Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on the neo-topic of People’s Planning is scanty. People’s Planning is the means for the implementation of decentralised planning. Hence the literature on decentralised planning is scanned to have some idea about the subject.

Hayek, F.A. (1945) advocated decentralised planning as it facilitates the use and activisation of local resources. In macro planning, these resources might have remained hidden and dormant and hence remained unused and idle. In certain regions, the problem may manifest in the form of unused man-power resources while in other areas it may exist in the form of unutilized land or water. Such issues can be taken care of in a decentralised planning system.

Gadgil, D.R (1966) one of the earliest proponents of decentralised planning believed that majority of the problems faced by the Indian economy can be solved through decentralised planning or planning from below. Yet, accepting the district as a unit of planning, he proposed the division of districts into smaller, homogeneous units, involving integration through what is known as Mandi centre approach.

Rao, V.K.R.V (1973) proceeded more or less, on the lines of Gadgil and desired the creation of what he calls economic areas within the district.

Alagh, Y.K. (1973) seemed to suggest a system in which the state and district be recognised for planning purposes, but the national economy could be decomposed into ten or twelve blocks for the purpose of economic development.
Anand Sarup (1973) who was personally involved in the plan process in India, shared the view that the district is not very ideal for planning. But he held the view that this is the only level where work can be initiated in the immediate future, within the framed work of multilevel planning apart from national and state level planning.

Jayaraman. K. (1968) after reviewing the historical evolution of the concept of decentralisation concluded that the concept of planned development of the economy through the agency of democratically elected bodies at the district and lower levels failed to take note of the existing socio-economic and politico-administrative setup in the rural areas and consequently the gulf between the levels of living of the rich and the poor inevitably widened in the process.

Raj, K.N. (1971) in his classic paper on district planning stood for planning from below encompassing the district, taluk (block) or village level, in spite of the fact that the methodologies for the same were developed with reference to the district and state units.

Bhatt, L.S. (1970) presented a frame work for regional development in the context of nation and planning in India. In this situation also, similar units such as district, block and village were recognised, but he suggested planning involving changes in the existing districts, where ever necessary. There is greater emphasis on regional physical planning at the lower levels of planning, but the economic planning takes over at the higher levels of planning. The issues of decision making and institutional development, however, were not analysed.

Nath, V. (1971) and Ranjit K. Sau (1971) in their study discussed the problem of decentralised planning and its implications on growth with justice.
Dubashi, P.R. (1973) and Dholakia, R.H. (1977) recommended decentralised planning as a remedial measure to reduce regional inequalities. Dubhashi, P.R. observed that Indian planning gives undue importance to plan models. Divakar, V.D. (1978) also pointed out the need for decentralisation in planning and scope for popular participation in planning.

In an indepth study Venugopal Reddy (1979) advocated multi-level planning due to the variations in the level of economic and social development among different regions of India. It is axiomatic that uni-level centralised planning would be relatively inefficient to deal with such a diversity of factors. He contended that it would be difficult to deal with enormous and diverse non quantifiable socio-economic situations within the framework without proper decentralised planning.

Gerald Wen (1979) stressed the view that regional policy and planning should be decentralised and comprehensive.

Clarke, G.C. (1980) identified the basic factors that inhibit planning from below and made suggestions to overcome them. The inhibiting factors identified by him were the following: (i) There is an unwillingness on the part of most of the senior officials to recognise that their subordinates especially their field staff and the rural people including the rural poor have knowledge and insights without which no programme or project can be planned or implemented. This appears to be due to lack of trust on their subordinates and fear or at best, reluctance to admit that there are things they do not know. (ii) There is also unwillingness among most officials to recognise that rural development in general and agricultural development in particular, is location specific, and, therefore, requires a high degree of local decision making. (iii) The absence of an effective mechanism for consulting with the rural people
particularly the bottom majority. Senior officials of government in general have failed to recognise that deliberate efforts must be made to create this mechanism, especially, if the voices of small farmers and the landless are to be heard. His suggestion to overcome the inhibiting factors are: (i) developing positive attitude towards planning from below among senior officials, (ii) helping government to review the ongoing rural development programmes in a manageable manner, leading to programme and policy changes more favourable to poor people, and, (iii) demonstrating the need for multi-disciplinary and multi-departmental planning in order to achieve a more integrated approach to rural development.

