CHAPTER-VIII

CONCLUSION

AND

SUGGESTIONS
The overall development of a country largely depends on the development of its rural folk. The third-world countries, which got independence after Second World War in order to achieve rapid economic growth, blindly followed Trickle down theory. As such the rural development received less attention in the policies and programmes of the government. But by 1960s all the third world countries realized that development becomes possible only when the fruits of development reach the targeted group i.e marginalised sections of society.

The concept of rural development has been defined by different writers differently. In 1975 World Bank in its policy paper on rural development considers that development of rural areas means extending benefits of development to those people who are seeking livelihood. Another publication of World Bank further makes it clear improving living standards of rural masses shall be included in rural development. In seminar paper on rural development, the thinkers added three important ingredients in rural development raising the rural people capacity to control their environment, to influence their environment and to increase participation of weaker section in rural development. G.Parthasarathy also expressed that rural development means improving living standards of the poor. Micharel Totaro says that rural development shall include development of all social services like employment,
education, housing, etc. The common Paradigm of rural development in all definitions includes the development of the poor in rural areas.

The rural development assumes importance in modern days in view of lack of minimum facilities in rural areas. It, further gained importance as the majority of rural people are illiterate, ignorant, and traditional thinking. The policy makers in almost all third world countries concentrating on rural development to reduce the rural migration, which will result in serious repercussions of the respective economics of the country.

The concept of rural development is comprehensive and multi-dimensional in nature. It covers agricultural development, infrastructure development, health improvement and other areas of rural economic and social life. It encompasses farmers, agricultural labour, rural artisans, children, women, etc.

In India rural development programmes are intended to change the mind set of rural people by promoting democratic values. They also confer on rural people the benefits of modern technology by way of providing basic needs like safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, etc.

The modern concept of rural development is as old as human history. In ancient days rural development was nothing but agricultural
The ancient and medieval has taken several measures to increase the yielding capacity agricultural land. The development of rural areas suffered a lot during colonial rule in India. The exploitative nature of British rule severely damaged rural economy of India.

The decentralisation of authority is considered more crucial for the proper and equitable development of rural areas. After the independence, the first major rural development programme, introduced in India in 1952, was Community Development Programme. The Programme failed to achieve it's desired goals. As such the policy makers and experts in the Planning Commission of India recognized the importance people's participation for the success of any developmental programme. As such the Balwanth Roy committee appointed by Planning Commission identified the need of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in India. So the inter-relation between development and people's participation gained significance in India. Since 1950s the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been playing an important role in planning and implementation of rural development programmes. The three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions, within their spheres of activities, are encouraging rural masses to participate in rural development activities.

After India’s independence the successive governments at Union and State governments tried to repair the damage done to rural economy
under colonial rule. With foreign assistance the government tried to reconstruct the rural economy. The efforts are still continuing to enable the rural masses to eat the fruits of modern technological innovations. The rural development programmes which are introduced in India in post-independence era are largely dependent on Mahatma Gandhi’s idea of ‘Village Swaraj’. Mahatma Gandhi pleaded that every activity which the government takes up for the development of rural areas should be on cooperative basis. As such the ideas of cooperative farming, cooperative small scale industries were started in rural India. Keeping in view of the Gandhian ideology of creating work in the places in the areas where people live, the government recently introduced National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme etc.

Panchayati Raj Institutions in India are as old as its political history. These institutions were called as village Republics by Mahatma Gandhi. The word panchayati literacy means a Council of Five. The PRIs in India were established to provide civic amenities to the villages. It is a matter of fact that the existing modern system of local government is the contribution of British rule. However, village panchayats have been in existence since the very beginning of Indian history. This institution had been the basic unit of administration during Vedic and Mauryan periods and it was used as an agency to collect revenue during
British period. Mahatma Gandhi, an ardent supporter of Gram Swaraj, wanted to make village panchayat a complete republic vested with requisite legislative and judicial authorities. It was on his insistence that Article 40 was included in the Indian Constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy.

The democratic system of government in a country can be ensured only if there is people's participation in the governance. Therefore, the system of democratic decentralization, popularly known as Panchayati Raj, has been considered as an instrument to ensure democracy, vehicle of development and socio-economic transformation of society. Panchayati Raj in India initially evolved out of Community Development programme, but it could not succeed for want of requisite people's participation. Balwantha Roy Mehta Committee (1957) stressed the need of democratic decentralization and suggested a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj in India. The recommendations of the Committee were accepted and various states adopted the Balwantha Roy Mehta model as per local requirements. However, after mid-sixties, PR lost its glamour and the maladies such as inefficiency, corruption, favouritism, uncertainty, irregularity, indifferent attitude of state governments, lack of people's initiative, etc., crept in Panchayati Raj. Besides, the establishment of parallel administrative agencies, inadequacy of funds,
dominance of bureaucracy, etc., have made these institutions subordinate units of government. All these weaknesses led to the appointment of Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), which recommended two-tier structure of PR, i.e., Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat along with other reformatory measures. However, Government of India did not accept these recommendations.

