CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, the data collected using questionnaires have been analyzed and interpreted in a way to tell the reader about what the beneficiaries of the rural development, functionaries of the panchayati raj institutions and the elected members of the grama panchayats, taluk panchayat samitis and zilla panchayats think and perceive about the decentralization, participation and rural development in regard to panchayati raj system in place in the district of Mysore and through it in the State of Karnataka. Following on from the last chapter, this chapter provides a summary of the thesis, which is a blend of seven commissioned chapters, chapter-by-chapter; gives the findings and conclusions in a nutshell and all together in a few pages; and then speaks on the implications of the study as well as presents some recommendations.

7.2 Summary

The thesis is a blend of seven chapters and they are briefly summarized here as to what they have discussed about the panchayati raj system in Mysore district of Karnataka. The first chapter is introductory and does the customary job of introducing the background of the study, the problem of analysis, the objectives, the methodology and the organization of the thesis. The specific objectives of the study have been (a) to examine the nature of the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the district of Mysore, Karnataka in the context of three taluks, namely, Mysore, Heggedadevankote and T. Narasipura; (b) to examine the functions of the PRIs in respect of various rural development programmes, operational in Mysore district, and to understand the issues, difficulties and constraints in people’s participation; and (c) to suggest and recommend ways and means of overcoming the functional difficulties from the
points of view of the elected members of the PRIs and the people of the rural areas, particularly in respect of their participation in the rural development programmes.

The research methodology has largely been of methods of primary survey, that is, the questionnaire survey and individual interviews. The primary sources of data have been the elected members of the PRIs in the three taluks of Mysore district, the functionaries of the panchayat raj institutions and the people who are beneficiaries of the rural development programmes operational in the district. The primary, questionnaire survey has been based on a random sample of (a) 136 elected grama panchayat members, 48 taluk panchayat members and 26 zilla panchayat members, a total of 210 elected members, (b) 50 functionaries of the panchayati raj institutions from the three taluks of study, and (c) 83 beneficiaries from H.D. Kote taluk, and 84 beneficiaries from Mysore taluk, and 83 beneficiaries from T. Narasipura taluk, making up a total of 250 beneficiaries.

Decentralization, for the purpose of the study and in the context of rural development in Mysore district, means a transfer of certain authority and power in the matter of formulation and implementation of development plans from the highest organization or institution at the national or the state level to organisations or institutions at the sub-state level, regional and local levels. The local level, which includes districts, blocks and panchayats, have particular roles in rural development planning and are vested with the powers and the responsibilities associated with that role. In a truly decentralized situation, such power includes the power to determine goals and targets and to raise resources locally, which in the case of grama, taluk and zilla panchayats are yet to be accomplished, although there is some true sense of decentralization in the workings of the panchayati raj system at the district level.

- **Decentralized Planning can, thus, be defined as a type of planning where local organisations and institutions formulate, adopt, execute actions and supervise the plan without interference by the central body.**
Public Participation is an ideal of democratic decentralization and is achieved through people’s participation in the process of governance. This is made possible through the institution of local self-government. Through the functioning of the elected bodies such as the grama panchayat, taluk panchayat and zilla panchayat, people participate in the process of governance and learn to make democratic institutions stronger. They realize the importance of freedom and democracy in respect of planning and development at the local level.

In the Panchayat Raj Institutions, decentralized Planning depends to a great deal on the devolution of functions and powers from Government at the top to the local levels. The Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) form the lower level authorities in India and Karnataka. It has been seen, however, that even when powers and functions are given to these institutions, something is held back in its exercise, by certain competing agencies. Very often, the weak Constitutional position of the Panchayati Raj Institutions has been the reason for this neglect. The National Government has however tried to strengthen the PR institutions by turning them into constitutional units of self-government through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1993. As many as 29 subjects have been identified for the PR Institutions. Many States have already devolved considerable number of functions and powers to these institutions with the power to mobilize resources. At present the trend all over the country is to move fast towards decentralized planning through PR Institutions. Karnataka state is one of the front runners in this initiative.