Ram P. Yadav (1980) examined the meanings and different aspects of people's participation in planning. He says that participation means direct involvement of the people and not indirect involvement through their representatives. This is because of the fact that the existing socio-economic and political structure of the society in most of the developing countries the so called 'representatives' of the people are most likely to represent the interest of the rich rather than that of the poor majority.

In a comprehensive analysis Dantwala, M.L. (1981) highlighted the importance of decentralised planning. He maintained the view that decentralisation would be helpful to curb bureaucratic handicaps, delays and red tape and to minimise the incidence of corruption. Each local level area has its own specific social and cultural ethos. These are to be properly understood if planning is for the people and not merely for the area.

Chaturvedi, H.R. (1982) opinioned that centralised planning failed to evoke popular participation in the plan formulation and implementation, thus seriously
impeding the success of planning. In fact, the logic of centralised planning was antithetical to people's participation.

Misra, S.N. and Kushal Sharma (1983) discussed the different aspects of people's participation like participation in decision making, implementation, benefit sharing, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, project etc. This is likely to reduce the mismanagement of resources and bring accountability. The crux of the problem of people's participation in general is to find viable institutions and techniques for ensuring equitable sharing of benefits of development by the poor themselves.

Santharam, M.L. et al., (1984) examined the psychological dimensions of people's participation in social organisations. They viewed that the people's participation has four broad perspectives, namely, economic, political, administrative and community. This is an empirical study with reference to three Indian states, namely, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. This case study analyses the institutional and non institutional participation in local development. Some of the important policy implications of this study are: (i) The present system of top down approach where programmes are planned without much involvement of villagers needs to be changed to bottom-up approach where people are consulted and involved right from the stage of identification of their needs to the implementation of the programe. May be the existing set up does not permit such a sudden change from top down to bottom up. Hence an attempt needs to be made to merge these two approaches where both the 'givers' and 'receivers' of the programe play mutually supportive role in evolving the programme. (ii) The education plays an important role in bringing about participation. All possible attempts should be made to educate people on various aspects of the programme and their importance, so that people get a clear idea about the nature of various aspects of the programe. This would enable them to organise themselves into
small functional groups. (iii) Leaders play an important role as facilitators of change process. There is a need to identify the informal and influential leaders of the community who have influence over a particular group. Such selected leaders should be trained in all schemes of development programme so that they in turn appraise the programme of the people and organise small groups for action.

Ganeshan (1985) pointed out that even though in India development planning at national and state level is an accepted tool of our development, efforts at micro level planning is not given due recognition.

Chopra, P.N. (1986) reviewed the problems faced in the adoption of decentralised planning process in India. In his opinion, lack of real political will is the stumbling block in the introduction of decentralised planning in India.

Jose, A.M. (1987) observed that decentralised planning seeks to ensure the people's right to participate in making decisions about their own development and due weightage should be given to this in developmental activities to march towards the twenty first century.

Krishna Mohan and Gupta, Y.P. (1987) indicated that the main objective of decentralised framework for planning is to utilise the scarce resources for optimum development, that is getting maximum benefit out of the available resources. It enables a better perception of the needs of local area, makes better informed decision making possible and also gives people a greater choice in decision concerning their development and welfare.

Singh, V.S. (1987) shared the view that decentralised planning serves to achieve better co-ordination and integration among programmes that enables the felt
needs of the people to be taken into account, ensures effective participation of the people.

Misra, G.K. et al., (1987) discussed the important components of area planning as the content of planning which is based on existing and potential resources in an area and the spatial or locational analysis which ensures the sectorial integration in an area. An inventory of resources would indicate the physical and biological potentialities as well as human in the area. Strategies are possible to develop that leads to the maximum utilization of various potentials. They observed that to make the plan implementation a success, the role of voluntary agencies like ‘clubs and women associations’ are very important.

Decentralisation of planning in the real sense pointed out by Kamata Prasad (1988) would imply a complete change in the planning set up from the bureaucratic, technocratic frame work to a participatory one. He felt that in the decentralised planning process people’s participation is essential.

