

Grassroots governance on reduction in unemployment

Dr. Akhilesh Pal

Department of Political Science, University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

India is the land of diversities. Here dwell the people of various religion, races and traditions. These diversities often vent out as a demand of states in different area of the country. In one side there are a higher income group living a luxurious life and on the other hand there are also a group of people who scarcely earn the income to survive. Almost 70 per cent of the total population is living in the villages but there is still a very poor state of development in the villages. There is no sign of development, no proper facility of education, health, electricity and roads. To make the democracy meaningful and welfare oriented we need the affective decentralisation of democracy through the panchayati raj institution. Democracy is the fundamentally decentralised system of governance. We have several problems of education, poverty, lower income and unemployment.

Keywords: grassroots governance, 73rd constitutional amendment, the Madhya Pradesh panchayat raj amendment, 2001, reduction in unemployment

Introduction

Panchayat raj, as a system of governance at the grassroots level in rural India has been rightly conceived as the most viable and proper mechanism of realising the goals of democracy, development, peace and security. Panchayat Raj is a system of maximum welfare of maximum people and based on justice. After Independence efforts have been made to create the units of self-governance at grassroots level but all went in vain since they could not produce the desired result. After Independence efforts were continued to create the panchayats as units of self-governance but the committed Central Government's initiative came out with 73rd Amendment for the establishment of panchayat raj institutions in India in 1993.

The whole idea of good and responsive governance is that of giving, of serving and of doing good of the people, or solving their problems and making their lives more liveable, satisfying and enjoyable (Sisodia: 2012) [31]. The essential pre-requisite for quality of governance is that the system should be good and suited to the needs, aspirations, background and ethos of the people concerned and that those selected for operating the system should be endowed with character and competence and remain motivated by the spirit of public service. Governance must be democratic, participatory, transparent and accountable. The issue of governance is more crucial and important from the point of view grassroots democracy since at local level the decisions taken by the elected bodies have direct implications for the life of the major chunk of population of the country.

India is the land of diversities. Here dwell the people of various religions, races and traditions. These diversities often vent out as a demand of states in different areas of the country. On one side there are higher income groups living a luxurious life and on the other hand there are also group of people who scarcely earn the income to survive. Almost 70 per cent of the total population is living in the villages but there is still a very poor state of development in the villages. There is no sign of development, no proper facility of education, health, electricity and roads. To make the democracy meaningful and welfare oriented we need the effective decentralisation of democracy through the panchayat raj institutions. Democracy is fundamentally

decentralised system of governance.

In the democratic system, panchayat is the only institute that takes the governance to the door of common people. The conception of democracy finds more realistic expression by the means of panchayat raj institutions. In this form of governance, villagers take part to decide their own future collectively. Since the problems are concerned with their villages, people take interest in solving them with the help of panchayat (Kothari, 1961:757) [14]. Local governance has been outlined as the form of psychological and practical needs of the local people. By nature human has always a will to be governed by his own hands because he can serve himself better. Human is self-centered by the nature. This sense of governance has been seen from the ancient time (Mutalib and Khan, 1983:259) [19]. Local governance as the sense of thoughtfulness, justifiable and sociability (Bryce, 1921: 149-50) [7].

People are the real wealth of nation. The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. To make the democracy meaningful and welfare oriented we need the effective decentralisation of democracy through the panchayati raj institutions. Democracy is fundamentally decentralised system of governance. We have several problems of education, poverty, lower income and unemployment. These problems can be only solved by more democratic government that is panchayati raj system.

The study conducted in the Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh. The study is mainly dealing with the primary data. The study as an evaluative study on fact based, descriptive and analytical. A proportionate sampling framework adopted. Dewas district which includes eight tehsils. Out of eight tehsils three tehsils were selected randomly for the

purpose of this study. From the selected tehsils, 5 Gram Panchayats were chosen in-depth study. Thus from 3 tehsils 15 Gram Panchayats were chosen in-depth study. The selection of Gram Panchayat was based on random from the list of all the gram panchayats of the selected block.

Panchayat Representatives and Gram Sabha Member/Villagers were the units of observation. From each selected Gram Panchayat – 5 Panchayat Representatives (1-Sarpanch, 1- Up-Sarpanch and 3- Panch) and 10 Gram Sabha Members (5 Male and 5 Female) were taken for an in-depth interview. Thus, in all, from 15 Gram Panchayats of 3 tehsils, the size of sample was 75 Panchayat Representatives (15-Sarpanch, 15- Up-sarpanch and 45-Panch) and 150 Gram Sabha Members (75 Male and 75 Female). Thus, the total size of sample was 225.

