

Assessment Of The Performance Of Panchayati Raj Institution Through Women Empowerment In India

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Abstract

Panchayati Raj is the basic unit of local administration. The system has three levels of administrations. Gram panchayat, Mandal panchayat, and block samati or panchayat samati. Generally it refers to the system of local self government in India. It was first introduced by a constitutional amendment in 1992 on the basis of recommendation of L M Shingvi Committee in 1986. The system has been since its introduction have done various activities in rural areas development and women empowerment. But the system has various problems in performing its functions, i.g mass illiteracy, poverty, ill health conditions etc. In democratic country constitution has given panchayat system with more power and its power and performance is also increasing. Studies on the subject reveal that Panchayati Raj institution have been made progress and could have brought positive changes in the villages societies and made the village politically, economically empowered. Women were also have made some progress in various fields through panchayati raj institutions. The system is further significantly beneficial to the village as it enabled the central and state governments to allot significant sources of money directly at the village level ; and introduces various social protection and development programmes, which could not have been implemented without the existence of a well functioning local government structure. In this paper attempt has been made to study assessment of the performance of panchayati raj institutions through women empowerment in India.

Keywords: Grampanchyat, Rural, development, Implementation, Strategies, Women, Empower, Beneficial, Allotment.

Introduction

Panchayati Raj institutions in India have their roots since time immemorial. The system has evolved through the ages. Panchayati Raj institutions are not only the means of political education. but provide an important mechanism for rural development and decentralisation of powers. Panchayati Raj system in India has come into existence through a long process of evolution. Panchayati Raj is an old conception on India and the earlier concept of democracy in the history of civilization. Now-a-days panchayati Raj bodies are considered as the prime mover of societal interests as well as considered as the main instrument of the socio-economic transformation in the rural area of the states. It is also prime mover of transformation of women empowerment and democratic decentralisation at the grassroot levels. They assume importance because they carry back to the people the power that really belongs to them. But this institution has various challenges for which all attempts of various constitutional amendment like 73rd, 33% women reservation bill etc has not yet completely solve women's problems in remote areas in India. So, to empower people of remote village and empower women, panchayati Raj

institutions should be changed to its structures, policies and programmes. To achieve this government, stakeholders, N. G. O and general public's efforts and cooperation is very need of the institution. In this paper attempt is made to study the performance of panchayati Raj institutions.

Objectives

The paper will assess the strategies needed for panchayati Raj administration system as well as it assess performances in women empowerment, further it will study weaknesses of panchayati Raj administration.

Methodology

In writing this paper both explanatory and descriptive methods are being applied and the data are collected from both primary and secondary sources. From secondary sources data are collected from books, journal, internet sources etc. In some respect personal observation is also applied.

Scope And Significance

Panchatiraj is the backbone of Indian Democracy. Success of democracy depends on empowerment of people through Institutions and organisations. Panchatiraj institution is such an organisation through which people are empowered for socio-economic development. Panchatiraj has been working in India since independence. At the very beginning its performance was very poor. Women empowerment was not so much given importance at that time. Women are most vulnerable people in present day societies but the contribution of women in socio economic development is not negligible. Panchatiraj Institutions had been made progress and brought positive changes in women of village societies. So this paper studies the performance of Panchaytiraj institutions through women empowerment in India.

Role Of Panchayat In Empowerment Of Women

The concept of decentralized local governance is not very few in India. The existence of Panchayats dates back to the Vedic ages. It exists throughout the history during Mughal or British regime. Post Independence India makes provisions for setting up local governance or Panchayat under Article 40 of the Constitution of India. Recommendation of Balant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) enabled to introduce thirteen more of less uniform structure of Panchayat Raj Institutions across the country. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments set the milestone in the history of Panchayat by making 1/3rd reservation of seats for women thus creating space for women in political participation and decision making at the grass roots level. The PRIs have always been considered as a means to good governance and 73rd Constitutional Amendment was affected in the hope that it would lead to better governance and provide political space to the disadvantage section of the society like schedule caste, schedule tribes and women.

