CHAPTER VI

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS:
AN ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION,
PARTICIPATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Introduction

This chapter has the purpose of assessing decentralization, participation and rural development through Panchayati Raj Institutions in the district of Mysore. The analysis and interpretation here relate to three datasets, namely, those of (a) the rural development programme beneficiaries, (b) the functionaries of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and (c) the elected representatives of the PRIs, namely, grama, town and zilla panchayats. In all, 250 rural development programme beneficiaries, 50 PRI functionaries and 210 elected members (GP 136, TP 48 and ZP 26) have been interviewed using three different questionnaires, designed primarily for understanding how the PRIs have assisted in making possible decentralized planning, public participation and rural development since their recent inception in Karnataka in general and Mysore district in particular. For a large part, the questionnaires assisted in collecting qualitative or verbal data and hence the data have been used in a frequency and percentage analysis to help interpret the revealed perceptions of beneficiaries, functionaries and elected members as to the nature and extent of decentralization, participation and rural development in the district. The discussion is in three parts:

- The first part deals with the revealed perceptions of rural development programme beneficiaries (sample size = 250);
- The second deals with the revealed perceptions of the PR Institutional functionaries (sample size = 50); and
- The third speaks of the revealed perceptions of the elected members (sample size = 210; ZP = 26; TP = 48; GP = 136).

Thus, the assessment of the PRIs in Mysore district is through considering the considered and educated opinions and perceptions of the three essential groups of people and hence is relevant in arriving at suggestions and recommendations towards
making the PRIs efficient and beneficial in terms of rural development with decentralized planning and participation.

6.2. Panchayati Raj in Karnataka

A World Bank study on the rural decentralization in the Indian states in 2000 has put down Karnataka as a state with a dramatic start of decentralization in the 1980s, but also backtracking later. The state has however provided very useful insights into the processes that helped or hindered decentralization. Karnataka, in the opinions of Vyasulu et al. (2004: 75-92) offers some of the best, and perhaps the worst practices on decentralization for the other states of the Indian Union. It is also ironical that the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act 1993, made within the ambit of the 73rd Amendment, failed to comply with the spirit of the decentralized governance. The functioning of the PRIs in Karnataka has been hampered by poor planning, lack of control over PRI functionaries, inadequate and tied funds and poor accountability mechanisms. There has been a recent effort by the Government to strengthen the PRIs in the state.

The Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act of 1993 incorporates the institutional structure set out by the 73rd Amendment. It has established the Gram Panchayat at the village, Taluk Panchayat at the intermediate and Zilla Panchayat at the district levels. Local development planning, participation and resource mobilization The PRIs are responsible, among other things, for development planning at the district, taluk (intermediate) and village level. This involves identification of local needs and resources for formulating local development projects, determining resource allocation priorities and locating projects within the integrated area development framework.

Although the Grama Sabha is expected to prepare and promote village development schemes during its open meetings, in practice, such meetings produce a list of demands, such as for school facilities, drinking water supply, a primary health centre, veterinary dispensary or a market link road. The demands are considered by the Grama Panchayat (GP), which prepares a GP sub-plan to accommodate the needs of individual villages as far as possible. The GP plans are incorporated into the Taluk
Panchayat (TP) plans, which form part of the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) Plan. This process is designed to ensure that every local aspiration is taken note of.

To promote regional balance, the State Finance Commission (SFC), set up by the Karnataka Government in 1996, recommended criteria for distribution of resources among the PRIs, giving a relatively higher share to backward areas/regions. Moreover, an untied grant of Rs. 100,000 is being given to every GP as additional financial assistance, which should not be adjusted against the funds recommended for devolution by the SFC.

The GPs are also empowered to levy taxes on buildings and lands, which are not subject to agricultural assessment within the limits of the panchayat area. The GP can fix the rate for supply of water for drinking and other purposes and levy charges such as tax on entertainment, market fee, and pilgrim fee. However, there is insufficient resource mobilization at the GP level. This has continued their reliance on the transfer of state resources on the basis of State Finance Commission’s (SFC) recommendations, which is limiting the realization of the objective of promoting more autonomous planning and administration by the local elected bodies within the Panchayati Raj.

6.3. Assessment by Rural Development Programme Beneficiaries

A total of 250 rural development programme beneficiaries have been interviewed for the purpose of assessing decentralization, participation and rural development in Mysore district. The beneficiaries, as indicated before, have been rather randomly chosen for interviews with the questionnaire, with only one criterion being the most desirable: that is, they are beneficiaries of a rural development programme implemented in their area with some benefits.

Socio-Economics of the Beneficiaries: The intent in the selection has been that of almost equal number of beneficiaries from the three taluks – H.D. Kote, Mysore, and T.Narasipura – and thus a third of the sample beneficiaries come from each of the three taluks. In number, however, the distribution is: 84 from Mysore taluk and 83 each from H.D. Kote and T. Narasipura taluks (Figure 6.1). The selection of
equal number from the sample taluks is deliberate and the sample however is less than 0.5 per cent of all the beneficiaries at the time of selection. Among the beneficiaries chosen for study, 99.2 per cent of them are women while only a negligible proportion (0.8 per cent) of them are men. Of the beneficiaries chosen for study, the constitution of scheduled castes from within the taluk is 37.3 per cent from H.D. Kote taluk, 52.4 per cent from Mysore taluk and 39.8 per cent from T. Narasipura taluk. Overall, however, the scheduled caste beneficiaries account for 43.2 per cent of the total sample. Scheduled tribes are the next largest component of the sample: overall 18.4 per cent and by taluks: 19.3 per cent from H.D. Kote taluk; 10.7 per cent from Mysore taluk; and 25.3 per cent from T. Narasipura taluk.

![Figure 6.1: Development Beneficiaries Sample for Study (in %)](image)

**Age Composition:** The beneficiaries chosen for the study represent ages between 19 years and 60 years, with a mean age of 34 years. Half the respondents are in the age group of 21-30 years, with 13.6 per cent of them in the age group 21-25 years and 34.8 per cent in 26-30 years. Thirty-three per cent of them are in the age group of 31-40 years, with 15.4 per cent in 31-35 years and 17.6 per cent in 36-40 years. While less than 1 per cent of them are in the ages less than 20 years (0.8 per cent), nearly 20 per cent of them are older than 40 years: 10.4 per cent in the age group 41-45 years, 4.4 per cent in 46-50 years, 1.2 per cent in 51-55 years and 2.2 per cent in 56-60 years (Figure 6.2).
Caste Communities of Beneficiaries: Among the communities, Scheduled Castes dominate the beneficiaries with 43.2 per cent, followed by Scheduled Tribes at 18.4 per cent, communities of general category 17.6 per cent, backward communities of category A 16.4 per cent, backward communities of category B 7.2 per cent, including muslims (6.8 per cent) and other backward communities just 4.4 per cent (Figure 6.3). Overall, there are beneficiaries of all caste / community categories in each of the taluks, although the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes dominate in number and proportions from within the taluks.

Employment: Nearly half the beneficiaries are agricultural labourers (123 or 49.2 per cent), as much as 41.6 per cent (104) of them are house wives and the rest of them are engaged in horticulture cropping (9.2 per cent). Figure 6.4 illustrates the distribution of employment. Most notable feature of the scenario is the fact that more
than two-fifths of the beneficiaries are housewives. Among the H.D. Kote taluk beneficiaries, housewives account for 39.8 per cent and agricultural labourers account for 54.2 per cent; in Mysore taluk, 48.8 per cent are housewives and 46.4 per cent are agricultural labourers; and in T. Narasipura taluk, housewives constitute 36.14 per cent and agricultural labourers constitute 45.8 per cent.

