CHAPTER X
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Overview

Inferences drawn in the body of the Thesis are provided in the form of summary and conclusion in this chapter.

Summary

The objectives of the study are to analyze the Panchayati Raj System at Union and State Level after 73rd Amendment; the Organization and Functions of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment; the Personnel Administration of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment; the Financial Administration of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment; and the State control over the Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment.

In the first chapter an attempt has been made to explain the Panchayats in the early recorded history of India, the Local Self Government during the British period, Lord Mayo’s Resolution of 1877, Lord Ripon’s Resolution of 1882, Royal Commission on Decentralization (1909), revival of Panchayats after Independence, Article 40 of the Indian Constitution, Community Development Programme and National Extension Service, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Study Teams and Committees appointed during 1960s to examine various aspects of functioning of Panchayati Raj System such as Committee on Rationalization of Panchayat Statistics,

A number of studies on Panchayati Raj System has been attempted to study the various aspects of Panchayati Raj system. The various literatures reviewed on the Panchayati Raj Institutions by the researcher are reported briefly in the second chapter. The studies reviewed on Panchayati Raj Institutions have not examined the real position of New Panchayati Raj System. Therefore, the scholar thought it proper to take up a
research study on, Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment.

The present study is about the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment. For proper understanding and analysis of the study, an understanding of the area in which it is set is quite necessary. Therefore, an attempt has been made to explain the area profile of Tamil Nadu in the third Chapter. In this chapter an attempt has been made to explain the details relating to location of Tamil Nadu, total area of Tamil Nadu, population, households, child population, Scheduled Caste population, Scheduled Tribe population, literates, illiterates, workers, main workers, main cultivators, main agricultural labourers, main household workers, main other workers, marginal workers, marginal cultivators, marginal agricultural labours, marginal household workers, other marginal workers, non workers and development related indicators in Tamil Nadu. The details furnished above data clearly indicate that rural areas in Tamil Nadu lack development and they have to be developed a lot.

In the fourth chapter an attempt has been made to examine the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and methodology of the study.

In fifth chapter the Panchayati Raj System at Union and Tamil Nadu State level after 73rd Amendment have been analyzed.
In the sixth chapter an attempt has been made to analyze the organization and functions of Panchayats at District, Block and Village Levels in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment.

Sincere, honest and hardworking human resources are an essential ingredient of any successful organization. This is true of Panchayati Raj Institutions as well, whose success will depend on how competent, efficient and contented are the personnel employed in them. Therefore, in the seventh chapter an attempt has been made to evaluate the personnel administration in Panchayats of Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment.

Panchayati Raj Finances means the system of governing, raising and spending of money in these Institutions. In view of responsibilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions in providing water supply, roads, streets and taking up new development projects after 73rd Amendment, it is necessary to enhance the finances of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the absence of sufficient financial resources, the Panchayati Raj Institutions can not run the administration properly. Therefore, in the eighth chapter an attempt has been made to analyze the finances of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment.

In the ninth chapter an attempt has been made to analyze the State control over Panchayats in the Panchayati Raj System after 73rd Amendment.
Conclusion

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India is doing substantial work in the promotion and development of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Rural Development is not possible until and unless we have a sound Panchayati Raj System with clarity of all details. Simply creating a structure would be of no use until and unless its functioning is assured according to the policies laid down.

Ministry of Rural Development has not accorded a proper status to Panchayati Raj Institutions as only one Joint Secretary Heads the Panchayati Raj Institutions Subject. Panchayati Raj Institutions are so large and complex that it needs an independent Department to handle its issues. The Ministry may be named as “Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj”. This will give required status and empowerment to the Panchayati Raj Institutions set-up. State Governments would also feel encouraged to follow suit. At present, there is no name of Panchayati Raj Institutions with the Ministry of Rural development.

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has to its credit the enactment of 1992 Act but there are several ambiguities in the Act. Besides, the State Governments have made laws to implement 73rd Amendment Provisions. These laws are not of good quality. It would be in the interest of all States, if the Ministry of Rural Development prepares model legislation for the guidance of all States.
Centrally Sponsored Schemes create problems for Panchayati Raj Institutions as they have to maintain a separate identity of these Programmes. The Panchayati Raj Institutions are also running such Programmes given by State Government as well as their own Programmes. This results in too much clerical work, complicated accounting and auditing, corruption and pilferage, lack of expertise at local levels and unnecessary expenditure on travel and inspection from far-off places. Therefore, there is a need for the merger of Union, State and Local Government Schemes to ensure economy and efficiency and flexibility to meet local needs and demands.

