



# Evaluation of Policies Approaches and Social Responsibilities Behind Panchayati Raj Movement in Jammu and Kashmir.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has its own unique history as far as Panchayati Raj is concerned. During the British period, while as in the rest of the country the Panchayati Raj system passed through various phases, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir it was only in 1935 when the first Village Panchayat Regulation Act No. 1 was promulgated by the then Maharaja Hari Singh. The preamble of the Act, states, "It is expedient to establish in Jammu and Kashmir state the village panchayats to assist in the administrative, civil and criminal justice and also to manage the sanitation and other common concerns of the village". It clearly shows that the essence behind the promulgation of this Act was not to promote Panchayati Raj in the state in letter and spirit but to use panchayats as an extended arm of the government for judicial and civil administration. This Act was limited in its objectives and elitist in nature.

**KEYWORDS:-** Policies and approaches of Panchayati System, Social responsibilities, Panchayati Raj Movement in J & K, Public Opinion and Hurdles of PRIs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Panchayati Raj System is the main thrust of National Development of the developing countries in general and India in particular. In India, since majority of population lives in rural areas, Panchayati Raj is an indispensable necessity for National Development effort.

The need for decentralization in development administration is an accepted fact, since the above can ensure harnessing of local resources, in due appreciation of local needs and knowledge, the Govt has been focusing their attention on their area. In fact, decentralization has been a subject of intensive debate since 1970's when the orientation and structure of development planning changed from growth to redistribution with growth. This warrants that ultimate objectives of decentralization should be realized, in respect of raising productivity and incomes, provision of basic needs to all and ensuring sustained development. In this context, the prerequisite is the very outlook of all those who are participants in the working of Panchayati Raj. The planner attempting to infuse decentralization and thereby people's participation in Panchayati Raj Administration, should have a clear idea as to the perception of various participants in the system viz. officials, non-officials, and the villagers on these interrelated issues. First, the extent to which their perception varies with regard to assessing the people's participation. This naturally entails probing into the factors, which go to influence the level of participation and particular schemes, which serve as the modes of their participation that are popular. The second issue centers on the ultimate objective of Panchayati Raj viz. that of delivery of benefits to those in the lowest rungs of society.

This could be accomplished only with efficient administrative machinery. Hence, the researcher brought them together and learned from the respondents, their assessment of the Panchayati issue. Besides, knowing the perception of the individuals, the researcher could examine the document on the performance of Panchayati Raj in respect of the study area. Thus, he could juxtapose the second issue viz. the Panchayati Raj in practice, along with the perception of participants. These two issues form the core of the analytical chapters of this work. As before stating the problem in terms of precise objectives and hypothesis, a few observations may be made on the concept of Panchayati Raj and its purpose.

In view of the need of the urgency of the multi-faceted rural problems, most of the developing countries initiated development programs, which lead to the creation of a no. of new institutions. To promote political development and social justice, people's institutions are to be created.

In India, many attempts were made for the upliftment of the rural poor. The creation of Panchayati Raj in 1959, with the object of entrusting the authority and responsibility for rural development to rural people is considered not only an innovation but also a revolution. Institutionally, an attempt is made to provide room for the involvement and active participation of the people through the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of rural development schemes.

Panchayati Raj says, Norman D. Palmer is the “most exciting experiment in democratic decentralization in any developing country”. Thus, Panchayati Raj Institution is a new stride in rural development. Specific stipulations aimed at strengthening the financial domain of the restructured local bodies have been made in the two enactments, so as to make local bodies vibrant and self-sustaining for better management of civic affairs.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

For the democratic decentralization of power and people’s governance in real sense through Panchayati Raj institutions, the Article 40 of the Indian Constitution was given a solid form and content. However, history is witness to the fact that the enthusiasm and vigor which prevailed in the Constituent Assembly, did not last long and with the result much hiccups were noticed in the policy and practice of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. There is a need to have a fresh look on the reasons which made to foresee the Statesman of the country the progress and prosperity of the nation through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The policy and practice then and now, the opinion of public about the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the reason which come in the way of functioning of these institutions, with the result the objectives which had been envisaged when the Panchayati Raj movement was lambded, could not be realized but have to be evaluated through empirical study..

In the light of the above statements, the present research has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- i) To evaluate the policy behind the Panchayati Raj movement in J & K.
- ii) To assess the approach of the Panchayati Raj Institutions to shoulder the social responsibilities.
- iii) To examine the reasons which come in the way of Panchayati Raj Institutions to prevent these institutions to become model one’s for other countries.
- iv) To know and assess the opinion of the public about the awareness, efficacy, utility and the actual functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jammu and Kashmir.

## HYPOTHESES

In order to explain and analyse the above mentioned objectives, a number of hypotheses were framed. The objective was to assess whether:

The Panchayati Raj movement in India with special reference to J&K has been taken with that zeal and zest which was there when the movement was conceived.

The laws governing the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been implemented effectively or partially and if they were implemented partially, what were the reasons.

The working of Panchayati Raj Institutions was in tune with the objectives set to be achieved through these institutions.

The socio-economic benefits of Panchayati Raj have percolated to the weaker sections of rural areas.

On the basis of these hypotheses, the conclusions were drawn with the help of various research tools and techniques discussed in methodology.

## STUDY AREA

The present study is an in-depth micro field study pertaining to “An Analytical study of Panchayati Raj System in Jammu & Kashmir: A Case study of District Kupwara”. The field investigation of the problem was carried out in district Kupwara of J & K State.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Review of Literature in Research is very necessary because it highlights the various aspects and issues regarding the research topic covered by the previous research studies. Review of research literature also enables researcher in finding missing research aspect of concern topic. It also helps in understanding methodological aspects of the study, which was being adopted by the previous researchers. The researcher has reviewed following few related research literatures.