Hanumanth Rao (1989) propagated that decentralised planning is not only necessary for improving the quality of implementation of anti-poverty programmes but it is also essential for weakening the existing socio-economic power of the rural elite to liberate the rural poor from its control. He had identified five areas of action to make decentralised planning effective in India. They are: (i) Suitable modifications in the centrally sponsored schemes so as to impart greater flexibility for local level planning, (ii) Measures for planning at the regional level, particularly in bigger states, (iii) Electoral reforms to the poor in the local level institutions, (iv) Structural change to release the initiative of rural poor by freeing them for various forms of socio-economic exploitation, and (v) Strategy to ensure people’s participation among other things by involving voluntary organisations.
Kamata Prasad (1989) stated that people are the best agency for the collection of data and information in the local level planning process for which village level meetings are needed.

Najundappa. D.M. (1989) propounded that area plans have to be prepared to make the people to identify the programmes of their own locality and to make use of their involvement and co-operation.

Ajith Kumar Singh (1989) described the emerging perceptions regarding decentralised planning under India’s five year plans. He provided a brief and critical review of the attempts in the direction of decentralised planning. Ajith Kumar Singh enlisted the following as the important emerging trends and perspectives relating to decentralised planning in India: (i) The imperative of decentralised planning is conceded by all in order to relate the developmental effort to the specific resource endowment potential and need of each area and for eliciting popular participation in plan formulation and implementation. (ii) The district level planning is regarded as the central pivot in the decentralisation process which can provide a link between grass root planning and state level planning. (iii) Integrated area planning at the district level is feasible only when the multiplicity of planning organisation is ended and the totality of planning activities are put under a single district planning body with necessary status, power and resources. (iv) The attempt at ensuring straight jacket sectoral programmes from above should be done away with inorder to relate decentralisation to planning in a meaningful way to local conditions. It would imply that the district level planning body should have the largest say in deciding about the sectoral allocation and utilization of resources put at its disposal. (v) There is a need to carry the process of decentralised planning gradually to lower levels by developing
their planning capabilities. The block or a cluster of villages may an appropriate unit for area planning. (vi) It has been repeatedly emphasised that the Panchayati Raj Institutions at different levels are the most appropriate bodies to be made responsible for decentralised planning and they should be strengthened. (vii) The idea of democratic decentralised planning can be attended only in steps by building up suitable structures and procedures.

Sudhakar Reddy, E. and Nimbur, B.N. (1989) analysed the issues relating to decentralised planning in India. They had strongly argued in favour of decentralised planning to solve the problem of poverty. To achieve the goal, appropriate local organisations will have to be constituted. The institutional frame work for the provision of inputs at local levels needs to be tailored to the size and variety of particular locality's requirements. The effectiveness of the institutional framework for aiding the decentralised development will be directly related to the quantity and quality of expertise of the key personnel and involving the local level institutions like panchayats.

Misra, R.P. (1991) pointed out that one of the most important features of decentralised planning is that it enables the full involvement of the people in the process of plan formulation and implementation. The involvement should be at the pre-plan stage, plan formulation and finally at the level of evaluation. It is now aptly said that the people's participation is a missing ingredient in the present method of planning. Decentralised planning not only makes up the missing ingredient, but, it would also contribute to the developing of a district style of development responsive to the needs of the people. The success of decentralised planning very much depends up on the extent to which effective and nonfrictional people's participation is secured.
Selvanathan S. (1991) observed that planning from below does not mean getting more funds for the programmes but involving the people in the development process.

Misra, S.N (1991) explained the role of voluntary organisations in decentralised planning. They can act as a real vehicle of participation and mobilisation of public, which ultimately may help in successful implementation of government decentralised policies. They may also provide not only services but also relevant information about local environment to central and regional agencies. They can also influence local administration and create awareness among people at the local level.

Srivastava K.B. (1992) analysed impact of decentralisation on rural poor with reference to Maharashtra state. He provides a brief review of the progress of decentralised planning and identifies the problems. This study reveals the changing attitude of bureaucracy towards rural poor. He pointed out that the rural bureaucracy in Maharashtra state has shown an increasing interest in solving the problem of rural poor. He also pointed out that the statutory representation of the rural or underprivileged sections in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has facilitated their participation in decision making to a great extent.

Mathur, P.C. (1993), Verma, B.M. (1993) and Pranab Mukherjee (1993) argued for successful blending of democracy with planning. Planning without democracy was bound to generate unbridgeable chasms and irreparable distortions in all production consumption cycles of an economy equipped with a centralised system of planning in which there was no scope for political feedback. Planning in a democratic political system like India must be decentralised so far as the people's right to evaluate the plans and articulate demands for their reformulation is concerned.
They, therefore, argued for participatory and decentralised planning in the interest of successful functioning of democracy.

