



## **ROLE OF VILLAGE PANCHAYAT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF PATHIAPAKA VILLAGE WARANGAL DISTRICT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Village Administration is a vital for all the administrative system. In administration there are the three types, Central, State and Local Administrations. Local Administration is the basic and decreases the burden of the Central and State Administration works. Decentralization is the vital mechanism through which democracy becomes truly representative and responsive. Most of the people live in villages and they depend on Agriculture activities. People must participate in politics and make a right decision, where if there is a system of local administration, there must be a real, democracy. Through Decentralisation the local administration becomes a successful. Almost all the third world countries which are engaged in the developmental process at one time or the other initiated some measures for decentralization, these approaches and the emphasizes laid vary from country to country. The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity. Five-year plans, specially the second five-year plan, laid special emphasis on the role of Panchayats in rural developments. The paper contains need and importance of the study, methodology, objectives of the study, hypothesis, general observations, evolutions of panchayat raj, development programmes in Pathipaka gram panchayat, etc. An attempt is made to study the role of gram panchayats in rural development in general and Pathipaka village of Nekkonda mandal of Warangal district in particular.*

## INTRODUCTION

The role of panchayat Raj institutions as instruments of rural reconstruction and development needs no emphasis. They have been reorganized with wider powers and financial resources not merely as institutions of political participation but institutions of social and economic development. Panchayat Raj has come to be associated with two broad images. First, it is a government by itself and second it is an agency of the state government. In the integrated exercise of planning for social and economic development, co-ordinate roles, the present set up is a three-tier representative structure of government where the administrators, elected leaders and local population participate in the developmental effort<sup>i</sup>.

In fact the elected representatives play the key role in the decision making process, leaders are regarded as facilities of the process of development. Since the emphasis of rural development policies is bringing about people's participation in the development programmes, it is possible to achieve this through the leaders (B.C. Muttayya, 1979, p-1). The administrators are expected to participate with missionary zeal in the life and development of the villages and these Institutions are to be galvanized to become effective instruments of social and economic change (Harichandan. C, 1983, p-3).

Village Administration is a vital for all the administrative system. In administration there are the three types, Central, State and Local Administrations. H. Siman says Central, State and Local Administration functions belong to Public Administration<sup>ii</sup>. Local Administration is the basic and decreases the burden of the Central and State Administration works. Decentralization is the vital mechanism through which democracy becomes truly representative and responsive. Most of the people live in villages and they depend on Agriculture activities. People must participate in politics and make a right decision, where if there is a system of local administration, there must be a real, democracy. Through Decentralisation the local administration becomes a successful. Almost all the third world countries which are engaged in the developmental process at one time or the other initiated some measures for decentralization, these approaches and the emphasizes laid vary from country to country. However, there is no agreement about the form and the degree of decentralization. Most of the debate centre round the degree of decentralization and its implementations and consequences. Rapid development is an inescapable goal of the third

world societies which are infected by large scale inequalities, poverty, illiteracy and in human living conditions. Therefore, developmental effort should be directed towards the poor to that extend development plans must reflect the realistic concern for Eradication of poverty<sup>iii</sup>.

Such a development is not possible without massive involvement of this neglected sections of the society. The participation has to be achieved through mobilizing the masses for development and by designing the program in such a way that they reach the large majority of the people to secure their widespread support<sup>iv</sup>. Therefore, development strategy can secure public participation has been one of the major challenges of modern times.

The word decentralization literally means away from the centre has been derived from Latin. Norman D.Palmer says "it has become less precious, and many thinkers says delegation and devolution have quite frequently been employed to denote the same ideas as decentralization" devolution to local authorities or other local bodies<sup>v</sup>. The difference between these two words is well highlighted when it is stated that decentralization does not give members of the public much of share in decision making at best they have more access to bureaucratic decision makers for increasing popular participation devolution: of authority giving to lower. Official's greater power is more promising than administrative decentralization<sup>vi</sup>.

The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity. Five-year plans, specially the second five-year plan, laid special emphasis on the role of Panchayats in rural developments. Second five-year plan envisaged a panchayat as responsible for village development keeping transformation of social and economic life of rural areas as its goal of development. It says that, the rural progress depends entirely on the existence of an active organization in the village which can bring all the people, including the weaker sections, in to common programmes to be carried out with the assistance of administration. To achieve this objective the second Five year Plan entailed the Panchayats to perform civic, developmental, land management, land reform and judicial functions. Subsequent plans and policy pronouncements of national leader to emphasized the role of Panchayats in village development.

