CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
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Systematic review of relevant literature of the previous work is important for any scientific research. In this chapter, the available literatures relating to the present study have been reviewed for providing some insight of the previous work. The main purpose of this review is to give a proper orientation and perspective to the present work. Considering the objectives of the present study, this chapter has been divided into four sub heads i.e. i) Panchayati Raj Institution, ii) Decentralization and Panchayati Raj Institution, iii) Decentralization, Planning and Implementation and iv) Decentralization and Panchayati Raj in West Bengal. In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the important findings of previous research work related to the study.

Panchayati Raj Institution:

Panchayati Raj Institution plays the main role for democratic decentralization and development of the rural community. The present review work on PRI is necessary to know the role of Panchayati Raj Institution in decentralized planning and implementation. Some important findings related to Panchayati Raj Institution are discussed here.

According to Mani Shankar Aiyar (2002), reforms have no great objection to Panchayati Raj; the tragedy is they regard Panchayati Raj as a sideshow. Panchayati Raj needs to be made the fulcrum of the reform process. The outlook for grass root development through grass root democracy is endowed process to the people in both rural and urban India. The author also stated that endow the panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of ‘self Government’ (Article 243G). Panchayat can fulfill their responsibilities as institution of self-governance by devolution of 3F i.e. Functions, Functionaries and Finance. Arrangements for the training of elected members of the Panchayats at different levels are very essential. In regard to the Gram sabha, the Panchayat Act,
1996 passed by Parliament in pursuance of section 4(b) of Article 243M sets out the functions of the *Gram sabha* in an exemplary manner.

As per M. V. Rajasekharam (1996), the decentralization of power and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions are not only empowering the people at the grassroots level but also enhancing the democratic functioning. The philosophy of “power to the people” at the grassroots level is guiding principles of 73rd and 74th Amendments. The empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions cannot be adequate without proper devolution of power and financial support to the grassroots level. The author also stated that if the 73rd and 74th Amendments constituted the first generation of Panchayati Raj reforms there is all-round realization now of the necessity to introduce the second generation reforms in Panchayati Raj.

Sumita Mishra (2003) studied in Bihar state and observed the Panchayati Raj in Bihar like that of another states is an extension with suitable modifications of the Parliamentary system of Government. The 1993 Panchayati Raj Act in Bihar is most exhaustive and gives adequate powers to the PRIs. The Panchayati Raj set up in Bihar represents a three-tier organizational pattern located at the village, block and district levels. The *gram sabha*, a general body of Panchayat, consisted of all adults residing within its areas. Mukhiya occupied a pivotal position. The author also stated that the PRIs in Bihar have really been in very bad shape since its inception to date. Various factors like organizational, environmental and the state Government’s apathy are responsible for this condition in Bihar. The people of Bihar had lost their faith because PRIs were either superseded or elections could not be held for a long time. After the election held in 2001, the lost faiths have been restored to some extent. People’s faith in these institutions could be fully restored if one strictly and honestly follows the new act. Author in this study concluded with some opinion that the PRIs with a constitutional status of their own would make a difference in their future prospects. The renewal of leadership through periodic elections may provide the rural masses education in the political process at grassroots level and it may take a positive turn for the better.
As per Sweta Mishra (2003) one of the important institutional agencies, which owes its origin to British India, is the District Administration. In the present day of development Administration; those in charge of the district in turn, face a challenge in their new role as change agent. The author in the historical background chapter stated that the district has been the nodal point of the administrative system in India for about two hundred years. The role of District Collector increased manifold in 1952-53 with the introduction of CDP and NES. At that time the development administration take care with the help of SDO and BDO. Panchayati Raj is the new vehicle of local self-government and of development in the District. The function of the District collector is many and varied, which is not a new phenomenon. The Balwant Rai Mehta study team gave a shape to the concept of Panchayati Raj. After the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment Acts there is no uniform pattern with the regard to the position of the district collector in relation to PRIs. In some states the power vested with higher level panchayat. It has been found that there is a lack of a clear cut demarcation of powers, functions, responsibility between Panchayat functionaries, particularly between the president and CEO of Panchayats. The overlapping of functions between panchayats can be checked and demarcation of functions and responsibilities between non-official and official functionaries of the panchayats can be provided for.

