



IMPACT OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Shuvajit Chakraborty

Associate Professor

Department of Political Science

Nehru College Pailapool Cachar, Assam

Abstract

The primary duty of the institutions of the Panchayati Raj is to quicken the pace of development and involve all members of society in this endeavour. By doing so, the institutions should be able to satisfy both the actual requirements of the populace and their hopes for the future in terms of technological advancement. A multi-level planning technique is being utilised in the decentralised planning. It will be necessary for it to begin at the lower level (Gram Panchayat), go on to the intermediate level (Mandal Parishad), and then progress to the higher level (Zilla Parishad). It is anticipated that the Panchayati Raj Institutions would play a significant part in the process of designing and carrying out the many different developmental programmes. It is possible to recall that ever since the country gained its independence, India has been consistently carrying out development programmes with the intention of bettering the social and economic conditions of the population.

Key words-, Panchayat Institutions, SGSY, and Rural Development,.

INTRODUCTION:

Because the vast majority of India's population lives in rural areas, India's rural communities need to go through comprehensive development in order for the country's overall economic growth to advance at a faster rate. This is necessary in order for India to fulfil its potential as a global economic powerhouse. The overall growth strategy for India places a primary emphasis on the modernization of the country's underdeveloped rural areas. People who are disadvantaged and live in rural regions are the target audience for rural development programmes. These programmes are designed to bring the benefits of development to these individuals so that they can experience growth in a number of dimensions. It tries to improve their standard of living by broadening their access to opportunities that will enable them to reach their full potential and by promoting their participation in the process of change that is aimed at accomplishing certain goals. In addition to this, rural development has the potential to alleviate some of the strain that migration exerts on urban and suburban areas. It also makes it feasible to make advantage of the people and natural resources that are found in rural areas, which helps to decrease the gaps that now exist between various locations. 1 A method known as rural development is one that makes it possible for a certain set of people, specifically impoverished rural women and men, to obtain more of what they want and need for themselves and their children via the use of a specific strategy. People who live in rural areas are collectively referred to as "country ladies and men." It comprises giving aid to the poorest of those people who seek a livelihood in rural areas in order to equip them

with the ability to demand and control a bigger portion of the benefits of rural development. This is done in order to empower these individuals.

Objective:

1. The impact of Panchayati Raj bodies on the socio, economic, political life of the rural masses
2. The role of Panchayati Raj institutions on the development of rural infrastructure, alleviation of poverty, providing employment opportunities in rural areas.

Research Methodology:

The gathering of data on Panchayati Raj in the district as a whole and, more specifically, on the rural development programmes vis-à-vis Panchayati Raj institutions in the district has made use of both primary and secondary sources of information. The gathering of primary data required the preparation of two Interview Schedules, which the respondents were then asked to fill out and return. They are listed in schedule I and are related to those who benefit from rural development programmes. People's representatives at the Village Panchayati, Mandal Parishad, and Zilla Parishad levels are included in Schedule-II. Tables, charts, and percentage breakdowns have been utilised whenever they were deemed appropriate to better illustrate the facts. The secondary data have been compiled using the books, journals, magazines, published reports, action plans, unpublished theses, official papers, brochures, and official records that have been made publically available. A variety of offices, including District Panchayat Offices, Mandal Parishad Offices, and the Office of the Zilla Parishad, as well as Research Institutions and various Libraries, were contacted in order to acquire the necessary information.

Sample Design:

For the purpose of conducting an in-depth study on the influence that rural development programmes have on their respective beneficiaries, a simple random sampling method was used to select one mandal from each of the three Revenue divisions in the Anantapuramu district in order to administer the Interview Schedule. In the second stage, 90 sample beneficiary respondents from rural development programmes were picked in a purposeful manner from each mandal that had been chosen in the first stage. There are a total of 80 people that answered the survey.

Results and Discussions:

Respondents' image of Panchayati Raj: The term "image of Panchayati Raj" refers to the perception or opinion that the general public has of the way in which the Panchayati Raj Institutions operate and the individuals who work within such institutions. The general perception of the public on the usefulness of the services provided by PRIs is shown in Table 1.

