CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The main purpose of this review is to give a proper orientation and perspective to the present work. The various literatures reviewed on Rural Development and the Panchayati Raj Institutions by the researcher are reported briefly in the following pages.

Chamber, Robert in his book titled "Rural Development: Putting the Last First" states that Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless.¹

Alavi, Hamza and Teodar Shanin in their book titled "Introduction to the Sociology of ‘Developing Societies" consider that the dominant arguments of the capitalist school are embodied in what is known as the Modernization Theory, or the ‘Free World’ model of development. The Modernization Theory was the justification for US hegemony in the context of the Cold War. Scholars who contributed to the growth and development of this theory comprised economists, sociologists, historians and anthropologies, and the determinants of development identified by them included both economic and non-technology and rationality, without changing class structure as a means of development, and removal of all social and ideological obstacles to such a process.²

Bernett, T., in his book titled “Sociology and Development” has pointed out that the Modernization Theory was based on several assumptions, some of which are briefly stated here:

1. Application of Western science and technology in order to increase production is essential for achieving development.
2. The process of development can be delineated into a series of stages, and all societies pass through those stages.
3. In the process of development, traditional social and political institutions are replaced by modern ones.
4. Traditional feudal forms of political power will be replaced by democratic forms of governance.³

McKay, John., in his Article titled “The Development Model, Development” considers that the initial support for the Dependency Theory came from Latin America, particularly from the work of Rural Prebisch and his associates at the Economic Commission for Latin America. However, the Chief spokesman for the theory was Andre Gunder Frank, who dismissed the Modernization Theory as useless from a policy perspective. Frank asserted that the relation between rich and poor nations was not only, not beneficial to the latter, but positively destructive, hindering and distorting their development. In his view, development and underdevelopment were both results of interactions between societies. He drew up detailed historical case studies of Chile and Brazil to support his assertions. The following are the main arguments of the Dependency Theory:

1. The developed countries (the First World) could not have achieved the level of development that they have, without the systematic exploitation of the developing countries (the Third World).
2. That the process of development passes through a series of stages is an illusion. Developing countries cannot attain development following the path adopted by developed countries, so long as the exploitative world system exists.
3. Countries that are now poor were not so to begin with: rather they have been forced into the stage of underdevelopment by a global system of capitalist exploitation.

4. Developing countries can develop only by snapping their links with the developed countries.\(^4\)

Lewis, W. Arthur, in his article titled “Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour” opines that according to Lewis, the process of growth cannot continue indefinitely, and must come to an end on account of a number of factors. When this happens, the process of capital formation can still be kept going by stimulating immigration or by encouraging export of capital to countries which possess abundant supplies of labour at the subsistence wage rate. Since the former measure is strongly opposed by trade unions, the latter seems more practicable. Lewis model seems to provide a good framework to understand the process of economic development in labour surplus developing countries like India. Its basic premise is that labour productivity in agriculture must increase substantially in order to generate surplus in the form of food to be used for development of the non-farm sector, and to release the surplus labour from agriculture for meeting the growing needs of the non-farm sector. However, the relevance of the model is constrained by a number of factors. First, labour unions may push the wage rate up as labour productivity increases, and keep the rate of profit and rate of capital formation lower than expected. Second, the capitalist employers may use the surplus for speculative or non-productive purposes, instead of ploughing it back for development purposes. This is, in fact, what has been happening these days in India and other developing countries. Third, to meet their rising expectations, rural people may consume more and save less than predicated by the model, and thereby dampen the pace of development.\(^5\)

Higgins, Benjamin, in his book titled “Economic Development: Principles, Problems and Policies” points out that the Lewis model does not present a satisfactory analysis of the agricultural sector, in the sense

that it fails to consider the possibility of a change of productivity in agriculture. Building upon the Lewis model, Gustav Ranis and John C.H. Fei construct a theory of economic growth, by first analyzing the role of the ‘neglected’ agricultural sector in a static sense, and then generalizing the ‘static’ analysis by introducing the possibility of an increase in agricultural productivity.6

Cochrane, Willard W., in his book titled “The World Food Problem: A Guardedly Optimistic View” has critically reviewed the models of Lewis and of Ranis and Fei, and concludes that the creation of investment capital needed to employ the surplus workers released from agriculture is the critical missing element in these models. He then suggests that the resources to finance the expensive process of agricultural modernization can be obtained in any one or in a combination of three basic ways:

1. By squeezing more agricultural surplus;
2. By slowing down the rate of investment in the non-farm sector and in basic infrastructure; and
3. By obtaining foreign loans and grants.