Detail village administration through various periods like pre-colonial, Vedic, British etc. has been discussed by A.K Sinha (2004). According to the author “Panchayati Raj was in existence during the vedic period in ancient India and worked well as the people carried out their personal and official duties based on dharma”. The term found in Rigveda and it was acted as a national judicature. Only good people were rights to involve in Sabha. Another term Samiti was also very importance in Vedic period. The author also mentioned in this study, “The Samiti had both military and executive functions besides being a place of social gathering.”

In British period, it is emphasized that village panchayats was not so prior for British Government. In 1870, Lord Mayo passed a resolution for decentralization of power to bring administrative efficiency by fulfilling the demands of local people. Various commissions on local governance like royal commission established in this
period. After independence, with thinking of mahatma Gandhi started Village Swaraj or Gram Swaraj. Gandhiji’s concept of Gram Swaraj became true after passing 73rd constitutional amendment. The author also discussed about “the myths or social stereotypes about Indian women’s position in society like (1) Women are weak, passive and dependent, (2) Women are intensive, holistic and contextual (3) Women are more altruistic, more nurturant and thus more moral and finally (4) Women can trust men to protect their welfare.” Soothe participation and women empowerment is very crucial for our society. The author also coated the Prasad opinion about empowerment that “empowerment is a process geared towards participation, greater decision-making and transformative action through awareness and capacity building.” Various recommendations of review committees like Balwant Rai Mehta committee; Ashok Mehta committee etc. has been discussed by the author. Author also detailed about post 73rd Amendment development through Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samities Zillah Parishads, District planning Committees, State Finance Commission with special reference Hariyana Panchayati Raj Act 1994.

The author purposively selected Ambala District of Harayana state and 4 blocks in this district with specific objective of “ascertaining the participatory role of women in performing Panchayat duties along with the extent of participation of the target group.” The author concluded about the undertaken study that “Without full and informal participation of women in politics, social and economic aspect, empowerment among then could be a difficult task. The author think that then only the dream of Mahatma Gandhi can be true and successful when all political parties, rural masses, intellectuals and media perform properly to generate awareness among all about its necessity.

According to S. Baluchamy (2004), rural development has a vital role in national development. In India, Panchayati Raj Institution commenced functioning in 1949. Various committees like Malaviya Committee (1956), Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957), G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985), etc. formed to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system. From the Ancient period local body was formed as the unit of administration. In Vedic age, the village headman who was called as Gramani controlled the village administration. On the same way, Gramik, Gopa, Sabha, Samiti,
*Panchayat* like terms used in the *Vedas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and other Hindu scriptures. In British Colonial period, a powerful central Government was established and the local bodies lost their autonomy in village administration. In 1882 Lord Ripon’s Government passed a resolution on local self Government. Royal Commission on Decentralization was appointed in 1907, which recommended the revival of the Panchayats. After Independence, the Government of India launched the Community Development Programme in 1952, but it did not make any satisfactory result for rural development. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) suggested that the Panchayati Raj Institution should form by the elected representative and also should enjoy enough powers and autonomy. In 1959 Panchayati Raj Institution started journey with some new initiatives. Here author discussed about the details of Panchayati Raj i.e. phases of Panchayati Raj, its functions and powers. In 1989, the then Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi introduced the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill to revitalize this system. 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. passed in 1992 to strengthen the Panchayats. *Gram sabha* formation, reservation for SCs/STs and women, developing powers and responsibilities to Panchayats, setting up of Finance Commission, Election commissions, and providing 29 earmarked items under XI Schedule of the Constitution on India to Panchayati Raj were the essential features of the Panchayati Raj Act.