Table-1, The perception of Panchayati Raj held by respondents:

Sl. No.	Views of Respondents	Social Category				Total
		ST	SC	BC	OC	

1	Useful	24 (72.73)	76 (80.85)	81 (84.37)	39 (82.98)	220 (81.48)
2	Not useful	4 (12.12)	7 (7.45)	6 (6.26)	4 (8.51)	21 (7.78)
3	Don't know	5 (15.15)	11 (11.70)	9 (9.37)	4 (8.51)	29 (10.74)
Total		33 (80.00)	94 (80.00)	96 (80.00)	47 (80.00)	270 (80.00)

Source: Field Data

* Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

It is evident from the data shown in Table: 1 that 81.48 percent of respondents have indicated that they believe the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions to be satisfactory. Only 7.78% of those who were polled believed that the services provided by Panchayati Raj Institutions were not beneficial in any way. The respondents from the most backward castes had the greatest acceptance rate (84.37 percent) of the usefulness of PRIS, compared to those from other socioeconomic groups. It is noteworthy to point out that respondents from Scheduled Tribes lead the list with the most unknown sentiments (12.12 percent), as well as the most unfavourable attitudes (12.12 percent) (15.15 per cent).

Participation of Respondents in Local body election: The formation of local self-governments is done with the intention of educating individuals living in rural areas about the democratic process. People receive training from the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), also known as village councils, when they are given the option to vote and run for office in local elections. 2014 was the year when elections were held for PRIs all around the state, including in the Anantapuramu district. It was decided to hold elections for both the Zilla Parishad and the Mandal Parishad. The 6th of April, 2014, as well as the 11th of April, 2014. In addition to that, elections were held for each of the Gram Panchayats. A sizable percentage of eligible voters participated in these elections and used their vote. A few of them decided to run for office in these elections as well. The information on respondent involvement in recent elections for their respective tiers of local body elections is shown in Table 2. (2014).

Table – 2, Respondents Participation in 2014 Local Body Election (Multiple Responses):

Sl. No.	PRIs	Caste wise participation in 2014 Election								Total	
		ST		SC		BC		OC		Yes	No
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
1	Zilla Parishad	26 (78.79)	7 (21.21)	87 (92.55)	7 (7.45)	88 (91.66)	8 (8.34)	42 (89.36)	5 (10.64)	243 (90.00)	27 (10.00)
2	Mandal Parishad	26 (78.79)	7 (21.21)	87 (92.55)	7 (7.45)	88 (91.66)	8 (8.34)	42 (89.36)	5 (10.64)	243 (90.00)	27 (10.00)
3	Gram Panchayat	32 (96.97)	1 (3.03)	93 (98.94)	1 (1.06)	96 (100.00)	-	45 (95.74)	2 (4.26)	266 (98.52)	4 (1.48)

Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

Due to the fact that voting for both the Zilla Parishad and the Mandal Parishad took place on the same day, the voters who participated in both sets of elections are the same. However, the levels of engagement across different socioeconomic groups are not distributed in an equal manner (see Table 2). When compared to the participation rates of respondents from other socioeconomic categories, those from Scheduled Tribes had the lowest rate of attendance at upper and medium levels, at 78.79 percent. However, their involvement in elections for lower tiers is higher than that of respondents from the OC. To elect representatives for Zilla Parishad and Mandal Parishad, over 92.55 percent of respondents who identified as belonging to Scheduled Caste cast their ballots. Their turnout in these elections is significantly greater compared to that of other socioeconomic groupings. The social and political awareness efforts that have been spearheaded by caste-based groups might be held responsible for this development. Voting participation among members of the SC community was significantly greater at the Gram Panchayati level, at 98.94%, than it was in the upper and middle tier elections. Each and every one of the BC respondents exercised their right to vote in the Gram Panchayat elections. They participate at a rate that is much greater in comparison to other social groupings. However, their participation in the elections for the Zilla Parishad and the Mandal Parishad is restricted to 91.66 percent. In the elections for the Zilla Parishad and the Mandal Parishad, approximately 10.64 percent of OC respondents did not exercise their franchise. The remaining 89.36% of eligible voters participated in the elections for the Gram Panchayat, and around 95.74% of eligible voters cast ballots in the election of their representatives for the local body. The overall participation rate of respondents to elect their representatives was 90 percent or higher in upper and medium tier elections and 98.52 percent or higher at lower tier elections. The participation rate in elections for local bodies is often much greater than that in elections for the Assembly and the Lok Sabha, which typically have a participation percentage that is between 70 and 80 percent at most.