For the study, both primary and secondary data were collected. Secondary data was based on books, journals, monographs, occasional papers, governments publications, circular, orders, ordinances etc. For primary data, two separate interview schedules were structured and administered among the respondents (gram sabha members and panchayat representatives). The interview schedules broadly included on issues of awareness and exposure of

the respondents towards the indicators of governance. The eight indicators of governance viz., participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientedness, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability among the stakeholders and local political leadership were studied through primary survey. For the data collection included both the providers and the recipients, therefore the emerging trends were crosschecked with respect to facts, point of view, perception and attitudes towards governance with human development. For this purpose, the qualitative methods include-key informant interviews, in depth interviews, participant observation and case study analysis. The participatory assessment methods included mainly directional group discussion. Dairy maintained to record the observation throughout the field work. Besides these, a village schedule and a directional group discussion were also administered to know the profile of the villages and other similar issues. On the basis of collected data code books were prepared; all the interview schedules were coded accordingly. Coded schedules were entered in the computer using SPSS (version 10) software. Mainly frequency tables and cross tables were generated for analysis and interpretation of data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Panchayat Representatives

Table 1: Impact of PRIs on Reduction in Unemployment.

S. No.	Impact of PRIs on unemployment	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total* (%)
1	Reduction in unemployment	9 (50.0)	14 (38.9)	12 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (46.7)
2	New opportunity of employment in village	9 (50.0)	14 (38.9)	13 (65.0)	0 (0.0)	36 (48.0)
3	Reduction in migration	8 (44.4)	14 (38.9)	12 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	34 (45.3)
4	Self employment	10(55.6)	15 (41.7)	14 (70.0)	0 (0.0)	39 (52.0)

*Multiple Responses
 Source: Primary Data

Table 1 shows that impact of PRIs on reduction in unemployment. 52.0 per cent respondents get self-employment in village. 48.0 per cent respondents are of the opinion that the new opportunities of employment in village. 46.7 per cent respondents view that reduction in

unemployment and 45.3 per cent respondents say that reduction in migration. This is comparatively better SC category respondents. Thus, it clear from the above analysis that majority of the respondents get self employment.

Analysis and Interpretation of Gram Sabha Members

Table 2: Impact of PRIs on Reduction in Unemployment.

S. No.	Impact of PRI on unemployment	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total* Responses (%)
1	Reduction in unemployment	22 (52.4)	25 (30.1)	8 (34.8)	1 (50.0)	56 (37.3)
2	New opportunity of employment in village	21 (50.0)	31 (37.3)	8 (34.8)	0 (0.0)	62 (41.3)
3	Reduction in migration	14 (33.3)	15 (18.1)	5 (21.7)	1 (50.0)	35 (23.3)
4	Self employment	8 (19.9)	9 (10.8)	4 (17.4)	0 (0.0)	21 (14.0)

*Multiple Responses
 Source: Primary Data

Table 2 shows that impact of PRIs on reduction in unemployment. 41.3 per cent respondents are of the opinion that new opportunities of employment in village. 37.3 per cent respondents view reduction in unemployment. 23.3 per cent respondents say that there is reduction in migration and only 14.0 per cent respondents get self-employment in village. There is no caste category differentiation. Thus, it clear from above analysis that majority of the respondents get new opportunity of employment in village.

Conclusion

It has been evident from the working experience of panchayat raj institutions and also as the above mentioned responses of respondents indicate that the level of participation of people at grassroots level has been

relatively low. Despite knowing the procedural aspect, gram sabhas are almost a formal institution. There is a clear cut gap between macro level decisions and grassroots reality.

The grassroots experiences suggest that the majority of the panchayat representatives and villagers are aware about the procedural aspects of gram sabha meetings. Keeping in view the indicators of governance, the understanding towards different aspects of panchayat raj is of mixed nature. In majority cases where present panchayat raj representatives endorsed the adherence to many procedural dimensions whereas the gram sabha members on the country gave their note of dissent on many issues and very specifically and categorically brought out the hegemonic position of sarpanch and secretary. This scenario has

revealed an adverse kind of grassroots reality which has hampered the process of governance in term of participation, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability etc.

It seems that only amendment in the State Act from time to time and specific provision for the system will not change the scenario. There is an urgent need to opt for an effective device whereby maximum people can be informed, made aware and motivated to come forward for the proper implementation and execution of panchayat raj. There is an urgent need to break the culture of silence and to strive for capacity building; sensitisation and orientation toward improve the grassroots scenario.

This is comparatively better SC category respondents. Thus, it clear from the above analysis that majority of the respondents get self employment. There is no caste category differentiation. Thus, it clear from above analysis that majority of the respondents get new opportunity of employment in village.