**Land Ownership of the Beneficiaries:** Nearly 43 per cent of the beneficiaries interviewed for the study on land ownership. About 15 per cent of them are marginal with less than 1.0 acre of land, 16 per cent of them own land between 1 acre and 2 acres (small), 5.6 per cent of them own land between 2 acres and 3 acres (small), 4 per cent of them own between 3 acres and 4 acres of land (medium) and only 2 per cent of them own more than 4 acres of land (medium) (Figure 6.5). A majority of the beneficiaries (57 per cent) is of landless people, either agricultural labourers or housewives and hence are unpaid labourers. Thus, a little more than a third of the land owning beneficiaries are marginal farmers, 50.5 per cent of the land owning are small farmers and 14 per cent of the land owning beneficiaries are medium farmers.
Income of the Households: A large majority of the beneficiaries (89 per cent) report a very low annual income of less than Rs. 6,000 (23.8 per cent), and between Rs. 6,001 and Rs. 12,000 (63.2 per cent). Thus, most beneficiaries are under poverty line. Those with moderate incomes (Rs. 12,001 and Rs. 20,000) account for 8.0 per cent while more than Rs. 20,000 for 5.2 per cent, with 2.4 per cent between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 30,000, 2.0 per cent between Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 50,000 and a negligible proportion of 0.8 per cent account for more than Rs. 50,000 per annum. The mean income of the households is however Rs. 11,178 per annum, with about 1 per cent reporting a maximum of Rs. 100,000 (Figure 6.6). Data appear to indicate that the rural development programmes of the PRIs at the taluk level cater primarily to the people below poverty line. They do therefore reach the majority of those to whom they are intended.

Among the H.D. Kote taluk beneficiaries, nearly a third (32.5 per cent) report of annual incomes less than Rs. 5,000 and 51.8 per cent of them report of incomes between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000; in Mysore taluk, 15.5 per cent of the beneficiaries report of incomes less than Rs. 5,000 and nearly 60 per cent report of incomes between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000; and in T. Narasipura, the distribution is 9.6 per cent with less than Rs. 5,000 as annual income and 60.2 per cent between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000 per annum.
6.4. Assessment of Decentralization, Participation and Rural Development

**Appropriateness of the 3-Tier Panchayat Raj System:** About 90 per cent of the beneficiaries suggest that the PR System is appropriate for the kind of rural development, while 8.2 per cent of them are unsure about it. However, only 85 per cent of them report satisfaction with the PR System, even as 8 per cent of them are not sure of their perceptions. Correctness of the present electoral processes in the PR System is appreciated by 88 per cent of them. A small proportion of them (3.2 per cent) is not appreciative of the electoral system and 10 per cent are not sure. Among those considering the PR System as appropriate within the taluks of our study, 91.6 per cent is from H.D. Kote, 92.7 per cent from Mysore and 86.7 per cent from T. Narasipura. Also, 86.6 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 90.2 per cent of the Mysore and 80.7 per cent of the T. Narasipura beneficiaries are satisfied with the PR System. The correctness of the present electoral process is appreciated by 88 per cent, 88.9 per cent and 86.7 per cent of the H.D. Kote taluk, Mysore taluk and T. Narasipura taluk beneficiaries.

**Elected Members’ Visit to Constituencies:** More than 69 per cent of the beneficiaries report that their elected representatives to the Panchayats visit their constituency whereas 29 per cent of them say that their representatives do not visit the constituency and 1.2 per cent of them are not sure of their visit. Exactly 40 per cent of the beneficiaries report that the representatives visit once a week, 27 per cent once a month, just about 2 per cent once in 3 months and 6.4 per cent of them say that the elected members ‘rarely’ visit them. About 78 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 66.3 per cent of the Mysore and 49.5 per cent of the T.Narasipura beneficiaries report of the visits of the elected members to their constituencies.

**Visit of ZP Officers and Staffs:** When asked about the visits of the ZP Officers and staffs to the village to enquire about deficiencies in the programme, 46 per cent of the beneficiaries report that they do visit and enquire about deficiencies whereas 52 per cent report in the negative and, that is, they are not. Only 50.6 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 48.8 per cent of the Mysore and 39.8 per cent of the T. Narasipura
beneficiaries report the visits of the ZP officers and staffs to enquire about the programme deficiencies from them.

**ZP Officers and Staffs Consulting with Constituencies:** A majority of 51.2 per cent of the beneficiaries indicate that they do not consult them in regard to development works even as 45.2 per cent say that they do consult them. However, 41.2 per cent of them say that the ZP Officers and staffs interact with them in public meetings while only 2 per cent suggest that they have group discussions with them. A clear majority of them (51.6 per cent) however says that there is no such interaction at any time. There are a few of the beneficiaries who report of meetings and discussions with them in different ways. To a question as to whether their elected representatives and officers consider their needs, more than 61 per cent have answered in the affirmative while 31.5 per cent in the negative. About 7 per cent of them do not know about such consideration.

More than half the beneficiaries from H.D. Kote taluk (50 per cent) and Mysore taluk (51.9 per cent) and 39 per cent of the beneficiaries from T. Narasipura taluk report of the ZP officers and staffs consulting with the constituencies regarding development works in the taluks. While, overall, 61.7 per cent of the beneficiaries indicate to elected representatives and officers considering the needs of beneficiaries, 75.9 per cent of them from H.D. Kote taluk, 65.9 per cent from Mysore taluk and 43.4 per cent from T. Narasipura taluk indicate the same as being considered by the elected representatives and ZP officers.

**Knowledge of Beneficiaries about Rural Development Schemes:** Just about 56 per cent of them know about the schemes being implemented in their areas by the ZP while 33.6 per cent of them do not. Among the beneficiaries from the taluks of study, 65 per cent from H.D. Kote taluk, 58 per cent from Mysore taluk and 53.2 per cent from T. Narasipura taluk know about rural development schemes implemented by ZP. The overall figure for the same is 58.8 per cent of the beneficiaries.
While 40 per cent of them have no sources of information for the schemes, 16.8 per cent of them indicate to elected members as sources, 10.8 per cent to village heads, an equal proportion of them to both elected members and village heads, 3.6 per cent to officers of the ZP, 2.8 per cent to periodicals and newspapers as sources and 2.4 per cent to all sources.

Fifty-nine per cent of the beneficiaries are aware that the ZP implements rural development programmes and the rest of them do not have any such knowledge. While 38.4 per cent of the beneficiaries are aware that the ZP implements the schemes on time, 43.6 per cent of them do not agree with that position and 14.4 per cent of them do not know about it at all. As for ZP implementing the rural development programmes, 72.3 per cent of the H.D. Kote sample, 64 per cent of the Mysore sample and 43.2 per cent of the T. Narasipura sample are aware of the same.

As for the implementing institution, the beneficiaries have varied ideas: 40.4 per cent of them say that it is grama panchayat, 12.8 per cent that it is both GP and TP and 7.2 per cent of them that it is a combination of GP, TP, NGOs and contractors. Some of them (1.2 per cent) even consent to others as being the implementers. As for necessary information and guidance from the ZP, 49.2 per cent of them say that they do and 45.2 per cent of them say that they do not. About 4 per cent of them do not know at all. For the question about getting necessary information and guidance from ZP, overall 49.2 per cent of the beneficiaries say that they get information and guidance, whereas only 42.2 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 50 per cent of the Mysore and 55.4 per cent of the T. Narasipura samples say that they do.

Transparency in the Administration of ZP: While a third of them say that the administration of the ZP is transparent, 56 per cent of them report that they are not transparent and about 9 per cent do not know about it at all. The transparency in administration of the ZP is evident also for 32.5 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 32.9 per cent of the Mysore and 37.3 per cent of the T. Narasipura sample beneficiaries.
Visit of the Beneficiaries to ZP: While 70 per cent of the beneficiaries have visited the ZP, 28.4 per cent have not. Among the visitors from the taluks, H.D. Kote taluk accounts for 69.9 per cent, Mysore taluk for 57.1 per cent and T. Narasipura taluk for 83.1 per cent, from within the taluks.

Cooperation of ZP Officers, Staffs and Elected Members: Less than half of them report that the ZP Officers, Staffs and elected members do cooperate with them while 52 per cent report in the negative. Nearly 61 per cent of them indicate that they do get all the information on the schemes from ZP without any complications. The rest of them say that they do not get all information without complications. The cooperation is vouchsafed by 34.9 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 48.1 per cent of the Mysore and 58 per cent of the T. Narasipura samples and the figure for the total beneficiaries is 48.9 per cent.