The essence of development, according to the philosophy of the present study, is not in ‘providing’ but in ‘promoting’ the rural sector. The rural people should know how to sustain themselves, financially, and gain economic independence, in time and over space. The stress on rural development is for self-reliance. Also, rural development should result in greater access to goods and services for the rural population. The Panchayati Raj Institutions are for this essential purpose of reaching the rural people with goods and services they need most, even as they develop over time and in space.
The second chapter has been a review of relevant and recent literature on such areas as decentralization, rural development, science, technology, society and rural development, and rural development and panchayati raj institutions in the country, the state of Karnataka and also in Mysore district. Research evaluating rural development programmes and schemes in the country and the different states has been covered to give national and regional flavours for such programmes which have been implemented locally and through local, self-governments. Poverty and rural development research has also been covered. A particular section on the criticisms of the gramasabhas has been attempted to provide for an understanding of the critical as well as functional difficulties and constraints there are in the panchayati raj institutions. Other areas of research reviewed are local self-governments, panchayat raj institutions, people’s participation in rural development, and recommendations for changing the panchayati raj institutions.

The third chapter has provided a description of the setting for the study. The chapter has discussed the historical, geographical, land use and rural development aspects of the district as could be gleaned from secondary sources of data. A reasonably well constructed description has been made of the socio-demographics from the Census data on the district, besides a historical, geographical and political account of local self-government in Mysore district. Formation of the Zilla panchayat, taluk panchayat samitis and grama panchayats in Mysore district has been recounted as it has happened in the State. Staffs of the panchayat raj institutions and the beneficiaries of the rural development in the district have also been discussed with supporting datasets.

Chapter four has been a discussion on the structure and functions of the three-tier of the Pachayati Raj System and Institutions, namely, the grama panchayats, taluk panchayat samitis and the zilla panchayats, with legal sanctions in the State of Karnataka. Each of the three-tiers and their legal positions, structures and functions of them have been discussed threadbare. Panchayat’s functions have been categorized into obligatory functions and discretionery functions. The obligatory functions of the village panchayats include village roads, tanks, street
lighting, sanitation and conservancy, control of epidemics, promotion and development of economic conditions with reference to agriculture and welfare of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The discretionary functions of the panchayats cover a broad range affecting the life and property of the village community, in general. They include civic functions like medical relief, markets, statistics and the developmental functions like cooperation, and veterinary relief. Besides, there are some ‘agency functions’ assigned by the Taluk Panchayat Samitis and the Government, the execution of construction works, distribution of irrigation water, management of minor forests, pasture and common lands are the most important. The regulatory powers of the panchayat are also quite extensive. The panchayats can make by-laws on a wide range of matters concerning sanitation, buildings, and markets. The main source of income of the grama panchayat are from the levy of the taxes and fees: tax on land, profession tax, vehicle tax, fees on hats, shandies, fees on registration of animals sold in their markets, tax on private scavenging, and water tax.

The fifth chapter has been a detailed discussion on the structure and functions of a Zilla Panchayat, as experienced in Karnataka. This is additional materials to those discussed under the Zilla Panchayat in the previous chapter. The discussion in the previous chapter on ZP has been for the sake of completing discussions on the three-tier system of panchayats in Karnataka, while that here is for making a special case of ZP and in particular to Mysore District.

Zilla Panchayat is an institution consisting of the elected members as determined under Section 160, the members of the House of People and the members of the State Legislative Assembly representing a part or whole of the district, whose constituencies lie within the district, the members of the Council of the State and the members of the State Legislative Council who are registered as electors within the district; and the Adhyakshas of Taluk Panchayats in the district.