**P.K. Mahanti and Bijoyini (1998):** in his research article entitled “NonTax Revenue generation by local Government: Ideology and prospect after the constitution provision” concluded that the share of NTR in the total revenue is dissatisfactory and collecting process is not good in our country. It was also found that state governments have not devolved clearly resources to the local governments. Authors suggested that local governments could raise the funds as a loan from banks, LIC

and other financial institutions. 'Grant' is a factor, which can be used to overcome regional disparities among local governments.

**Dr. Seeta Prabhu , Dr. Suraj Kumar, Ms. Elena Borssati, Mr. Srinivasan, Mr. Aparna Pande, Dr. Sundharam under the leadership of Dr. Brenda Goel MeSweeney,(2000)** , UNDP combinely prepared Discussion Paper Series-1 , 'Decentralization in India Challenges and Opportunities'. They conclude that the local governments must help to become vehicle for social transformation. Strengthening local bodies could be beneficial to deprived section of the society. As local bodies are roots of democracy, human development and strong local democracy can go hand in hand. Authors focused on decentralization from below not from above which will be helpful to make grand success of democracy.

**Ajit Karnik, Abhay Pethe and A. Karmarkar (2002)** , in their article entitled: Developing a quantitative framework for determining of funds from State Governments to Local Bodies" opined that the state must transfer the funds to local bodies as per suggestions of finance commission. States should have permanent data collection machinery that will provide continuous inputs for the operationalization of the proposed procedure.

**Anita Rath (2006)**, in his research entitled Urban Local Finance: Issues and Alternatives, found that the fiscal reforms of local bodies assumes significance now. Great perspicuity needed in addressing these aspects. Abolition of octroi has meant serious fiscal crisis in many cities, as their substitutes have not been equally productive as octroi. At the same time property tax reforms in many Indian cities have their own loopholes.

Ahmad Nesar, (1998) , in his paper entitled "A study of Panchayat Finance in India" attempted to understand the system of Panchayat Finance taking into account the Kerala and Rajasthan states in India. The study has covered the finance of PRIs as well as decentralization of the fiscal process of these two States. He concluded that Kerala PRIs are enjoying a greater level of functional and financial autonomy and also people's participation in developmental planning has been given a campaign mode. Whereas Rajasthan is, the first to introduce the modern system of panchayat in the country, but there is a lack of funds, no financial autonomy, also high poverty, drought situation, and people's slow participation in the system.



## COLLECTION OF DATA

Both primary and secondary sources of material have been used in the collection of data on Panchayati Raj System in district Kupwara. For an in-depth study, district Kupwara was selected. Thus, the locale of the study was District Kupwara. In order to make the study more useful, the said district was selected through purposive sampling method.

## METHODOLOGY

The study area of District Kupwara was selected through purposive sampling method. In order to make the study more useful and in-depth, the researcher went for a pilot study, as before gathering information on the perception of various participants. His interaction with the individuals was very revealing. He could notice that not all the participants were well endowed with information and well crystallized views on the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions. This situation prompted the researcher to look for such respondents, who were different from the general stock, in respect of clarity of perception. He was convinced that only those who seemed to have conviction about their views should be included in the study to ensure reliability of information and consequent generalization pointing towards policy making. Being exploratory area of research the present earnest attempt of the researcher to bring the limelight the views of various participants, may be taken as fulfilling the norm of conceptual validity of the sample, rather than statistical validity. In fact the researcher collected data from a large number of respondents from each category of respondents but he eliminated those participants from the sample whose responses did not qualify to be reliable and consistent, in the estimate of the researcher. In this exploratory study the researcher took utmost care in regard to the reliability of the tools) the schedule administered). He is of firm conviction that the social science research will end up as a mere orthomorphic exercise if one does not bestow his/her attention on the qualitative aspects of the participants responses.

## CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of preceding analysis and within the framework of the objectives of this study, the analytical study of Panchayati Raj System in J&K has been discussed in detail and it was observed that the institution of Panchayati Raj is as old as the history of India's civilization itself. It has been existing in India since the ancient Vedic periods, passed through distinct phases throughout Indian history, and thus has a major and lasting impact on the Indian culture and

civilization. Therefore, it has helped the present Panchayat structure to be acceptable to Indian society. Many steps have been taken up to modernize the ancient Panchayati Raj system during the British rule. The establishment of British Local Fund in 1869, Lord Mayo's Resolution of 1870, Lord Rippon's Resolution of 1882. Enactment of Bombay Village Panchayat Act, 1920 and the passing of 1909, 1919 and 1935 Acts were some of the significant landmarks in this process. The importance of this institution was also felt by the Indian National Congress, which was involved in the freedom struggle. However, the prevailing political circumstances and lack of political will did not allow it to work as expected. Due to the prevailing circumstances of this time, these institutions were neglected even after independence. Except giving constitutional recognition (in the Directive Principles of State Policy), no serious attempt was made by the Central Government during the first decade of independence. To make these institutions functional the appointment of Balwantrai Mehta Committee in 1956 was the first national attempt made by the Central Government to study the whole problem connected with 'Community Development Programme (CDP), National Extension Service (NES)', and Rural Local Institutions. On the basis of the recommendations made by the B.M. Committee for democratic decentralization, most of the states had enacted legislations (Panchayati Raj Acts) of a suitable type in the latter half of fifties and early sixties. This process provided nation-wide infrastructure for the rural development with a hope to involve rural people in the nation building activity. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the then Prime Minister coined this infrastructure as Panchayati Raj. The study analytically studied the Panchayati Raj System in Jammu and Kashmir.