Complications of the ZP, TP and GP: The beneficiaries do see several different complications with the ZP, TP and the GP. Among them, no cooperation is the most important complication for 21.2 per cent of them, corruption and non-cooperation are the complications for a tenth of them. There are indeed several combinations of the complications for smaller proportions of the beneficiaries: corruption and shortage of time for 1.2 per cent, corruption and intermediaries for 1.6 per cent of them, non-cooperation and intermediaries for 2.8 per cent, and all possible combinations for the rest of them. As for the taluk pertinent beneficiaries, there are no complications for 54.9 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 71.6 per cent of the Mysore and 59 per cent of the T. Narasipura beneficiaries.

Participation in Implementing Development Programmes: Two-thirds of the beneficiaries do participate in the implementations of the development schemes whereas 29.2 per cent of them do not. In regard to taluks, 61 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 83.5 per cent of the Mysore and 64.6 per cent of the T. Narasipura beneficiaries confirm their participation in the implementation of the development programmes.
Suggestions for Rural Development Programmes: There are several ways in which the beneficiaries participate in the development programmes, including their implementation: they do offer suggestions to elected members and officers (2 per cent), they participate in the process of defining the development programmes (2 per cent), at the implementation of the development programmes (2.4 per cent), and by regularly speaking about the possible failures of the development programmes to the elected members and the officers (1 per cent). On the other hand, some 15.6 per cent of the beneficiaries participate by giving necessary information to the ZP on the implementation of the programmes. The rest of them participate in the implementation of the programmes through various combinations of the participatory activities above.

A fifth of the total beneficiaries say that the elected members are the people who suggest rural development programmes, with 16.9 per cent, 20.2 per cent and 22.9 per cent of the beneficiaries from H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura taluks, respectively, supporting the contention. Village heads are the next of the people who suggest programmes and they are supported by 10.8 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 14.3 per cent of the Mysore and 18.1 per cent of the T. Narasipura beneficiaries.

Social Responsibility of Elected Representatives and ZP Personnel: More than 56 per cent of the beneficiaries agree that the elected members and the ZP personnel have social responsibility whereas 37.2 per cent of them do not agree, meaning that the elected representatives and the ZP personnel do not show up their social responsibility and 5.6 per cent of them are unaware of it. As for the taluk beneficiaries, 59 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 69 per cent of the Mysore and 38.6 per cent of the T. Narasipura Taluks beneficiaries vouchsafed for the social responsibility of elected representatives and the ZP personnel.

Decentralization in the PR System: Asked about the decentralization achieved by the current PR System, a third of the beneficiaries say that it has achieved such decentralization but more than 38 per cent of them think it has not. A good proportion of them (28.4 per cent) do not know whether the PR System has achieved it. Among the ‘within’ taluk beneficiaries, 44.6 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 34.1 per
cent of the Mysore and 39 per cent of the T. Narasipura do not feel decentralization is achieved by the present PR System. Among those who feel it is achieved are 26.5 per cent beneficiaries from H.D. Kote, 36.6 per cent from Mysore and 32.9 per cent from T. Narasipura taluks.

**Gender in PRIs:** To a clarification whether the beneficiaries agree that there is a 50 per cent reservation for women, 62 per cent of them have answered in the affirmative. While 8.4 per cent of them have said ‘no’, 28.4 per cent of them are not aware of it. About 71 per cent of the H.D. Kote, 62.2 per cent of the Mysore and 55.4 per cent of the T. Narasipura beneficiaries agree with 50 per cent reservation for women in the PRIs.

**Support of Banks and Cooperative Institutions to ZP:** More than a simple third of the beneficiaries (36.8 per cent) are sure that banks and cooperative institutions support the ZP, whereas a majority (52.8 per cent) is not sure about their support. About 10 per cent of them do not know about it. The banks and cooperatives do support the ZP is vouchsafed 25.3 per cent, 39 per cent and 47 per cent of the beneficiaries from the three taluks of our study, H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura, respectively. A higher proportion from each of the taluks does not do so and the proportions are: 71 per cent for H.D. Kote, 51.2 per cent for Mysore and 37.3 per cent for T. Narasipura taluks.

**Difficulties for Loans with Banks and Cooperatives:** About 45 per cent of the beneficiaries do have difficulties with the banks and cooperatives for loans (53 per cent in H.D. Kote taluk, 38.1 per cent in Mysore taluk and 43.4 per cent in T. Narasipura taluks), while 49 per cent of them do not (45.8 per cent, 53.6 per cent and 48.2 per cent in H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura taluks, respectively). Corruption, intermediaries, selfishness on the part of the personnel of the banks and cooperatives, caste prejudices, political affiliations and power politics and other factor cause difficulties. Corruption is the biggest difficulty for 8.4 per cent of them; Intermediaries are a problem for 3.2 per cent of them; Selfishness is the difficulty for a
similar proportion of beneficiaries; Caste prejudices are however a problem for only 2.4 per cent of them; and political interferences are a difficulty for 1.6 per cent of them. There are of course several combinations of these causing difficulties for the beneficiaries in getting loans. As many as five 2-factor combinations cause difficulty for nearly 20 per cent of them whereas 3-factor and 4-factor combinations account for difficulties for over 30 per cent of the beneficiaries.

**NGO Cooperation with ZP, TP and GP:** Sixty-eight per cent of the beneficiaries indicate that NGOs do cooperate with the PRIs in Mysore district (76.8 per cent, 67.1 per cent and 63.4 per cent in H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura taluks, respectively) while 19.2 per cent of them say ‘no’. About 11 per cent of them are not aware of any such support by the NGOs. For 61 per cent of the H.D. Kote taluk, 31 per cent of the Mysore taluk and 37.3 per cent of the T.Narasipura taluk beneficiaries, the NGOs with responsibilities do deliver development programmes to people.

For 32 per cent of the beneficiaries, there are NGOs nearby or in their villages. But for a larger share of them (41.6 per cent), there are no NGOs nearby or in their villages.

**Knowledge of Gramasabha and How it Works:** Almost everyone (96.4 per cent) know about gramasabha (H.D. Kote 100 per cent, Mysore 98.8 per cent and T. Narasipura 94 per cent), and there are some who do not know about it (1.6 per cent) and how it works. There are still others (2 per cent) who have absolutely no knowledge about it. A large majority of 82.4 per cent know about the processes of gramasabha and how it really works, even as some 8 per cent of them do not have any idea of the processes and almost an equal proportion of them who ‘don’t know’ of the processes.

About 42 per cent of the beneficiaries are of the view that a gramasabha is held once every six months while 37.2 per cent of them believing it to be held once in three months and 10.8 per cent of them not knowing when and how is it held.
Nearly 84 per cent of them think that the beneficiaries of the development programmes are chosen by the gramasabha (H.D. Kote taluk 93.9 per cent, Mysore taluk 88.9 per cent and T. Narasipura taluk 74 per cent), 5.2 per cent being not aware of who selects them and 8.8 per cent not knowing anything about the selection process itself, leave alone who selects them.

**Participation of Elected Members and Officers in Gramasabhas:** The results of analysis of data indicate that 85.6 per cent of the beneficiaries being aware of the elected members’ and officers’ participation in the gramasabha (H.D. Kote taluk 92.8 per cent, Mysore taluk 92.7 per cent and T. Narasipura taluk 73.5 per cent) and 8.8 per cent not being aware of the same.

**Criteria for Beneficiary Selection:** From a list of criteria arbitrarily given in the questionnaire, 14.4 per cent has chosen ‘poverty’ as an important criteria for selection (H.D. Kote 1.2 per cent; Mysore 15.5 per cent; and T. Narasipura 26.5 per cent), 3.2 per cent ‘caste’ as a criterion (4.8 per cent each for Mysore and T. Narasipura taluks), about 1 per cent ‘humanitarian grounds’ as a criterion, and only a negligible proportion of them (0.8 per cent) ‘political affiliations’ and ‘others’ as criteria. About 71 per cent of them have indicated ‘poverty and caste’ as the criteria (H.D. Kote 88 per cent; Mysore 69 per cent; and T. Narasipura 56.6 per cent) and negligible portions of them (0.4 per cent) each several different combinations of the criteria.

