which will be done appropriately with the standard procedures.

4.1. Various Modes of Training Suggested

i. Institution-based Training, ii. Cascade Decentralized Mode Training – through SIRDs, ETCs, academic Institutions and NGOs, iii. Mass Media based Training – writing through newsletters, TV & radio, iv. Traditional and Folk Media – with the help of resource agencies and NGOs, v. Exposure Visits to Good Performing Panchayats/ NGOs/Projects, vi. SATCOM Training, vii. Information, Education &

Communication (IEC) Events, viii. Experiential Learning Mode, ix. Help Desk/Help-Line, x. Model Learning Outreach Centres, xi. Video – Conferencing, xii. Social Media

4.2. Areas of Training

The areas or subjects in which training needs to be provided to ERs and other stakeholders largely depend upon –

- The existing status of devolution in different States, in respect of the 3Fs viz.: Funds, Functions and Functionaries.
- The role of Panchayats in Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) is also increasing. As a result, new stakeholders (departmental functionaries and CBOs) are continuously being added to the training ambit. New training areas also emerge with every additional sector devolved to Panchayats. Moreover, new concerns of will be adhere to the Sustainable Development Goals which are incorporated in the vision 2030 of the nation.

4.3 Suggested Content Areas for Different Types of Training Courses

(i) Basic Orientation (Foundation Course)- The Foundation Course is a mandatory course designed to orient all the new ERs, as well as core panchayat functionaries such as Panchayat secretaries, with the fundamental concepts related to Panchayati Raj. This will be conducted within six months of every fresh PRI election. The desired duration may be three days, in a face-to-face, direct interactive mode. The suggested course content for Foundation Course are as follows:

(a) Common Core Content:

- Concept of democracy and people's participation in development
- Meaning of local self-government
- Overview of Panchayati Raj in India
- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments
- Gram Sabha and participatory development
- Human development, gender equality, social justice and women empowerment
- e-Governance and e-Panchayats
- Good governance
- Quality-assured service delivery of all development programmes

(b) State-Specific Content:

- Overview of State Panchayati Raj Act and Rules
- Roles and Responsibilities of Panchayats – at all three levels

- Devolution of '3Fs' with respect to XI-Schedule-29 Subjects
- Activity-Mapping for 3 tiers actually devolved by respective State Governments
- Relevant issues related to Scheduled V Areas in respect of PESA
- Participatory decentralised planning and District Planning Committee
- Conduct of mandatory meetings by Panchayats – General Body and Standing Committees
- Office management and Maintenance of registers and records
- Transparency & accountability mechanisms: RTI and social audit
- Financial management: budgeting and accounting systems, including Panchayat data base of funds received, expenditure incurred and own income
- Revenue matters related to Panchayats – Collection of taxes/fees/ penalties; Removal of encroachments from Panchayat lands and common property resources; Issue of housing Pattas and land records and mutation.
- Registration of births, marriages and deaths

(ii) Thematic Sector-specific Course

A detailed thematic sector-specific training course could be planned for ERs and officials or for Standing Committees, in a direct interactive face to face mode. The duration could be 2-3 days for these thematic courses, which should be planned during the second year after election. The topics and discussion will centre on the Overview and status of the concerned sector, Core issues to be addressed, Decentralized planning process in each sector, Role of PRIs related to planning, supervision and coordination of devolved subjects and Management of flagship programmes under each sector. The thematic areas may be on Provision of civic services, Health, Water and sanitation, Education, Women and child development, Social justice and empowerment and Natural Resource Management.

(iii) Refresher Courses

The mandatory Refresher Course may be of 2 to 3 days' duration. This should be designed for reinforcement of knowledge generated in the Foundation Course in the first year of the electoral cycle and could ideally be during second or third year after election.

(iv) Leadership Courses: The suggested topics of Leadership Training could be- Leadership and motivation, Communication/public speaking, Office and assets management, Conflict management, Inter-personal relationships, Coordination and convergence, Stress management and Participatory decision making.