The sixth chapter has been the chapter where the analytical results of the datasets from three different groups of people, beneficiaries, functionaries of the PRIs and elected members of the grama, taluk and zilla panchyats, have been
discussed and the different groups’ thinking and perceptions of the PRIs and rural development schemes in the district have been brought to bear on the themes of the research study. The findings and conclusions from the study are given in a nutshell in the following section.

The seventh chapter, which is the present chapter, is a summary of the thesis, presenting the findings and conclusions in a nutshell and giving certain simple recommendations for improving the functioning of the panchayat raj institutions.

7.3 Findings and Conclusions

This study has focussed on rural development through local governments, particularly the three-tiered panchayati raj system, in Karnataka, taking Mysore district as a case study. Three taluks have been chosen from the district, based on relevant criteria for selection, and they are: H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura. Sample respondents have been chosen from three groups of people, namely, the beneficiaries (250) of the rural development schemes, functionaries of the Zilla Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Grama panchayats (50) and elected members of the Zilla, Taluk and Grama Panchayats (210) for separate surveys using three different questionnaires to assess decentralization, participation and rural development in Mysore district. A brief summary of the findings and conclusions are given below.

7.3.1 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.

- Among the beneficiaries, 99.2 per cent are women while a negligible proportion (0.8 per cent) of them are men. 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.
The beneficiaries’ ages range 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 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.

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.

Nearly half the beneficiaries are agricultural labourers (123 or 49.2 per cent), as much as 41.6 per cent (104) of them are housewives and the rest of them are engaged in horticulture cropping (9.2 per cent).

Most notable feature is 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.

Nearly 43 per cent of the beneficiaries own lands. About 15 per cent of them are marginal with less than 1.0 acre of land, 16 per cent of them own between 1 acre and 2 acres (small), 5.6 per cent of them own 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). A majority of the beneficiaries (57 per cent) is of landless people, either agricultural labourers or housewives and hence are unpaid labourers.

- A 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). Most beneficiaries are therefore 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.

- About 90 per cent of the beneficiaries think that the PR System is appropriate for rural development in Mysore district. Only 85 per cent of them report satisfaction with the PR System.

- Among those thinking the PRS as appropriate within the taluks of the study area, 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 PRSystem.

- 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.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- Among the ZP officers and staffs visiting constituencies, only 50.6 per cent from H.D. Kote, 48.8 per cent from Mysore and 39.8 per cent from T. Narasipura. The beneficiaries report that on such visits, the ZP officers and staffs enquire about the programme deficiencies from them.

- A majority of 51.2 per cent of the beneficiaries report that the ZP officers and staffs do not consult them on development works, while 45.2 per cent say that they do consult 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.

- As for rural development implementing institution, the beneficiaries have varied ideas: for 40.4 per cent it is grama panchayat, for 12.8 per cent it is both GP and TP and for 7.2 per cent it is a combination of GP, TP, NGOs and contractors.

- 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 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.

- As much as 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.

- Less than half the beneficiaries report that the ZP Officers, Staffs and elected members do cooperate with them in the implementation of the schemes 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 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 and for the total beneficiaries, it is 48.9 per cent.

- Two-thirds of the beneficiaries participate in the implementation of the development schemes whereas 29.2 per cent are not. In the 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 participate in the implementation of the development programmes.

- 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 social responsibility and 5.6 per cent of them are unaware of it.

- As for the current PR System, a third of the beneficiaries say that it has achieved 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.

- 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, in their taluks.

- 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. The banks and cooperatives do support the ZP is vouchsafed by 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.

- Sixty-eight per cent of the beneficiaries are sure that NGOs 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). 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.

- Everyone (96.4 per cent) knows about grama sabha (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. A large majority of 82.4 per cent know about the processes of grama sabha and how it really works.

- Nearly 84 per cent of the beneficiaries think that they are chosen for the development programmes by the grama sabha (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.

- The results of analysis of data indicate that 85.6 per cent of the beneficiaries are aware of the elected members’ and officers’ participation in the grama sabha (H.D. Kote taluk 92.8 per cent, Mysore taluk 92.7 per cent and T. Narasipura taluk 73.5 per cent).