**Difficulties in Implementing Rural Development Programmes:** Cronyism (about 4 per cent; more or less same proportion for the three taluks), caste (8 per cent: 7.2 per cent H.D. Kote; 7.1 per cent Mysore; 10.8 per cent T. Narasipura), political favouritism (6.4 per cent: 1.2 per cent for H.D. Kote; 8.3 per cent for Mysore; and 9.6 per cent for T. Narasipura), bribe and corruption (2.8 per cent) and delaying tactics (4.8 per cent) are some of the factors making for difficulties in implementing the rural development programmes by the PRIs. A good proportion of the beneficiaries, in fact, in varying but small proportions, believe, individually, that certain different combinations of the factors above cause difficulties for implementing the programmes properly.
Suggestions for Achieving Complete Development: From a list of 8 possible
for achieving complete rural development, nearly a fifth of them have chosen all the
eight as their preferences (within taluk: H.D. Kote 16.9 per cent; Mysore 15.5 per
cent; and T. Narasipura 26.5 per cent) while the individual suggestions are preferred
only by negligible proportions: implementation of the development programmes (1.6
per cent), eradication of corruption, eradication of political favouritism (1 per cent
each), eradication of cronyism, abolition of intermediaries (1.2 per cent each), and
people’s participation in the development programmes (1 per cent). Preference is at
varying and higher proportions for different combinations of the strategies:
implementation of the programme and eradication of cronyism (9.2 per cent);
eradication of corruption, political favouritism and abolition of intermediaries (5.2 per
cent); and eradication of corruption and cronyism and people’s participation (7.2 per
cent: within taluk: H.D. Kote 14.5 per cent; Mysore 4.8 per cent; and T. Narasipura
2.4 per cent).

Appropriate Agency for Implementation of Development: Gram panchayat
(37.6 per cent: within taluk percentages: 32.5 per cent, 44 per cent and 36.1 per cent
for H.D.Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura taluks, respectively), Governments (7.2 per
cent), NGOs (6 per cent) and contractors (2.8 per cent) are considered as the
appropriate agencies for implementing the rural development programmes by the
beneficiaries, whereas some combinations of all the agencies are suggested as the
most preferred: GP, TP, ZP and NGOs (18.4 per cent: for the three taluks, it is 15.7
per cent, 16.7 per cent and 22.9 per cent, respectively); GP and NGOs (9.2 per cent);
GP, TP and ZP (4 per cent); and GP and Governments (2.8 per cent). There are other
preferred combinations of agencies which aggregate to nearly 10 per cent of the
beneficiaries’ preferences.

2. Assessment by Functionaries of the Panchayati Raj Institutions

A total of 50 functionaries, chosen from the ZP, TP and GP institutions from
the three study taluks – H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura – have been interviewed
using a separate (second) questionnaire, seeking their ideas, opinions and perception
for a clear cut understanding what is happening in Mysore district in regard to
decentralization, participation and rural development through the PRIs. A description and analysis of their ideas, opinions and perceptions is given below.

**Functionaries and their Composition:** Fifty PRI functionaries have been selected from 14 places, including three taluk headquarters, namely, H.D. Kote (town), Mysore (city) and T. Narasipura (town). The other 11 places are typical villages with grama panchayats. Thirty (or 60 per cent) of the functionaries have been selected from Mysore city Zilla Panchayat, five (or 10 per cent) of the functionaries from T. Narasipura Town Panchayat and the rest of them (12 or 24 per cent) from the Grama Panchayats (one each from 10 villages – Alagudu, Antharasanthe, Byrapura, Elawala, Hampapura, Hemmege, N.Belturu, Nagavala, Nooralakuppa and Varuna - and 2 from another village: Keelanapura). In all, 7 of the functionaries have come from H.D. Kote taluk, 35 from Mysore taluk and 8 from T. Narasipura taluk. Among the functionaries, 7 are women (H.D. Kote, 14.3 per cent; Mysore, 11.4 per cent; T. Narasipura, 25 per cent) and 43 are men (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 88.6 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent). Of them, 11 are from the general community category (H.D. Kote, 28.6 per cent; Mysore, 25.7 per cent); 16 are from other backward classes (H.D. Kote, 14.3 per cent; Mysore, 37.1 per cent; T. Narasipura, 25 per cent), 19 are from scheduled castes (H.D. Kote, 42.9 per cent; Mysore, 31.4 per cent; T. Narasipura, 62.5 per cent) and 4 are from scheduled tribes (H.D. Kote, 14.3 per cent; Mysore, 5.7 per cent; T. Narasipura, 12.5 per cent) (Figures 6.7 and 6.8).
Among the PRI functionaries interviewed for the study are: Chief executive officer, chief planning officer (ZP: 2), district officer, executive officers (TP: 3), panchayat development officers (12), secretaries (GP: 2), project directors (2), joint director, deputy directors (7), assistant director, assistant project officer, assistant agricultural officers (6), block educational officer, deputy forest officer, district health officer, district social welfare officer, and taluk social welfare officer. They have been chosen for the interviews on their availability during the field survey and they are thus a random selection rather than a purposive selection. There are certain other functionaries who have not been interviewed because of their non-availability or their pre-occupation with their duty.

**Age Distribution of Functionaries:** Among the 50 functionaries interviewed are people young and old and their ages range from 28 to 59 years, with an average age of 47 years. From their ages, we surmise that most of them are quite experienced in their jobs. A fifth of them are below 40 years of age, another fifth of them are between 41 and 45 years, a third fifth of them are between 51 and 55 years, 24 per cent of them are between 46 and 50 years and the rest of them are above 55 (Figure 6.9).
Incomes of Functionaries: As functionaries of the PRIs of the State, they are both Government employees and are salaried, with increasing incomes over the years and the cadres. They have an income range of Rs. 200,000 to Rs. 750,000. There are very high variations in their annual incomes are evident from the range itself. While 8 per cent of them are with an income less than Rs. 100,000, there is an equal proportion of them (8 per cent) with incomes between Rs. 100 thousand and Rs. 200 thousand. Sixteen per cent of them are in the range of Rs. 200 thousand to Rs. 300 thousand; 24 per cent of them are in the range of Rs. 300 thousand to Rs. 400 thousand; 30 per cent of them in the range of Rs. 400 thousand to Rs. 500 thousand; and 6 per cent of them are in the income brackets of Rs. 600 thousand plus (Figure 6.10).

Variations in incomes are quite large and each one of the functionaries from H.D. Kote taluk falls within different income brackets (1 in 100 thousand, 1 in 180 thousand, 2 between 225-250 thousand, 1 in 350 thousand, 1 in 500 thousand and the last in 600 thousand). On the other hand, the functionaries of Mysore taluk, being larger in number (35, 70 per cent), show different incomes: 10 in the bracket of Rs. 500 thousand, 5 in Rs. 400 thousand, 3 each in Rs. 300 and Rs. 350 thousand, respectively, and 2 each in Rs. 100, Rs. 250, Rs. 450, and Rs. 600 thousand and the rest in other varying income levels. The functionaries from T. Narasipura taluk compares well with those from H.D. Kote taluk, in their individual income brackets.

Functionaries and the Panchayat Raj System: Ninety four per cent of the functionaries are satisfied with the PRS in Karnataka (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent). Eighty two per cent of them are of the opinion that the three-tier of PRS are appropriate for implementing rural
development programmes (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 80 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent). A fifth of them however opt for a two-tier system, although they do not ascribe any reason for their preference. As much as 94 per cent of them are satisfied with the existing Zilla Panchayat system as well (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 94.3 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent), with 98 per cent of the perceiving the existing electoral process as the correct one (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent).

**Standing Committees of the ZP:** A very large majority of them (94 per cent) is also satisfied with the standing committee (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 100 per cent). However, 82 per cent of them consider the existing standing committees as adequate (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 79.4 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent).

There are in fact 5 Standing Committees in the ZP: General Standing Committee, Agriculture and Industries Standing Committee, Social Justice Standing Committee (28 per cent), Standing Committee for Education, Health and Agricultural Extension and Standing Committee for Finance, Audit and Planning. Most of the functionaries are aware of these Committees and what they are constituted for (90 per cent). There is need for a Standing Committee on Women and Children’s Development, for women and children are an important component of the development scenario (16 per cent).

**Financial Independence of the ZP:** There is a Government Fund for the ZP and TP (56 per cent) and the GP has its own collection of taxes and tariffs and fees (65 per cent). There are grants from the Government for it programmes (52 per cent). There are taxes on housing, water, license fees, power tax and several other incomes for the GP, TP and the ZP. But there is always need for mobilizing more funds (40 per cent), because the population keeps increasing and there are increasing demands for everything. Again, most functionaries seek increase in grants from the Government (84 per cent) for implementation of new programmes. There is need for releasing grants in time (48 per cent) such that there is no delay in executing infrastructural projects. Of course, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes need to be
strengthened (68 per cent). There is an increasing number of the needy and hence they have to be brought under the schemes through considered and proper selection (66 per cent).

**Participation in ZP:** Again, a majority of 82 per cent attend the meetings of the ZP (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 80 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent) while 92 per cent of them think that their ideas (opinions and suggestions) are acknowledged in the ZP meetings (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent). For 96 per cent of the functionaries, the elected representatives actively participate in the ZP meetings (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 100 per cent). There is generally acknowledgement for the opinions of the elected members (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 100 per cent). In 94 per cent of the functionaries’ opinion, the ZP personnel and the elected representatives have mutual cooperation (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent). The elected members and the ZP staff own equal responsibility in the opinion of 98 per cent of the functionaries (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 100 per cent).

**Financial Grants and Independency:** As much as 96 per cent of the functionaries indicate that the ZP receives grants from both the Central and the State Governments (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent) but however the ZP has financial independency only in the eyes of 64 per cent of the functionaries (H.D. Kote, 71.4 per cent; Mysore, 65.7 per cent; T. Narasipura, 50 per cent), as the others (36 per cent) do not think so (H.D. Kote, 28.6 per cent; Mysore, 34.3 per cent; T. Narasipura, 50 per cent).

The officials, staff and elected members of the ZP participate actively in the budget revision process is the opinion of 94 per cent of the functionaries. According to 98 per cent of the functionaries, ZP and the State Government have good relationship for the achievement of rural development. Likewise, the ZP and the TP have good cooperation among them (88 per cent). In the opinion of 98 per cent of the
functionaries, there does exist a good cooperation between the TP and the GP. The GP and the TP personnel, in the opinion of 88 per cent of the functionaries, cooperate well enough. There are meaningful relationships between the ZP and the State Government Departments are vouchsafed by 88 per cent of the functionaries. For a similar majority, the ZP and the TP have good cooperation as well.

**Selection of Rural Development Beneficiaries:** According to 98 per cent of the functionaries, the beneficiaries of the rural development programmes are selected by the *gramasabha* (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 100 per cent). Poverty line is the principal criterion for selection (66 per cent); poverty and caste are also the criteria for selection (16 per cent). In certain cases, political influences have been the criterion (20 per cent).

**Knowledge of Rural Development Programmes:** Ninety-eight per cent of the functionaries are knowledgeable about the various rural development programmes. Pamphlets and notices and public meetings (20 per cent), workshops, seminars, film screening, exhibitions are generally the major sources of knowledge for people and hence the functionaries promote the use of all these, besides several other innovative means of improving knowledge of the programmes (54 per cent).

**Cooperation in Effective Implementation of Development Programmes:** In their effective implementation, according to 94 per cent of the functionaries, the elected representatives cooperate (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent). There is satisfactory cooperation in the implementation of programmes (68 per cent) from all concerned agencies and particularly from monitoring and evaluation agency (22 per cent) and finance (32 per cent). Other agencies are also cooperating with the GP, TP and ZP. There is however need for timely release of funds and grants (36 per cent), guidance and suggestions (16 per cent) and administrative and evaluation assistance (28 per cent).

**Knowledge about and Participation of NGOs:** While 96 per cent of the functionaries are aware of the district NGOs (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per
cent; T. Narasipura, 87.5 per cent), 4 per cent of them do not know about them. In the understanding of 84 per cent of the functionaries, NGOs cooperate (86 per cent) in the effective implementation of the rural development programmes (H.D. Kote, 71.4 per cent; Mysore, 91.4 per cent; T. Narasipura, 71.4 per cent). However, 14 per cent of them appear to have difference of opinion on that count.

There are several NGOs which are effectively involved in the implementation. To name a few which are prominent in their rural development work: MYRADA, RUDSET, V-LEAD, ODP, Vivekananda Youth Movement, Ambedkar Yukara Sanga, Srishath Mahila Swasaya Sanga, Purusha Swasaya Sanga, Swami Vivekanand Nagarikara Sanga, Grameenabiridhi Sanga, Nirmithi Kendra and so on.

**Cooperation of the Political Parties:** Political parties also cooperate in the implementation of the rural development programmes, for only about 60 per cent of them (H.D. Kote, 50 per cent; Mysore, 65.7 per cent; T. Narasipura, 43 per cent), whereas 35 per cent of them think that they do not (H.D. Kote, 33.3 per cent; Mysore, 31.4 per cent; T. Narasipura, 57 per cent), primarily because of variances in opinions and ideas when the political parties are not the ruling parties.

**Media Help in Reaching the Programmes to People:** While 98 per cent of them agree that the media such as the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and films do help in reaching the development programmes to the people (H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 85.7 per cent), 2 per cent of them do not. Most functionaries (94 per cent) also formulate publicity programmes for rural development programmes to reach the public (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent).

**Formulation of Rural Development Programmes:** For 94 per cent of the functionaries, experts do formulate rural development programmes (H.D. Kote, 85.7 per cent; Mysore, 100 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent).

**Difficulties in Effective Implementation of Development Programmes:** There are several difficulties in the way of an effective implementation of the rural
development programmes in Mysore district. Among them, institutional difficulties are indicated to by 44 per cent of the functionaries (H.D. Kote, 71.4 per cent; Mysore, 30.3 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent), technical difficulties by 50 per cent of them (H.D. Kote, 14.4 per cent; Mysore, 63.6 per cent; T. Narasipura, 25 per cent), and others such as the administrative, financial and implementation by 2 per cent each of the functionaries.

**Suggestions for Overcoming Difficulties**: One particular means of overcoming some of the difficulties faced in the implementation of rural development programmes is to have all the programmes implemented through the local government, that is, the grama panchayat (94 per cent). But there is of course a lack of personnel at the grassroots and also a lack of training. A two-tier system (4 per cent of the functionaries) for the PRS could be a solution. Direct participation of the people could bring down levels of corruption (44 per cent) and even political interferences (26 per cent). Educating the grassroots personnel and providing them with the requisite knowledge, because of a several lack of knowledge amidst them, would be another way of overcoming difficulties (98 per cent).

3. **Assessment by Elected Members of Zilla, Taluk and Grama Panchayats**

A total of 210 elected members to the grama panchayat (136 representatives), taluk panchayat (48 representatives) and zilla panchayat (26 representatives) have been interviewed (Figure 6.11) using a separate (third) questionnaire in order to gather their ideas, opinions and perceptions on the functioning of the PRIIs they sit in as elected representatives of the people in regard to decentralization of planning and development, participation in planning and development and rural development itself. A description and analysis of the results of data analysis is given below.
Demographics of the Elected Members Sample: The elected members of the gram panchayats have been chosen from 58 villages in the three taluks of Mysore district under study. A more or less similar number of representatives has been chosen as the sample for study from the three taluks and thus the samples (136 in all) include 46 members from H.D. Kote taluk (33.8 per cent) and 45 members each from Mysore taluk (33.1 per cent) and T. Narasipura taluk (33.1 per cent), respectively. While only one elected member each has been chosen from several villages, more than one members have been selected from other villages, with 10 as the maximum number selected from one village called Muguru. Multiple samples have been chosen (from 2 to 10) from several villages. Of the sample representatives, 67 (49.3 per cent) are women and 69 (50.7 per cent) are men.

The elected members of the taluk panchayats have been selected from the three taluks, namely, H.D. Kote (15 or 31.3 per cent), Mysore (20 or 41.7 per cent) and T. Narasipura (13 or 27.1 per cent). The 48 of them are in effect members elected by the people from 47 villages in the three taluks. Two members have been selected from one of the 47 villages, namely, Menasikyathnalli. Among them, the women representatives (28) account for 58.3 per cent as against the men representatives – 20 or 41.7 per cent.

The elected members of the zilla panchayats have been selected from the seven taluks of the district, namely, H.D. Kote (5 or 19.2 per cent), Hunsur (2 or 7.7 per cent), K.R. Nagara (1 or 3.8 per cent), Mysore (6 or 23.1 per cent), Nanjangud (3 or 11.5 per cent), Periyapatna (2 or 7.7 per cent) and T. Narasipura (7 or 26.9 per cent). It is thus evident that a considerable number of elected members have been chosen for study from the three taluks of our study and some representative number of them selected from other taluks to give wider coverage. They are 26 of them, elected directly by the people to represent them at the TP and ZP from the village panchayats. They are from 25 villages across the district, with 2 representatives from one village, namely, B. Seehalli. The women representatives (14 of them) account for 53.8 per cent the sample and the men representatives (12 of them) account for 46.2 per cent.
Community Categories of the Elected Members: As representation in the democratic set up of the PRIs, the elected representatives are generally from all community categories and based on reservation according to the strength of the communities. Of the 136 grama panchayat representatives selected for interviews, general category (GM) accounts for 22.7 per cent (Lingayats 16, other general categories 15), backward communities category A (16) for 11.8 per cent, backward communities category B (14) for 10.3 per cent, scheduled castes (36) for 26.5 per cent and scheduled tribes (39) for 28.7 per cent. Thus, the scheduled tribes and castes together constitute the largest group of elected members, which is also a ground truth (Figure 6.12).

Of the 48 representatives chosen for interviews from the taluk panchayats, general category (GM) is represented by 8 members (Shetty 1, Lingayat 4 and others 3) accounting for 16.7 per cent, backward communities group A (19) for 39.6 per cent, backward communities group B (6) for 12.5 per cent, scheduled castes (10) for 20.8 per cent and scheduled tribes (5) for 10.4 per cent. And of the 26 representative samples of the zilla panchayats, general category (GM) accounts for 23 per cent, backward communities group A for 23 per cent, backward communities group B for 7.7 per cent, scheduled castes for 26.9 per cent and scheduled tribes for 19.3 per cent.

Age Distribution of Elected Members of GP, TP and ZP: Nearly 60 per cent of the elected members of the grama panchayat belong to age groups below 40 years. Among them 19.1 per cent are in the age group below 30 years, 23.5 per cent are in the age group 31-35 years, and 17 per cent in 36-40 years. The middle aged
representatives account for 12.5 per cent in 41-45 years, 13.9 per cent in 46-50 years, and 4.1 per cent in 51-55 years. The older age groups have about 3 per cent of them in 56-60 years and 5.1 per cent in 60 plus years (Figure 6.13).

Nearly half the elected representatives of the TP are within the age group 26-35 years (below 30 years 25.1 per cent and 31-35 years 25.1 per cent), the largest share of the elected representatives belong to the age group 36-40 years with 27.2 per cent, and the other, nearly 23 per cent of the elected members of the TP belong to ages above 40 (41-45 years, 12.6 per cent; 46-50 years, 2.1 per cent; 51-55 years, 6.3 per cent; and above 55 years, 2.1 per cent).

On the other hand, the age distribution of elected members of the ZP is as follows: the group below 30 years account for 11.5 per cent, 31-35 years account for 48.5 per cent, 36-40 years for 7.6 per cent, 41-15 years for 11.4 per cent, 46-50 years for 19.1 per cent, 51-55 years for 7.6 per cent and above 55 years for 3.8 per cent.
Occupational Structure of Elected Members: The elected members of the grama panchayat are engaged in different activities (Figure 6.14), most of them being involved in agriculture (60 or 44.1 per cent). About 5 per cent of them are in businesses (7 of them) while 28.7 per cent of them (39) are agricultural labourers. Housewives account for 20.6 per cent of them with services just about 1 per cent of them. As for taluk panchayat representatives, a majority of them (21 or 43.8 per cent) is in agriculture, almost similar number (20 or 41.7 per cent) is of housewives, and the rest are either in business (3 or 6.3 per cent) and agricultural labourers (4 or 8.4 per cent). A majority of the zilla panchayat members (16 or 61.5 per cent) is in agriculture whereas the next largest group of them (7 or 24.9 per cent) is in business, and others are mainly women who are housewives (3 or 11.5 per cent).

Income of Elected Members: The income of the elected members of the grama panchayat range from Rs. 5,000 to a staggering Rs. 200 thousand. Thus, there is a vast income difference among the elected members. However, 86 per cent of the elected members have reported an income of less than Rs. 25,000 while 8.6 per cent of them between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50 thousand. A very small proportion of them (0.7 per cent) fall in the income class of Rs. 50 to Rs. 75 thousand, while a slightly bigger proportion (2.7 per cent) fall in Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 thousand and a small proportion (0.8 per cent) fall in the class Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 thousand (Figure 6.15).
The distribution of income among the elected members of the taluk panchayat is different, with 4 per cent falling in the less than Rs. 25,000, 16 per cent in the Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 thousand, 20 per cent in the Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 thousand, another 20 per cent in the Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 thousand and 4 per cent in the more than Rs. 400 thousand. The range of income is thus between Rs. 10,000 (3.8 per cent) and Rs. 500,000 (3.8 per cent). The elected members of the taluk panchayats are relatively well off than the grama panchayat members, who are in fact the poorest of the elected members.

Among the zilla panchayat elected representatives, the variation in income is between Rs. 6,000 (2.1 per cent) and Rs. 150,000 (4.2 per cent). However, the distribution of income is as follows: 64.5 per cent of the zilla panchayat members report of an income less than Rs. 25,000; 12.6 per cent between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50 thousand; 2.1 per cent in the group of Rs. 50 to Rs. 75 thousand; 8.3 per cent in the group of Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 thousand; 6.3 per cent in the range of Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 thousand; and a similar 6.3 per cent of them in the group of more than Rs. 125 thousand. It appears that most members of the zilla panchayat (56 per cent) are better off than the rest, for they have incomes more than Rs. 125 thousand.

**Active Political Experience of Elected Members:** The grama panchayat members have indicated that they have varied years of experience in active politics, with 17.6 per cent of them reporting more than 5 years’ experience, 1.5 per cent about
5 years’, 2.9 per cent 4 years’, 16.9 per cent 3 years’, 4.4 per cent 2 years’ and 43.4 per cent just about 1 years’. Some of them have obviously been sitting members in the gram panchayats, before the current term and thus they (3 per cent) have more years of experience in active politics at the grassroots level. The TP members also have varied experiences as well, with 16.7 per cent of them having the ‘first time’ experience, 18.8 per cent about a year’s experience, 25 per cent 2 years’ and a majority of the rest (about 40 per cent) more than 3 years’ experience. About 81 per cent of the elected ZP members contested for the first time and about 19 per cent a second time. Thus, the ZP members alone have limited experiences.

**Representation by Political Parties:** The elected GP members, because the elections are fought on party lines, represent national parties in the panchayat. A good majority of them (67.6 per cent or 92 of them) is of independents, whereas 14.7 per cent represent the National Congress, 2.9 per cent represent Janatha Dal(S), 4.4 per cent Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP) and 8 per cent of them represent other political parties which are regional in character. Among the TP members, 45.8 per cent owe allegiance to the National Congress Party, 31.3 per cent to the Janatha Dal (S), 6.3 per cent to Janatha Dal (U) and 16.7 per cent of them to the Bharathiya Janatha Party. Also among the ZP members, a majority of 53.8 per cent of the members is with the National Congress Party, 26.9 per cent with the Janatha Dal (S) and 19.2 per cent with the Bharathiya Janatha Party.

**People’s Opinion of the Political Parties:** The elected GP members have heightened opinion about their political parties as 73.5 per cent of them indicate that their parties are thought as ‘excellent’ by the people; 14.7 per cent of perceive people’s opinion of their parties as ‘good’; and a small proportion of them (less than 1 per cent) consider their parties’ position in the midst of the people is ‘bad’. According to the elected TP members, their party is considered ‘excellent’ by the people for 62.5 per cent of them and ‘good’ by the people for 33.3 per cent of them. According to the ZP members however their party is considered ‘excellent’ by the people only for 7.7 per cent and ‘good’ for 92.3 per cent.
Times Contested in Elections: About 67 per cent of the elected GP members have contested the elections for the first time while 16.2 per cent a second time, 3.7 per cent a third time, 1.5 per cent a fourth time and 2.2 per cent more than 5 times. A tenth of them have not however answered the question at all, leaving it for us to make a guess about their attempts. Or they have contested so many times that it is not important how many times they have done so. Among the TP members, 64.6 per cent have contested for the first time, 25 per cent for the second time, 4.3 per cent for the third time and 4.2 per cent for more than three times. Just about 2 per cent of them have not responded to this query, leaving us unsure of their contesting elections. While 81 per cent of the ZP members have contested for the first time, about 19 per cent of them have done so for the second time. Thus, the GP and TP members have better experiences than the ZP members.

Representatives’ Opinions about their Parties: Asked about their own opinion about the party they represent, 79.4 per cent of the elected members of the GP have indicated ‘excellent’, 8.1 per cent ‘good’, 1.5 per cent ‘don’t know’ even as 11 per cent of them have left it unanswered. As to their own opinions about their political party, just about 65 per cent of the elected TP members think of their parties as ‘excellent’ and about 29 per cent of them think that it is ‘good’, although 6.3 per cent of the members have not stated any opinions about their parties, may be fearing repercussions in such opinions. All the ZP members have shown an opinion of their parties being ‘good,’ in their own.

Designations of Current Positions: Most of the GP members are just members, while 7.4 of them are Presidents, 5.9 per cent are Vice Presidents and 0.7 per cent are members with some responsibilities relevant to rural development schemes. For example, 9 per cent of them are on the subcommittee for drinking water, 1.5 per cent of them on the drainage subcommittee and nearly 45 per cent on both drinking water and housing subcommittees. As for TP members, a majority of 56.3 per cent of the elected are not part of any of the subcommittees. On the other, 2.1 per cent sit on the drinking water subcommittee, 2.1 per cent on drainage subcommittee, and 33.3 per cent of them sit on all three subcommittees, namely, drinking water, housing and drainage. As much as 88.5 per cent of the elected ZP
members are not members of any subcommittees, but 3.8 per cent each sit on drinking water, housing and other subcommittees. There are some members (3.8 per cent) who sit on more than one such sub-committees.

**Decentralization of Power:** A majority of the GP members do not agree with the decentralization of power, whereas 93.8 per cent of the TP members and 96.2 per cent of the ZP members agree with the decentralization.

**Type of PRI liked by the Elected Members:** Among the GP members, a very large majority of members (96.9 per cent) show preference for three-tier type of PRIs and a slightly smaller proportion (93.8 per cent) of the TP members and only 61.5 per cent of the ZP members prefer the three-tier. Two-tier PRI is opted for by 38.5 per cent of the ZP members. Among the people who agree with the three-tier system are 85.5 per cent of the GP members, 93.8 per cent of the TP members and 96.2 per cent of the ZP members. There are some who do not agree with the 3-tier system for some reasons and they have not been stated.

**Agreements with ZP System, Election Process and Length of Election Term:** A majority of 84.6 per cent of the elected GP members, 93.8 per cent of the TP members and 92.3 per cent of the elected ZP members agree with the existing ZP system. Likewise, a majority of the elected members in GPs (85.3 per cent), TPs (100 per cent) and ZP (96.2 per cent) agree with the election process as being correct as well. Direct election process is favoured by 13.2 per cent of the GP members, 46.2 per cent of the ZP members and 100 per cent of the TP members as being the correct process. As for the election term, the length of the current term is also supported by 96.2 per cent of the GP members, 88.5 per cent of the TP members and 97.9 per cent of the ZP members. They all generally agree with the present system of the election processes even for Presidents and Vice Presidents at 96.2 per cent, 53.8 per cent and 97.9 per cent, respectively, for GPs, TPs and ZP.

A majority of the GP, TP and ZP members agree with the election term of ZP, most prefer a 2-year term (98.5 per cent of the GP members, 97.9 per cent of the TP members, and 88.5 per cent of the ZP members) whereas a small proportion of ZP members (3.8 per cent) opt for 4-year term and a similar proportion of them (3.8 per cent) for 6-year term.
Knowledge of ZP Standing Committees: Nearly 94 per cent of the elected GP members know about the ZP standing committees and they also know that the committees meet once a week. About 98 per cent of the elected TP members and all of the elected ZP members know about the standing committees. While 80 per cent of the elected GP members and 85.4 per cent of the elected TP members agree on 3 such standing committees, the elected ZP members however say that there are 5 such subcommittees (96.2 per cent). A clear majority of the three groups of elected members agree with the current standing committees: 88.2 per cent of the elected GP members and all 100 per cent of the elected TP and ZP members. Eighty six per cent of the GP members, 87.5 per cent of the TP members and 96.2 per cent of the ZP members are also aware of their work towards implementing rural development programmes. Not only a majority of the elected members know about them, but they also know their constitution and their work. They are also able to list a number of such standing committees, most notably production subcommittee, social justice subcommittee, finance, health, planning and audit and gram sanitation subcommittees.

In the opinion of 89.7 per cent of the GP, 93.5 per cent of the TP and 96.2 per cent of the ZP members, the subcommittees are capable of giving suggestions and guidance relating to rural development.

There is often full attendance at the ZP meetings is the consensus of 86.8 per cent of the GP, 97.9 per cent of the TP and 100 per cent of the ZP members. Participation at these meetings is high as 92.6 per cent of the GP, 89.6 per cent of the TP and 96.2 per cent of the ZP members actively participate in the proceedings of the meetings. Every one of the TP and ZP members make prior preparations for the meetings and participation, only 94.9 per cent of the GP members do so. All of them feel free to participate in the proceedings without someone prodding them to do so. They account also for the participation of the officials of the GPs (89.7 per cent), TPs (91.7 per cent) and ZP (100 per cent). They also see that the officials and staffs come prepared for attending the meetings.

Such meetings are always so that there are secular and unbiased discussions on rural development actions and decisions are thus made in a fair fashion (91.2 per cent of the elected GP members, 97.2 per cent of the elected TP members and 100 per cent
of the ZP members). The discussions are rural development related and are constructive for making decisions in regard to rural development as well. There is always introspection in the meetings where members introspect about the success of the missions – nearly all members of the GPs, TPs and ZP agree to this introspection.

**Political Interference in the Execution of Development Works:** For 39 per cent of the GP, 41.7 per cent of the TP and only 19.2 per cent of the ZP members agree to political interference in the district development works. There is also a large majority of them denying such interference in development works. And according to 33.8 per cent of the GP members, 31.3 per cent of the TP members and 26.9 per cent of the ZP members, corruption is the main road block for achieving rural development.

To a question as to how one can eradicate corruption from the development works at the ZP, TP and GP levels, people’s participation, removal of corruption, official attendance at *gramasabahs*, removal of mediators and sanctioning and releasing programme funds directly to GPs have been suggested as the solutions. There is greater support for all of this only from 20 per cent of the GP members, 21 per cent of the TP members and 19 per cent of the ZP members. This means a majority of the elected members in the GPs, TPs and ZP are silent about corruption.