Respondents who contested in 2014 Elections: Elections in India are open to any citizen of the country, provided they meet certain requirements. Only a minuscule percentage of people ran for office in the most recent elections for local bodies, which were conducted not long ago. Those of the respondents who ran for office in the most recent elections did so either as independent candidates or on party tickets, and in both cases, they were victorious. The information on the candidates who ran for local body elections in 2006 is shown in Table 3.

Table – 3, Number of Respondents contested in 2014 Elections:

Sl. No.	Name of the Office	Social Category								Total	
		ST		SC		BC		OC		Yes	No
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
1	ZPTC	-	33 (100.00)	-	94 (100.00)	1 (1.04)	96 (98.96)	-	47 (100.00)	1 (0.37)	269 (99.63)
2	MPTC	-	33 (100.00)	1 (1.06)	93 (98.94)	2 (2.08)	94 (97.92)	1 (2.13)	46 (97.87)	4 (1.48)	266 (97.77)

3	Gram Panchayati President	-	33 (100.00)	2 (2.13)	92 (97.77)	2 (2.08)	94 (97.92)	1 (2.13)	46 (97.87)	5 (1.86)	265 (98.14)
4	Ward Member	2 (6.06)	31 (93.93)	3 (3.19)	91 (96.81)	4 (4.17)	92 (95.83)	2 (4.26)	45 (95.74)	11 (4.07)	259 (95.93)

Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

According to what is shown in Table 3, the percentage of respondents who participated in the elections at less than 5 percent. In addition, none of the candidates managed to secure victory in the elections. None of the respondents who identified as belonging to a Scheduled Caste ran for the positions of ZPTC, MPTC, or Panchayati President. Only two of the ST category's responders decided to run for membership in the ward. In terms of the Scheduled Castes, none of them competed for a membership spot in the ZPTC. Among the SCs, there was one election for membership in the Mandal Parishad, two elections for the presidency of the Gram Panchayat, and three elections for forward memberships. The responders from the Backward Caste group competed for all four categories of available vacancies. What this indicates is that the BCs' level of political awareness is growing from year to year. In the elections, there was one race for ZP membership, two contests for the presidency of the Mandal Parishad and the Gram Panchayati, and four contests for ward membership. As was the case with STs and SCs, none of the OC respondents ran for a membership position in the Zilla Parishad. In the elections held in 2006, there were two forward memberships up for grabs: one for the Mandal Parishad, and the other for the Panchayati Presidentship.

Knowledge about Rural Development Programme: The Panchayati Raj Institutions' many developmental plans were designed to be of assistance to a wide variety of people and groups within the community. They are useful to farmers, agricultural labourers, jobless young people, women, and men in business, amongst other groups. In order to estimate the precautions that beneficiaries of rural development schemes and programmes would take, knowledge and awareness are prerequisites that must be met. The specifics of respondents' familiarity with various types of development programmes are provided in Table 4.

Table – 4, Respondents' Knowledge on Major Rural Development Schemes (Multiple Responses):

Sl. No.	Name of the Rural Development Programmers	Social Category				Total
		ST	SC	BC	OC	
1	MGNREGP	33 (100.00)	94 (100.00)	93 (96.88)	43 (91.49)	263 (97.41)
2	Indiramma Housing	32 (96.97)	93 (98.93)	95 (98.95)	45 (95.74)	265 (98.14)
3	Watershed Programmer	19 (57.57)	74 (78.72)	78 (81.25)	40 (85.10)	211 (78.15)
4	IKP	30 (90.90)	92 (97.87)	95 (98.95)	45 (95.74)	262 (97.04)
5	Rajiv Arogya Sri	29 (87.87)	81 (86.17)	90 (93.75)	44 (93.62)	244 (90.37)