The author studied this with seven effective objectives to verify the awareness level, power holding, participation, perceive role of elected representative, leadership qualities and influence of participator democracy. To fulfill the objectives the author selected the Dindigul District of Tamilnadu State and also selected eight blocks from the selected district. The author found that the Village Panchayat President and District Panchayat Councilors are more trained than Panchayat Union Councilors. The elected members of Panchayati Raj are well known about the people’s need but they are unable to fulfill that due to insufficient funds. The author concluded “Participatory democracy will become a reality under the Panchayati Raj system only if the people really and actively participate in the affairs and the activities of the Panchayat.” This can be possible when *Gram sabha* will function properly to boost the people’s participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
Panchayati Raj is one of the most important political innovations discussed by P. Manikyamba (1989). The working of Panchayati Raj since 1959 has revealed several shortcomings as well as achievements. Panchayati Raj acts as a catalytic for social change. It also has a bond between rural masses and Government at higher levels. One important achievement of Panchayati Raj is it increases the consciousness of people about their rights. Another significant contribution of Panchayati Raj is it became successful to generate leadership at village level. The author also stated that “While it is true that the Panchayati Raj bodies in general are dominated by socially and economically dominated classes. In West Bengal, the village elite formerly confined to upper classes is now more widely diffused.” The author also found out some shortcomings on Panchayati Raj system, those are

- Domination by socially and economically privileged classes.
- Philosophy not properly understood i.e. absence of awareness among the rural civil servants and Panchayati Raj non-officials regarding the main objectives of Panchayati Raj and democratic decentralization.
- Qualitatively weak membership.
- Unenthusiastic attitude of ex-officio members.
- Unsatisfactory bureaucratic response.
- Inadequate fund, etc.

The author also discussed about the Panchayati Raj and Rural Women. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee considered the conditions of rural women and suggested that they should assist for their income generation and improve condition for their children. The Ashok Mehta Committee laid special emphasis on the need to recognize and strengthen women’s constructive decision-making and managerial roles. The year 1975 was the International Women’s Year. In the Sixth Five Year Plan was included a chapter on women and development. In this plan period the Government decided to take steps to create general awareness and understanding of the problems of women.

In most of the states adopted three tier Panchayati Raj system i.e. Gram Panchayat at Village level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zilla Panchayat or Zilla Parishad at District level. In these entire three tier women should have compulsory representation. The National Perspective Plan for women pointed out
“Political power and access to positions of decision-making and authority are critical pre-requisites for women’s equality in the process of nation building.” Awareness generation is very important to promote participation. In West Bengal political awareness of women is found very low. Institutional participation by the women was not satisfactory by the author. It is found that women members’ vocal participation at Gram Panchayats is limited. The author also found that some rural women proved themselves as exceptional in political institutions. The author studied in Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh and studied on women members’ caste composition, educational levels, economic status, age, political background, socio-economic conditions at selected three tiers and found structural constrains, attitudinal constrains, environmental constrains on the way of participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution. The author also suggested some views like allotment of a considerable number of seats to women in the local bodies in general, provision for all women panchayats, arrangement of training for attitudinal change, promotion of income generation activities etc.

According to the G. Palanithurai (1999) “the new arrangement of decentralization of power or devolution of power or empowerment of people is equated to developing resourcefulness of the people or entrustment of more responsibilities to the people”. The role of Government turned from provider to facilitator in development work. New Panchayati Raj system is a process by which people also involved in every stage of development process. This new system is acting as third Government.

It has three-tier structure namely; district Panchayat and Gram or village Panchayat. This system has been vested with powers for decision making and twenty-nine subjects in XI schedule.

In Tamil Nadu new Panchayati Raj system came into existence in 1994 for local body institutions. The salient feature of this act are a three-tier system Gram sabha, establishment of Election commission and Financial Commission, reservation of SCs / STs as per proportionate to their population, and one-third reservation of seats for women and formation of District Planning committee.
The nucleus of the new Panchayati Raj System is *Gram sabha*. All the adult voters of the village Panchayat are the members of *Gram sabha*, Village Panchayat or Gram Panchayat is constituted for a minimum of five hundred populations in Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu is entitled to constitute a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by three tiers. The author also stated, “more number of development programmes and schemes are to be evolved from below but at present more development schemes and programmes are chalked out at the national level and pushed through the State Government to the Grass-roots for implementation”.