(v) Thematic Focussed Courses :- The themes for special courses are:

i. Participatory inclusive Development Planning – Focus area - Water conservation, harvesting, water audit etc., Food security and public distribution system, Rural housing, Waste management,

Tapping non-conventional sources of energy, Environmental management, Livelihoods (agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, dairy etc.), Micro-enterprise management, Education, health, nutrition etc.

ii. Convergence with state and centrally sponsored schemes

iii. Financial management and augmentation of own resources

iv. Salient features, principles and methodology of the GPDP

v. Sensitisation on the role of Panchayats and SDGs.

5. Conclusion

This paper vitalised the importance of the strengthening the PRIs in terms of enhancing the capacity of the elected representatives and functionaries for effective delivery of the development initiatives. It covered the areas of knowledge required for the people in the day to day functioning of the Gram panchayat and discussed the strategy for imparting skills through suitable trainings. The topics of trainings range from evolution, historical development, constitutional provisions and amendments, status of establishments, reservations to the communities and women, elections, decentralisation, devolution of powers, functions, empowerment of people through panchayats, functioning of panchayats, finances of the panchayats, role of panchayats in delivery of basic services, development, people participation, corruption of panchayat members, success of PRIs, participatory planning, implementation of development programmes, role of PRIs in rural livelihoods, employment, etc all the major aspects of functioning of panchayats are to be given with meticulous planning and action were studies from small unit of 'village to state and nationwide' coverage. The Government of India and also many state governments believe democratic decentralisation through devolving powers, functions and finances requires huge capacity building efforts for strengthening of the Panchayat Raj representatives and officials.

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7

Backwardness and Development Intervention: Review of BRGF

This paper empirically analyses the implementation of Backward Region Grant Fund Scheme (BRGF) in four gram panchayats of Udaipur district in Rajasthan, implemented during 2006-2012. This study focuses on: (A) Works undertaken under BRGF in the selected four gram panchayats, (B) Removal of backwardness, (C) Assessing the BRGF works of related gram panchayats and decentralisation of powers. These four selected gram panchayats are under Panchayat Extension for Scheduled Areas (PESA) 1996. Through BRGF seven major works were undertaken. The ordering of these priorities has implication, both in the removal of backwardness and decentralisation of power. The study has arrived at three major findings. First, all the four gram panchayats could utilize more than two thirds of the fund sanctioned to them under BRGF scheme. Second, infrastructural work related to construction of boundary walls has led to improvement in day to day functioning of school. Third, these infrastructural works assisted in the removal of backwardness in the sampled gram panchayats.

Manish Vishnoi*
Ram Chandra Pandit**

* Training Manager, Samajik Yuva Sangthan Sansthan(Social Youth Forum),Jaipur, Rajasthan. Ph: +91-9652017005, e-mail: manishvishnoi1991@gmail.com

** Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad, Telangana., Ph: +91-9177826535, e-mail: ramchandra@uohyd.ac.in

1. Introduction

Development is premised on the need to create competitive market and should be extended to all sectors. Much remains to be done in regulating the pricing of natural resources and improving the agricultural productivity. 'Though reforms are aimed at increasing the efficiency through enhanced competition, they do not automatically result in growth by itself and translate into better social sector outcomes. A definite policy paradigm that prioritises social welfares needed' (Rangarajan C., 2015, October 29).

Successive Five Year plans also laid emphasis on achieving the goal of balanced regional development and reducing inter-state disparities besides goals such as raising the rate of growth, eradicating poverty, etc. Plans were formulated for faster development of the relatively backward regions. In particular, public investment was undertaken by the government to set up public sector units in the backward areas. Various other measures were adopted to develop the backward regions, such as higher investment for irrigation and rural infrastructure to increase the rate of growth in agriculture, financial and fiscal incentives to attract more private investment, etc. A system of fiscal federalism was evolved in which resources were transferred from the Centre to the states, with the criteria for transfer funds relatively biased in favour of the so-called "backward" states. (Ministry of Finance, 2013, Report of the Committee on for Evolving a Composite Development Index of States, p. 1)