- About 71 per cent of them are certain that ‘poverty and caste’ are the criteria for selecting beneficiaries (H.D. Kote 88 per cent; Mysore 69 per cent; and T. Narasipura 56.6 per cent).

- 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.
7.3.2 Functionaries of the Panchayati Raj Institutions: A total of 50 functionaries have been chosen from the ZP, TP and GP institutions from the three study taluks – H.D. Kote, Mysore and T. Narasipura.

- The functionaries are people young and old and their ages range from 28 to 59 years, with an average age of 47 years. 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 between 51 and 55 years, 24 per cent of them between 46 and 50 years and the rest of them are above 55.

- The functionaries have an income range of Rs. 200,000 to Rs. 750,000. There are very high variations in their annual incomes. 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 Rs. 300 thousand to Rs. 400 thousand; 30 per cent of them Rs. 400 thousand to Rs. 500 thousand; and 6 per cent of them are in the income brackets of Rs. 600 thousand plus.

- Ninety four per cent of the functionaries are satisfied with the PRS: H.D. Kote, 100 per cent; Mysore, 97 per cent; T. Narasipura, 75 per cent. Eighty two per cent of them are of the view 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).

- There is 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 its 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.

- A majority of 82 per cent of the functionaries 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).

- 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).

- For 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).

- 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.

- For 94 per cent of the functionaries, the elected representatives cooperate well enough (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).
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).

Political parties do cooperate in the implementation of the rural development programmes, for about 60 per cent of them (H.D. Kote, 50 per cent; Mysore, 65.7 per cent; T. Narasipura, 43 per cent) confirm it 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 such political parties are not the ruling parties.

While 98 per cent of the functionaries agree that the media (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).

There are difficulties in the effective implementation of the rural development programmes in Mysore district. 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).

7.3.3 Elected Members of Zilla, Taluk and Grama Panchayats: A sample of 210 elected members have been chosen, with a view to give proper representation to elected members of the three-tier system as follow: grama panchayats 136 representatives; taluk panchayats 48 representatives; and zilla
panchayat 26 representatives. A separate, third questionnaire has been used to collect data and process them to arrive at conclusions.

- The elected members of the grama panchayats have been chosen from 58 villages in the three taluks of Mysore district: in fact, a more or less similar number of representatives has been chosen from the three taluks and thus the samples (136) 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. Of the elected representatives, 49.3 per cent are women and 50.7 per cent are men.

- The elected members of the taluk panchayats have been selected from the three taluks: H.D. Kote 31.3 per cent; Mysore 41.7 per cent; and T. Narasipura 27.1 per cent. All 48 of them are members elected by the people from 47 villages in the three taluks. Women representatives account for 58.3 per cent as against men representatives who are just 41.7 per cent.

- The members of the zilla panchayats have been selected from the seven taluks of the district: H.D. Kote 19.2 per cent; Hunsur 7.7 per cent; K.R. Nagara 3.8 per cent; Mysore 23.1 per cent; Nanjangud 11.5 per cent; Periyapatna 7.7 per cent; and T. Narasipura 26.9 per cent and thus in various proportions. Women representatives account for 53.8 per cent the sample and men representatives for 46.2 per cent.

- Of the 136 grama panchayat representatives, general category (GM) accounts for 22.7 per cent; backward communities category A for 11.8 per cent; backward communities category B for 10.3 per cent; scheduled castes for 26.5 per cent and scheduled tribes for 28.7 per cent. Thus, the scheduled communities have larger representation in the sample (55.2 per cent).
Of the 48 representatives chosen from the taluk panchayats, general category (GM) is represented by 16.7 per cent, backward communities category A by 39.6 per cent, backward communities category B by 12.5 per cent, scheduled castes by 20.8 per cent and scheduled tribes by 10.4 per cent. Of the 26 representative samples of the zilla panchayats, general category (GM) accounts for 23 per cent, backward communities category A for 23 per cent, backward communities category B for 7.7 per cent, scheduled castes for 26.9 per cent and scheduled tribes for 19.3 per cent.