The people and the leaders should know their responsibilities and duties. The author also suggested some steps which can be taken for betterment of Panchayati Raj System. Those are – awareness should be created among the people about this new system, arrangement of training for elective members for their capacity building and capable for planning from below with resource management and elected leaders should be aware about the twenty nine subjects of XI schedule for local body institutions.

In the study of Participation of Women in Local Self Government, Hazal D’ Lima (1983), discussed the socio economic background of the female representatives of the Zilla parishad and Panchayat Samities of Maharashtra. The author also finds out the factors that help or create barrier in the way of performance of the female members. The statutory representation provided for women on Panchayat bodies is important for promotion of the women’s participation in the national level. But from the study it is not founded that the impact of empowered women on rural development in gram Panchayat level after women reservation through constitutional amendment.
Decentralization and Panchayati Raj Institution:

Decentralization process directly related with Panchayati Raj Institution. To know about the decentralization process as well as Panchayati Raj Institution, review of related book/article give a direction to the present study.

According to D. Bandyopadhyay (1999) the Dalits in the Indian society were often suppressed by the elite class even after independence. He explains that the system of administration lacks accountability to the people. The bureaucratic system below the state level, was nurtured in such a way that they are almost non accountable to the people. The author hopes that the new Panchayati Raj System will remove the inherent weakness of the administration at the local level. He states that elected representatives of the people should have the right to exercise superintendence and control over government officials; He argues that the democracy of the elite are on the offensive against the democracy of the Dalits.

District administration has a vital role in the history of Indian Administration as well as on decentralized planning at the grass root level. The advent of Panchayati Raj in India marked the first step in providing a new perspective on District Administration. D. Sundar Ram (1996) also stated in the preface that various models in implementation of Panchayati Raj in the process of decentralization of positive steps taken by the Government of India in strengthening democracy at the grass root level through the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution also have an important bearing on the growth of District Administration. The changing perspective on district administration in India one cannot but refer to the approaches of the government of India to words the five years plans. The editor/author has examined through this book that the changing post-independence perspectives on reforms in administration, planning and welfare which related with the district Administration

The conceptual framework of good governance is discussed by Kalia Shefali (2004). The terms governance and good governance are very important place in development literature. Bad governance is regarded as the root cause of all evil in the society. According to the author “administration is essentially a group activity which
involves co-operation and co-ordination to achieve desired goals or objectives”. The author also discussed about the administration, some important responsible factors which is deteriorating administrative setup and also some factors, which are responsible for inefficient, irresponsible and insensitive administration. People’s participation in good governance and needs for good governance with some golden rules and current scenario also discussed in this chapter. The author also detail discussion are made an the context of Indian Governance in historical perspective i.e. in Vedic India, Ancient Indian, Medieval India, Mughal Period. Next is British India to Civil Service. The author discussed about the Imperatives of good governance which containing the discussion an efficient administration, new public management model with criticism, sensitive administration. State and local level administration with special reference to Rajasthan discussion has been made in this book. The author also very interestingly discussed about administration versus maladministration. Various draw back of administration is given in this book. How administration reforms have to perform their role is containing in sixth chapter and how e-governance become a tools for efficient, responsive and sensitive administration.

The author concluded that good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. It requires being intelligent, dynamic, and clean and clear objective. It should be capable to inspire, building trust, confidence and co-operation to the people.

A.K. Dubey (2003) in the study stated that Decentralization as a political phenomenon is a means to make the state more responsive and adaptable to the local needs than what it could be with concentration of administrative powers and responsibility in the central state. In the context of a developing nation, implementation of the socio-economic developmental programmes is the foremost priority in the objectives of the nation building. To make a sustainable, suitable institutional mechanism for the decentralization, proper policy, political environment and the economic condition have to keep in mind. In order to concentrate on the efforts for development proper institution has to be identified and strengthened both functionally and organizationally. In actual practice, the process of decentralization has been confused with setting up of more organizational structures at various levels, which is not complemented by delegation of functions and accountability. Instead of entrusting functions to the decentralized units, particular organizational structures are
thrust upon the implementing units. According to the author, correct approach would therefore be to attempt a cost benefit analysis of the development process so that development services are achieved in a cost effective manner without adding to the administrative overheads.