The need to revamp the PR remained alive and became an important issue of debates and discussions during the eighties. C.H.Hanumantha Rao’s Working Group on District Planning (1983), G.V.K.Rao Committee (1985), L.M.Singhvi Committee (1986), P.K.Thungan Committee (1988) and Panchayati Raj Sammelans (1989) are some of the important landmarks where the issue was discussed and debated indepth. Consequently, Rajiv Gandhi’s government introduced, the Constitution (Sixty-Fourth Amendment) Bill in 1989; however, it could not get there requisite political support in Parliament. National Front government also made an attempt by introducing, the Constitution (Seventy-Fourth Amendment) Bill (1990), which was lapsed due to dissolution of ninth Lok Sabha. It was Congress government again which introduced a fresh bill in September 1991 with some modifications and got it passed in December 1992 as the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act and later on it was ratified by the State Legislatures.
The state governments were asked to prepare new Panchayati Raj legislations or to amend their existing laws absorbing the provisions of the central act. As a result, the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 was enacted and implemented in the state. But Panchayati Raj institutions have been working in the state since historical times. Historical records reveals that panchayats were flourished in villages from the days of the Satavahanas, who ruled Andhra from 271 BC to 174 AD, the days of the Kakatiyas. During the period of British rule the isolation of the village had completely broken. The administrative policies pursued by the British strengthened the force leading to the disintegration of the village as a community.

After independence Panchayati Raj institutions gained their prominence. The Government of Andhra Pradesh accepted the recommendations of the Balwanth Roy Mehta’s Committee (1957) and decided to establish panchayati samithies in each district on an ad hoc basis, benefit by the experience gained through its working and bring forward legislation thereafter to create a three-tier system of panchayati raj. The ad hoc samithies formed in 1958 proved successful, the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati samithies and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959, was passed and by the end of 1959, these statutory elected bodies had been established in all the districts. The panchayati samithies were established
by November and the Zilla Parishads by December of that year. By the end of November 1959, total 235 panchayati samithies were established. The second and third batches were constituted in the following year.

In December 1959 all the district boards were statutorily abolished and Zilla Parishads were constituted for all the twenty districts in the state. An adaption order was issued to suitably adapt and transfer the powers, functions, assets and liabilities and also the institutions and staff of the district boards to the panchayati samities and Zilla Parishads. An amendment made in 1963 to the act of 1959 had redefined the Andhra area, restricted the membership of the Legislators with right to vote to one samiti only, and prohibited a person from simultaneously being a Legislator and presiding member of any one of these bodies. The amendment prohibited the M.L.As from being the members of the Zilla Parishad or samities if their constituencies did not include any rural area, besides prescribing the terms of the presiding members and prohibiting village officers from becoming members of these bodies.

Jalagam Vengala Rao Committee which was appointed in 1968 recommended that the MPs and MLAs should be wean from holding electric posts. It also suggested for providing more financial resources to Panchayat Raj bodies. Another committee which was appointed in 1971
under the chairmanship of C. Narasimhan reiterated faith in Panchayat Raj. It recommended several structural changes in Panchayati Raj bodies.

To re-haul the Panchayati Raj institution, the Telugu Desam government, which came to power in 1983, had promised in its election manifesto that it would work for the revitalisation of Panchayati Raj institutions. The proclaimed purpose of the reform was to decentralize administration, with a view to make the panchayati raj institutions closer to the people.

The act of 1986 made significant changes in the Panchayati Raj set up. It abolished 330 panchayati samities and created 1,104 Mandal Praja Parishads (M.P.Ps) in their place. While a Gram Panchayati had been constituted for a village, the Mandal Praja Parishad was created for a group of villages with population of 35,000 to 50,000 and the Zilla Parishad, was renamed as Zilla Praja Parishad, co-terminous with the district. Panchayati Raj institution have been poured new vigour after 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993.

On the basis of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Andhra Pradesh State Government passed the A.P. Panchayati Raj Act 1994. In this act all the constitutional obligations were incorporated. It is a comprehensive act which covers three tiers of rural local government. By
this act a separate Election Commission as well as Finance Commission was created in the state and it made some modifications in the structure of Panchayati Raj bodies, which were in existence before 1994.

The state Panchayati Raj department is the apex body which look after the needs of rural local government in the state. The Minister of Panchayati Raj is the political head of the department, where as the Principal Secretary of Panchayati Raj is the administrate in-charge of the department. In discharge of his duties he is assisted by one Additional Commissioner, three Deputy Commissioners, one Chief Accounts officer and other Subordinate Staff.

The lowest tier of Panchayati Raj Institution in the state is known as Gram Panchayati or Village Panchayati. The membership of each Gram Panchayati ranges between 5 to 21, which includes sarpanch, vice sarpanch and ward members of respective panchayati. Besides, there are 4 permanent invitees in every panchayati.

Gram Sabha is the deliberating body of Gram Panchayati area, and its members. It scrutinizes administrative and audit reports and also selects beneficiaries for rural developmental programmes.

Every Gram Panchayati performs essential as well as discretionary functions. Essential functions include construction of roads, toilets,
wells, registration of births and deaths, etc. The discretionary functions are optional function, which Gram Panchayati performs on the basis of its economic position. The major sources of income of Gram Panchayati included grants and funds given by Union and State government and taxes levied by the Gram Panchayati.

Gram Panchayati Sarpanch is the political head of Gram Panchayati. In major as well as minor panchayat, panchayat secretary is the administrative head. He is assisted by Junior Assistant, Sanitary Inspector and other staff. As the political head of Gram Panchayati, the sarpanch presides over the meetings of Gram Panchayati as well as Gram Sabha. He takes all steps necessary for the development of Gram Panchayati area as well as people living in it. The Panchayati Secretary as the administrative head prepare the agenda and budget of Gram Panchayati. He will take all steps to implement the decisions of Gram Panchayati or Gram Sabha and sends the report to higher officials of the district.

The middle of intermediate tier of Panchayati Institution in the state is known as Mandal Parishad. It comprises of five types of members. Another five kinds of members attend its meeting as permanent invitees. The Mandal Parishad undertakes community development and agricultural development programmes in its jurisdiction. The taxing
power of Mandal Parishad is very limited. As such it entirely depends on Central and State Government funds and grants.

The political head of the Mandal Parishad is Mandal Parishad President, who is indirectly elected by the members of Mandal Parishad. As the political head he presides over the Mandal Parishad meetings and determines the agenda of such meetings. He securitizes the records of Mandal Parishad and also takes steps for proper execution of works in the mandal.

The administrative head of the Mandal Parishad is Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO). In discharging of his duties he is assisted by the office staff as well as the extension staff. He attends to the meetings of Mandal Parishad and advises the members on administrative matters. He prepares annual budget of Mandal Parishad for the approval of Mandal Parishad and sends the copies of minutes of Mandal Parishad meetings to Zilla Parishad as well as State Government. Mandal Educational Officer, Mandal Engineering Officer and Extension Officer of Panchayat Raj department play major role in the development of the Mandal. Mandal Education Officer takes up all steps necessary for the educational upliftment of children in the mandal area. The Mandal Engineering Officer advises as well as draws plans for the development
of the mandal. The Extension Officer plays crucial role in the implementation of rural development programmes.

The upper tier of Panchayati institution in the state is popularly known as Zilla Parishad. For every district (except Hyderabad) in the state, there is a Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad acts as supervisory and coordinating agency of PRIs. Zilla Parishad consists of three categories of members, namely, elected, ex-officio and co-opted members. Besides this five types of members attend to Zilla Parishad meetings as permanent invitees Zilla Parishad distributes all the funds received either from Union or State government to Mandal Parishads in the district. Large source of its income comes from grants and funds of the central and state government.

The political head of Zilla Parishad is the Chair person. He/She is indirectly elected by the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency members. ZP Chair Person also acts as the Chairman for four Zilla Parishad Standing Committees. ZP Chair Person verifies the records of the Zilla Parishad. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the administrative head of Zilla Parishad and is appointed by state government. On one hand he is responsible to Zilla Parishad and on the other hand he is responsible to the State government in the exercise of his functions. As administrative incharge the CEO supervises the execution of all activities of the Zilla
Parishad. In the discharge of his functions the CEO is assisted by Deputy CEO, Accounts Officer, Educational Officer and other subordinate staff. The Deputy CEO supervises the day to day functions of Zilla Parishad. He looks after all accounts and financial matters of Zilla Parishad.

Every Zilla Parishad in the state functions through seven Standing Committees. These committees play vital role in the implementation of rural development programmes in their respective district. Among seven Committees, the Chairman of two Standing Committees must be Women, who are nominated by the Zilla Parishad Chairman.