Suggestions

- The provisions of the State Acts should be translated into simple Hindi and local dialect and be distributed to all panchayat functionaries in the form of pocket booklets as ready beckoners. Posters can also be prepared and displayed on the walls of Gram Panchayat building.
- The Panchayat Raj Institutions have specially empowered people to work as units of self-governance but it has been observed that the level of awareness and exposure among panchayat raj representatives and gram sabha members are very low. It is therefore important to initiate special training packages, awareness campaigns and capacity building programmes.
- Gram Sabhas have been provided supreme position in the new system but people at large are least informed about these provisions. They are still accepting the supremacy of gram panchayat. It is important to make them aware about such provisions. For this purpose public awareness campaigns can be launched through NGOs. Electronic media (Community Television) can also be an effective medium.
- Panchayat expected has to perform a very specific role to tackle social issue as well. The panchayat through the gram sabha should also take lead to minimise the social evils. Use of liquor and practice of dowry are to be discouraged.
- The study suggests that merely by resorting to amendment in the State Act and specific provisions for new system cannot change the scenario of villages. There is an urgent need to explore effective devices whereby maximum people can be informed, made aware and motivated to come forward for the proper implementation and execution of panchayat raj to achieve the goals of good governance.

References

1. Akhatar Majeed. Federal India: A Design for Good Governance, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 2005.
2. Bardhan Pranab, Mookherjee Dilip eds. Decentralisation and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007.
3. Barthwal CP. Good Governance in India, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2003.
4. Behar Amitabh, Kumar Yogesh. Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: from Panchayat Raj to Gram

5. Swaraj 1995 to 2001, Working Paper 170, ODI, London, UK, 2002.
5. Behar Amitabh. Madhya Pradesh Gram Swaraj: Experiment in Direct Democracy, Economic and Political Weekly, 2001.
6. Blair H. Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries', World development. 2000; 28(1):21-39.
7. Bryce James. Modern Democracy, The Macmillan Company, 1921.
8. Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra, Duflo Esther. Impact of Reservation in Panchayati Raj: Evidence from a Nationwide Randomised Experiment, Economic and Political Weekly, 2004.
9. Haq Mahbub ul. Human Development Report, United Nations Development Programme, 1990.
10. Jayal Niraja Gopal, Prakash Amit, Sharma Pradeep K. eds. Local Governance in India: Decentralisation and Beyond, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006.
11. Jeremy Bentham. An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1907.
12. Jha SN, Mathur PC. Decentralisation and Local Politics-Readings in Indian Government and Politics-2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999.
13. Joseph TM. Local Governance in India Ideas: Challenges and Strategies, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2007.
14. Kothari Rajni. Panchayati Raj: Re Assessment, Economic and Political Weekly, 1961, 757.
15. Kuhn Berthold. Participatory Development in Rural India, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1998.
16. Lieten GK. Development, Devolution and Democracy: Village Discourse in West Bengal, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1996.
17. Mathew George ed. Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories in India, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000.
18. Mehata GS. Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj System, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2002.
19. Mutalib Khan. Theory of Local Government, Sterling, New Delhi, 1983, 259.
20. Nambiar Malini. Making of Gram Sabha Work, Economic and Political Weekly, 2001.
21. Oommen MA. Devolution of Resources from the State to the Panchayat Raj Institutions-Search for a Normative Approach, ISS Occasional Paper Series-18, Institute of Social Science, New Delhi, 1995.
22. Palanithurai G. Grassroots Democracy in Indian Society, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000.
23. Ram G. Political Development and Modernization in Tribal India, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 2001.
24. Rawls John. A Theory of Justice, The belknap Press, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971.
25. Sachchidananda. Empowerment of Dalit through Panchayati Raj: The Bihar Experience, Serials Publication, New Delhi, 2007.
26. Singla Pamela. Women's Participation in Panchayat Raj: Natural and Effectiveness, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2007.
27. Sisodia Yatindra Singh. Decentralised Governance in Madhya Pradesh: Experiences of Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas, Economic and Political Weekly, 2002.
28. Sisodia Yatindra Singh. Functioning of Panchayat Raj System, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2005.
29. Sisodia Yatindra Singh. Experiment of Direct

- Democracy: Gram Swaraj in Madhya Pradesh, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2007.
30. Sisodia Yatindra Singh. Implementation of PESA in Scheduled Areas: An Action Research Study on Working of Panchayat Raj in Tribal Regions of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat Study Report of Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Govt. of India, MPISSR, Ujjain, 2008.
 31. Sisodia Yatindra Singh. Dynamics of Local Governance in Post 73rd Amendment Scenario: A Study Functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Villages of Madhya Pradesh Study Report of Indian Council of Social Science Research, Govt. of India, MPISSR, Ujjain, 2012.
 32. UNESCAP. What is Good Governance? United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2009.
 33. Verma BM. Social Justice and Panchayati Raj, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2002.
 34. Widmalm Sten. Decentralisation, Corruption and Social Capital: From India to the West, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008.