Panchayat on the other hand, being the local land government nearest to the people, can be viewed as the breeding ground for women leaders. It can provide them ample opportunity to experiment their self confidence and join hands on experience. This platform enables them to take part directly in the decision making in the process of women empowerment from the village level. It can change the social scenario of the village.

Empowerment women constitute half part of the society, but they are a way of political, social, economic and health opportunities. Women with disabilities have been largely neglected. Also due

to many Societal rules and regulations, they never are a part of the decision making process. Though at present women enjoy equal status with men as per the Constitution and legal provisions but still, they have a long way to go. It is true and prove that “ a country prosper of its women prosper”. So women empowerment is vital towards the development of the society. They have to authorize to have control over their own lives. Empowerment is an only effective answer to oppression, exploitation, injustice and other melodies of societies. In short women empowerment means to give women the opportunity to fulfill their creative capabilities and desires and take decisions independently.

In the sixth five year plan (1980-85) introduced women empowerment programmes with an emphasis on women raising and mobilization. The Government of India has declared the year 2001 as a year for the Empowerment of Women. In the year 1993, the Government of India took revolutionary steps by making Panchayati Raj a part of the Constitutions. In this regard Panchayati Raj institutions which give 33% reservation to women coupled with decentralized decision making have had mixed implications.

The Indian Constitution proceeded Part-4. The Directive Principles of State Policy Article 40 for the setting up of village panchayats. But this is not justifiable Political participation and grassroots democracy have been strengthened considerably by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment (1992-1993) that have created new democratic institutions for local governance. It provides for reservations for women in Panchayat Raj system set up two ways.

With the advent of this act India today has more than 500 districts panchayat around 5,000 block panchayats and more than 2,25,000 village panchayats approximately 90 Municipal Corporations 1,500 Municipal and 1800 Nagar Panchayats and there are also 81,258 women to Gram Panchayats, 37,109 women in Panchayat at the intermediate level and 3153 women panchayats at the district level. Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in women empowerment can be highlighted.

- (1) Women are taking up the challenge and giving themselves up to enter politics at the lower level in the spirit of self government as committed citizens.
- (2) Through the experience of the Indian Panchayat Raj institutions, more than one million women have actively entered into the political life of India. Reservation for Women in Panchayat up to one third seats.

- (3) Women issues have been come to the fore front at the local level and consequently state and national level.
- (4) PRI's through women can work as the creation, development and promotion of Self Help Groups, Co-operatives, and MSMEs for better employment and livelihood options in rural areas.
- (5) Women leaders in Panchayat are transforming local governance by sensitizing the state to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.
- (6) Through Panchayat Raj Institutions, women are changing governance are evident in the issues they choose to tackle, water, alcohol, abuse, education, health and domestic violence.
- (7) Women leaders in the Panchayats are transforming local governance by sensitizing the state to issue of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.
- (8) Through PRI, women are changing, governance are evident in the issues they choose to tackle, water, alcohol, abuse, education, health and domestic violence.

Weakness of Panchayati Raj Institutions of the Panchayati Raj

Institutions have same weakness in the way of performance of its functioning. The biggest weakness of Panchayat Raj Institutions is that it is the State Government that legislates on its autonomy and responsibilities. With all the operating and support structures intact, if the legislature of stouts intends to transfer its meager power and development functions, PRI becomes ineffective.

Secondly, though the PRI has autonomous organizational structures they do not have the requisite manpower on years to come 'PRI tell it becomes resourceful enough to him and five' their workers has to depend heavily on earlier bureaucracy of the government. Thirdly, in addition to the lack of stable and sufficient autonomy along with disenchanting borrowed bureaucracy PRI is very poor endowed in terms of its financial resources as well. Its taxation authority and shared of assigned state tax are to be determined by the respective state governments. Fourth the State Government has supervisory and dissolution of power over PRI. In itself it may not be a major threat because in a decentralized set up some degree of supervision by his tier to ensure commitment to the wider low can be justified.

Another important weakness of PRI is the lack of trained manpower to discharge its responsibilities.