## **NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The Panchayat Raj System is playing important role in rural development. Gram panchayat Pathipaka village has taken the responsibility of implementing various rural development programmes of both state and central governments. The study is needed for evaluating the role of panchayat and the impact of the same on the development of study area.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1) To study the Historical development of the Panchayat Raj and Grama Sabha
- 2) To evaluate the work of panchayati Raj Institutions and their role in rural development.
- 3) To examine the Administrative structure, powers and functions of village Panchayat.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

In the light of objective and the hypothesis of the study, a systematic research design is drawn. The relevant data for the study was collected through primary and secondary sources. Research tools such as interview schedule and participant observation was used. The Secondary sources comprised of official records. Separate questionnaires were used for collection of information from Gram Panchayat members, and rural poor people, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people who have taken assistance and other benefits under the jurisdiction of gram Panchayat. The data is also collected through the interview schedule. Respondents were interviewed at their respective residences. An questionnaire was prepared which comprised questions on various aspects dealing with their social, economic, political and educational conditions.

## **EVOLUTION OF PRI'S-AN OVERVIEW:**

Rural development has been massively a government supported process rather than the people led process in India. To formulate and implement rural development programs an appropriate institutional structure is required. This need was met by the establishment of Panchayat Raj Institution (PRIs) in India. Further, the PRIs, being local self-governing bodies ensure, the opportunity for people's participation and involvement in the formulation and

implementation of rural development programs. Thus, the PRIs are entrusted with the task of promoting rural development in India. Since Independence greater emphasis has been laid on the social, economic and planning policy of our country for creating an appropriate rural, economic and social infrastructure and promoting overall development. The planning policy of our country accorded the highest priority to agriculture and rural development. The measures envisaged from first five-year plan had considerable bearing for the growth of rural economy. The first five-year plan laid down that "development of agriculture, based on the utilization of man power resources of the countryside and the maximum use of local resources, holds a key to the rapid development of the country". In the words of Committee on Plan Projects, "so long as we do not discover or create a representative and democratic institution which will supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local objects conforms with the needs and wishes of the locality, invest it with never be able to evoke local interest and excite local initiative in the field of development" and the team recommended a three-tier model of Panchayat Raj to serve as instrument of rural development in India (Committee on Plan Projects Report, 1957, Vol.I, p-5). Panchayats have been in existence for a long period. The present set-up clearly marks itself off from the past in respect of powers, functions and financial resources. The four main aspects of the present system are (i) democratization of the constitution and universal establishment of Panchayats. (ii) transfer of more powers from the state to these bodies, (iii) expansion of the scope of and transfer of more functions to the panchayats in regard to agriculture and allied activities, health and welfare and education and (iv) strengthening of the resource position of these bodies (Muttayya.B.C., 1979, p-1).

Rural development is generally conceived as a multi-sectoral activity which includes, besides agricultural development, rural industries, the establishment or improvement of social overhead facilities or infra-structure, such as schools, clinics, roads, communication, water supply, markets, welfare sources, improved nutrition, literacy, adult education etc. The primary objective of rural development is the enrichment of the quality of the rural masses, particularly the poorer and the weaker sections of the rural society (Shah. 1990, pp -7). The implementation of democratic decentralization through the Panchayat Raj institutions was meant to give an opportunity for local initiative and participation in the developmental activities. Pandit Nehru with his characteristic long-range vision and idealism went to the extent of saying, "democracy is not merely parliament at the top or in the states, but something that excites every person and indeed any place in the country if need arises"

(K.Sheshadi, 1976, p-7). Gandhiji drew the picture of free India's political structure in these words, "Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Every village should be a republic or a Panchayat having full powers. The greater the power of Panchayats, the better it is for the people". "Swaraj" signified to him the vesting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labourer. True democracy cannot be worked from bellow by the people of every village (Dayal Rajeshwar, 1970, p-15).

In this light, The Constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment) Act, 1992 has provided a new dimension to the concept of Panchayat Raj. In other words, the concept of participation of the people should be considered as an ideological commitment and, therefore, what is needed is legislative and structural measures to give legitimacy to people's participation (Vijayakumar. A, 1984,p-32 & 33).The Panchayat Raj institutions are statutorily elected bodies at the village, Block and District levels with powers of local government. The primary objective of Panchayat Raj is to strengthen the base of democracy at the grass roots and to enable the people of each village to achieve intensive and continuous development in the interests of the entire population, irrespective of the caste, class, and creed of religion.