The population of Anantapur district is 36.40 lakhs as per 2001 census. The percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes is 17.5 per cent of total population. The total irrigation area in the district is 14.08 per cent. The minerals available in the district are gold, diamonds, iron ore, barites etc.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Anantapur district have been functioning since historical times. The systematic functioning of these institutions started after India’s Independence. At present there are 1001 Gram Panchayats, 63 Mandal Parishad and one Zilla Parishad are functioning in the district. In all there are 12075 local body representatives in the district.
As per 2001 population the rural population of the Anantapur district is 74.74 per cent. The district is subjected to frequent famines. Almost every year one part or the other part of the district suffers from droughts. Keeping in view of the prevailing drought situation in the district the central as well as State governments extend or launch the rural development programmes to Anantapur district. The prestigious National Rural Employment Programme was launched by the Central government in the district. The rural development programmes which the Union and State governments launch on pilot basis will also extend to the district. The Rajiv Arogya Sri which was initially launched in 2007, in three districts of Andhra Pradesh covered the Anantapur district. There are so many such examples. It is not an exaggeration to say that, since independence all rural development programmes started by Central as well as State governments, definitely, covered the Anantapur district.

The prestigious National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) was formally launched in Anantapur district. In the first stage it was extended to 200 districts. The programme guarantees 100 days of wage employment to each rural household irrespective of caste or income. The programme is proved fruitful for drought ridden district of Anantapur. All the three tier of PRIs have due role in the implementation of NREGP programme. Under the NREGP programme more than 7.5
lakh families belonging to various social categories got job cards. In this programme nearly 48.58 Scheduled Caste households, and 47.30 per cent Scheduled Tribe households were working.

The programme of disbursement of pension to old age people was launched by the Government of India in August 1995. Later it was extended to physically challenged persons, widows and weavers. The amount was enhanced from time to time. At present the old age people, widows and weavers are getting Rs.200 per month and disabled people are getting Rs.500 per month. By the social security pension nearly 4 lakh old age, disabled and weavers are being benefited in the district. The share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in social security pensions stood at 16.1 per cent and 4.27 per cent respectively. Around 54 per cent of pensions were allotted to Backward Classes in the district. The share of OCs and Minorities was registered at 23.94 per cent and 1.55 per cent respectively.

For the equitable and just distribution of land, the Government of Andhra Pradesh assigned lands to the marginalized sections of the society. But due to poor quality of these lands the beneficiaries, to whom lands assigned failed to get good yieldings. As such for the development of these lands the government introduced Comprehensive Land Development Scheme (CLDP). By the Comprehensive Land
Development Programme, 41.86 per cent of Gram Panchayats in the district were covered. Under the CLDP programme 52.43 per cent of beneficiaries are from Scheduled Castes. The share of Minorities under this scheme is negligible.

The watershed programme was introduced by the government to enhance ground water level and also to check soil erosion. The programme helps for the balanced utilization of natural resources. Under the programme the authorities select villages, where the ground water level is at lowest ebb and develop them by implementing various sub schemes. Watershed programme covered all mandals in the district. By this programme 79 per cent of Gram Panchayats are also covered. The programme covered 1594582.52 acres of the land in the district.

Shelter is considered one of the basic needs of human beings. So the central as well as state Government introduced several housing schemes. The important among them are Indira Awas Yojana, (IAY), Indiramma Housing, etc. The Indiramma housing is intended to provide permanent houses for all the shelter less people within stipulated time of three years. Under Indiramma housing programme 3.89 lakhs of houses were under construction under three different phases of the programme. Construction of more than 60 per cent houses among them is almost completed.
In order to eradicate the poverty in rural areas and also to empower the rural women, the Self-Help Groups movement was started in India. The SHG programme was named as Indira Kranthi Patham. Under this programme the members of SHGs save certain amount of money for every month. To add to the savings of women the banks extend financial help to these SHGs at the rate of 3 per cent interest per annum. In the Anantapur district nearly 110448 SHGs were benefited through bank linkage programme since 1999-2000. The SHG members utilize this money for productive purposes and which ultimately lead to the economic empowerment of rural women.

In order to protect the health of people, who are living below poverty line, the Andhra Pradesh government introduced Rajiv Arogya Sri Scheme. The scheme provides an opportunity to the poor people to get access to corporate hospitals, for curing their diseases. The programme was extended to the district in the first phase of initiation of the programme. Under Rajiv Arogya Sri Programme 949 medical camps were conducted in the district. Under this programme 16,909 patients in the district have undergone either surgery or therapy.

In their day to day life people participate in political, social and administrative affairs. The political participation is crucial to bring awareness about the political environment. Political participation
includes the participation in the process of development. To assess the peoples participation and perception on Panchayati Raj Institutions and rural development a sample survey was conducted during the study. By simple random sampling method 270 sample beneficiaries of rural development were selected. Among them 12.22 per cent are Scheduled Tribes, 34.83 per cent are Scheduled Castes, 35.35 per cent of Backward Classes and 17.42 per cent are OCs. Among them 92.97 per cent are Hindus and the remain 7.03 per cent are Muslims.

The sample respondent beneficiaries hails from three different age groups. About 18.14 per cent hail from 15-25 age group, 67.03 per cent hail from 26-35 years age group and 14.83 per cent hail from 36 and above age groups. With regard to marital status about 89.62 per cent are married with living life partners, whereas 2.60 per cent are widows/widower and remaining 7.78 per cent are unmarried. Nearly 88.88 per cent of respondents are living in nuclear families and the remaining 11.12 per cent were living in joint families. Most of the respondents’ (86.30 per cent) family size is 0 to 4 members, where as 12.59 per cent respondents family size range from 5 to 9 members and the remaining 1.11 per cent family size is 10 and above 10.
Nearly 60.38 per cent are landless and 33.70 per cent are either marginal or small farmers. The remaining 5.92 per cent have medium landholdings. Nearly 89.64 per cent respondents’ occupation is agriculture and allied activities. About 6.30 per cent are construction labours 2.22 per cent are petty businessmen. About 97.61 per cent respondents are the beneficiaries of public distribution system. Among them 94.07 per cent are white ration card holders. Due to the division of joint families just before the data collection nearly 3.34 per cent of respondents possess neither white nor pink card. About 87.41 per cent of sample respondents are living in safe dwellings and the remaining 12.59 are living in temporary dwellings. The annual income of 58.88 per cent respondents ranges between Rs.10,000-25,000. The remaining hail from middle income group families.

On the basis of the respondents’ perceptions regarding the achievement of objectives, PR institutions are perceived both as the units of self-government, as well as agencies of government. These institutions facilitate the mechanism of decentralization of powers essential for strengthening democracy. However, the extent of devolution largely depends upon the wish of state government. These institutions act as the nurseries of democracy, which are essential to develop local leadership in the rural community. The rural community wish to send representatives
to these institutions based on unanimous elections and disfavour any type of involvement of political parties in the elections and functioning of PR institutions.

To get the benefits of any institution or organization, one must have adequate knowledge about that particular institution. The study reveals that the awareness levels of the sample respondents with regard to three tiers of Panchayati Raj institution is not only uneven but also different with regard to various social categories. The awareness levels at lower tier is more than 92.5 per cent, and in case of middle tier the awareness levels decreased 6 per cent. The awareness further declined in case of the upper tier. It can be attributed that the two upper tier Panchayati Raj institutions leaders are not within the reach of the common.

The awareness levels of respondents with regard to Panchayati Raj Institution representatives is not evenly distributed. About 93.33 per cent are aware of village president, whereas 84.44 per cent are aware of Mandal Parishad President. The awareness further declined with regard to Zilla Parishad Chairman.

With regard to usefulness of Panchayati Raj institutions nearly 81.5 per cent positively responded and only 7.78 per cent responded
negatively, which the remaining 10.74 per cent not responded. It is the duty of the Panchayati Raj institution leaders as well as officials to educate the people about the usefulness of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The participation of the people in Panchayati Raj elections shows downward trend with an increase in the tier of Panchayati Raj institutions. The reason for this trend seems to be the gap between people and their representatives and also may be in different attitude of voters.

The democratic Constitution of India guarantees not only right to vote but also right to contest in elections. Our study reveals that less than one per cent of respondents contested for elections at upper tier of Panchayati Raj institutions and nearly 1.5 per cent contested at middle tier. Coming to lower tier more than 5 per cent of respondents contested in elections.

The people get the fruit of rural development only when they have adequate knowledge about the ongoing developmental programmes. The knowledge of people with regard to six major developmental programmes is unevenly distributed. The knowledge of people with regard to Indiramma Housing Programme, NREGP and IKP is more than 97 per cent, where as with regard to other three programmes the knowledge ranges between 77.78 per cent to 90 per cent. It can be concluded that the
knowledge of people will be high, if the scope and application of programme is higher or vice versa.

Another criteria to test, whether the fruits of rural development are reaching to the people or not is to know their satisfaction level over the selection of beneficiaries. The study reveals only half of the respondents are satisfactory over the selection of beneficiaries. The remaining half of them expressed either dissatisfaction or not responded. It is due to excessive political involvement people expressed dissatisfaction.

As half of the people expressed indifferent attitude over the present selection of beneficiaries their responses were registered over their choice of selection of beneficiaries. Nearly 90 per cent of the respondents opted for Gram Sabha for the selection of beneficiaries, which they thought reduces the political interference in the selection of beneficiaries.

Inspite of variations over the knowledge and selection of beneficiaries, more than 92 per cent of people accepted the utility of rural development programmes. Nearly 96 per cent of SC respondents and about 94 per cent of ST respondents expressed that the rural development programmes are useful. It is because in almost all rural development programmes they are the prime beneficiaries.
The socio-economic and political background of the elected representatives of the PR institutions was examined to find the relationship between socio-economic background and their role performance. The study indicates that the traditional dominance of the elderly people has been withering away and the younger people are coming up to shoulder the responsibility at the grass root level power structure. One of the factors responsible for this trend can be attributed to the lowering of age to contest PR elections. The new enactment has also enhanced the representative character of PR institutions as it has provided 33 per cent of seats for women in addition to the reservation for SCs and BCs. Thus, the dominance of males, at least in terms of composition of these institutions, has not been there now. There are some instances when women could get elected to the unreserved seats in PR institutions.

The influential castes still dominate and Scheduled Castes could not ensure to elect more leaders than the seats reserved for them. However, the leaders of the Backward Class make the way by winning even more seats than their reservation. The Hindus prevail at every level because of their pervasiveness in rural society. A majority of elected leaders (66 per cent in the sample) are literate and many of them have higher educational qualifications. A trend has been observed that educational level of leaders increases as we move up towards Zilla
Parishad level. The rural leaders come mainly from farming community and from reserved category. Nearly 45.57 per cent hail from forming community. They are followed by housewives with 26.66 per cent and the remaining come from various occupations like, agriculture labour, business, rural artisans etc. The traditional concept that the rural leaders come from large and joint families is withering away and small and medium sized nuclear families are making their way in rural power structure of the district.

The number of children of 40 per cent leaders is between 3 to 4 members and other 30 percent of leaders have children less than three. It means that large number of leaders are following small family norm. Only 30 per cent of leaders have more than four children.

The major source of income of large number of (86.66 per cent) leaders is coming from agriculture and allied activities. It means that in rural areas still large number of people’s income is dependent on crop yielding and labour charges. The remaining leaders’ major source of income is business and other petty professions.

The annual income of 54.45 per cent of leaders ranges between Rs.25,000 to 75,000 and about 23.33 per cent leaders income is above Rs.75,000. The income of 22.22 per cent leaders is below Rs.25,000. It
means that majority of rural leaders hail either from low income or middle income groups.

The link between land holdings and rural leadership is also eroding away mainly because of the reservation system, downsizing of land holdings, and emergence of nuclear families and the process of political development in country as a whole.

Leaders' awareness on various rural development programmes is unevenly distributed. All leaders at three levels of Panchayati Raj Institutions are aware of NREGP programme. The study further reveals that leaders at middle and upper tiers are more aware of rural development programmes, than the leaders at lower tier. As the leaders at Gram Panchayati level have poor access to media and poor involvement in decision making at district level, their knowledge is poor with regard to rural development programmes.

All the leaders at Mandal level and Zilla Parishad level considered that rural development programmes are useful for rural masses. But only 92 per cent of Gram Panchayati leaders considered them useful and 8 per cent denied to respond. This peculiar situation may be attributed to the fact that some of the leaders at village level, might have been denied
access with regard to the implementation of such programmes by dominating caste leaders of that village.

The direct involvement of leaders in the implementation of rural development programmes is high at lower level when compared to middle tier. The involvement at lower, middle and upper tiers is 46 per cent, 20 per cent and 26.67 per cent respectively. It means that leaders at upper and middle tier decide the course of rural development programmes but they don’t directly involve in the implementation of such programmes. Whereas the leaders at village level directly involve in the selection of beneficiaries, in giving directions to the implementation of such programmes.

All the leaders of three tiers responded that they have to be given due share in the planning process of rural development programmes at district level. They said that the proper implementation of rural development programmes will become possible only when they share opinions with higher officials.

The leaders’ perception with regard to allocation of funds is somewhat different. Nearly 36.37 per cent of leaders opined that the allocations of funds are taking place by narrow partisan attitudes. Whereas 55.55 per cent positively responded and expressed that
allocation of funds is alone as per the needs and requirements of respective rural areas. The leaders who expressed dissatisfaction over allocation funds reported that the ruling party is allocating funds to those areas where their supporters and leaders are heavily concentrated and is neglecting those areas where opposition party supporters are in majority.

Almost all the rural leaders except a few leaders of MP and ZP levels reside in villages. The rural leaders are not very rich but living a moderate life. Some of them particularly at ZP level are maintaining a good living standard as they are endowed with rural and urban property and substantial sources of income. Several rural leaders are poor, but all of them are from the reserved categories.

Theoretically the selection of the beneficiaries for various rural development programmes should be done on the basis of the needs of the rural people, by taking various factors like annual income of the family, the land possessed by the family, etc. But the practical situation is quite different from the theoretical guidelines. In a large number of villages, the political involvement in the selection of beneficiaries is becoming the order the day. The local village leaders or land lords of the dominant caste in a particular village is influencing the selection process for various rural development programmes. In some cases the selection of beneficiaries for various rural development programmes is done on party
lines. The voters who are the supporters of the present ruling party in the last elections get their names included in various rural development programmes irrespective of their economic status. As such the real, and needy people of marginalized sections are losing the ground to get the fruits of developmental programmes.

Another anomaly which often reported is that the beneficiaries who got their names under various developmental programmes enrolled were not getting material and financial help in time. The inordinate delay in sanctioning of material and financial help to the beneficiaries on the part of officials is another cause for the ineffective implementation of rural development programmes. Lack of co-ordination between officials and non-officials is another cause for delay in sanctioning material and monetary targets.

There are two aspects of administration. One is policy – making or decision making, which is the prerogative of non-officials. The other aspect is that of execution. Once the decision has been taken, the role of the officials begins. An official has the right to comment when he does not implement as per the policy or decision. An official is there to aid and advise, explain the rules and regulations and even then if decision is taken against the rules, he can record a note of dissent and report the facts to the government for directions and not to execute the decision till then. Non-
officials should also not to make it an issue and create bad blood and wait till decision is finally taken by the government. If both understand their roles clearly, there will be no clash but happy co-ordination and cooperation. It is only clash of interests which aggravates the situation.

Officials as well as non-officials both are equally ignorant about each other’s roles. The elected chairperson thinks that he is the head of the organization, hence everybody should obey his orders. He tries to usurp all administrative powers from the executives. On the other hand, the officer thinks himself as the chief executive and more powerful. Such misunderstanding increases tensions. The officials inherited the administrative system from the British who ruled India. Even after independence, they enjoyed a monopoly of power for 13 years. With Panchayati Raj, they thought that their powers were snatched; hence an attitude of retaliation still exists in their minds. Officers have still not been able to change their mind-set from bureaucracy to democracy. Elected people, having the next election in mind, generally try to help people even if the rules do not allow. An official is fearful about penalty and disciplinary action for wrong decision. This also creates tension.

The essence of Panchayati Raj lies in the freedom the local self government enjoy in making their own course of development and the availability of their own source of finance. The adequate funds of local
governments are an important indicator of their ability to deliver adequate services to their citizen. The adequate funds can be defined as the availability of financial resources in excess of spending obligation. The level and quality local government services will suffer in the absence of meaningful and adequate finances. The delivery of local government services can happen only with adequate financial funds available to them. The adequate financial flow result in the creation of a platform for delivery of services to citizen and enhancing the quality of the services it provides.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis (1) participation of people in Panchayati Raj activities is not up to the mark was tested. It holds good. The study reveals that 98.52 per cent of people participated in 2006 Panchayati Raj elections held to Gram Panchayat. With regard to middle tier and upper tier the participation is not up to the mark. Only 90 per cent of respondents participated in these elections. The sample respondents who contested in 2006 Panchayati Raj elections is limited to only 7.78 per cent. Among them 4.07 per cent contested for Gram Panchayati ward membership and 1.86 contested for Gram Panchayati sarpanch post. The respondents who contested for middle tier panchayat is confined to 1.48.
It further declined in case of upper tier where only 0.37 per cent contested in elections.

Hypotheses (2) Majority of the people and their representatives unanimously resolve that rural development programmes are useful for the development of rural people is also tested and it also holds good. The study makes it clear that large number of respondents considered that the ongoing rural development programmes are useful. To be more precise about 92.22 per cent of respondents expressed that rural development programmes are useful for the development of rural areas. Around 95.75 per cent of Scheduled Tribe respondents considered them useful. In case of Backward Caste and OC respondents the percentage is reduced to 90.62 per cent and 87.23 per cent respectively. Only 5.56 consider that rural development programmes are not useful. These respondents also raised some objections with regard to National Rural Employment Programmes, which made it difficult for them to get agricultural labour at cheaper rates. About 2.22 per cent denied to respond.

The Panchayati Raj representatives further strongly pleaded that rural development programmes are most useful for the development of the country side. More than 95.5 per cent of them conceded that rural development programmes are useful. It is important to note that none of
the representatives expressed negative attitude towards rural development programmes. Only 4.44 per cent denied to reply.

The Hypothesis (3) The fruits of development are not properly reaching to the real needy people is also tested. The study in general illustrates that the development of infrastructure facilities in rural areas is still in bad condition. Most of the people living below poverty line also hails from rural areas. If the fruits of rural development programmes reach needy, the conditions of rural masses will be different.

Findings of the study:

The following are the important findings of the study:

1. The study reveals that the awareness levels of general public on Panchayati Raj institutions as well as leaders is decreasing with an increase in the tiers of PRIs.

2. More than 81 percent of respondents considered that the Panchayati Raj institutions are useful to bring socio-economic development and awareness among rural folk.

3. The participation of people in Panchayati Raj elections also is showing downward, with an increase in the tiers of PRIs.

4. The awareness of people on such rural development programmes, whose scope is wide, is high and vice versa.
5. Nearly 50 percent of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the present procedure of selection of beneficiaries. As such around 90 percent opted for Gram Sabha as impartial body to select the beneficiaries.

6. Around 92.22 percent of respondents accorded that the rural development programmes are useful.

7. The percentage of younger and middle age is increasing in the Panchayati Raj leadership.

8. The awareness levels of Panchayati Raj leaders with regard to rural development programmes is also decreasing with an increase in the tier of panchayat.

9. Large number of the leaders of rural local bodies conceded that the ongoing rural development programmes are useful and the leaders are, also expecting to introduce more such programmes.

10. The peculiar finding of the study is that nearly 58 per cent of Panchayati Raj leaders acknowledged that their involvement in the implementation of the rural development programmes is almost nil.

11. Almost all the leaders, of Panchayati Raj Institutions expressed that the district authorities shall make them as part and parcel of rural development planning as well as development.
12. Around 36.37 per cent of leaders said that the allocation of funds to the Panchayati Raj Institutions is done by the government by partisan attitude.

13. Highest number of beneficiaries in the district under NREGP and CLDP programme hail from Scheduled Castes.

Suggestions:

1. There is every need to enhance the knowledge of rural mass with regard to ongoing rural development programmes. For the improvement of the knowledge of the people wide canvassing is needed by the Panchayat Raj leaders as well as officials.

2. The scope of the rural development programmes is to be enhanced to cover all the poor people in rural areas, irrespective of caste or religion.

3. For the successful implementation of the rural development programmes, the involvement of Panchayat Raj leaders is to be enhanced, by reducing the official role in implementation.

4. The selection of beneficiaries to various rural development programmes is to be done in the meetings of Gram Sabha.

5. To increase the role of Gram Sabha in the implementation of rural development programmes, the meetings of the Gram Sabha must
have to be held at least once or thrice in a month. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act is to be amended to this effect.

6. For the furtherance of relations between Panchayat Raj leaders and people, it must be made obligatory for leaders to conduct village level meetings at least once in six months.

7. From the analysis of the present study, the following suggestions are made in order to strengthen the process of democratic decentralization. It is very much essential to develop capacities and competence of PR leaders and particularly of the GP leaders. Therefore, first of all, the elected leaders of these institutions should be at least literate who can read and write in mother tongue. This measure will help to promote literacy among the village folks, an essential component of social progress. It will also help to evolve better leadership in rural power structure.

8. All correspondence should be in the regional language only instead of English, so that the rural leaders can read and understand easily.

9. The comprehensive training programmes can improve upon the competence and capacities of rural leaders. The methods of imparting and components of training course should be devised after careful examination of training needs of specific leaders.

10. It has been found that Gram Panchayat meetings are not held regularly and the agenda of these meetings is not prepared and
circulated among Sarpanches as per the stipulated time. Moreover, the meetings are usually held at the residence of Sarpanch instead of public place.

11. The training and non-training needs of the PRIs, and implementing agencies should be analyzed and identified and they should be trained. Male domination should be restricted and women are to be allowed to perform their functions effectively, so that the policy of women reservation is fruitful.

12. The guidelines for the implementation of rural development programmes should be modified in view of the ground realities.

13. For the effective implementation of rural development programmes by the Panchayati Raj Institutions, there is a need for allocating additional tax sources to the PRIs which are productive, simpler to administer, locally feasible and economical to collect the local level.

14. The productivity and the service delivery mechanism need to be improved and targeted programmes to achieve the desired goals of balanced development of rural areas.

15. The pattern of budgeting followed by the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be simple.

16. There should be clarity about powers and functions between the officials and the people’s representatives. The chances of misunderstanding and differences are more when such clarity does not exist.
17. Public representatives should know that officials have the right to give advice and accordingly it is also expected from them. Officials should also understand that elected representatives have the right to disagree with the advices of officials.

18. Capacity building of newly elected people's representatives alone will make the PRIs as real institutions of self-government.

19. The state level political leaders should be serious and sincere about empowerment of the PRIs.

20. At the district level, the DRDA should be made a wing of the Zilla Parishad so that duplication of staff is avoided and effectiveness increases with a single line of control.

21. Effective training is needed for planning at the village and district levels in respect of people's representatives as well as officials so as to prepare plans which not only meet the local demand but also utilize the local resources to the optimum level.

22. Efforts are being made by various state as well as central government to empower the Gram Sabha to involve all the people in decentralized planning. Even though the availability of funds and their sanctioning power may still be at different levels, when the question comes for execution of programmes, there is no alternative but to involve the PRIs at the village level.