National Committee for the Development of Backward Areas set up by the Planning Commission in 1978 identified six different characteristics of an area's geography and history that would be an impediment to development: a) chronically drought prone areas, b) desert areas, c) tribal areas, d) hilly areas, e) chronically flood affected areas, and f) coastal areas affected by salinity. (Ministry of Finance, 2013, Report of the Committee on for Evolving a Composite Development Index of States, p. 2-3)

The Eleventh Plan has mentioned regarding the problems of backward areas, "Redressing regional disparities is not only a goal in itself but is essential for maintaining the integrated social and economic fabric of the country without which the country may be faced with a situation of discontent, anarchy and breakdown of law and order."(Planning Commission, 2008, Manual of Integrated District Planning, p. 28)

The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act in its 11th Schedule has mandated devolution of power. The litmus test for successful implementation of decentralisation is devolution of 3 Fs – Function, Functionaries and Finance. Functionaries of Rajasthan got 4th rank among top five states in terms of their performance. Rajasthan got 1st rank in Increasing Resource Allocations and 2nd rank in Improving Governance.

Decentralisation of functions means effective transfer of function to happen in accordance with principle of subsidiarity. Decentralisation of functionaries implies that local government level functionaries should work under the control of the elected leadership. Decentralisation of finance means the financial authorisation of local government should be commensurate with their functional responsibility. (Devolution Index Report 2014-15, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, p.27).

2. Backward Region Grant Fund in Udaipur District

The Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) was launched in February 2007. It was funded by Government of India (GoI) and managed by Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to redress regional imbalances in development, bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirement that are not being adequately met through the existing inflows. It provides financial resources for supplementing and converging existing development inflows into 272 identified districts (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2007) in the country. These districts are backward districts on several criteria, including human development indicators, proportion of population belonging to SC/ST, high environmental risks, poor opportunities for inclusive growth, etc. In these districts, the project will work closely with the UN agencies to deliver on the joint UN convergence agenda. As visualized by the 2nd Administrative Reforms Committee and as laid down in states through legislation and policy, the District Planning Committee (DPC) will facilitate and lead an iterative process of planning. This will involve local needs assessment based on the participation of women and people belonging to SC/ST and prioritization based on available local, state and national resources. A majority of the districts are in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has constituted a National Advisory– cum Review Committee, chaired by V. Ramachandran, in May 2009 to assess the overarching objective of the programme, the plans prepared, and the need for modification.

A need was felt to study the scenario and certain objectives were identified to study the States. They were (a) To examine the processes laid down in the Guidelines and the extent to which they were followed /adapted in planning and execution of prescribed works as per the technical sanctions issued by the state government, (b) To focus on those works which have abided to both quality and timely completion as per technical sanctions accorded to them by the concerned section, and (c) To identify the role of PRIs in selection of woks, reducing bottlenecks in implementation and community perception regarding utility of assets created in the village/district). To highlight on BRGF investments, and its impact on reducing regional disparities/ backwardness of both blocks and districts with respect to base line

indicators and measures/strategies adopted by implementers in converging and dovetailing with other schemes/programmes. The reference period for the study was 2006-2012.

3. Objectives

This paper is based on an empirical study of the implementation of Backward Region Grant Fund Scheme (BRGF) in the selected four gram panchayats of Udaipur district in the state of Rajasthan. The scheme was implemented in these selected four gram panchayats during 2006 -2012. The following four aspects were studied:

A. Presenting the profile of the gram panchayats.

B. To study the works undertaken under BRGF and fund utilization.

C. Assessing the BRGF performance with reference to the removal of backwardness..

D. Assessing the BRGF works and decentralisation of powers.

4. Methodology

This is an empirical study based on observation and interview method. The data was collected between July 2012 –July 2014 among the four gram panchayats of Girwa and Kherwara Block. 1. Padoona, 2. Saroo (Girwa Block), 3. Kherwara, and 4. MandwaPhala (Kherwara Block). In order to gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding official function and intervention, among these two blocks four gram panchayats were selected for the study. Both open and closed ended questionnaires were administered. Structured questionnaire was used to gather official data, whereas open ended questionnaires provided information from officials, elected representatives and persons of the selected sample gram panchayat. Focus group discussions are conducted with gram panchayat members and respondents of particular gram panchayats were conducted with the help of a checklist, structured questionnaire and focus group discussion. Discussions were also held with both State and district level implementing officials. The Researcher interacted with Chairpersons of Zila Parishad, Subject Committee Chairpersons, Block Panchayat Chairpersons, Gram Panchayat Chairpersons, District Magistrate, Chief Executive Officer, Officials of District Rural Development Agency, Project Director, and other concerned officials and non officials.

5. Udaipur District and Four Gram Panchayats: Profile at a Glance

Udaipur district consists 80.2 percent rural and 19.8 percent urban population, whereas the State has 75.1 and 24.9 respectively (Census, GoI, 2011). The sex ratio of Udaipur district (958) is significantly higher than that of the State (928). The literacy rate in Udaipur district

is 61.8 percent which is lower than the State's average (66.1 percent). Male literacy rate of the district (74.7%) is lower than that of the state's literacy rate 79.2 % while female literacy rate of the district (48.4%) is lower than the state's literacy rate, i.e. 52.1%. Gender Gap of the literacy rate is 26.3 percent in the district.

According to census 2011, the total population of Udaipur district is 3,068,420 comprising 1,566,801 males and 1,501,619 females. It shares almost 4.48 per cent of state population but 3.43 percent of state area. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in Udaipur district is 6.1% and 49.7% respectively, whereas the State percent of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population is17.8 and 13.5, respectively. There are 1,525,289 Scheduled Tribe persons reside in the district which is 49.7% of total population, whereas Scheduled Caste population shares 6.1 percent of total population. Udaipur city, also known as the 'City of Lakes' and 'Venice of East', is a very popular tourist destination in Rajasthan, India.

Udaipur district is one of the backward districts under BRGF scheme. It has been identified by Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Udaipur district has 2479 villages, out of them 2471 villages are inhabited and 8 villages are uninhabited. District has 458 gram panchayats out of which two blocks Girwa and Kherwara which were high and low performing Blocks were selected (District Census Handbook Udaipur, Directorates of Census Operations, Rajasthan -2011). In Girwa, Padoona, Saroo Gram Panchayats and in Kherwara, Mandwa Phala, Kherwara Gram Panchayats were being selected respectively. These four gram panchayats also comes under Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996.

5.1. Social Category Wise Population of Four Gram Panchayats

Social category wise population of four gram panchayats represents population data with reference to gender, tribe and caste. The total population is 26408 in four gram panchayats covered in lesser than 16 villages. Among them 53.93 percent is male and 44.06 percent is female population. The Schedule Tribe constitutes 69.03 percent of the population, the Schedule Caste 08.23 percent, other backward castes and general constitute 22.72 percent. More than two-thirds of the population of the three gram panchayats (Padoona 95%, Saroo 93% and Mandwa Phala 86%) are scheduled tribes. A majority of Schedule Tribes (Meena, Bhil and Gameti) are living in these four gram panchayats. All the four village presidents are from the Meena tribe.

5.2. Social Category Wise: Elected Representatives of Four Gram Panchayats

Out of the 59 elected representatives from gram panchayats data reveals that 55.93 percent are male and 44.06 are female. This shows a good sign of women empowerment at grassroots

level. Social category-wise, Schedule Tribe elected representatives (ERs) are 76.27 percent, Schedule Caste 05.08 percent, other backward castes and general are 19 percent. More than two-thirds of the elected representatives belong to the Schedule Tribes. The percentage of Schedule Tribe in padoona, Mandwa Phala is 100 percent, Saroo 94.44 percent and Kherwara is having 69 percent in OBC elected representatives.

6. BRGF Fund Utilization in Four Gram Panchayats

This section analyses the works undertaken under Backward Region Grant Fund in the four gram panchayats in Udaipur District during 2006-2012. During the utilization period of fund, a total number of 37 works had been done in different categories such as, concrete road, drainage, boundary wall in government school, aanganwadi centre, extra class room in government school, construction of bridge, sub health centre, tin shed (cremation ground) etc. At the aggregate level a majority (56.75%) of works undertaken were laying of Concrete Roads and Drainage works. Saroo and Kherawara gram panchayats laid seven concrete road and drainage in each, followed by Mandwa Phala (4 CC Roads) and Padoona (3 CC roads). The key inference of this is that the GPs stressed on infrastructure creation in their choice.