According to the L.M Singhvi (2003) public governance is a concept of the widest amplitude. It includes structures, institutions, process and skill in the public domain. The exclusive, legislative and judicial institutions are the branches of public governance. The works of the public governance depends not only on constitutional arrangements but also on the functional dynamics of public opinion, citizen participation, political and administrative capacities and fiscal and entrepreneurial strengths. The author also stated that decentralization is a method of devolving power and evolving structures and methods to bring public governance nearer the public. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee stated that development couldn’t progress without responsibility and power. Community development can be done when the public understand their problems, realizes their responsibilities, exercise the necessary powers through the proper local administration. According to the author the Indian village and Gram sabha is the republican base of our democratic nation. Panchayati Raj must draw its inspiration from the quintessential concept of Gram Swaraj. The author concluded with that the Decentralization and Panchayati Raj means empowerment at the grass root level. Its success lies through team work, dedicated and selfless leadership, vigilant citizenship and patriotic sense of fundamental duties among one and all.

**Decentralization, Planning And Implementation:**

Panchayati raj institution regarded as institution of the people, by the people and for the people. An attempt has been made to know the planning and implementation of the schemes as well as planning and implementation process, role of people in the decentralization process. Through the people’s participation, the local people can directly involve with the planning and implementation process of Panchayati Raj Institution. With the help of available literature on this topic an attempt has been made to find out a relation with the present study.
According to Pradipta Chaudhury (2004), several times in post independence in India, various questions have been raised on reservation and whether its true benefits have percolated to sections that really need them. The reality is that reservations have served essential as tools to absorb privileged sections of the lower castes into the ruling classes. Moreover, the politics of caste ‘identity’ also founded on reservations has helped push real economic problems facing the poor away from the centre stage. The author also stated that the low caste movement first arose in the south because of the greater ritual repression there by the Brahmins, compared to the north. The major low castes of the southern states had achieved higher economic status than the Brahmin, when their political mobilization met success in early twenty century. Since 1990 caste castes in politics has received a great boost. The politics if caste identity has been hailed as a movement towards true equality.

The participatory models basically belong to two categories: one, which views participation as a means to achieve institutional efficiency; and the other, which sees participation as furthering the goals of empowerment, equality and democratic governance. Ellora Puri (2004) also stated that participation, what ever its goals may be is in itself a fuzzy concept having acquired varied meanings over a period of time at one end of the spectrum it could mean just a nominal membership in a group, and at the other end it could imply having an effective voice in decision making process.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 made Panchayati Raj Institutional of self-governance. This act provided grass root level democracy in one side and another side social justice to the people. This study of R.K Wishwakarma (2003) giving the picture of Panchayati Raj Institution of Uttar Pradesh.

In U.P, presently it has three-tier Panchayati Raj system i.e. Gram Panchayats (GPs), Kshetra Panchayats (KPs) and Zilla Panchayats (ZPs). According to the section 3 U.P Panchayati Raj act, 1947, the State Government shall entitle to from Gram sabha for a village or group of villages. The Gram sabha shall hold two general body meetings each year soon after kharit and Rabi Chops. Gram sabha has some assign function like voluntary labour mobilization for community welfare programme,
identification of beneficiaries of development schemes, and rendering assistance for implementation of development schemes.

Gram Panchayats are local level institution which formed by the elected representative. The Gram Panchayat is established in every Panchayat area and composed by pradhan and nine or more members.