**Training and Facilities Provision:** Nearly 92 per cent of the elected GP members, 85.4 per cent of the TP members and 100 per cent of the ZP members seek to gain training and helpful educational programmes such as workshops and seminars towards capacity building. Further, variously different proportions of the elected members seek to have capacity building facilities and towards this end, they suggest various combinations of training, camp, workshop, seminars and other relevant activities. On an average, 35 per cent of them seek training, 21 per cent seek camps, and less than 4 per cent of them suggest workshops and seminars.

**Visit to Constituencies:** Most elected members – 96 per cent of the GP members, a similar proportion of TP members and 100 per cent of the ZP members – visit their constituencies regularly and the weekly once is the most favoured routine
for about 85 per cent of the GP members, 87.5 per cent of the TP members and about 77 per cent of the ZP members. The rest of them have infrequent visits to their constituencies but they invariably visit the people who voted them to the PRIs. Further, on their visits, they not only receive petitions and complaints, and even applications for jobs, and see that they receive appropriate attention from the officials of the ZP. Almost every one of the elected members has had such petitions and complaints looked into by the ZP officials.

Cooperation of the Officials and Staffs in Rural Development: In the elected members’ opinions, the officials and staffs of the rural development agencies in the state cooperate very well in the implementation of the rural development programmes. A very high proportion of the elected GP members (90.4 per cent), TP members (93.8 per cent) and ZP members (96.2 per cent) indicate to such cooperation.

Reach of the Rural Development Programmes: There are always some kinds of publicity in order to reach the public with information on the schemes being implemented: 93.4 per cent of the GP members, 100 per cent of the TP and also ZP members indicate that they have been behind formulating publicity programmes. They have planned for campaigns using pamphlets, public meetings, workshops, seminars, film shows, exhibitions, gramasabha meetings and various others programmes. However, no individual campaign has been done because, to make them effective, a combination of all or some of them has been attempted in the district. Among the GP members, more than a fifth of them have campaigned with pamphlets, public meetings and gramasabha meetings; and 17.8 per cent of them campaigned with public meetings, workshops and gramasabha meetings. On the other hand, 31.3 per cent of the TP members have used a combination of pamphlets, public meetings and gramasabha meetings; 27.1 per cent of them public, gramasabha meetings and other campaigns; and 10.4 per cent of them a combination of more than 4 campaigns. In fact, there are campaigns with almost all of the listed aids. Among the ZP members, however, gramasabha meetings have been a popular campaign among 42.3 per cent; pamphlets and gramasabha meetings among 23.1 per cent; and public and gramasabha meetings among 11.5 per cent.
Mass media have been taken advantage of in reaching the people with information on rural development schemes being implemented in the district. Dailies, periodicals (magazines), radio, television and films have been the mass media (print, audio and visual) for campaigning on the rural development schemes. They have reached villages (89.7 per cent of the GP members), taluks (97.9 per cent of the TP members) and the district (96.2 per cent of the ZP members).

**Delivering Decisions of the Gramasabha to Officials:** Almost every elected member appears to have the mandate of delivering the decisions of the gramasabha to the officials for implementation: 99.2 per cent of the GP members; 97.9 per cent of the TP members and 100 per cent of the ZP members. In most cases, the beneficiaries also agree to the opinions of the elected members: 97.7 per cent of the GP, 95.8 per cent of the TP, and 92.3 per cent of the ZP members.

**Difficulties in Organizing Meetings:** Less than 20 per cent of the GP members, 29 per cent of the TP members and only 7.7 per cent of the ZP members have had some difficulties or the other in organizing the public meetings for campaigning on the rural development schemes. It has always been a combination of several difficulties rather than one single difficulty faced by the elected members. While 80 per cent of the GP members, about 67 per cent of the TP members, and 92.3 per cent of the ZP members have not faced any difficulties, alcoholism, groupism, casteism, political influences, even selfishness and some sort of mediation have been the general difficulties in the villages and taluks and district. Mediators have been the difficulty for 5 per cent of the GP members, casteism and mediation have been the difficulty for 6.3 per cent of the TP members, and groupism has alone been the difficulty for ZP members.

**Criteria for Selection of Beneficiaries:** Poverty (23.5 per cent) and poverty and caste (65.4 per cent) are the main criteria for selecting the beneficiaries for the elected GP members. For the TP members, poverty (18.8 per cent), and poverty and caste (79.2 per cent) have been the criteria for the same. While poverty (73.1 per cent) is the main criterion, poverty and caste (26.9 per cent) have been the criteria for the ZP members. Power equations within the villages, influential people may also influence the results of a selection.
Participation and Cooperation for Rural Development: All the elected members participate in rural development schemes of the district: 97 per cent of the GP members, 100 per cent of the TP and ZP members. Also most elected members and officials cooperate with each other in regard to rural development schemes in the district.

There are several rural development programmes being implemented in the district, most notably, all programmes of the 13th Five Year Plan, Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Swarnajayanti Grama Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), Bisi Oota Yojana (BOJ), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Basava Indira Housing, Ambedkar Housing, Drinking Water, Development of Roads, Development of Schools, Rural Sanitation and several others are all known to the elected members and they have an excellent knowledge of them. Exceptions are 5.9 per cent of the GP members, and 4.2 per cent of the TP members.

According to 88.2 per cent of the elected GP members, 85.4 per cent of the elected TP members and 38.5 per cent of the elected ZP members, the people of the district participate actively in rural development programmes being implemented. Yet there are certain proportions of them in the villages, because of their ignorance and backwardness, do not know about them and therefore are not benefiting from them. There are also difficulties in implementing the rural development programmes (34.5 per cent of the GP members, 45.8 per cent of the TP members, and 42.3 per cent of the ZP members) and among them the important ones are: institutional, administrative, financial difficulties, corruption, implementation difficulties, political party influences and hurdles, and casteism. These difficulties are uniformly found and faced by the implementers of the programmes. The elected members are aware of them and, sometimes, they are the cause as well as the hurdles in the way of their implementation. Party and political affiliations influence and affect these in a way that the rural development programmes suffer. They are always in some combinations that their effect is devastating.

Suggestions to Overcome Difficulties in Implementation: For each of the problems, either difficulties or constraints, the solution lies within. An institutional problem or difficulty can only be overcome by institutional solutions, call it reforms.
or whatever. Corruption is one particular problem which requires an attitudinal change, especially in the minds of the political leaders, and by extension, everyone who contests the local body elections on a party ticket. There are in fact necessary mechanisms in place to overcome difficulties and constraints, but then there are people who specialize on ‘loop holes’ which can get them ‘quick money’ and hence corruption is deep rooted. Besides, the elections are fought on party lines and the contestants have to spend money on their campaigns to win. This has resulted in much corruption. Judicial activism is rather low that curbs for corruption do not function effectively.

Conclusion

This chapter has been the core of the thesis, discussing hard facts about the workings of the grama, taluk and zilla panchayats. There have been three different parts of the chapter, each discussing the perception and insights of the people involved in rural development through local governments. The beneficiaries (250), the functionaries of the Panchayati Raj System (50), and the elected members of the grama panchayats (136), taluk panchayats (48) and zilla panchayats (26) have been interviewed using specially designed, pilot tested questionnaires to understand how they perceive the PRS and PRIs in regard to decentralization and participation in rural development.

It is heartening to note throughout the discussion that the decentralization has worked, participation has happened and rural development has occurred, albeit difficulties and constraints in implementing the rural development schemes. Most important conclusion, implied rather implicit, is that there is an attitudinal problem to tackle in every stakeholder and institutional, administrative and political problems of some very deep complexity to look into, study and analyze, even more deeply than has been done using three different, yet more or less similar kind of questionnaires. A participatory appraisal approach with a ‘narrative’ could have been much better for analysis and interpretation.
References:


Vyasulu, V. et al. 2004: Inter-State Study on Rural Decentralization, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad.