

# An Empirical Study on People's Participation in Gram Sabha with special references to Mariyammanahalli, in Bellary District of Karnataka

Dr. K.Babu Rajendra Prasad

Assist. Professor of Political Science  
Government First Grade College,  
Mariyammanahalli-583222

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## Abstract

Gandhiji's political philosophy which paved gram swaraj, it paved the way for making panchayats effective instrument of grass root governance and participatory development. It is an undisputable part that decentralization is key to both healthy democracies for the socio-economic development of Indian society. This paper seek to present the findings of an empirical study of people participation in gramsbha of Mariyammanahalli village panchayat of Bellary district, for exploring the extent of peoples participation in gramsabha as a result of an implementation of section of 2 Karnataka state4 ZP,TP,GP and NP Act-1993.This made provision for the people's participation at grass root level for village development it also aims at making some suggestions for making participation of people effective in this institution of decentralize of rural governance. The present study is an attempt to understand people.

“According to UNDP (1993:21), Participation means that people are closely involved in economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives.”

Keywords:- Philosophy, swaraj, panchayath, effective Instruents, social economic.

## Introduction:

The concept of panchayats in post-colonial India is reflected in the Constitution and in the reports of the committees and commissions and the experiences of their working, tend to suggest that there can be three perspectives on panchayats as instruments of development (the instrumentalist perspective), panchayats as institutions of self-government (institutional perspectives). The first perspective popularised by the Balvantrai Mehta Committee to which the birth of panchayats is traced, puts emphasis on non-political panchayats, putting rural development as the first and foremost agenda for the first generation non-political panchayats. The participation of the people was considered necessary for better implementation of rural development programmes. The Ashok Mehta Committee which reviewed the working of panchayats in 1978 seemed to have largely been influenced by the instrumentalist idea of panchayats. Although it had pleaded for political panchayats it wanted panchayats to have two tiers rather than three as suggested by the first Mehta. It was argued that as there was no government machinery below the block the third tier would not be able to serve any fruitful purpose in terms of implementation of rural development programmes. The second generation political panchayats as recommended by the second Mehta thus upheld the instrumentalist brand of panchayats. Interestingly the idea of panchayats as units of self-government which was embodied in Article 40 of the Constitution, escaped the notice of both the Mehta's. The statesmen had not also mentioned it in their discussions. This aspect remained beyond the purview of decentralization discourse. It was the L.M. Singhvi Committee constituted by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1989 which was the first to stress the constitutional institutional perspective. The seventy third amendment of the Constitution sought to make

a blend of both these perspectives. The third generation panchayats. The preparation of district plan has been made mandatory in the wake of 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment, accordingly, the plans prepared by Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipalities in the district are consolidated from district plans.

### Objectives:

- To know the awareness among people about gramsabha.
- To explore participation of people in decision making process in gramsabha and rural development.
- To suggest based on findings

### Methodology;

The study covered Mariyammanahalli Gram Panchayat located in the state of Karnataka. Mariyammanahalli (Indian Government reference number code is 219,259) is under the Hospet-Inter panchayat, Bellary-Zill panchayat. It includes 2 villages namely Mariyammanahalli and Mariyammanahalli Thanda. It consists of 29 members from M.M.Halli and 3 from M.M.Thanda for 20,000 population. The selection of Panchayat by purposeful sampling method and selection of respondent made by stratified and random sampling method for insuring that the unit selected for study becomes as far possible people of Mariyammanahalli Panchayat as whole. The entire 180 respondents including male and female from various socio-economic and political background were interviewed. The questionnaire was administered to them during November-December 2013 for this purpose.

### 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment

The idea that produced the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment was not a response to pressure from the grassroots, but to an increasing recognition that the institutional initiatives of the preceding decade had not delivered, that the extent of rural poverty was still much too large and thus the existing structure of government needed to be reformed. The Constitutional (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment) Act, passed in 1992 by the Narasimha Rao government, came into force on April 24, 1993. It was meant to provide constitutional sanction to establish “democracy at the grassroots level as it is at the state level or national level”.

### Gram Sabha

- The Gram Sabha or Village Assembly as a deliberative body to decentralized governance has been envisaged in the foundation of the Panchayati Raj System. A uniform three-tier structure of panchayats at village (Gram Panchayat — GP), intermediate (Panchayat Samiti — PS) and district (Zilla Parishad — ZP) levels.

The gramsabha is an important aspect in the three-tier system of panchayat raj. People's participation in the decision-making process and for rural development, it is the power of people.

(1) The Gram Sabha shall meet at least once in six months: Provided that a Special meeting of the Gram Sabha shall be convened if a request is made by not less than ten percent of the members of the Gram Sabha with items of agenda specified in such request and there shall be a minimum three months period between two special meetings of the Gram Sabha.

(2) The quorum for the meeting of a Gram Sabha shall be not less than one-tenth of the total number of members of the Gram Sabha, or hundred members, whichever is less. As far as may be, at least ten members from each Ward Sabha within the Panchayat area shall attend the meeting and not less than thirty percent of the members attending the Gram Sabha shall be women. As far as may be the persons belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes shall be represented in proportion to their population in the Gram Sabha.

**(3) Subject to such rules as may be prescribed, the Gram Sabha, shall exercise powers and discharge functions as hereinafter provided, namely:-**

(a) To consider and approve the annual plan prepared by the Gram Panchayat;

(b) To generate proposals and determine the priority of all schemes and development programmes to be implemented in the Panchayat area by the Zilla Panchayat or Taluk Panchayat after considering the recommendations and suggestions of the Ward Sabhas through the Gram Panchayat;

(c) To identify and select the most eligible persons from the Panchayat area for beneficiary oriented schemes on the basis of criteria fixed by the Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat or the Government and to prepare list of beneficiaries in the order of priority after considering the priority lists of individual beneficiaries sent by the Ward Sabhas. Such list shall be binding on the concerned Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat or the Government, as the case may be;

(d) To disseminate information on development and welfare programmes and to render assistance in effective implementation of development schemes by providing facilities locally available and to provide feedback on the performance of the same

(e) To render assistance to the Gram Panchayat in collection and compilation of details required, formulation of development plans, collection of essential socio-economic data and canvassing participation in health, literacy and similar development campaigns;

(f) To get information from the officers of the Gram Panchayat as to the services they will render and the works they propose to do in the succeeding period of six months after the meeting of the Gram Sabha;

(g) To get information from the Gram Panchayat on the rationale of every decision of the Gram Panchayat concerning the Panchayat area;

(h) To get information from the Gram Panchayat on the follow up action taken on the decisions of the Gram Sabha;

(i) To provide and mobilize voluntary labour and contributions in cash and kind for development works and to supervise such development work through volunteer teams;

(j) To resort to persuasion of Gram Sabha members to pay taxes and repay loans to the Gram Panchayat;

(k) To decide, after considering the suggestions of the ward sabhas the location of street lights, street or community water taps, Public wells, Public sanitation units, irrigation facilities and such other Public amenity schemes and to identify the defiances in them and after considering the suggestions of the ward sabhas to suggest remedial measures and to report the satisfactory completion of the works;

(l) To impart awareness on matters of public interest such as cleanliness, preservation of environment and prevention of pollution;

(m) To assist employees of the Gram Panchayat in sanitation arrangements in the Panchayat area and to render voluntary service in the removal of garbage;

(n) To promote the programme of adult education within the Panchayat area;

(o) To assist the activities of school betterment sanghas, Anganawadi, Mahila Samaja, Youth associations, self help groups, women activities in the Panchayat area;

(p) To assist the activities of public health centers in the Panchayat area, especially in disease prevention and family welfare population control and control of cattle diseases and create arrangement to quickly report the incidence of epidemics and natural calamities;

(q) To promote communal harmony and unity among various groups of people in the Panchayat area and to arrange cultural festivals literary activities and sports meets to give expression to the talents of the people of the locality; and

(r) To conserve and maintain public properties such as Gomala, tanks, tank beds, ground water, grazing grounds of the cattle, mines etc., within the limits of the Gram Panchayats;

(s) To take action to prevent discrimination on the basis of caste, religion and sex etc., and to direct the Gram Panchayats to not to grant license to shops vending liquor or narcotic drugs or place of gambling or any other activities prejudicial to public interest;

(t) To identify the child labourers if any, present within the limits of the Gram Panchayats and to take action to rehabilitate them and to assist in implementation of the legal action specified by the Central and State Governments;

(u) To exercise such other powers or discharge such other functions as may be prescribed.

(4) The Gram Sabha shall in its ordinary meeting or a special meeting convened for the purpose, discuss the budgetary provisions, the details of plan outlay and the subject wise allocation of funds and also the

details of the estimate and cost of materials of the works executed Or proposed to be executed in the Panchayat area.

(5) The annual statement of accounts of the preceding financial year, the last audit note and replies thereto and the panchayat jamabandi report and action taken thereto shall be placed by the Gram Panchayat for the consideration of the Gram Sabha in its meeting. The

Views, recommendations or suggestions of the Gram Sabha shall be communicated to the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat shall give due consideration to the views, recommendations and suggestions of the Gram Sabha.

(6) The procedure for convening and conducting the meeting of the Gram Sabha shall be such as may be prescribed.

(7) Every meeting of a Gram Sabha shall be presided over by the Adhyaksha of the concerned Gram Panchayat and in his absence by the Upadhyaksha and in the absence of both Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha, by any member of the Gram Panchayat nominated by it.

(8) The officers of the Gram Panchayat shall attend the meetings of the Gram Sabha as may be required by the Adhyaksha and an officer specifically nominated by the Gram Panchayat as convener of the Gram Sabha meeting shall assist in convening and conducting its meetings and recording its decisions in a minute book and also in taking follow up action thereon.

(9) The Gram Sabha may constitute sub-committees consisting of not less than ten members of whom not less than half shall be women, for in-depth discussion on issues and programmes for effective implementation of decisions of the Gram Sabha and in furtherance of Exercise of powers and discharge of functions of Gram Sabha.

(10) All resolutions in respect of any issue in the meetings of the Gram Sabha shall be passed by the majority of the members present and voting.

**Findings:**

1. Out of 180 respondents, all of them are found to have clear idea on functioning of Gram panchayats. They also know about developmental programmes implemented in the respective village for past two years.

2. 80.5% of the respondents are aware about rural development schemes such as; NREGP, GANGAKALYAN YOJANA, and ASHRAYA YOJANA etc, higher level of education, good economic background and interest of people appear to be the causes of their high level of awareness.

3. 58.26% respondents content with the panchayat activities

4. 89.28% of respondents were aware of gram sabha concept which shows that there is good sign of people's participation in discussing about rural development activities.

5. 11.52% respondents don't know anything about Gram Sabha, this is very important finding of this study.

6. 5% of respondents have not responded anything pertaining to Gram Sabha.

7. 50.5% of respondents know about the minimum eligibility to attain Gram Sabha.

8. 66% of respondents are aware with the proceedings of Gram Sabha.

9. 48.88% of respondents Clear with the quorum for Gram Sabha meet.

10. 78.45% of respondents prepare panchayat premises for conduct of Gram Sabha.

11. 79.70% respondents opined that gram sabha is the best platform to discuss about rural development activities.

12. Only 9.65% of respondents are not happy with the Gram Sabha concept.

13. 85.29% of respondents opined that casteism, partiality, and nepotism are common in selecting beneficiary.

14. Majority respondents opined that the decisions of Gram Sabha are partially implemented. 16. 44% of respondents opine that Gram Sabha is not held systematically.

16. The reservation had laid down formally which has no real empowerment of women by panchayat. It has also been found that the participation of women in meetings is not satisfactory comparing to male. However they did not get cooperation not only from the family members but also from male members of the



meeting. Participation of women in preparing budget and annual plan was not to the desired extent in Gramsabha. Members of SC, ST and women are proved to be a good number of participation compared that of to high socio economic background. Social restriction over elite women causes for lower level of participation.

**Suggestions:**

1. It certainly provides an opportunity to people possessing better educational qualification, leadership qualities and past experiences in caring out effective Gramsabha.
2. All members of village are allowed to attend the meeting even though their involvement not confirmed in the list of voters.
3. Women should also be encouraged to organize themselves. The Mahila Mandals in the villages are effectively used as an instrument to mobilize them for this purpose and also take the participation of youth clubs in sharing their ideas for rural development.
4. There should be increased emphasis on ensuring the participation of schedule caste and tribes in the meetings of panchayats at the all level. This is needed to promote and enhance their leadership qualities and self confidence. It will help them to perform in the panchayats to ensure their participation in meetings. Attendance of all SC, ST and women must be compulsory with higher reservation right from Gramsabha to Zilla Panchayat.
5. Gramsabha must be processed on the base of government guidelines, so that it can stop political partiality and nepotism.
6. To promote people's participation there is also need for effective governance, which relies on accountability and transparency.
7. There is need to set up information centers at the local level to provide timely and relevant information to the people and their elected representatives.
8. Gram Sabha/Ward Committee meetings have to be held regularly with required quorum for effective participation of the people belonging to all sections of society.
9. To ensure authenticity and holistic city of the panchayat/ward plan, smaller meetings should be organized at ward/panchayat levels.
10. Exposure visits of representatives of local bodies to panchayats.
11. Organisation of block or district-level meals in collaboration with voluntary organisation, government departments for spreading the concept of people's participation in development planning.
12. Incentives for those who are promoting the concept of people's participation in development activities.
13. Imparting training to elected representatives of local bodies and government department.

**Conclusion:**

Gramsabha is basic unit of local self government. We are practicing three tier panchayat raj institutions. The democratic practices ensure representative participation of the people in decision making at micro level, where the voters not only elect their representative but also participate in the conception, formulation, implementation of socio economic development schemes for the village development. However, Gramsabha has not yet become an operational entity in the most of the state. To provide dynamism to Gramsabha and improve its vibrancy and efficacy, appropriate measure to build its capacity will have to be adopted. There is need to spell out powers and functions defining its role as a planner, decision maker and auditor. Grampanchayat can efficiently serve rural people only if the Gramsabha become vibrating solution and its all members take active participation in its meeting. There is an also strong need to involve academicians, NGO, CBO's, social workers and retired person for organizing awareness camps for the contributing to the overall development of the rural India.

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