Panchayati Raj Institutions come under the State List and hence State Governments must ensure their efficient functioning. This would benefit the State Government as 90 per cent of the work can be carried out at the level of Local Government and the State Government can concentrate on important macro-level issues and research activities essential for the development of the State. Many of the States like Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra are taking some interest while some have no interest in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Democracy must in essence mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all. Let us discuss the facts and suggestions, which can enhance the reputation and prestige of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
Most of the laws enacted by State Government are not exhaustive, causing many problems. There is a need for enactment of laws which are more clear, specific, simple and relevant can create harmony between Stable Governments and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

From the State Government resulting into constant interference by the State 80 percent of the personnel in Panchayati Raj Institutions, who are on deputation from the State Government, do not feel committed to Panchayati Raj Institutions. They can be transferred, promoted, etc. at the whims of State Governments without consulting the Panchayati Raj Institutions. There is a need to depute a person for at least a period of five years, they should not be transferred, mid-way, they should be told that their promotion would depend upon their work in Panchayati Raj Institutions, they should co-operate with elected representatives, they should bring fresh ideas to vitalize Panchayati Raj Institutions and in the last stage, they may be allocated permanently to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Since most of the Grants come from State Government and from other agencies through State Government, it is suggested that Grants may be released in regular installments so that Panchayati Raj Institutions do not have to chase Officers of Finance Department unnecessarily.

State Governments have not understood the meaning of decentralization as Panchayati Raj Institutions have to take sanction of State Government even in small issues. There are too many controls of the State over the Panchayati Raj Institutions make decentralization a farce.
Employees at senior positions overestimate their positions and do not guide the elected representatives properly. They must guide, advise and provide information to elected representatives so that they can come out with excellent policies.

Panchayati Raj Institutions should work on no party bases to create harmony and good will in the Village as was prevalent in ancient India. Panchayati Raj Institutions should be kept away from party politics.

MLAs and MPs have plenty of work to do at National/State level which gets neglected due to their indulgence in local politics. In addition, the Members of Panchayati Raj Institutions cannot develop their leadership qualities in the presence of MLAs and MPs. Besides, they have their own axe to grind, i.e. to create political support for themselves for next elections.

In spite of a decade after 73rd Amendment, the most revolutionary fact is the creation of Gram Sabha with adequate functions and power. However, in practice, it hardly regularly meets and no functionary of Panchayati Raj Institutions is interested in their functioning.

Establishment of a system of good and effective headquarters-field relationship depends to a great extent on smooth and effective channels of Communication between them. This requires that the powers, authority and responsibility of field officers should be clearly defined, coupled with considerable autonomy given in local matters. Formal inspections, submission of periodic reports, etc. should be supplemented by informal visits of headquarters staff to build up rapport and camaraderie between the
headquarters and the field. The principle governing headquarters-filed relationship could be summarized as—“Whatever after due consideration and analysis you find to be conducive to the good, or benefit and welfare of all beings believe in, that doctrine cling to it and take it as your guide.

Thus, it is high time that the Union and State Governments provide leadership to Panchayati Raj Institutions and equip them with adequate structure, finances and personnel to make them units of democratic functioning. We must not delay this process, as it is already too late. It is better not to do any thing about Panchayati Raj Institutions half-heatedly. We must devote all our efforts and energy to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