Starting with a brief account of the theoretical and methodological issues involved, Abdul Aziz (1993) delineates the institutional structure necessary to achieve the ends of decentralised planning. The main ingredients of decentralised planning are its capacity to identify both local level needs, problems and aspirations of the people, and to facilitate people’s participation to formulate and implement appropriate projects. He also felt that, with people’s participation ensured under decentralised planning, the focus is to solve local problems such as poverty, unemployment and under utilization of locally available resources. More over implementation is likely to be more effective.

Bhargava, V.S. and Rapnael, J.C. (1994) studied the working of gramasabha under the erstwhile two tier Panchayati Raj Institutions in Karnataka state. Some of the important findings of the study are: (i) The attendance is very poor in the gramasabha meeting and hence ‘qualitative participation’ of people is almost negligible. Participation of women in the gramasabha meetings also negligible. The study also reveals the factors responsible for the negligible participation. They are: (i) In the first meeting people were just curious to know about what was happening in the meetings. (ii) The gramasabha meeting has become almost politicized. When the people come with genuine needs, often persons belonging to the other political party tend to weaken their demands. Sometimes it may lead to clashes between parties. Therefore, local people avoid the gramasabha meetings. (iii) The gramasabha meetings has gradually lost in digressions, the discussions are deviated from the issue of the agenda. Finally it turned out to be complaint lodging meeting. Bhargava and
Rapnael suggested different measures to attract more people towards the gramasabha meetings.

Misra, N.L (1994) examined the issues in establishing viable size for village panchayats. He observes that the factors like successful resource mobilisation, competence for planning, implementation capacity and proper institutionalisation of people's participation are the factors determining the viability of panchayat. He pointed out that the involvement of people is very crucial for the smooth running and achievement in the development programmes at the grass root level and becomes necessary to; (a) to take note of the felt needs of the people, (b) to mobilise resources, (c) to anticipate and iron out possible conflicts or sharp differences in the planning and implementation stage, (d) to increase the speed of implementation by securing the co-operation of the people, and (e) to bring about a change in the power structure in people's institution in favour of the rural poor.

Bhagyalakshmi, J. (1998) deeply studied the constitutional amendments (73rd constitutional amendments) which laid the foundation stone for realising the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi in 'grama swaraj'. She opinioned that functional and financial autonomy for implementation and transparency in the procedure as essential ingredients for the smooth functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Thomas Isaac and Harilal, K.N. (1999) argued that centralised system of planning is a failure in addressing fundamental problems of development faced by the country such as mass poverty and unemployment. The lack of involvement of people in nation building activities, indifference to the development needs of the people and channelling of resources for wrongly perceived goals, total disregard of local specificities even where it matters most, lack of efforts at integration of fragmented
development intervention, rampant corruption are commonly identified evils of the system that are attributable more to centralisation than to any other features of the system that was in force. At the same time, it would be unrealistic to assume that planning of every thing is best done at the local level. Therefore, they advocated multi-level planning with people’s participation.

Atal Behari Vajpayee (1999) analysed the role of planning commission and observed that the planning commission has a crucial role in long term direction setting. He suggested that the planning commission should emerge as a Tink Tank for addressing the critical policy issues facing the economy. The planning commission should pay greater attention to identify policies that rejuvenate the economy and help the poor. He also observed that there is an urgent need for genuine devolution of political, administrative and financial power to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. If democracy works at the national and state level, it will surely works at the village level also.

Reddy, C.R. et al., (1999) strongly argued for people’s participation in rural development. They observed that awareness, willingness and capacity are the factors on which active participation depends. The five decades of political democracy and people’s struggle have raised the level of awareness among the rural people. Still, they lack the capacity to participate. Basic changes are needed in the socio-economic structure so as to enable the weaker sections to gain the capacity to participate.

Prabhat Patnaik (2000) identified two kinds of decentralisation, namely, ‘firm level decentralisation’ involving production units and ‘government - level decentralisation’ means decentralisation of decision making and of command over
resources from the upper to the lower layers of elected government. According to him the basic analytical difference between the two kinds of decentralisation is that in firm level decentralisation, the overall macro aggregates of the economy emerge as the sum of individual micro level decisions, while in government level decentralisation the macro aggregates are decided already at the macro level and the objective of decentralisation is to make resource use more effective, that is more in accord with people’s needs. He also argues that strengthening panchayats through devolution of decision making and resources is not a part of the ‘rolling back’ of the state, but a means of enforcing greater accountability of the state, by entrusting a whole range of decisions which directly affect the ‘lives of the people’ to those layers of the state where the people can organise effective supervision over it.