6	CLDP	16 (48.48)	79 (84.04)	76 (79.16)	39 (82.98)	210 (77.78)
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Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

According to the information shown in Table 4, each of the 33 individuals who identify as belonging to a Scheduled Caste has heard of the National Rural Employment Programme. It indicates that a sizeable percentage of ST respondent households are receiving financial assistance as a result of the plan. There was a familiarity with the Indiramma Housing Programme among 96.97% of ST respondents. The percentage of people who are aware of the Watershed Programme is 57.57, while the percentage of people who are aware of the Comprehensive Land Development Programme is 48.48. The narrow scope of these programmes is likely to blame for the little amount of knowledge that exists regarding them. The percentage of ST respondents who are familiar with the IKP and Rajiv Arogya Sri Programs is around 90.90 and 87.87 respectively. In the case of respondents from Scheduled Castes, too, the level of knowledge on NREGP is 100%. Knowledge of the responder is higher in the case of the Indiramma Housing Programme and the IKP than it is in the case of other developmental projects. To be more specific, 98.93 percent are familiar with the Indiramma Housing Programme, and 97.87 percent are familiar with the Indira Kranthi Patham. When compared to the other socioeconomic groups, the percentage of people who are aware of Rajiv Arogya Sri is the greatest at 86.17 percent, while the percentage of people who are aware of CLDP is the most at 84.04 percent. The Watershed Programme receives the least amount of attention compared to all of the other initiatives. The responders from BC not only have the greatest level of knowledge but also the same level of understanding regarding the Indiramma Housing Scheme and the IKP. Respondents from British Columbia have a knowledge of MGNREGP at a rate of 96.88%, while those from Rajiv Arogya Sri have a rate of 93.75%. Awareness of the Watershed Programme and the Community Land Development Programme now stands at 81.25 and 79.16 percent respectively. When compared to respondents from other socioeconomic categories, those who identify as OC have a lower level of understanding of the MGNREGP (91.49 percent) and the Indiramma Housing Programme (95.74 per cent). The percentage of people who are aware of IKP is 95.74, while the percentage of people who are aware of Rajiv Arogya Sri is 93.62. The respondents who are aware of CLDP make up 82.98 percent of the total. The total number of respondents who are aware of the Indiramma Housing Scheme is 270 out of 270. It is followed by MGNREGP with a score of 263, while IKP with a score of 262 takes the third spot. 244 of the respondents are aware of the benefits that Rajiv Arogya Sri may provide. There are only 78.15 and 77.78 percent of beneficiaries who are aware of the Watershed Programme and the CLDP, respectively.

Selection of Beneficiaries: Results can only be seen from the numerous rural development programmes that have been started by the Central and State Governments, but only when the people who are in the greatest need participate in such programmes. There have been rumours that in some programmes, wealthy and powerful families are using their influence to get their children's names registered in preference to those of disadvantaged groups. In light of this, the beneficiaries were asked to indicate their contentment with the selection of beneficiaries for the various development plans, and the results are provided in Table 5 below.

Table – 5, Respondents' Satisfaction Levels on the selection of Beneficiaries for Rural Development Schemes:

Sl.No.	Social Category	Responses			Total
		Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory	No Response	

1	Scheduled Tribes	16 (48.48)	15 (45.45)	2 (6.06)	33 (100.00)
2	Scheduled Castes	43 (45.75)	48 (51.06)	3 (3.19)	94 (100.00)
3	Backward Caste	47 (48.96)	47 (48.96)	2 (2.08)	96 (100.00)
4	Other Castes	29 (61.70)	14 (29.79)	4 (8.51)	47 (100.00)
	Total	135 (50.00)	124 (45.93)	11 (4.07)	270 (100.00)

Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

The findings shown in Table 5 make it abundantly evident that only half of the individuals who participated in the survey have indicated contentment with the selection of beneficiaries for the different development programmes. The other fifty percent of them either do not respond or express discontent with the offer. To be more specific, around 45.93% of people have voiced their displeasure, whilst 4.7% of people have spoken neither their satisfaction nor their disapproval. In terms of social groupings, the proportion of OC respondents who reported being satisfied was the greatest (61.70 percent), while the proportion of Scheduled Caste respondents who reported being satisfied was just 45.75 percent. When it comes to the remaining two social groups, respondents from the BC and ST demographics each reported pleasure at a rate of 48.96 and 48.48 percent respectively. More than half of the respondents who were members of the Scheduled Castes were unhappy with the current process of selecting recipients for various types of development programmes. They claimed that the village landlords who chose the recipients were subservient to them in their decision-making. They are followed by respondents from British Columbia and the Southern Territory, who indicated discontent at a rate of 48.96% and 45.46% respectively, placing them in second and third position correspondingly. Approximately 29.79% of those who responded from OC voiced their discontent as well. In the event that there is no response, the OC responders are placed at the top of the list. Immediately after them comes a group of STs with a percentage of 6.06 percent.

Respondents views on the selection of Beneficiaries: According to the findings shown in the table that came before this one (Table 6), over half of the people who participated in the survey are unhappy with the way in which recipients are chosen. They have been questioned about their degrees of contentment about the selection of beneficiaries, and then they have been requested to make suggestions regarding the technique or approach that should be used to pick beneficiaries.

Table – 6, Respondents suggestion on the selection of Beneficiaries:

Sl. No.	Responses	Social Category				Total
		ST	SC	BC	OC	
1	Gram Sabha	30 (90.90)	89 (94.68)	84 (87.5)	38 (80.85)	241 (89.26)
2	Gram Panchayati President	2 (6.06)	2 (2.13)	6 (6.25)	1 (2.13)	11 (4.08)

3	Village Leader	-	-	2 (2.08)	6 (12.77)	8 (2.96)
4	Government Officials	1 (3.04)	3 (3.19)	3 (3.13)	2 (4.25)	9 (3.33)
5	Other Political Leaders	-	-	1 (1.04)	-	1 (0.37)
	Total	33 (100.00)	94 (100.00)	96 (100.00)	47 (100.00)	270 (100.00)

Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

According to the information presented in Table 6, the vast majority of respondents (89.26 percent) selected Gram Sabha as their preferred method for the selection of beneficiaries for all rural development programmes. It indicates that those who are disadvantaged and in need will be given the opportunity to have their voices heard in the Gram Sabha meeting, where they will be enrolled in a variety of different programmes that promote development. The fact that the general public has now come around to the idea of selecting recipients through democratic means is a heartening and positive turn of events. Only 7.41% (4.08+2.96+0.37) of those who participated in the survey were in favour of some political engagement in the selection of those who would get benefits. On the other side, 3.33 percent of respondents were of the opinion that the selection process should be left up to concerned government authorities.

None of the ST respondents were in favour of the engagement of either the village chief or other political leaders in the selection of recipients. Examples of such political leaders include ZPTC members, MPTC members, MPPs, MLAs, MPs, etc. Over ninety percent of them felt that Gram Sabha was the most suitable organisation to use in the selection of recipients. Approximately 6.06 percent of them favoured the job of village president, whereas 3.04 percent of them favoured government officers.

In the same way as with Scheduled Tribes, none of the respondents who belonged to Scheduled Castes advocated for the participation of the village chief or any other political leaders in the selection of recipients. Approximately 94.68 percent of them have appropriately credited Gram Sabha with playing a role in the selection of recipients. They have shown a great deal of faith in government authorities, particularly the President of the Gram Panchayat. About 9.37 percent of respondents from the province of British Columbia (6.25 plus 2.08 plus 1.04) felt that political leaders should have a say in the selection of recipients, while just 3.13 percent of respondents supported the role of government officials. However, the vast majority of respondents (87.5% of them) acknowledged Gram Sabha as the greatest guarantee to pick recipients on the basis of their level of need.