Panchayat Raj or local self-government is an exercise in democratic decentralization of administrative authority. The system is based on the following principles.

1. There should be a three-tier structure of local-self governing bodies from village to district level, with an organic link from the lower to the higher ones.
2. There should be a genuine transfer of power and responsibility to these bodies.
3. Adequate financial resource should be transferred to those bodies to enable to them to discharge their responsibility.
4. All development programs at these levels should be channeled through these bodies.

The system evolved should be such as to facilitate further decentralization of power and responsibility in the future (Dahama 1993, p-41). The future of the country really depends upon effective Panchayat Raj and people's participation or co-operation. It is the only effective instrument. Which can put speed and substance in our planning process and ensure the most effective use of the country's resources productivity. In that lies the future both of democracy and real development of the economy as well as of the people in the country. In

the years to come, Panchayat Raj will be a catalytic agent of integrated development of rural.

### **Meaning of Rural Development**

The term 'Rural Development' is of focal interest and is widely acclaimed in both the developed and the developing countries of the world. There is however no universally acceptable definition of rural development, and the term is used in different ways and in vastly divergent contexts. As concept, it connotes over all development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multi dimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities - village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all, the human resource in rural areas. As a phenomenon, it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well being of a special group of people the rural poor. As discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioral, engineering and management sciences (Katar Singh, 1995, p-18).

### **STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE RURAL AREAS**

It is quite interesting to see the likely change in the structure of rural community. As a result of poverty alleviation programs to support the income and employment of the household in the lowest strata of the rural society. For a long time these households were with the victims of exploitation by the elite which had taken deep roots in the rural economy, Now the question is whether the poverty alleviation programs have weakened these roots and created any favorable atmosphere for the rural poor to improve their conditions. Another equally important change that we witnessed in the rural scene after poverty alleviation or rural development programs are that the poor people who never had any voice in the functioning of the village institutions. Now they are taking active part in these village institutions. This shows the confidence gained by the poor in framing the programs and policies meant for them. This change is predominantly due to the PRIs and their functioning.

### **General Observations**

It is found that majority of the respondents were quite with the program as it had helped them to improve their economic condition at least marginally and to some extent

employment. Majority of the sample beneficiaries (82.5%) felt that the scheme under which they were selected was not different from their traditional occupation. Those indicated it was different from their traditional occupation (91.4%) felt quite satisfied with the change. Since the change has resulted in an increase in income and employment. To another question as to whether they would suggest any change in the scheme. Majority of the sample beneficiaries (94.5%) said no and those who pleaded for the change suggested that, the amount of assistance should be enhanced, and if possible it should be released in one installment. The respondents from allied agriculture sector demanded the supply of cross breed buffaloes and sheep. Thus the rural development programs implemented through the Panchayat Raj institutions in selected area have provided more employment opportunities for village landless people, artisans, small and marginal farmers and handicrafts. These programs have also provided good social and economic positions for the rural people. The SC/ST people are getting more facility of rural development program compare to the other caste people, because they were socially and economically backward than their counter parts. And the rural development programs also become a good instrument for infrastructure development of rural area. The Panchayat providing more facilities like drinking water, sanitation, health services, school buildings, adult education, roads and bridges, street lights and etc, these facilities provided by Panchayat Raj institutions like a Pathiapaka Gram Panchayat as a agency of state government. Thus, the hypothesis that Panchayat Raj institution is playing crucial role in elevating the positions of the rural people stands confirmed.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The implementation of rural development programs through the Panchayat Raj institutions has a drastic change in the socio economic conditions of the rural people in the selected areas. The implementation of rural development programs has affected even the social and political affairs of the people of the selected area. In the economic front of the rural development programs have created an improvement in economic position of the selected area, as a result of implementation of rural development programs most of the people gain additional income. From the created assets which has resulted into deprivation in selected areas. After the implementation of rural developments programs, efforts have been made to strengthen village and cottage industries, as a result most of the people have become employed in various agriculture and allied activities like animal husbandry, sheep/goat rearing, handicrafts, small business and other activities. This has brought vigorous change in

socio economic setup of the selected Gram Panchayat. The implemented rural programs like SJGSY, housing schemes and power schemes have created various gainful activities for poor in selected area to be placed above the poverty line. Further, more in the newly built houses and provided power connection for houses, it indicates that there is a cumulative process for infrastructure development of rural area. As an exceptionally results some beneficiaries undergone losses of assets even by adopting rural development programs, but it is insignificant on other hand poor people who have not cover under the schemes are leading a measurable life.

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