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## WORKING OF PANCHAYAT RAJ SYSTEM IN TELANGANA STATE - A STUDY OF KARIMNAGAR DISTRICT

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### Abstract

India like most developing countries has been attempting rural development thought variance policies since independence. In a country where seventy- five percent of the population dwells in over five lakh seventy-five thousand villages, the importance of Local Government, popularly known as Panchayati raj in India, looks self-evident. Indeed, thoughts on Local Government are but part of the larger concern for social and economic amelioration of the people, a task to which India is committed, Since the village has always been the primary unit of administration in India, it remains the focus of attention. Panchayats have been amongst the oldest political institutions of India, and the very use of this term has deeply nostalgic association tending to take the mind to the distant and dim past. But in the form in which it is constituted and made to function today in new state like Telangana. Organization of Panchayathi Raj in India came as a revolutionary step towards rural development.

**Keywords:** Rural Development, Welfare Administration, Decentralization, Three-tire–Panchayat Raj System, Socio Economic Transformation, People Participation, Social Political Pattern of Society.

### Introduction

#### Statement of the Problem

**“Through all-round progress & grassroots level participation, our Govt. is working towards making 'Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday' a reality.”**

**Damodara Narendra Modi**  
Hon’ble Prime Minister of India

Rural development has become major concern of the third world in general and India in particular. The fact that 80 percent of the people live in rural areas spread over nearly 6 lakhs villages poses a major challenge and calls for a comprehensive development strategy. The development is an attempt to raise the capacity of the people to control their environment accompanied by wider distribution of benefits resulting from such a control. The thrust of the development should be on the rural poor whose quality of life has been deplorable for centuries. Therefore, the emphasis of rural development should be on:

- (i) raising agricultural and rural productivity
- (ii) raising community solidarity, and
- (iii) institutionalization of equality.

The first sign a healthy democracy is that collective decisions are made by the people who are most effect by them. Decentralization is the vital mechanism through which democracy becomes truly representative set up and participation is the delegation of power to the people at the grassroots level. After independence the focus of the rulers shifted from regulatory to welfare administration. The crucial challenge ahead was the upliftment of rural; masses from almost poverty. The process of decentralization was rolled out with the submission of the report by Balawant Ray Mehta Committee popularly known as Mehta Committee in November 1957. It recommended a three-tier Panchayat Raj system. It also strongly was in favor genuine transfer of powers and resources and recommended that all the developmental activities should be canalized through these institutions. Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) tried to further strengthen the Panchayat Raj institutions. It has recommended two-tier system with Zilla Parihad and Mandal Parishad. It favors for open participation of political parties is elections to Panchayat Raj bodies. It opened that this will give actual powers and decision-making chance to the Panchayat Raj. In fact, the transfer of power for determining priorities in planning at the grass-roots became a reality with the passage of the 73rd amendment. This has accorded constitutional status to local bodies and endowed them with measures of continuity, certainty and strength. With this amendment it has become imperative to the State Governments to conduct elections to Panchayat Raj bodies regularly and to give adequate representation to the weaker sections at various levels to enable them to have a say in the ongoing process of development.

### Panchayats at Colonial Period

During the prolonged British rule, in fact, the village economy was ruined like anything. One’s self-sufficient, self-sustained village was converted into a village eve dependent on outside forces. Socio-economic and administrative Excellency of the village was disturbed and opened up villages to ruthless exploitation in all fronts. The Panchayat Raj System introduced in 1959 had made



tremendous impact on village India as it brought about a new political awakening among the rural masses. The rural masses for the first time realized that democracy has traveled down to the village level and they have an opportunity to participate actively in process of socio-economic development. It may be informed that with the introduction of Panchayat Raj system. The Panchayat Raj soon became popularly and gained roots in the country side. Gradually, the local power structure has developed a close nexus with its counterpart at the state level. The state leadership countries its 'vote bank' through Panchayat Raj leaders. Thus, there is strong linkage between the leadership at the state level. Apart from this, the decision of the government to involve the Panchayat Raj Institutions actively in the planning and implementation of state sponsored anti-poverty programmes gave a new fillip to the local bodies for increasing their sphere of influence.