Regarding the OC question, the majority of respondents (80.85%) favoured Gram Sabha for the selection of recipients. When compared to respondents from other groups, the biggest percentage of respondents (14.90%) said that they welcomed political engagement in the selection of recipients. A little under 4.25 percent of respondents were in favour of official engagement. Even in this case, 80.85 percent of respondents said that the Gram Sabha was the appropriate agency for selecting the recipients of aid.

Utility of Rural Development Programme: The overall improvement of rural regions is the goal of the many programmes and plans that are designated for rural development. During the course of the field

research, the perceptions of the respondents were recorded about the utility or lack of usefulness of these programmes, and the results were tabulated and shown in Table 7.

Table – 7, Respondents views on the Utility of Development Schemes:

Sl. No.	Responses	Responses			Total
		Useful	Not-useful	No Response	
1	Scheduled Tribes	31 (93.94)	1 (3.03)	1 (3.03)	33 (100.00)
2	Scheduled Castes	90 (95.75)	3 (3.19)	1 (1.06)	94 (100.00)
3	Backward Castes	87 (90.62)	6 (6.25)	3 (3.13)	96 (100.00)
4	Other Castes	41 (87.23)	5 (10.64)	1 (2.13)	47 (100.00)
	Total	249 (92.22)	15 (5.56)	6 (2.22)	270 (100.00)

Source: Field data

*Figures in parentheses is percentage of total

According to the data shown in Table 7, about 92.22 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that rural development programmes are necessary for the growth of rural regions. 5.56 percent of respondents reported that these programmes had a negative influence on them. It has been noted that respondents with medium landholdings have voiced their displeasure and lack of value with the NREGP programme since it made it harder for them to acquire labour at affordable prices. There was one response missing from each the SC, ST, and OC categories. About 93.94 per cent of ST respondents offered good reaction, 3.03 per cent gave negative comments. More than ninety-five percent of respondents from Scheduled Castes thought that rural development programmes were helpful, whereas just three point nineteen percent of them thought that they were not helpful. When it comes to respondents from Backward Caste, 90.62 percent gave a good response, while 6.25 percent gave a negative response towards rural development programmes. More over ten percent of the people who responded to the OC survey said that rural development programmes were not beneficial, whereas 87.23 percent believed that they were useful.

Findings of the study:

1. There is a high level of knowledge among people about these rural development programmes, the extent of which is expansive, and vice versa.
2. Almost half of the people who participated in the survey voiced their discontent with the current process that is used to choose the recipients of the benefits. As a result, close to ninety percent of people chose for the Gram Sabha as an objective body to determine the recipients.
3. Approximately 92.22 percent of those who participated in the survey agreed that the rural development programmes are beneficial.

4. The leadership of the Panchayati Raj is becoming more comprised of individuals of younger and middle-aged ages.
5. The knowledge levels of Panchayati Raj leaders on rural development programmes are also dropping with an increase in the tier of panchayat. This is a trend that has been seen throughout time.
6. A significant number of the leaders of rural local bodies have acknowledged that the rural development programmes that are now underway are beneficial, and these leaders also anticipate the introduction of further programmes along these lines.
7. The peculiar finding of the study is that nearly 58 percent of Panchayati Raj leaders admitted that their involvement in the implementation of the rural development programmes is almost nil. This is a finding that stands out as peculiar because it was found that nearly 58 percent of Panchayati Raj leaders.
8. Virtually every head of a Panchayati Raj Institution voiced their opinion that the district authorities should incorporate their organisation into the process of rural development planning and development.
9. Roughly 36.37 percent of the leaders surveyed stated that they believe the government's distribution of cash to the Panchayati Raj Institutions is influenced by their political attitudes.
10. The majority of people who have benefited from the NREGP and CLDP programmes in the district belong to groups designated as Scheduled Castes.

CONCLUSION

Panchayati Raj Institutions, which functioned as units of local self-government for the purpose of rural development, aided in the process of democratic decentralisation and contributed to the progress of rural areas. The institutions not only act as institutions for political involvement, but also as institutions for the socioeconomic development of the people living in rural areas. Positive responses were found when the data were analysed about the level of knowledge that villagers have regarding the part that Panchayati Raj Institutions play in the process of rural development.

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