We have been breathing in a free and democratic country. But lack of trust persists in the people’s representatives at Panchayat Level. The Parliament is trusted to run the country. The Assembly is trusted to run a State. But a Panchayat is not considered fit enough to administer Villages. A Village Panchayat is required to depose trust in the highest Panchayat of the land namely the Parliament and act accordingly. But the Parliament and the Assemblies feel no compulsion to trust the wisdom, competence and eligibility of Village Panchayat to handle a small amount of power. It means the voters choose a wise Member of Parliament or a competent Member of Legislative Assembly. But they choose a good for nothing Member to the Panchayat. It is often pointed out that Members of Panchayat are in a large number of cases, illiterate or without insufficient education and if they are
not males, they have little understanding of the world outside because they have been confined with in the four walls of their homes. When the first Lok Sabha was enacted through adult franchise, the literacy rate in India was only fourteen per cent. And yet, it was that Lok Sabha and the Government that emerged from it laid the foundation for the Nations’ giant leap towards progress. The voters may be uneducated but they are not ignorant. Women may have been behind the doors but they know the true nature of the World outside, for they bear the burnt of every day life. Only those who recognized this fact truly believe in democracy and institutions of self governance. We have powerless and ineffective local bodies in place of powerful Local Governments. The complaint continues to be heard is that Villages are not educated enough to handle power even at the lower level. Panchayats have been denied their legitimate share of power because the rulers are afraid that the common people equipped with Panchayat power will not rest until they succeed in making the State accountable to the public. Once the Panchayats begin to assert their power, they will change the very nature of our polity or expose its fault lines which have not allowed the fruits of development to percolate to the common masses. For example the case of proliferation of parallel bodies in almost all the States, which have been set up to bypass the elected Panchayats. Mention may be made of the Self Help Groups in Tamil Nadu. They are being strengthened at the expense of the Panchayats. This is what one can call the policy of giving by the left hand and taking away by the right hand. In other words, what has been bestowed
upon the Panchayati Raj Institutions by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment has been taken away by the State Governments. The IV Schedule of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act has provided powers to District Panchayat, Block Panchayats and Village Panchayats on 29 subjects relating to agriculture, including agricultural extension, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation, minor irrigation, water management and watershed development, animal husbandry, dairying and poultry, fisheries, social forestry and farm forestry, minor forest produce, small-scale industries, including food processing industries, khadi, village and cottage industries, rural housing, drinking water, fuel and fodder, roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication, rural electrification, including distribution of electricity, non-conventional energy sources, Poverty Alleviation Programme, education, including primary and secondary schools, technical training and vocational education, adult and non-formal education, libraries, cultural activities, markets and fairs, health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries, family welfare, women and child development, social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded, welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, public distribution system and maintenance of community assets. But most of these powers are enjoyed by the respective Departments and not handed over to the Panchayats in Tamil Nadu after 73rd Amendment. Power still remains concentrated in the hands
of the Union and the State Governments. The local people are yet to take charge of their lives. Unless the people are trusted to manage local affairs without official control within, they will never learn adequately to discharge their functions and to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has provided for the appointment of Chief Executive Officers at District, Block and Village levels. The Act has provided that the Chief Executive Officer at the District Level should be a Senior IAS Officer and he should assist the District Panchayat in carrying out the different developmental functions that have to be carried out from the District Panchayat. But so far in Tamil Nadu, a Project Officer in the Rank of Joint Director has been appointed to assist the District Panchayat. The Project Officer functions under the control of the District Collector. Therefore, the District Collector is in charge of the implementation of developmental functions by the District Panchayats. In the present context of District Panchayat Administration, Project Officer instead of helping the District Panchayat in carrying out the functions allocated to District Panchayat, he dictates control over the District Panchayat. This scenario makes it clear that a Senior IAS Officer has not been appointed to assist the District Panchayat and the Project Officer who is appointed in the place of a Senior IAS Officer is acting as a boss over the District Panchayat. As a result the District Panchayat is unable to discharge its functions properly. At Block Level there is strong administrative machinery in Tamil Nadu. Here also the Block Development Officer who acts as the Chief
Executive Officer at Block Level instead of assisting the Block Panchayat in carrying out the different functions, boss over the Block Panchayat. As a result the representatives of Block Panchayat in Tamil Nadu are unable to manage the local affairs without the official control from within. At Village Level though there is a provision for the appointment of Chief Executive Officer for every Village Panchayat, a suitable Officer has not been appointed to assist the Village Panchayat in carrying out the different functions of the Village Panchayat. As a result the Village Panchayat is unable to carry out the different functions allocated to it properly. Therefore, suitable Chief Executive Officers at District and Village Levels should be appointed to assist the District and Village Panchayats in carrying out the different functions of the District and Village Panchayats. Further, the representatives of the people at the District/Block/Village Panchayat should be allowed to manage local affairs without official control from within, so that they will never learn adequately to discharge their functions properly.

In view of the increased responsibilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions in providing water supply, roads, streets and taking up new development projects, it is necessary to enhance the finances of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the absence of sufficient financial resources, the Panchayati Raj Institutions can not run the administration properly. The recommendations of the Second State Finance Commission to augment the different sources of revenue of the Panchayati Raj Institutions to rural local bodies are adopted they will
have substantial and growing resources, which are entirely within their power to exploit and develop.

The Union and the State Governments should exercise positive control and supervision and not negative in the nature of fault finding over Panchayati Raj Institutions. Sitting at the headquarters, far from real scene of activity, they perceive and plan control over Panchayati Raj Institutions, which results in low morale, unproductively and wastage of resources. The control and supervision should encompass to stimulate the genuine growth of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The State Government can guide them in the process of planning in the way that they themselves become experts in future. It requires hard work and preparation on the part of the personnel at the State headquarters since control is easy and prestigious than imparting of skills. The State Government can guide the rural local self-government bureaucracy to be serious in the process of rural development. Most of the technical and non-technical bureaucracy still works under the control of State Government. How can rural government be effective? Punjab Government in order to check absenteeism among development functionaries entrusted them to Panchayati Raj Institutions. There was a strike by the associations of respective departments. Government yielded to the pressure and withdrew the orders. This weakened the Panchayati Raj Institutions. State Government should be firm and should transfer all local departments to Panchayati Raj Institutions to make them equipped with necessary powers over bureaucracy. State Government must provide
finances in time so that the works may be completed in time. In this way, people would respect Panchayati Raj Institutions and their prestige would be in the eyes of people and they would participate with full potential to make local governance, a success. State Government should promptly solve the issues referred to them by Panchayati Raj Institutions rather than appoint committees or ordering inspection. They should reduce the paper work to the minimum. The innovative ideas of Panchayati Raj Institutions about programmes must be encouraged and sanctioned as they know better about their area, its problems and potential. Panchayati Raj Institutions should be motivated through appreciation to create confidence in them. Control should be reduced to the minimum to create a stage, where they get complete freedom and supervision is not required. Panchayati Raj Institutions possess the potential which can be optimized, provided the State Government both politicians and bureaucracy are keen to develop Panchayati Raj Institutions. The ultimate purpose of 73rd Amendment is to make Panchayati Raj Institutions as self-entity and self-reliant. Unless the representatives of the people are allowed to manage local affairs without official control from within, they will never learn adequately to discharge their functions properly. Therefore, it is the duty of the Union/State Government bureaucracy and law courts to help them in initial stages, till they got maturity and are in a position to handle the affairs independently without official control within the Panchayati Raj Institutions.