Panchayat Raj Institutions are the grass-root unit of self-government they are the instruments for participatory democracy and decentralization at the grass root level. They carry back to the people the power that really belongs to them. Thus, they have an immense potential for democratic decentralization and devolving power to the people. They are the vehicles of socio-economic transformation. It is therefore necessary that their bodies are effective and function meaning fully. This demands an active involvement, contribution and participation of the people. Participation reform to direct involvement of people, both men and women, in (i) decision- making (ii) Implementation of development of programmes and (iii) monitoring and evaluation of programmes and (iv) sharing the benefits of development. Thus, there has to be a "bottom-up approach" rather than one where people are mere observers and total dependents. The people should operate and the government should cooperate.

### After Independent Era

The year 1959 marks revolutionary steps in the development of institutions of rural local self-Government in the country. The year saw the inauguration of Panchayat Raj movements throughout only in executive and advisory capacity to the community Development programme were now to assume full responsibility for carrying it ahead. The turning point came with the publications of the report of the community on plan projects in 1958 popularly known as the Mehta committee. Assuring that peoples participation, involvement and ultimate taking over the community development programme by local institutions was the heart of the message, the committee was faced with the puzzle of explaining the low level of activity in terms of people's participation in post intensive phase of the blocks. Indian society was to undergo a rapid social alteration immediately after the independence. Removal of poverty and inequality was the utmost priority of the post-independence regimes. Realization of the priorities into a concrete programme, an elaborative institutional area at the grass-root level was to be formulated. Political consciousness, up of the new political order, alleviated from the colonialism. Local Government systems was to be introduced. Hence the momentum for Panchayat Raj gained speciality. Therefore, after independence, the Government had to lunch comprehensive developmental and welfare-oriented schemes and programmes through five-year plans to enable the people to lead a life which dignity. Balavant Roy Mehta felt that community development and national extension service programme (N.E.S.P) had failed to evoke popular initiation. Local bodies at a level higher than the Panchayat had envied but little enthusiasm in the community development programmes. This Committee envisaged a three-tier system of rural local government, namely, village Panchayat at the village level, panchayat samiti at the block level; and the Zilla Parishad at district level. The study team also recommended that such a body, it created has to be statutory, elective comprehensive in its duty and functions, equipped with necessary executive machinery and in possession of adequate resources.

### Committees on Panchayat Raj System

The committee in nyaya panchayat recommended for setting of a nyaya Panchayat for it a group of villages, having elected members, the Nyaya Panchayat should elect the Chairman of the Nyaya panchayat from amongst themselves. The Nyaya panchayat should not be bound the procedural codes of the Indian Evidence Act. Committee on Panchayat Raj Elections (1964) appointed a committee on the methods of elections of the Panchayat Raj bodies in 1964. The major recommendation of the committee voting in panchayat elections should be made compulsory. The voter who fails to do so should be find. The sarpanch should be elected directly by the voters of the panchayat. Political party symbols should not be used at panchayat raj elections. The Ashok Mehta committee's most momentous recommendation was for the creation of a two-tiered system of panchayat Raj in the place of the three-tiered one recommended by the Balavant Roy Mehta reports. The Committee major recommendations are two-tier set-up viz., Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat. The district should be the first point of decentralization under the popular supervision below the state level. Below the district there should be Mandal Panchayats by grouping a number of villages. The mandal Panchayats would cover a population 25-35 thousand. Consequently, the village panchayat should abolish. It opted for participation of political parties in Panchayat Raj elections. There should be effective representation of weaker sections like the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the reservation of elective seats. It also stated that elections to local bodies should be held at regular intervals. But the recommendation of ashok Mehta Committee were side lined at that time, with collapse of Janatha Government Subsequently several other committees were also set-up and their brief suggestions are presented here. G.V.K. Rao committee in 1985. This committee recommended that, elections to Panchayat Raj institution be held regularly. Panchayat Raj institution at the district and lower levels is given greater powers in relation in relation to planning implementations and monitoring of rural development plans. The Sarkaria Commission dealing with the central-state relations has recommended the decentralization of real power to local governments and increased a popular involvement



in rural development activities. To check the unwillingness of many states to transfer power to the local level. The committee said that, elections to Panchayat Raj institutions are held at regular intervals. A law in the parliament may, be enacted for this purpose.