Thus representation is given for all communities and in sufficient numbers in a way all sections, caste and creed of the people, may be represented without a bias. The idea has essentially been to obtain all points of view so that the study may be said to objective and relevant to the point as well.

Nearly 60 per cent of the elected members of the grama panchayats belong to age groups below 40 years. About half the elected representatives of the TP are within the age group of 26-35 years. The age distribution of elected members of the ZP is: the group below 30 years account for 11.5 per cent, 31-35 years 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.

Most of the grama panchayat members are involved in agriculture (44.1 per cent). About 5 per cent of them are in businesses while 28.7 per cent of them agricultural labourers. Housewives account for 20.6 per cent. As for taluk panchayat representatives, a majority of them (43.8 per cent) is in agriculture, almost similar number (41.7 per cent) is of housewives, and the rest are either in business (6.3 per cent) or agricultural labourers (8.4 per cent). A majority of the zilla panchayat members (61.5 per cent) is in agriculture whereas the next largest group of them (24.9 per cent) is
in business, and others are mainly women who are housewives (11.5 per cent).

- The income of the elected members of the grama panchayat range from Rs. 5,000 to a staggering Rs. 200 thousand. There is a vast income difference among the elected members: 86 per cent of them have an income of less than Rs. 25,000 while 8.6 per cent between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50 thousand. 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.

- The 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 representatives, variation in income is between Rs. 6,000 (2.1 per cent) and Rs. 150,000 (4.2 per cent): 64.5 per cent with 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 Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 thousand; 6.3 per cent Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 thousand; and a similar 6.3 per cent 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.
• The grama panchayat members have varied years of political 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 year’s. Some of them have obviously been sitting members in the grama panchayats, before the current term and thus they (although only 3 per cent) have more years of experience in active politics at the grassroots level.

• The elected members represent national parties in the panchayat. A good majority of them (67.6 per cent) 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 political parties which are regional in character.

• The elected members consider their political parties as follow: 73.5 per cent of them think that their parties are thought as ‘excellent’ by the people; 14.7 per cent of perceive their parties as ‘good’; and a small proportion of them (less than 1 per cent) consider their parties’ position as ‘bad’. Asked about their opinion about the party they represent, 79.4 per cent of them have indicated ‘excellent’, and 8.1 per cent ‘good’.

• 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.

• Among the GP members, a very large majority (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.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- 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.

- 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.

- 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 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.

- 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).

- 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 existing subcommittees are capable of giving suggestions and guidance relating to rural development.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- There is full attendance at the ZP meetings by 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.

- Except for a small proportion in all the three categories, all the others indicate that the ZP meetings are rural development programmes related and the discussions are secular and unbiased and therefore are constructive as well.

- 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.

- 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.

- People’s participation, removal of corruption, official attendance at gramasabahs, removal of mediators and sanctioning and releasing programme funds directly to GPs are suggested as the solutions for removing corruption. 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
Conclusion and Recommendations

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. 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.

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.

In the elected members’ opinions, the officials and staffs of the rural development agencies in the state cooperate very well. 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.

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.

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
Conclusion and Recommendations

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.

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 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.

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.

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 implement rural development schemes in the district.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

7.4 Recommendations and Suggestions

Recommendations: One of the things observed from the results of the study is that every beneficiary, functionary and elected member appears to think that the panchayat raj institutions function effectively. The principal reason for this
perception is that they are at the helm of affairs at the institutions and they are reluctant to evaluate themselves as otherwise.