Further, the fund is utilized on putting up boundary walls in government school (three schools). During the field visit two gram panchayat authorities reveals that along with .road construction next maximum allocation of fund from BRGF fund was utilized in setting up Aanganwadi Centre and extra class room. Total fund of Rs. 97.8 lakhs were utilized by four GPs under seven categories. Out of that in Padoona, Mandwa Phala is 100 percent, Saroo and Kherwara has utilized highest amount Rs. 31.58 lakhs and 30.02 lakhs respectively. Padoona has utilized amount of Rs.20.05 and lowest by Mandwa Phala with sum of Rs.16.15 lakhs.

The number and the variety of works undertaken are some of the indicators for assessing the performance of the four Gram Panchayats studied. Padoona GP can be considered to be the strongest because it has undertaken five works out of seven, while Saroo and Kherwara Gram Panchayats could undertake only three works. Mandwa Phala could undertake only two works. Even though Saroo and Kherwara spent more money than Panduna Gram panchayat. The more the variety of works undertaken by a gram panchayats the more effective its performance because more community needs are met. Padoona gram panchayat performed better because they could meet a variety of needs of the village community.

A. Gram Panchayats Performance based on Fund Allocation and Fund Utilization during 2006-2012.

The fund allocations and utilization in four gram panchayats during 2006-2012 was a sum of Rs. 105.73 Lakh and it was disbursed to the Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Padoona, Saroo, Kherwara, MandwaPhala under the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)

scheme. The total funds were alloted from the received funds to the District to each GPs are Saroo (31%) and Kherwara (30.16%) followed by Padoona (25%) and Mandwa Phala (15%). These allocations are based on population size of the Gram Panchayat.

The performance of the Gram Panchayats with reference to utilization of the fund disbursed under the BRGF Scheme. Three Gram panchayats (Padoona, Saroo, Kherwara) could not spend the entire amount allocated to them. Padoona GP have received a late approval of works from Zilla Parishad. In contrast, Mandwa Phala not only spent the entire amount allocated to them but also exceeded this sum by Rs.80,000/-. Among the three GPs which could not utilize the entire amount allocated to them, the performance of Padoona GP was the poorest. In terms of percentage, the shortfall of Padoona GP was 22.73 percent. From this data, it is clear that Mandwa Phala is the strongest gram panchayat while Padoona is the weakest gram panchayat.

7. BRGF Works Performance and Removal of Backwardness

This section will assess the BRGF works with reference to the removal of backwardness in the four gram panchayats. Discussion with President, Saroo gram panchay (Shri. Harish Singh Meena), and President, Padoona gram panchayat (Smt. Laxmi Devi Meena), revealed that the following infrastructure improvement are visible in the villages after the implementation of BRGF scheme.

A. Laying of Concrete Road and Connectivity: Construction of concrete road has helped rural people in intra and inter village transportation. It is well connected to main markets, city and national highways. Prior to taking up works under BRGF, road condition was in damaged situation. It was very dusty and polluted area. Transportation becomes faster for local community people and public. These four gram panchayats will not require concrete road for another 10-15 years.

B. Drainage and Improvement in Village Sanitation: Construction of drainage helped in removal of garbage, collection of stagnant water during rainy session. Rain water is directly going into drainage. The sanitation condition of the streets has improved significantly.

C. Boundary Wall and Improvement in School: The four gram panchayats built boundary walls in seven of their schools. This infrastructural work brought in the following major improvement in the functioning of the schools, such as:

(i) Children stay in the school for longer hours

(ii) Outsiders do not disturb the school functioning

(iii) Tree plantation could be undertaken

(iv) Boundary wall has prevented the cattle from entering in the school. In short, the school functions like an education institution. Because of the construction of boundary wall the "Schooling" component of the Saroo School has improved.

D. Bridge and Connectivity: Construction of bridge at Aadavela village in Padoona gram panchayat helped people during rainy session. Villagers can go easily to their fields for agriculture and other for daily wage works. Through this bridge transportation connectivity has improved. School buses/autos are coming home to pickup children. Children are reaching school safely in all the four seasons.

E. Sub Health Centre and Enhancement in Public Health: Construction of sub health centre in Jhabla village helped community people in addressing their health needs. Any villager can approach health sub centre on any health issues. Gram panchayat also has constructed a quarter for Auxiliary Nursing Midwife (ANM) so that they can stay there.

8. BRGF Works and Decentralisation of Powers

This section will be assessing the BRGF works with reference to decentralisation of powers.

8.1. Decision Making and Infrastructure Work

The list of works is decided in Gram Sabha with village public, and all ward panchs, ward members and elected representatives of their gram panchayat. Based on Gram Sabha decisions, the gram panchayat is preparing a proposal of works for every year. Gram panchayat submits the proposal to Block panchyat (Panchayat Samiti). Block level officials approves the proposal of works. Fund is directly transferred to gram panchayat's account from Central government.

8.2. Decision Making and Basic Schedule Rate

Procedure for construction of Concrete road in gram panchayats is based on Basic Schedule Rate (BSR). BSR was finalised earlier by Block panchayat with the final approval from Zilla parishad. The tender was also opened at the block level office. Both these powers were vested in the Block panchayat. Now the power has been vested with the gram panchayat. The Gram Panchayat now finalises the basic schedule rates and tender is also opened at the gram panchayat office. They are the final authority. The Contractor's role is to supply all kinds of procurements. Sarpanch (Village secretary) does all kinds of monitoring and evaluation. Technical assistance will be provided by Block level officials, such as Junior Engineer,

Assistant Engineer working in the particular block panchayat.

8.3. Decentralisation of Powers from 2006 to the Present

The State government of Rajasthan is further strengthening the process of empowerment of gram panchayats. Till 2006, the village sarpanch had powers to sanction amounts up to Rs. 2.5 Lakh per annum. Now the sanctioning power has been raised to Rs. 5.00 Lakh per annum. Earlier, tenders were opened at Block level. Now they are opened at gram panchayat level. Previously, basic schedule rate (BSR) was decided at block level. Now it is decided by gram panchayat. These three changes directly indicate the decentralisation of powers on gram panchayats in Rajasthan. These changes will also benefit the four gram panchayats under the backward region grant fund scheme. These gram panchayats could implement successfully many infrastructure projects on concrete road and drainage, boundary wall in government school, Anganwadi centre, extra class room in government school, construction of bridge, sub health centre and tin shed for cremation ground.

9. Conclusion

The four selected gram panchayats in Udaipur district under BRGF scheme could improve the infrastructure of village with reference to road connectivity, village sanitation and school infrastructure. This study generated empirical data to establish the fact that under BRGF scheme four gram panchayats could successfully undertake major works of infrastructure in their respective gram panchayats.

Infrastructure leads to removal of backwardness in different ways. These works helped the four gram panchayats in removing their backwardness with reference to village sanitation, road connectivity and school functioning.

A preliminary examination indicated that development with reference to infrastructure has taken place. Further the gram panchayats have some formal powers in taking decision but the exercise of their formal power varies from gram panchayat to gram panchayat. In all the four gram panchayats, powers were devolved to certain extent. This has showed positive results in the functioning of GPs.

To sum up, the administrative changes introduced by Government of Rajasthan and the successful implementation of backward region grant fund has started empowerment of Padoona, Saroo, Kherwara, MandwaPhala gram panchayats. This has its implication on the decentralization of powers in four gram panchayats through creation of infrastructure and development intervention. Observation and discussion indicates that the Sarpanch is the key figure in decision making. Backward region grant fund scheme has become a good development intervention and it has played a significant role in

empowering of gram panchayats.

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Book Review by:

S.Raveendranath*

Database for Decentralized Governance: A Hand Book

Dr. M. Kuttappan (2017)
Maanas Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram
Price: Rs. 120/-
Phone No. 9074119672

Decentralized governance has received world-wide attention as an important element in the development strategy since the 1980s. Among the countries experimenting decentralization, the most ambitious and massive one is Indian decentralization consequent on constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992. The amendments have created a third tier of governments at Panchayat/Nagarapalaka level besides the Central and State Governments. These Local Governments (LGs) are now entrusted with a large number of development and welfare functions and are mandated to prepare plans for economic development and social justice with people's participation. The constitutional amendments also provide for the creation of gram/ward sabhas composed of the electorate. By legalizing gram/ward sabha, planning is brought close to people who are the ultimate target of development. People's participation in planning will be effective only if they are conscious of their rights and duties and are empowered with a fairly good knowledge of the local conditions supported by date.

Despite over two decades of decentralized governance in India, a Government of India Expert Committee chaired by Sri. Mani Sankar Iyer pointed out that the decentralized planning is least realized in practice. One of the important reasons for the poor performance in decentralized planning is the absence of reliable database at LG level. Database for decentralized planning is the organized collection and maintenance of inter-linked data on various parameters of the socio-economic and environmental conditions of the area under the jurisdiction of a local government. Even though the need for creating a sound database at LG level was stressed by the National Statistical Commission chaired by C. Rangarajan, a standard system does not exist till date.

In the book under review, the author has made an earnest effort to build up a database at LG level and for its aggregation at higher levels of governance. Because of my interest in decentralization and statistics I read the book from page to page and found it as a useful handbook for LGs for preparing the Development Reports and Annual and Five Year Plans. Sri. S.M. Vijayanand, former Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala and former Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government

* Secretary, Centre for Tropical Studies, Thiruvananthapuram.

of India in his Foreword to the book stated that it is a very useful document for local planners, particularly elected representatives.

The book is divided into nine chapters and in many there is a sub-section on Kerala, which is accepted as the leader of decentralization after the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. After briefly discussing the constitutional provisions for decentralized governance, the relevance and the structure of the book are presented in the introductory chapter. Though the focus of the book is to build up a system for the collection and maintenance of database at LG level, the importance of decentralization and decentralized planning is discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 as the author strongly feels that the people in general, and elected representatives in particular, have not yet internalized the meaning of decentralization and the possibilities offered by it. Based on the World famous people's plan campaign carried out in Kerala during 1996-97, the author suggested a planning methodology for LGs. Citing the large size of Gram/Ward Sabha and the non-participation of experts in the meetings, the author suggested the constitution of a small group of experienced and knowledgeable persons of the local area to plan schemes and to oversee their implementation. As the local planners have to be familiarized with the statistical system, evolution and the present structure of Indian statistical system and its interdependence with the state system are detailed in Chapter 5. The need for reliable and timely data at LG level and the existing sources of data are described in Chapter 6. A critical analysis of these data with reference to their reliability, periodicity and retrieval revealed that they are a mixture of good, bad and indifferent categories.

Various initiatives for the development of local level data by the Central and Kerala Governments are discussed in Chapter 7. Despite these initiatives, the author lamented that even now there does not exist a proper methodology for the collection and maintenance of LG level data. To evolve a methodology for Kerala State, a case study was conducted in Pallichal Village Panchayat of Thiruvananthapuram District. The learnings from this case study are given in Chapter 8. In view of the fast changes in the cropping pattern of Kerala, in favour of perennial crops, a new methodology for the collection of agricultural statistics is suggested in this book. After assessing the status of local level data and identifying the data gaps, the author suggests a census type survey once in five years of all households within the jurisdiction of an LG. The LG has to initiate the survey with the technical support and supervision of the Department of Economics and statistics. A set of inter-linked model schedules for a comprehensive census type survey are appended in this handbook. The policy measures for the collection and maintenance of database at LG level and their aggregation at higher levels of governance are presented in the concluding Chapter 9.

The relevance of this handbook is enhanced now as the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has initiated a people's plan campaign from 2nd October to 31st December 2018 for the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) for the financial year 2019-2020 with the slogan 'Subki Yojana Subka Vikas'. The plan document terms it as a catalyst for transforming rural India and describes it as a comprehensive participatory process which involves full convergence of all schemes of Central Ministries' Line departments related to 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

The primary audience of this book is over 2-6 lakhs of LGs and 30 lakhs of Elected Representatives in India. Though the author claims that the analysis in the book is presented in a readily understandable language, I doubt whether an average Elected Representative can digest it. It is more useful to professionals and researchers. Hence the book needs to be translated into regional languages to cater to the needs of ordinary people and Elected Representatives.