### Formation of Panchayat Raj System in A.P.

The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj system was formally established on November 1, 1959. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) took the Ashok Mehta recommendation of two-tier system seriously but modified to include village Panchayat also. Andhra Pradesh tried to evolve its own system of local government. The elections were held in March 1987 to the Mandal Praja Parishad and Zilla Praja Parishad on the basis of the 1986 Act. These elections were held on party line. The local leadership has also become politically more responsible. Since the reputation of political parties depends on the integrity and performance of the local leaders, the accountability is much more in these cases. The local Government concerned to Panchayat Raj Institutions and to place them on a strong footing in the polity, reached a crucial stage with the introduction of constitution amendment bills in 1989 by the then Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi, one of the basis provisions of the bill was, it should be mandatory for all states to set-up Panchayat Raj institutions due. Reservation of seats to be made for SC, ST, BC and women in all Panchayat Raj bodies separate commission be set-up to review the finances of the Panchayat Raj institutions, the accounts of Panchayat Raj institutions be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor of India. It may be noted that most of these provisions were later incorporated in the 73rd constitutional amendment. Expect the powers proposed for the Governor or the Central Government in the 64th amendment bill, which had been given to the legislature in the 1992 amendment.

On the basis of the suggestions received from politicians, Officials and concerned people from social life, the cabinet of the consultation with the Chief Ministers of all the states formulations the 74th, 73rd amendment bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha in sept, 1990. It was passed by the Parliament in Dec 1992. The amendment came in to force on April, 1993, on which date, all provisions in various state acts that were strong dislike to the provisions of the constitutional their own acts. Andhra Pradesh accordingly 1995 Panchayat Raj elections by 73rd amendment act in 1992.

Though the 73rd amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1992 still a number of states have to implement it tooth and nail. Andhra Pradesh is in the forefront in this regard. This State not only adopted three-tier Panchayat Raj system. It has given adequate powers to the Grama Panchayat also. Out of 29 items listed in the amendment act pertaining to powers that are to be devolved to Grama panchayat, Andhra Pradesh Government has accepted to give powers to Grama Panchayats on 16 items. Even though the 73rd amendment was enacted in April 1993, it took two more years to implement it in the states. By June-July 1995 only the elections were conducted in a number of states including Andhra Pradesh.

Accordingly, Andhra Pradesh Government formulated its own act in 1994. Elections to the Panchayat Raj Institutions along with the provisions of 73rd amendment were conducted in June-July, 1995. Serious research still has to be undertaken in this area to go into the process of implementation of 73rd amendment. Keeping in view of the facts, a humble attempt has been made to go for a Micro level study in Karimnagar District in newly emerged Telangana State (02-06-2014).

### Research Objectives

Hence, a micro level study of Bheemdevarapally, Huzurabad, Manakondur and Gambhiraopetmandals in Karimnagar district in Karimnagar District in Andhra Pradesh has been taken up to study the implementation and impact of 73rd amendment. A sample of 200 respondents were selected at random information has been collected through structured questionnaire. The Socio-economic background of the village was well as respondents pertaining to population, literacy level, land particulars, cropping pattern, case and age-wise composition, Gender particulars, educational status, occupational structure, residential status and income level are analyzed. Nearly 52 percentage of the population are from backward case, within this backward class community, Yadavas, Goudasa and Padmasalie are the dominant sub castes. In the total respondents of the villages nearly 88 percentage literate and 12 percentages of respondents are illiterates. The total land available for cultivation is clearly states that the Agriculturist (OC) who have land for cultivation are less in labour, comparatively with BC, SC, ST, Minorities who are land less masses.

Most of the respondents are in the middle age group. Nearly 36 percent are in the age group of 41 to 50 years. Among the 200 respondents 88.5 are Literates. Most of the respondents belonging SC and ST, BC communities are agricultural labourer. The Socio-economic status of OC are emerging as politically, business economically dominate section, but the basic inequalities still persist. As per the 73rd amendment; ectoplasm was conducted to the local bodies. After the elections the number of Grama Panchayat are in Andhra Pradesh 21,934 total wards are 2,08,586, number of M.P.T.Cs. Are 14,000 and Z.P.T.C members are 1192. as per the 73rd amendment 93.3 seats are reserved for B.C., S.C., S, T., communities and women all together are all level of the Panchayat Raj set-up and 6.7 percent seats are left for general category. The organizational set-up of the three-tier Panchayat system after 73rd amendment is Zilla Parishad, Mandal parishad, and Grama Panchayats. Zilla Parishad Chairman heads in (ZP), Mandal parishad President at mandal level (M.P.P), Sarpanch at Grama Panchayat (GP) level are the policy makers and instruments of implementation.



Respondents of the i., e., 38.5 percent do not now about the 73rd amendment to the majority constitutions, which has given impetus to the Grama Panchayats strengthened their; economy position, democratic functioning and enabled the participation of people at grass-root level, especially the weaker sections and women. On the functioning of Grama Panchayat, again 49 percent of the respondents said that they do not know anything in this regard. Respondent admitted that they don't know whether grama sabha was conducted or not any day. The opinion of the most of respondents on civic amenities in the village is very positive. Out of 200 respondents more than 70 percent have expressed their satisfaction on the roads, drinking water, education facilities and with the street lighting. 60 percent of the respondents said that their problems are being attended very well. There is a mixed response from the respondents regarding relation between Government officials and politicians in solving the problems of their own and village.

An examination of the impact of the socio-economic structure on the working of Panchayat Raj Institutions highlights come of the constraints inherent in development process. The caste hierarchy which characterizes rural life in India is found to be actively prevalent in Karimnagar District. However, there are certain apparent changes in the socio-cultural aspects of caste system such as maintaining physical distance and inter-relations among the people. But it is mostly confined to middle and upper caste only and Harijanas continue to suffer isolation from the mainstream of village life. Paradoxically cast continues to play an important role in the developed a vested interest in the perpetuation of the caste system. As a result, the working of panchayat raj system which is intended to bring about social changes has itself become a victim of the caste divisions. Cast consciousness and the resulted divisive tendencies are hostile to community spirit without rural development is almost impossible 4. Added to this education a catalyst for change is largely absent in Karimnagar District.

The economic pattern of Karimnagar District in tune with the social pattern is based on inequalities. The lower castes depend on their physical labour mostly working in the fields of the rich. This economic gap perpetuates social hierarchy on the one hand and results in the monopoly of political power on the other.

#### **Pattern of Research and Research Tools**

All the respondents selected for the study does not know about the budgetary allocations made by grama panchayat. This shows how the villagers are poor in knowing the management of their own village funds. This gives sample scope for non-account ability of officials and politicians. The opinion of the majority respondents is that political parties are working together in the implementation village development programmes. Most of the respondents know very well about central funds, particularly about Jawahar Yojana funds. The leadership in the villages the hands of backward communities it is the opinion of majority respondents. Tax awareness is high among people of this villages 86.5 percent of the respondents is paying their tax regularly.

Observations based on the field study shows that, the Karimnagar District villages in Telangana State is ahead in implementing various developmental activities with the active participation of elected representative of the Grama Panchayat. Though theoretical people do not know the particulars of the funds and how they are being utilized. The study of this division stands as an example in this matter. They are virtually demanding the village politicians and officials to implement all schemes are sanctioned to this division. And another thing is most of the respondents are demanding the funds increasing for development of villages. They are also asking for due justification to all the sections of this division, while sanctioning the government schemes and subsidiary programmes.

#### **Opinion of the Respondents**

Respondents' opinion of Panchayat Raj system in Karimnagar District is recorded in this research. Economic position, urge for democratization and participation of people especially among the weaker sections and SC ST and women had played significant pivotal impact factors on the respondents. Most of the respondents said that 33 percent seats at various levels are reserved for women, and some of the respondents preferred that only when socio-economic and political development of the villages can be realized them the villages get new lease of life with the participation of the people in political activities. Overwhelming number of respondents expressed knowing about the Panchayat Raj institutions. Number of factors could be reasoned out for this state of response such as lack of information, respondent's priority and all the most the publicity on part of the concerned department. Knowledge related to the legal profile of the amendment had not been entrenched reached the population in the division. Local political functionaries too did not take keen interest in educating the masses about the 73rd amendment.

On the functioning of Grama Sabha, again 49 percent of the respondents said that they do not know anything in this regard. Those who said that they know something about it told that grama sabha should be conducted once for every three months, Entire village population should be assemble and take active part in policy decisions. Some of them said that though they know about the functioning of Grama Sabha, there is of no use in it as these sabha are purely functioning on political lines. Thus, the very core structure of Panchayat Raj Institutions remain inaction and many a time non-functional. The implementations of inaction of the vital structure i.e., Grama Sabha are far reaching. Non-functioning of Grama Sabha leads to concentration of power in the hands of the few



individuals ground on party lines. In case of the stony village, Sarpanch became all powerful in the functioning of Grama Panchayat, decentralization of power to the local bodies not negated in the actual context of the functioning.

### What need to be done for People Participation

Ultimately, it is the people's participation, which transforms the scene of the village. 73rd amendment has shown a perfect way in this regard. Something has been done in this process, but much has to be done. Mere elections and reservations do not offer financial and administrative justice to the Grama Panchayats. Political compulsions should not come in the way. Strengthening the grama panchayats is not a charity that is being granted by higher circles. It is the fundamental right of the sons of the soil to decide their own future and to work out their priorities on their own way according to the needs of the village. As the constitution guarantees the grama panchayat equal status with that of assembly, it is the need of the hour to give full powers to Grama Panchayats that are envisaged by the 73rd Taxation powers and due share in Central funds and grants agencies, which are directed towards Grama Panchayats, which will strengthen the working of Grama Panchayats. Education and health facilities can be improved with their own funds. Thus, will definitely change the attitude of the people residing in villages. There will be more awareness among them to fight for their democratic rights. This will lead to a "Sampurna Grama Swaraj" (Complete Village Ruling State) which is the ultimate aim of all the people Indian Federal democracy at grass roots.

### Summing Up

An examination of the impact of the socio-economic structure on the working of Panchayat Raj Institutions highlights some of the constraints inherent in development process. The caste hierarchy which characterizes rural life in India is found to be actively prevalent newly emerged Telangana State Karimnagar District. However, there are certain apparent changes in the socio-cultural aspects of caste system such as maintaining physical distance and inter-relations among the people. But it is mostly confined to middle and upper caste only and Harijanas continue to suffer isolation from the mainstream of village life. Paradoxically cast continues to play an important role in the developed a vested interest in the perpetuation of the caste system. As a result, the working of panchayat raj system which is intended to bring about social changes has itself become a victim of the caste divisions. Caste consciousness and the resulted divisive tendencies are hostile to community spirit without rural development is almost impossible. Added to this education a catalyst for change is largely absent in Karimnagar District. The economic pattern of Karimnagar District in tune with the social pattern is based on inequalities. The lower castes depend on their physical labour mostly working in the fields of the rich. This economic gap perpetuates social hierarchy on the one hand and results in the monopoly of political power on the other.

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