In the governance process there are large numbers of representatives from reserve categories who neither have experience nor the confidence to take charge of the new role. Accountable and responsive manpower which work under rural democratic organization and do their work not as State Government's bureaucrats but as professional development managers are totally absent. There is fair change that many of the women representatives elected to all the three lives of the PRI may be illiterate. Further, with several social handicaps most of the female representatives of these institutions do not but at ease to visit the government offices for various domestic work leads and their authority is exhausted by others.

There is general lack of manpower in the Panchayat Raj Institutions. With a limited member of officials, even after complete devolution of powers, it may become difficult for the PRI's to look after all the works assigned to them by State Government. Unless PRI's are equipped with adequate staff to discharge their functions, the objectives sets forth under 73rd Amendments may not achieve.

Government strategies for expanding Panchayati Raj Institution

The Government has taken a special initiatives for expanding the outreach and enhancing the quality of Panchayat Raj Institution. The National Building Frame Work (NCBP) 2014 has been prepared for effective implementation of Rajiv Gandhi Panchayati Sa Shakti Karan Abhijan (RGPSA) after extensive resultation with state governments and non government organizations. Hand book manuals for training of Panchayat Raj Institutes have been developed and hand with State Governments. On the issue related to sanitation, drinking water and governance in Panchayats. Detailed review with state secretaries on RGPSA, conducting video conferring zonal meetings development of RGPSA management information system are some of the other activities undertaken for Panchayati Raj Development.

The RGDSA is launched to strengthen Panchayati administration system across the country during 12th five year plan. RGPSA supports head based activities including administrative and technical expertise and infrastructure for gram panchayat, capacity building training enabling of panchayats and special supports for panchayats etc. The funding for RGPSA for state plan is on a 75.25 sharing basis by Central and State Government respectively.

Manpower and Office Building

A large number of GP's in the country do not have even full time secretary and around 25% of GPs do not have basic office buildings. This greatly constraints their functioning and invites unfairly adverse remarks.

Decentralized planning

State would District Planning Committee (DPCS) and responsibilities for planning and implementation are to be devolved to the panchayats alone and not any parallel structure.

Rotation of Reservation

State Legislatures might consider extending the term of each reservation rotation cycle. State should not introduce state specific policies on reservation which result in diminishing the presence and role of women in Panchayati Raj.

Jurisprudence

MoPR would network with expert institutions to review and compile the growing case law on Panchayati Raj. MoPR would also put in place an appropriate institutional mechanism for building updating, disseminating a database panchayat related jurisprudence.

Annual Reports

Annual Administrative reports by Panchayat should facilitate comparison, identity, innovations, helps in drawing lessons and highlighted policy issues requiring resolutions. The action points of the seven round tables would underline the basic frameworks of the annual state of the Panchayat Reports (SoPRs). Drawing upon the SoPRs of the state, the MoPR would prepare an Annual Report on SOPR in the country.

Devolution Index

All states would prepare a Devolution index to facilitate self assignment.

Election

There must be parity in the electoral process between Parliamentary Assembly and Panchayat Elections. MoPR would encourage consultation between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the State Election Commission (SEC) on evolving a common electoral roll for all levels of

elections. The Union Government would consider preparing a nodal code relating to the supervision, directions and conducts of election of Panchayat, E-Governance, Information and Technology (IT) is needed transparency, disclosure of information and social audit, for better and convergent delivery of services to citizens, improving internal management and efficiency of panchayat, capacity building of representatives and officials of panchayat and medium of E-procurement.

Conclusions

The participation of women especially then belonging to weaker sections in GPs has increased after the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The empowerment of women including members from weaker section appears to have increase over the year. But, the political journey is not smooth for women in a patriarchal and case ridden society on account of which they face numerable problems in the village panchayat two decade after amendment, it is proceed that reservation alone cannot ensure the effective participation itself has to take lead role promoting the agenda of empowerment of women by making concrete actions. At the same time multiple government and non government stake holders including CSOS and media have to join hand to take forward the agenda of women's empowerment. It is expected that elected women in panchayat will not only perform their functions as elected representatives but will also make significant contribution to models of gendered government with equity, social justice and efficient delivery of public goods and services in future.

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