List of Latest Publications of KILA

	M	E	T	K
➢ *13th Five Year Plan- Guideline GO MS 72/2017/LSGD, dt 29.03.17(April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *13th Five Year Plan- Guideline GO MS 79/2017/LSGD, dt 03.04.17 (ULB) (April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *13th Five Year Plan- Guideline GO MS 80/2017/LSGD, dt 07.04.17 (April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Guideline 233/2012/LSGD, dt 07.09.12 (April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *PG Diploma in Local Governance (CRC) (April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Jagartha Samithiyum Thadesha Bharana Sthapanangalum (April 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Model Project of – Thalikulam Grama Panchayat (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Model Project of Kumarakam Grama panchayat (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Model Project of Nedumbasery Grama panchayat (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Model Project of Mararikulam South Grama panchayat (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Model Project of Alappuzha Municipality (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Public Administration for Block Panchayat (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Circular on Birth and Death (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Nagara Vikasanavum Vikasana Standing Committiyum (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Capacity Building Training for officials of DUA & ULBs (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Grievance Redressal Manual - (May 2017)*		✓		
➢ *Administrative Manual – Homeopathy and Ayurveda (May 2017)*		✓		
➢ *Office Management Manual, Gender budget manual, administrative manual for Matsya Bhavan(May 2017)*		✓		
➢ *Administration Manual for Primary Schools-(May 2017)*		✓		
➢ *Public Administration for Block Panchayat Module (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Nagara Vikasanavum Vikasana Standing Committiyum-Module (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Jagartha Samithiyum Thadesha Bharana Sthapanangalum Handbook (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Capacity Building Training for officials of DUA & ULBs -Module (May 2017)*	✓			
➢ *Annual Report 2016-17 (June 2017)*		✓		

➢ *Public Reporting Manual (June 2017)*		✓
➢ *Administration Manual- Anganawadi, primary health, krishi bhavan, veterinary, revenue (June 2017)*		✓
➢ *Guideline – LIFE Mission (July 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Samagra Suchitwa Padhathi – Handbook (July 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Government Orders and Circulars, Vols. 14-20 (August 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Haritha Keralam – Samagra Suchitwam (August 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Double Entry Accounting - Basic concepts (August 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Samruthi 2017 - Watershed Development Programme - Thaliparamba Constituency (September 2017)*	✓	
➢ *District Plan Preparation - Guide line (October 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Plan Implementation of LSGIs -Module(October 2017)*	✓	
➢ *District Plan Preparation - Module (October 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Life Mission Guideline 2017-18 (November 2017)*	✓	
➢ *International Conference Souvenir -November 2017 (November 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Handbook - Navakeralathinay Janakeeyasoothranam - Samuhya Vihdyabyasa Paripadi (November 2017)*	✓	
➢ *Special Gramasabha for Children (December 2017)*		✓
➢ *Peoples Plan Campaign and Developmental Mission (March 2017)*	✓	
➢ *13th FYP PPC- Helper for Preparing Status Report- 12 Sectors (February 2017)*	✓	
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➢ *SDG Tool Kit - Draft for Discussion (December 2016)*		✓
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➢ *Kumarakom Grama Panchayat- An Overview- Handbook for Field Visit (November 2016)*		✓
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➢ *Mararikulam South- An Overview- Handbook for Field Visit (November 2016)*		✓
➢ *Helper for SC Development - Training for Scheduled Caste Promoters, Scheduled Caste Development Officers, Grama Panchayat Presidents, SC Working groups Conveners,*		
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➢ *Marginalisation, Poverty and Decentralisation – KILA's International Conference Series (November 2016)*		✓
➢ *Marginalisation, Poverty and Decentralisation – KILA's International Conference Series (November 2016)*		✓
➢ *Kerala - A Caste Study of Classical Decentralisation (Third Edition) (October 2016)*		✓
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M-Malayalam, E-English, T-Tamil, K-Kannada