In the article of Madhu Dandavate (2000), reveals certain important facets of Indian Planning. He states that the idea of Planning as a corner stone of economic reconstruction of free India, was first outlined by Netaji Subhash Candra Bose in his presidential address at the Haripura Session of Indian National Congress in February 1938 and Pandit Nahrur was appointed the chairman of the committee by the congress. This committee became the precursor of Advisory body of planning Board setup by the interim government of India in 1946. It had played an important role for the formulation of first Planning Commission of free India.

According to a school of thinking, the process of planning is relevant only in a system in which the Public Sector represents the commanding heights of the economy. To establish an egalitarian economy, an efficient and incorruptible cooperative system is essential. The author also cites the examples of the Scandinavian countries where they follow the co-operative system, which helped them to maintain an egalitarian system. He asserts that the planning process of India must have a better methodology for poverty elimination.

The nature and the pattern of the decentralization planning in India are varied because of the variety of institutions and practices in different states stated by Rama Pathayak and Anil Dutta Mishra (2003). There is multiforality in the economic condition. The constrain on decentralization also varied from different states like political lack of will vis- a-vis decentralization of power, inadequate administrative structure etc. Decentralized planning is complex process, capacity building, change on administrative, technical and political system, but the most important is the political and administrative will to decentralized powers to the lower levels. The central administration has accepted the idea of decentralization but the plan functions have not been delegated accordingly and central financial power remains without effective links between planners and politicians at various levels. In the decentralized planning
process willing cooperation between administration and public participation occupies central place requiring understanding and awareness of procedures. In reality, it is a far more complex process beset with greater problems now than ever before. The authors in their conclusion said that the crucial importance of decentralized planning for balanced development in our country it become complex and difficult due to various kind of constrains. Now majority of the State have introduces the decentralization planning process. It will be successful when it has to be backed up by sound practices.

T. Kalyani (1996) presents some administrative aspects of the District Planning in the study and focused on certain significant aspects of District Administration vis-à-vis planning and development as the latest emphasis on decentralization has brought greater attention to be paid to the structure and the function of the administration, District administration with particular reference to planning and incidentally development administration. The author also stated that the state level plans include by the District level and Block level plan from the 3rd plan. During the fourth planning process, the planning commission issued detailed guidelines for preparation of District plans through the Panchayati Raj and Community development. According to the author, the planning activity in the district should be a joint effort by both officials and non-officials. There is needed to make the District as a semi-autonomous entity. The district is a viable and appropriate unit of micro-level planning. As in the case of the State and National Plans, finance will be the most important elements in regard to district plan also. The author also stated that the collector must be invested with complete control over the expert planning team under him. Some working arrangements have to devise for their recruitment, training and other relevant aspects, as part of the State Administration structure.

Justice and fairness is very essential for progress and development of human society. Various revolution movements strengthen and developed the concepts of justice, liberty and equality in human society. The concept of ‘Welfare State’ originated in Britain. It is very tuff to define the concept of welfare because of its different types of practice. According to Abraham Mathew (2005), welfare is very
close to equality, and equality means that a minimum of welfare guaranteed to all members of the society. On the other hand the administrative system is very essential to achieve the goals of welfare state. Administration plays double role to achieve the socio-economic goals. i.e. administration assist the process of policy making and another one is it takes responsibilities for its implementation.

In India, Emperor Ashoka, Akbar adopted welfare oriented approaches in administration in past. In Independent India, the Government has incorporated in Indian Constitution the concept of welfare. There also another provision for Village Panchayats also is incorporated in Indian Constitution. Article 40 of the Constitution reads, “The State should take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self Government”. The author also stated that ‘removal of poverty and unemployment are the twin objectives of welfare programmes of the panchayats”. 73rd Amendment ensures the decentralization and women participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions. NGOs also play a catalytic role in Panchayati Raj activities to boost up the awareness building, participation, training for planning and implementation. This study mainly based on Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, its nature, quality, problems, mechanism for maintenance of created assets and to evaluate the impact of the new Panchayati Raj system on welfare programmes for rural poor.

First chapter of this book contains the introduction of study. Second chapter explains the conceptual framework of the study. Some literature reviewed by the author in this chapter. Third chapter is very important because it is containing the planning process in India with special references to 8th Five Year Plan and JRY. The result, data analysis has given in chapter four and five. Chapter six is containing the conclusion and suggestions given by the author. To describe planning process in India, the author stated ‘resolution of the Planning Commission was set up in 1950 to formulate plans and development of country. On August 1, 1950, the then Prime Minister Nehru announced 1st Five Year Plan in Parliament. In the mid 70s, sample surveys shown that over that over half of India’s population continued to live below the poverty line. Then special emphasis given an manpower planning and human capital development. So many poverty alleviation programme launched like IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, EAS, and ultimately JRY. JRY was the most important wage employment programme for rural development and poverty alleviation. It was
centrally sponsored scheme. The allotted fund distributed the Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayats on 70:15:15 basis and Gram Panchayat should spend 85% of allotted amount. The responsibility of beneficiary selection was on Gram sabha. There were some difficulties in implementation process of JRY, these are non-availability of funds, insufficiency of manpower, communication Blocks and Lack of coordination, unrealistic targets and priorities, improper utilization of resources and selection of beneficiaries, non-recognition. The author observed that, unless power and restorability are shared with the people development goals would not be achieved. The implementation of welfare programmes through PRIs gives a new dimension with people’s participation at gross root levels. Author found that the JRY was unable to create adequate employment opportunities. The author also identified lots of gaps, those are – unrealistic targets, lack of coordination, frequent transfer of officials, lack of training, time consuming procedure, improper selection of projects and beneficiaries etc. Finally the author suggested that measures should be taken up to enhance the skill and capabilities of the workers. Upper level should ensure about the available fund to the lower levels. Gross root level institution like Gram sabha should strengthen for proper planning and implementation.

Ruddar Datt, K.P.M. Sundaram, (1985) explain the concept of poverty in its different dimensions. They observe that the concept of poverty in the USA would be significantly different from that of Third World countries. The main aspects that have been focused by them are; policies, strategies, programme design, delivery system, local institutions and management of programmes, implementation of poverty alleviation programmes undertaken by the various states of India.

They also reveal the fact that rural development programmes would not yield the desired result by mere distribution of funds unless administered with great vigil and commitment.

The strategy explains by Ram Ahuja (1997) that eradication of poverty in its different manifestations. He states that there is no appropriate set of policies and programmes for alleviating poverty. About the concept of poverty, it is a situation that gives rise to a feeling of discrepancy between what “one has” and what one “should
have”. He suggests mainly three strategies for eradication of poverty; (i) maximization of economic growth by stepping up investment that would trickle down and diffuse among all sectors of the society, (ii) the distribution of assets through land reforms, community development programmes and nationalization of big industries, as suggested by the structural school and (iii) initiating of rural development programmes such as IRDP, TRYSEM, NREP, RLEGIP JRY, JGSY, SGSY etc. He has also made a critical evaluation of the antipoverty programmes going on in India.

The study of K. S. Gopal (2009) has been carried out in Andhra Pradesh. In this study the author stated that social audit is a dynamic tool by which people are able to make officials accountable for their performance in the delivery of legally enshrined rights. NREGA confers to guarantee a right to work to the people. Social audit in Andhra Pradesh built ‘tracking’ software, so that the people can easily obtain any information. The system would make transparency easy, simple, quick, and low cost would be based on the different needs of users. But in reality when it came to implementation Government ignored this unique opportunity for proactive provision of information.

**Decentralization and Panchayati Raj in West Bengal:**

In the state West Bengal, it is regarded that the panchayati raj system is very much strong body at the grass root level. The people of West Bengal are very much concern about political empowerment as well as politically participation in the PRIs. *Gram Sabha* and *Gram Sansad* and *Gram Unnayaan Samities* also plays vital role in the way of democratic decentralization. An attempt has been taken to find out some views of previous work relevant with this present work following reviews done.