Thavaraj, M.J.K. (1981) stressed the idea of decentralised planning and the necessity of resource mobilisation for the Kerala state in particular.

Achuthamenon, C. (1986) and Ramachandran, V. (1986) analysed the attempts made by the government of Kerala to introduce democratic decentralisation and fullfledged decentralised planning.

Oommen, M.A. (1991) and Padma Ramachandran (1991) made a good attempt in analysing the existing data base for decentralised planning in Kerala. Padma Ramachandran revealed that there is a wide gap in the availability of reliable data in time for decentralised planning.

Narayanan, C. (1991) analysed the salient features of the Kerala District Administration Act. He is of the view that it is a landmark in the history of local self government in Kerala.
Sankaranaravanan, K.C. (1996) while analysing the metamorphosis of decentralised planning opinioned that decentralised planning process envisaged in Kerala is a golden experiment and all people must consider this as an opportunity to contribute their might for the development of their locality and thereby the state and the country. Resources may not be a constraint if the schemes are implemented through the use of idle resources available within the locality and there is vast untapped manpower resources in every panchayat and that could be used effectively without much financial involvement.

Radhakrishnan, C. (1997) discussed the role of socio-political organisations in planning. He argued that decentralised planning involving participation of people might remain a dream, it is in not given adequate support by socio-political organisations in Kerala. Significant and fundamental changes in the strategies, priorities and styles of functioning of the socio-political organisation would be called for ushering in such a state of affairs.

Bandyopadhyay, D. (1997) while analysing the People's Campaign in Kerala observed that people's campaign is not merely to get some suggestions regarding some projects from the masses directly. The real agenda is that through the campaign the planning process will hopefully become an instrument of mass conscientisation in regard to the issues in development.

Manu Bhaskar (1997) traced out the historical origin of modern panchayat in Kerala. He observed that the origin of modern panchayats in Kerala can be traced back to the decentralised feudal system of medieval Kerala - thorakuttam, desakuttam, nattukuttam, mannuthavar and arannuthavar which were the democratic local assemblies that existed throughout Kerala giving leadership to rural administration.
Oommen John (1998) evaluated the functional, financial and administrative autonomy of local bodies in Kerala. He observed that the Panchayati Raj bodies in Kerala are in a better position now when compared to previous years. Though there has been shortcomings in the work done by the local bodies so far as the implementation process is concerned, one needs to be pessimistic about the future.

George Mathew (1999) while analysing the People’s Campaign in Kerala, examined the role of gramasabha and observed that people’s participation happens when ordinary people come together in gramasabha at regular intervals when non-official experts and volunteers prepare reports, formulate projects and draft the local plans.

John, M.S. (1999) examined the role of decentralised planning in employment generation in rural areas. The study conducted in a village panchayat in Kottayam district to find out the extent to which decentralised planning has succeeded in generating additional employment by taking up small works reveals that the main beneficiaries of the employment generating projects were contractors, businessmen and the migrant labour. The local participation got little share of total cost of projects in the form of wages. He is of the view that the main reason for the failure of the employment projects was the absence of any policy to accord preference to local people in employment in the works undertaken within the panchayat area and lopsided employment planning dictated by a certain level of agricultural and social development. He opined that employment generation in the form of certain additional mandays is one of the indirect goals of decentralised planning.

Sundar Raj (2000) while analysing the rural employment generation observed that people’s participation is the only effective way for rural poor to
directly participate in development and implementation of programmes and sharing their benefit. Rural employment is a weapon to fight against poverty and together with people's participation it becomes the mightiest weapon to fight rural poverty. He observed that the essence of people's participation approach is that it has the dual goal of promoting growth and equity while ensuring the development of democratic process at the grass roots.

Parameswaran, M.P. (2000) pointed out the importance of people's participation in planning. According to him unless the people become ready to assume power and acquire the skill to handle authority there will not be any change in the state of affairs. He viewed that citizen should be capable of and willing to take the responsibility of total development of increase production and equitable distribution and should have thorough knowledge of the local physical resource, their use pattern, deficiencies, potentials and threats.
Reference