Of these three sources, foreign loans and grants are, he asserts, the most advantageous, or least expensive. He further states that the growth rate of agricultural production in a developing country in the early stages must be raised high enough to meet its expanding food requirements. For this to happen, he argues, the pull exerted on agriculture through higher market prices will not be enough: agriculture must be pushed, and pushed hard, by a strategy emphasizing the use of modern technology and supporting infrastructure and services.7

Myrdal Gunnar, in his book titled “Economic Theory and Under-developed Regions” highlights low levels of income in most of the non-Soviet countries in the world, and international disparities in income,

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wealth and investment. Myrdal finds the theoretical approach (automatic self-stabilization) inadequate to grapple with the problems of inequality. In his opinion, in the normal case, a change does not call forth countervailing changes, but, instead, supporting changes which move the system in the same direction as the first change, but must faster–the principle of circular and cumulative causation. As a result of such circular causation, a social process tends to move faster. A social process can be stopped by introducing new exogenous changes in the system. He elaborates this with an example of the African-American problem in the USA. Two factors, namely, White prejudices causing discrimination against the African-Americans, and their low plane of living are mutually inter-related. Their low standard of livings is kept suppressed by discrimination by the Whites. On the other hand, the African-American’s poverty, ignorance, superstition, slum dwellings, health deficiencies and their supposedly unclean appearance, bad odour, disorderly conduct, unstable family relations and criminality, stimulate and feed the antipathy of the Whites for them. Both these factors mutually ‘cause’ each other. He also emphasizes the role of non-economic factors in development, and highlights the backwash effects of growth brought out by the free play of market forces. The clustering of labour, capital, goods and services in certain localities and regions leave the remaining areas, mostly rural, more or less in the backwaters and accentuate regional inequality. Concentration of firms, capital, and talented individuals in certain localities (growth points) at the expense of surrounding areas (the backwash) lowers the level of economic development below what it would have been, if growth points had never emerged. Against the backwash effects there are, however, certain centrifugal ‘spread effects’ of expansionary momentum from the centers of economic expansion to other regions. Empirical evidence shows that ‘backwash effects’ are neutralized by ‘spread effects’ only at a high level of development. This is one of the reasons why rapid sustained progress becomes an almost automatic process, once a country has reached a high level of development. At low levels of development, the ‘spread effects’ are
either very weak, or are just strong enough to cancel the ‘backwash effects’, and the result in both cases is poverty and stagnation. Similarly, at the international level, trade, capital movement and migration have strong backwash effect on the developing countries. Examples can easily be cited of developing countries whose cultures have been impoverished as a result of the establishment of trading contacts with the outside world.8

Alax, Alexander, V., in his book titled “Human Capital Approach to Economic Development” has developed a model which emphasizes the importance of human capital investment in the process of economic and social development. By human capital, we mean acquired mental and physical ability through education, training, health care, and pursuit of some spiritual methods like yoga or meditation. The acquisition of human capital is largely through the investment of human effort and money. The simples and most important of this type of model is a schooling model, which relates economic development to schooling. He classical and neoclassical economists did not explicitly include the quality of human resources in their theoretical frameworks; labour was taken to include both physical and mental effort.9

Boeke, J.H., in his book titled “Economics and Economic Policy of Dual Societies” attempts to explain underdevelopment in terms of socio-logial dualism, which he defines as ‘the clashing of an imported social system with an indigenous social system of another style.’ On the basis of his analysis, largely based on the Indonesian experience, he concludes that the kindest thing the Western world can do for developing countries is to leave them alone; any effort to develop them along Western lines can only hasten their retrogression and decay. The acceptance of the dualism leads to two policy conclusions:

1. As a rule, one policy for the whole country is not possible; and

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2. What is beneficial for one section of society may be harmful for another.

An appraisal of Boeke’s theory would reveal that whereas there can be no question about the existence of dualism, its explanation lies not in the nature of society as Boeke perceives it, but in economic and technological terms. This is proved by the fact that not all efforts to promote development in the developing countries through technical and capital assistance from the West have been in vain.10

Ensminger, Douglas, in his book titled “An Evolving Strategy for India’s Agricultural Development” points out that the Grow More Food Campaign (GMFC) was India’s first organized effort to increase food production. Although the campaign was launched in 1943 in the wake of the Bengal famine, it did not make much headway until 1947. The campaign had a two-pronged approach. First, to bring idle but potentially productive land under the plough, and second, to stimulate cultivator interest in increasing crop yield per hectare. In the 1948, the GMFC was reviewed by the Thakurdass Committee, and following its recommendations, the campaign was reoriented in 1950-51. In the following year, the GMFC became a part of the First Plan. In 1952, the Government of India appointed the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sir V.T. Krishnamachari to evaluate the campaign. The Committee found, inter alia, that all aspects of village life are interrelated, and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation; and the movement touched only a fringe of the population, and did not arouse widespread enthusiasm, or become in any sense a national programme. The committee also made a number of recommendations regarding the future policy of the GMFC. One of the recommendations was that an extension agency should be set up for rural work, which would reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life. It was out of this background and experience that India’s Community Development

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Programme was born. The following basic premises were fundamental in India’s decision to create the National Community Development Programme in 1952:

1. The overall development of the rural community can be brought about only with effective participation of the people, backed by the coordination of technical and other services necessary for securing the best from such initiative and self-help. It was to provide the necessary institutional structure and services that early attention was given to the development of basic democratic village institutions especially Panchayati Raj, cooperatives and village schools.

2. The Problems of rural development have to be viewed from a holistic perspective, and the efforts to solve them have to be multifaceted.11

“Panchayati Raj Reforms and Rural Development” by Shivanna, N., is a book based on a survey conducted by him on the role of Taluk Development Boards in rural development with reference to Koratagar Taluk in Tumkur District of Karnataka State. In this book he has reported that the major constraints for the better performance of the Taluk Development Boards were lack of sufficient power and functions, especially in the financial sphere and the major constraint for the existing planning activities at the Taluk Development Boards level was the dependence in the financial sphere.12

Ashok Mehta Committee on “Panchayati Raj Institutions” was set up to enquire into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and to suggest measures for strengthening them so as to enable a decentralized planning and development to be effective. The Committee suggested that the formulation of structure, functions and the utilization of financial, administrative and human resources on Panchayati Raj Institutions should be determined on the emerging functional necessity of management of rural

development. Further, it recommended, a ‘two-tier model of Panchayati Raj instead of three – tier model of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. The two-tiers were Zilla Parishad at District level and Mandal Panchayati at Village level.\textsuperscript{13}

Ayyangar and Ranga in their book titled “\textbf{Decentralized Democracy for Grass Root Planning}” view that the State shall establish self-governing Panchayats for every village or a group of villages with adequate powers and funds to give training to rural people in democracy and to pave the way for the effective decentralization of political and economic power. As expressed by Mahatma Gandhi, they added that democracy must be broad-based and decentralized. Villages Panchayats are needed to train the people in Government.\textsuperscript{14}

Bandyopadhyay, D., and Amitava Mukherjee in their book “\textbf{New Issues in Panchayati Raj}” view that the book as a valuable by product of the Project entitled “Strengthening Panchayati Raj System – A Training Intervention” founded by the Ford Foundation. Towards the end of the Project, the Task Force wanted to assess the current situation in Panchayats particularly relating to participation of women in the process of local governance. It became a common knowledge that attempts were being made to deviate from the main spirit of decentralization of governance as mandated under the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment. Not only parallel structures were being created in the name of efficient implementation of some projects, other institutional road blocks were also being set up to ensure the dominance of the elite political establishment both at the State and the Central levels. MLAs and MPs wanted an effective executive role in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, often being oblivious of their roles as members of legislative bodies. Setting up of Self Help Groups, particularly, for women was an important step in ensuring participation by them in


\textsuperscript{14} Ayyangar, M.A., and Ranga, N.C., Decentralized Democracy for Grass Root Planning, Granvive Austin, 1972, p.36.
public matters. While these bodies could act as interest groups to espouse their cause through Panchayats, particularly, at the Village level, attempts were made in various States to bypass the Panchayats and to give resources to them direct for various Programmes. Somehow or the other it looked that the existing political establishments could not accept Panchayats as a third stratum of governance in India and felt rather threatened because of the emergence of Panchayati Raj Institutions mandated by the Constitution. Members of the Task Force and their friends/associates decided to record their experiences and views on various aspects of Panchayats as it obtained around 2002. Contributors are well-known in their fields of activities and this friendly critique of the situation a decade after the Constitutional Amendment is expected to help those who seriously consider strengthening the base of our Republic by empowering the little republics of Village Panchayats and its higher territorial entities.\textsuperscript{15}

Bhargava, B.S., in his work \textit{“Panchayati Raj System and Political Parties”} has examined the achievements and role of political parties in Rajasthan. The author maintains that there is too much politics and the leaders and their associates only enjoy the benefits of these institutions. These institutions are financially very weak and the members look after their self-interest and want to monopolize position and power. Power orientation of political parties in understandable, but not at the cost of the functioning of the system. The author suggested that for raising the standards of politics and performance improvement of the political parties in relation to Panchayati Raj System, steps should be taken in the direction of its acquiring reasonable level of legitimacy.

Bhatnagar, S., in his work \textit{“Rural Local Government in India”} has indicated that the problem of the sluggish growth of the ‘Gram Sabha’ is a deep-rooted problem. It is suggested that the urgent need of the hour is to strengthen the institution of the ‘Gram Panchayat’. For the success of

democracy there is a need to decentralize the power to the grass roots. The local government may also be constitutionally recognized and protected in the same way as the central and State governments.\(^\text{16}\)

Bhupen Sarmah in his book “Rejuvenating Panchayati Raj” considers that with the neo liberal democratic perspective, the present development discourse in India is largely preoccupied with the notion of ‘good governance’. It is considered to be one of the most crucial variables, or perceived as the prerequisite of a sustainable development trajectory. ‘Good Governance’ has to be concretized through the process of institutionalizing democratic decentralization in decision-making involving wider participation, which warrants social justice besides equity in distribution of resources. At the operational plane, therefore, ‘good governance’ is seen as a mechanism for empowerment of the hitherto disadvantaged sections ensuring efficiency of and accountability and transparency in the development process. Role of the State has to be restricted only to the extent of institutionalization of the mechanism of decentralization as an aid to a free market economy. The development process to be followed is seen in terms of a State-Civil Society synergy.\(^\text{17}\)

Bose, A., in his book titled “The Movement for People’s Planning Processes” has explained that the movement for people’s planning process in Midnapore District of West Bengal. It revealed that the starting point of decentralization for the bottom should be the village and the framing of rural development plans should start with listing by villagers themselves.\(^\text{18}\)

Celine Rani, A. in her book “Emerging Pattern of Rural Women Leadership in India” attempts a study of the process by which the women leaders are emerging to the political front to manage the Panchayat system. By evolving a framework suitable to this study, the process of

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\(^{16}\) Bhat Nagar, S., Rural Local Government in India, Trimuri Publications, New Delhi, 1976.


emergence of the leaders has been analyzed. In this work, it has been established that the socio-economic status is a significant factor in determining the emergence of rural women leaders. Different kinds of categories of leaders have been identified. This reflects the conditions in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{19}

Chopra, Gopal, Kodekodi and Murthy in their book titled \textit{“Participatory Development – People and Common Property Resources”} consider that the participatory process has its own dynamics of conflict, understanding, persuasion, prohibition, violation (of rules) and so on. Depending upon the strength of the social decision system, the participatory process can be classified as conflict-resolving, welfare, equity or development-oriented and so on. Participation as an institution is a static view of the process. It relates to some specific objective and is treated as an instrument to achieve it.\textsuperscript{20}

Goel, S.L., and Shalini Rajneesh in their book \textit{“Panchayati Raj In India”} maintain that Panchayati Raj was in existence during Vedic period in ancient India and was working well as the people were carrying out their personal and official duties based on ‘Dharma’. The life of the people was peaceful and fruitful as there were limited desires of the people. In the medieval period Panchayati Raj lost its significance, as feudal lords managed local affairs through dictatorship. They never bothered for the people and only acted in their own interest. During the British period, there were attempts to set-up local Governments. Lord Rippon is considered to be the first person who came out with a Resolution of 1882 to provide framework for local governments. After this, there were attempts to improve local Governments through the Acts of 1909, 1918, 1935. However, there was no real intention for the Britishers to decentralize power. It was merely an arrangement to suit their imperial requirements. After Independence,

\textsuperscript{19} Celine Rani, A., Emerging Pattern of Rural Women Leadership in India, Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi, 2002.
Government of India under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, was committed to set-up Panchayati Raj System to provide real Swaraj to the people of rural areas. The Government of India appointed many Committees and Commissions from time to time to suggest the structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj System which can help the people to come out of abject poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, squalor, disease, etc. The most important of them were Balvantrai Mehta Committee, Singhvi Committee and Ashok Mehta Committee. All these Committees recommended ‘democratic decentralization’ through two or three-tier Panchayati Raj System. The latest development in this direction is the Constitutional Amendment (73rd and 74th) of 1992 which aims to provide constitutional status to Panchayati Raj System. This was the culmination of attempts made for about fifty years after Independence. This amendment is considered a landmark in the history of local Government in India. It provided in detail the structure, functions, finances, planning, machinery, powers to elected members, etc., so that the decentralization can be effected, efficiently and economically. The amendment stressed the importance of Gram Sabha and made it obligatory to set up Gram Sabha as a part of Panchayati Raj Institution system. A decade has passed since the constitutional amendment but there has not been much difference in the actual functioning of Panchayati Raj System because those in power at the State and Union level, never want to part with authority. They manage to thwart the attempts of decentralization in order to perpetuate their hold on Panchayati Raj System.21

Darshankar, A.Y., in his book “Leadership in Panchayati Raj”, analyses the interaction between caste and politics, the role of money, education and social rank in the working of Panchayati Raj institutions in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. The author suggested that the success of Panchayati Raj largely depends on the leaders and they have to be deeply committed to the ideals of Panchayati Raj. It has not brought all

the expected benefits to the common man but has brought new charges in various fields. There is a hope that with the emergence of sound, sharp, enlightened and committed leadership these institutions will function for the betterment of the rural community as a whole.\textsuperscript{22}

Harichandran in his book titled \textit{“Panchayati Raj and Rural Development”} examines the Panchayati Raj with the main objective of evaluating the role of these bodies in rural development with particular reference to Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that Panchayati Raj bodies enjoyed delegated powers and functions. Resources were inadequate to meet the responsibilities; Panchayati Raj bodies could be instruments of rural developments only if they are provided with adequate resources.\textsuperscript{23}

Hooja, B., in his work \textit{“Panchayati Raj Versus Decentralization of Administrations”} reviews the genesis of the twin concepts of Panchayati Raj and democratic decentralization in the context of their historical perspective and in the light of the development on the eve of independence and since. He has suggested that there is a need for harmonious working relations between the Panchayati institutions and the District administration.\textsuperscript{24}

Joshi, R.P., and Narwani, G.S., in their book \textit{“Panchayat Raj in India”} opine that decentralization and democracy are the most significant themes in any discussion in the realm of development and polity. The dawn of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, in a way, marks the emergence of an era where the futility of centralized experiments of governance has been conceded and decentralized governance has unequivocally been advocated, both as a strategy and philosophy of bringing about reforms and changes in democracies which should invariably lead to virtues of transparency, responsiveness and accountability and ensure good governance. Panchayati

\textsuperscript{23}Hari Chandran, C., Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1983.
Raj, as a system of governance at the grass roots level in rural India, has rightly been conceived as the most viable, and proper mechanism of realizing the goals of democracy and decentralization. The current debate is not on its desirability but on strengthening it by identifying its weaknesses and taking care of the lacunae which are still there in spite of its constitutionalization through the historical 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

It has now been almost a decade since Panchayati Raj in India had not only been constitutionalized in the true sense of the term but also given a status which has led to the debate on ‘District Government’ and creation of the third tier of federal polity in India. Empowerment of women and the weaker sections through a well-conceived system of reservation has brought about a change in the socio-political culture of those sections of society and has also led to a virtual transformation of the rural scene where people have not only increasingly become aware of their rights but have also started demanding their share in power. In fact, rural India today has become the embodiment of a new revolution which seeks to provide a much-needed direction to the policy and thereby make democracy and decentralization vibrant and feasible for those who deserve it the most. The stark reality, however, is that instances of initiatives and support to what may be called ‘New Panchayati Raj’ have also been found to be short-ranged and half-hearted. The old problems of lack of political will and inadequate financial resources as well as lack of exclusive, competent and dedicated staff at Panchayat Level continue to afflict the new Panchayati Raj System and have led to a serious enquiry in terms of restructuring the constitutional edifice on logical and pragmatic grounds. The recommendations of the Commission on Constitutional Reforms and some other commissions/committees, like the Administrative Reforms Commission in Rajasthan, have provided further impetus to the debate and rightly called for a new approach to the whole issue. The academics have necessarily got to get involved in addressing the issues and challenges that confront us in the realm of grass roots democracy and decentralization. Needless to say, the first decade of the 21st
century is going to witness a serious debate on the methodologies and approaches of concretizing the goals of democracy at the grass roots level and the present book is an outcome of this urge to initiate debate on some of the crucial issues and emerging trends on Panchayati Raj in India. The focus is on issues and an attempt has been made to illustrate them with references to the experiments and experiences of various States in India, as well as of the Central Government. In doing so, recourse has been taken to quite a good number of scholarly works and evaluation studies dealing with the status of Panchayati Raj in India. An effort has also been made to incorporate recommendations of various committees and commissions and wherever possible and feasible data have been given to substantiate the conclusions and findings.25

Kumar, S., and Venkataraman, K., in their book “State of Panchayati Raj Relations in Tamil Nadu” have examined the administrative, financial and technical aspects of supervision and control in Tamil Nadu. It has been realized that the way in which control is exercised depends very much on the linkage of officials and non-officials who are concerned with the Panchayati Raj movement.26

Maheswari, S.R., in his book, “Local Government in India” describes the structure, personnel, finance and functioning of rural as well as urban local governments. He concludes that inadequate financial resources, low pay scales, incompetent personnel, excessive interference by the State Government in the day to day administration, wide spread corruption, nepotism and favoritism in the local civil service are cited as the major causes of ineffectiveness of local government’s development. He suggests that there should be a deliberate policy to encourage

26 Kumar, Sushil and Venkataraman, V., State Panchayati Raj Relations: A Study of Supervision and Control in Tamil Nadu, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1974
experimentation and allow variation to suit local government so that they may develop their roots.\textsuperscript{27}

Nandedkar in his book titled “\textit{Local Government Its Role in Development Administration}” has attempted to study development and democracy as the two purposes of Panchayati Raj institutions. He states that democracy is associating people with the process of decision-making. Participation of the people in the lower units of administration through Panchayati Raj institutions is the sine qua non of the success of rural development programmes.\textsuperscript{28}

Palanithurai, G., in his book “\textit{New Panchayati Raj in Tamil Nadu}” says that New Panchayati Raj System a much popularized and deeply discussed word and concept in the recent years among the public and politicians. Yet ambiguity persists at every level in perceiving the concept in the context. From the level of the perception of the leaders who had involved in the process of evolving and enacting the New Panchayat Act by amending the Constitution of India to the perception of the common man who is considered as a beneficiary or development participant, one can anticipate a variety of problems. In a Country like India with multitude of variations in the socio political institutions, one would expect such problems. The concept, its relevance, and its implications are to be perceived properly by all those who are involved in the process of operationalizing the concept in real life. Otherwise it will be very difficult to realize the objectives of the concept. But contrary to expectation, in India, people at different levels perceive the concept differently and operationalize the concept according to their own understanding and need, where one would come across problems. In Indian setting we have been witnessing different levels of institutions in terms of their functioning. The levels of functioning vary due to the perception of the individuals who are at the helm of affairs in operationlizing

\textsuperscript{27}Maheshwari, Shri Ram, Local Government in India, The Macmillan Company of India Limited, Delhi, 1971.
\textsuperscript{28}Nandedkar, V.C., Local Government Its Role in Development Administration, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1979, p.5.
the concept. Assessing the performance of these institutions is not so easy. Hence case studies have been made. Details regarding the powers conferred on Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats and handling of those powers and responsibilities by the leaders of the different tiers have been analyzed in those case studies. Critical areas like capacity building and creating support structure for empowerment of women have been probed in these cases. Problems have been brought out from the cases. With regard to empowerment of women variety of cases have been selected and analysed and in the same way cases have been selected to analyse the functioning of a Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat. General overview of Tamil Nadu Panchayat has been given. A report of the capacity building exercise has been incorporated to enrich the understanding of the functioning of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu. This handy volume would provide a birds eye view of the new Panchayats of Tamil Nadu.\(^{29}\)

Pant, N., in his work "The Politics of Panchayati Raj Administration" has attempted to delineate the sources and areas of conflict, co-operation and collaboration between officials and non-officials in Bhagelpur District of Bihar and also tried to find out the reasons for the prevailing State of affairs.\(^{30}\)

Raj, H., and Sakendra Prasad Singh in their book "Panchayati Raj and the Citizens" have studied the Panchayati Raj System from community development Programme to Balwantray Mehta Committee Report and its implementation. They concluded that the present system of election is not conducive to the growth of healthy popular participation at the local level. To strengthen participation they suggest that the head of the local


educational institution and office bearers of different political parties should be associated with the Panchayati Raj bodies.\(^{31}\)

State Planning Commission’s, “Report of the Working Group on Decentralized Planning and Panchayati Raj” is the report of the working group constituted under the leadership of K.V.Sundaram in the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu, for evolving guidelines and methodological ways to prepare plans at different levels through the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu under the new dispensation. The report has twelve chapters, which deal with different aspects of the planning process. Keeping the history and the devolution of powers in Tamil Nadu in the backdrop, the working group evolved the framework to prepare plans in Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats. Further it has also developed the approach for planning at the micro level. Apart from the above there are three important major aspects included in the report, namely, the creation of the needed administrative structure, building the capacity of the leaders and the officials involved in the planning process and devices to mobilize the people for their participation in the planning process.\(^{32}\)

Subramaniam, Ra., in his book titled “Integrated Rural Development” has rightly observed that today, planners, researchers, administrators and social scientists have started to look around for a suitable model for village development in the broader context of national planning. Further, according to him, rural development is inconceivable and impossible without decentralization in planning.\(^{33}\)

Ownes and Shaw in their book titled “Development Reconsidered” point out that much of the responsibility for planning and implementation could be delegated to regional or local institutions. It was


\(^{33}\)Subramaniam, Ra., Integrated Rural Development, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, 1986, p.126.
realized by the Government that unless people in the villages take the responsibility and involve themselves in implementing the developmental programmes, the State and Central Governments could not succeed in their attempt to develop the rural areas.\textsuperscript{34}

The above studies on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Institutions and a number of studies referred to and appended in bibliography, have not examined the impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes on Rural Development under the State Planning Commission of Tamil Nadu with special reference to Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana. Therefore, the scholar thought it proper to take up the present research study.