To examine the future of the Panchayathi Raj system in West Bengal Maitreesh Ghatak and Maitreya Ghatak (2002) state that the experience of West Bengal under the Panchayati Raj system, stands in sharp contrast with the other states. Despite its pioneering status in terms of reforms of the Panchayati Raj system, West Bengal is far away from several other states today in terms of development of power, finance and functions of the Panchayat. They also reveal that the extent of people’s
participation in the planning process is significantly less compared to that to Kerala. They try to explain the organizational structure of Panchayats and make an analysis about Panchayati Raj System in Bengal.

Neil Webster (1992) seeks to examine the development of Panchayati Raj system in West Bengal. At the very outset, he states that the interests of the poor could be better protected and the need of the party could be best served through the 1973 Panchayati Raj Act. The 1973 Act had been formulated on the basis of the original Panchayat Acts passed in West Bengal in 1957 and 1967. According to this Act, a four-tier system of Panchayats had been created extending downwards form the district level to the village. To democratize the Panchayats and destroy the existing ‘Rock Departmentalism’ were the twin goals of the Panchayati Raj system introduced in West Bengal. Rock departmentalism was rooted in the deep elitism and conservatism that permeated much of the bureaucracy, reinforced by the hierarchical administrative structure. Based on this, state policies and programmes were channeled down through the district department to the block and ultimately to the village. From 1985 all state development plans have been drawn up on the basis of annual District Plans, which is turn are based up on the proposals from the Panchayat Committees below. The author argues that the new Panchayat Raj system has altered the structure and functioning of the local bodies.

Nirmal Mukherji and D. Bandyopadhyay (1993) in a report mentioned that the success of West Benal Panchayat is quite satisfactory, especially in land reforms and generating awareness among the masses. However, the authors have pointed out that the initial enthusiasm of the people observed after 1978 has now largely faded resulting in stagnancy of the Panchayats. The survey was conducted in 1992 and this study could not find out the post 73rd amendment scenario.

According to Moitree Bhattacharya (2002), CPI(M)’s policies and principles bear maximum influence on the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system in West Bengal. The author has made an attempt to find out the interface between two the contradictory process of democratic decentralization and the democratic centralism which is the basic philosophy of CPI(M). The book deals with the participation of elected members as well as the common people. The study also focused on the extent
of control that political parties exercise in the decision-making activities in the gram Panchayat.

Ashok Kumar Mukhopadhyay (1980) in his book “Panchayat Administration in West Bengal” discussed the evolution, structure, composition, power, function and stuffing pattern on Panchayat administration in West Bengal. This study gives a idea about the administration in West Bengal panchayats since 1950s to present period.

According to the Prabhat Dutta and Payel Sen (2009), Panchayati Raj is the concretized form of democratic decentralization. The authors explained that after Independence, community development programme launched to local area development but it became failure. To find out the causes of CDP failure, Balavant Rai Mehta committee was formed by the Government of India. This committee suggested for a three tier Panchayati Raj institution. Then ashok Mehata Committee identified three phases in the evolution of PRI in India after passage of the seventy Third Amendment of the constitution (1993) was the bold step to start third generation Panchayat Raj. One remarkable scheme is MP Local Area Development Scheme. Under this scheme MP can suggested to the District collector works worth up to Rs. 2 crore. The authors also stated that 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India stipulates the transfer of powers and functions to PRI as a part of decentralization process.

In West Bengal 29 subjects of Functions and 12 functionaries devaluated to Panchayati Raj Institution 73rd Amendment of the Constitution regarded as institutions of self-Government and Gram sabha is tools for local self-government. Local people through Gram sabha can participate in PRIs. In West Bengal, there is another body called Gram sansad. This body constituted by the geographical location of which the electoral constituency of the members of the GP. The authors described that through the gram sansad the people can participate more effectively.
Some of the important studies related to the Panchayati Raj and decentralization related studies have been done in this chapter. Through the actual participation of the local people in the decentralization process this institution can be, for the people, by the people and of the people. It is also very important that the state West Bengal regarded as the one of the best state where the entire Panchayat system as well as decentralization process has been implemented successfully. Above studies can help to formulate valuable implications and recommendations in the light of the findings of the present study.