- The PRIs are Constitutional entities. The State Governments have to endow the panchayats, all three tiers, with powers and authority necessary to enable them to function as institutions of local self-government with the responsibility of preparing plans for socio-economic development and for implementing them.
- The Eleventh Schedule has identified 29 subjects under the purview of the panchayats. However, in order that the PRIs are able to undertake the responsibility entrusted to them, they require both financial and functional autonomy. It is necessary not only to ensure flow of funds to them from the Consolidated Funds of the States and from the Central Government via the Centrally-Sponsored Schemes (CSS), but also to give them independent revenue raising powers of their own.
- The State Finance Corporations (SFCs) were set up with this objective of making specific recommendations for making the panchayats financially viable. In many States, including Karnataka, the SFCs have submitted their reports and in some of the States their recommendations have been accepted.
- It is hoped that the SFC submit its own recommendations expeditiously and the State Government initiate appropriate action to devolve adequate funds to the PRIs in the State.
- The resource mobilisation effort by the PRIs is generally limited, it is imperative to provide PRIs with revenue-raising powers of their own in order to reduce their excessive dependence on the State and Central Governments. There are taxes which can be, and are, collected by the local bodies. A substantial part of the plan
expenditure may be given to the districts in the form of untied funds from the tax collections.

- In addition, grants for specific schemes entrusted to the panchayats may be given to them by the State Government. Funds from Centrally Sponsored Schemes will also be in the form of a grant but those would not be a part of the untied pool.

- Certain taxes like the entertainment tax should be handed over to them. Irrigation rates may also be collected by the Zilla Panchayats and resources generated in regulated markets may be brought within the purview of District Planning Committees (DPCs).

- Further, as the three tiers of panchayats have been empowered to raise taxes, levies and tolls on a variety of activities, incentive schemes may be encouraged for increasing benefits to increase their incomes. Kerala model in this regard may be completely adopted to have better results.

- It is also imperative that the PRIs raise their own resources. But until such time that they are financially dependent on funds from the State government, these should be in the form of untied funds. The State budgets should specify the amount earmarked for district sector plan under panchayati raj as also the distribution of this among the three tiers. It is suggested that 30 – 40 per cent of a State's plan may be devolved on local bodies, in order to make them effective in rural development activities.

- Urban local bodies may be allowed to raise loan funds through bonds for financially viable economic activities like water supply and sewerage systems.

- The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Mysore have not been actively involved in the planning and decision making processes, because of a lack of planning expertise amidst the elected members and even some functionaries of the panchayat raj institutions. It is important
therefore to provide a structure for such a planning body which could draw expertise from outside. Besides, they are often short of funds and their financial powers are limited.

- Active involvement of the PRIs in the planning process would also provide a better climate for people’s participation in the implementation of the plans, a condition crucial to its success.

- Although the reservation under Panchayati Raj for rural women is effective in the state of Karnataka, and in Mysore district, in terms of number of elected members in office at present, women are not adequately empowered to play an effective role because of social, economic and political factors. It is necessary to turn the tide in favour of effective women participation in Panchayats and this can be done only gradually and through effective educational programmes for elected women and elected men. It is sometimes important to break the hold of their ‘husbands’ in matters political, because they seem to rule the roost when it comes to functioning. Women should play a more important role in the working of democracy at the grassroots and in decentralization. There are also certain areas which are essentially a woman’s domain like the handling of finances of the households and bringing drinking water to home, in which areas women can excel men.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research: While writing up the thesis, several ideas suggested themselves as to what needed to be done as further research. Some important ones are the following:

- Instead of looking broadly at the way rural development through decentralization and people’s participation has happened via the local panchayati raj institutions, it may be worthwhile evaluating each of these organizations individually such that the analysis could be deep enough to give deeper perspectives on their functioning.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- It may be worthwhile also to look at each of them in the light of some very important functions of the panchayati raj institutions, such as water supply, sanitation and health as this is an important area that needs focused attention, from a rural area point of view in the country.

- It may be significant to look at the development planning function of the zilla panchayats in the state, and may be even across several states for comparison, in order to suggest better ways of dealing with planning better rural development.
References:


