CHAPTER-V

INTERACTION BETWEEN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE PANCHAYATS
CHAPTER V
INTRECTION BETWEEN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION AND WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE PANCAYATS

In a democratic society the role of voluntary organisation is very important. Voluntary organisation is formed by like minded persons of an area or locality to achieve common objectives. Such voluntary organisations may be in the form of interest groups or pressure groups. The importance of such voluntary organisations or non-governmental organisations is more when the membership of the organisation or organisations is confined in a particular area or locality and the common objective is to the welfare of the people of the locality.

The voluntary organisation is a non-governmental organisation formed by the people of a specific area with a definite number of members. The number members of such organisation may vary from one organisation to another with a minimum of 25 members. The term voluntary organisation has used in a broader sense here. The study covers the organisations, registered under the various trusts and charitable Acts. It includes unregistered groups and organisations. These unregistered groups and organisations have the responsibility for rural development in a specific area.

1 Malemleima, "Rural Development in Manipur with particular reference to Imphal East", Unpublish M.Phil Dissertation, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, 1993, p.97.
or areas with or without the aid of a government agency. It covers various youth organisations, Mahila Mandal, Civil organisations like local clubs, Meira paibis etc. In a sense, these organisations may also be termed as unregistered or informal organisations.

**Importance of Voluntary organisation**

The voluntary organisation working for the upliftment of rural people has had a long history in this country. The earliest to take up this work were missionaries and religious organisation. The impact of their work may be seen in the fields of education and health and also in the general upliftment of the people in the remote and backward areas of the country. It has been recognised that voluntary organisation can play a very creative role, motivating the people and supervising the distribution of resources with a view to ensure their proper utilisation. They can also play a very useful role in matching project to the local conditions and supplying local know-how about the various factors involving productivity and marketing.

Voluntary organisations have important role in informing and motivating people and in carrying out supplemental action for improving incomes by promoting self employment activities, helping in the identification of eligible household, organising them for group action,
informing them about schemes and official procedure, preparing application and offering follow-up and liaison services etc. Though the main responsibility for resources transfer remain officials and financials institutions, the voluntary organisations can help in guiding and project formulation process.¹

Voluntary organisations depend upon voluntary contribution from the member’s like minded persons or groups of person and bodies. It attempts to asses the sextend and to which its goals are being achieved and to do so as efficiently and openly as possible. One major problem faced by the voluntary organisation is lack of resources, both financial and human. Since most of the activities undertaken by voluntary organisations are in the nature of extension work, they are not able become self-supporting bodies. They always depend for funds on the Government, whose procedure is often slow and time consuming. The Non-Governmental organisations working in the rural area view the Panchayati Raj institutions with great interest. Several Non-Governmental organisations believe that only a representative institution like the panchayat can effectively achieve the larger goal of comprehensive and integrated rural development for which they have been

¹ Desai Vasant; 'Rural Development, Programmes and strategies'; Vol. II. Himalaya Publishing house, Delhi, 1988, Pp 348-49
struggling from decades. Accordingly some of these Non-Governmental organisations have been trying to relocate their role in rural development as supportive and complementary to the Panchayat.¹

**Panchayats and Non-Governmental organisations:**

There is close relation between the Panchayati Raj institutions and Non-Governmental organisations. The Panchayati Raj institution had been established in order to promote the socio-economic and political interest of the people of the area especially in the rural sector. The objective is to make the adult villagers to participate in the socio-economies and the political matters affecting the life of the villagers. The governance of the village is also in the hands of the elected members of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

Likewise the Non-Governmental organisations of the area of the village are formed by the members of the village or locality with common objective to fulfil. As the objective is to achieve the common interest of the members of the village, the working and activities of the non-governmental organisations or community based organisations also shared in the promotion of the welfare of the villagers in the socio-economic and cultural

matters. Thus the objectives of the Panchayati Raj institutions and the non-governmental voluntary organisations fall under the same category i.e promotion of the socio-economic, cultural and political interests of the villagers.  

The difference between Panchayati Raj institutions and non-governmental voluntary organisations is that the first is legally constituted body consisting of members elected by the villagers, discharging assigned duties by exercising powers given under the Acts passed by parliament or Legislative Assemblies of the state.

It acts as the lowest unit of self-governing bodies in the working of parliamentary democracy in India. The non-governmental voluntary organisations on the other hand do not enjoy such legal status. These organisations only possess the powers given by the bye-lows of the organisation and its members are not elected by the villagers. Excepting these differences, both Panchayati Raj institutions and the non-governmental voluntary organisations aim at the common objective i.e the welfare of the villagers.  

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The vital role of NGO, in Panchayat:

The 73rd Amendment of constitution of India on 24th April 1993 dealing with Panchayati Raj, and its implementation in April 1994, is a step towards decentralization of power and establishment of local-self government in the village. The Amendment also mentions about the reservation of seats for SCs and STs in proportion to these population in the Panchayats and reservation of not less than one-thirds of the seats for women in different levels of Panchayats. The Act makes a provision that the Panchayats are autonomous in their any pressure. In such situations, many voluntary agencies (VAs) are skeptical about their roles because the government funded development of the village level will be controlled and implemented by Panchayati Raj Instituions.¹

The importance of voluntary organisations in the village is felt when there is need of support and co-operation. The voluntary organisations have played important role during the pre-election, election and the post election periods of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the rural areas of Manipur.

Before the election to Panchayats, the members of the voluntary organisations working in the villages can make the villages aware of the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions for the socio-economic development of the

village. The members can also mobilise youths, women and old people in the villages for their participation in election and caste their votes. The members of the voluntary organisations by organising villagers and their meetings in each, village of the Panchayat area can facilitate the meetings in support of the genuine candidates who care for their well-being and development.

Voluntary organisations can conscientious the villagers not to sell their collective decisions made in village meetings, for money offered by contesting candidates in election, and for physical or muscle power shown or threats given by local anti-social people. More over, collective decision of the villagers will instil collective strength not to alter their decisions against all odds. The voluntary organisations can also sensitise villagers to identify their representative to check bogus voting and booth capturing during elections.

After the elections, voluntary organisations can train, educate and conscientises the elected representatives of the Panchayat, particularly SCs, STs, and women, to assertive in the process of the development of disadvantaged communities by providing social and economic infrastructure in the villages. The education and concretisation by the voluntary organisations can save the elected SC, ST and women members from becoming mere rubber stamps.
Second, the Panchayats plan and implement activities relating to agriculture, social forestry, small scale cottage industry, rural housing, drinking water facilities, village electrification, poverty eradication programmes, primary and secondary education planning, social welfare, public distribution system and so on.

The voluntary organisations can also take up awareness building programmes for the villagers who are the members of gram Sabha and help the members of gram Panchayats in assessing the needs of villagers through village meetings, socio-economic surveys which is cost-effective. The voluntary organisation can prepare micro-plans by organising village meetings or using participatory rapid rural appraisal techniques. Most of the villagers are ignorant about the implementation of micro-plans relating to above mentioned activities. The Panchayat functionaries are not cognizant with the process to elicit the participation of villagers in implementation of micro-plans. The Panchayat functionaries hardly possess any knowledge about accounts and record keeping; voluntary organisations can train and assist the Panchayat functionaries in these areas.¹

Third, majority of the villagers in the rural areas do not perceive the panchayat till date as a people’s organisation. Voluntary organisations can make the villagers aware of the importance of the Panchayats by organising awareness programmes, meetings etc.²

² Ibid
These organisations can mobilise villagers for their active participation in need identification, project planning and execution of the micro plans of the village Panchayats. The members of the voluntary organisations can periodically discuss and review with the Panchayat functionaries and villagers about the execution of micro-plans in the villages. They can organise social action programmes of villagers in case things go wrong in the execution of the programmes by the Panchayats.

Thus, the role of the voluntary organisations would be for concretisation of the villagers who are members of the gram Sabhas, elected ST, SC and women members of the Panchayats. The voluntary organisations may carry out different activities in collaboration with the Panchayats and Panchayat functionaries.

**Voluntary Organisations in the Rural Areas of Manipur:**

There are many voluntary organisations in the rural areas of the five districts of Manipur. For in-dept examination of the role of voluntary organisations in interacting with the panchayats, two Districts namely Imphal East and Imphal West, Manipur are selected.

The voluntary organisations are classified as Registered and Unregistered. There are 13 registered (7 in Imphal East I and 6 in Imphal
East II) voluntary organisations in Imphal East and the number of unregistered ones is 5 in Imphal East. These registered and un-registered voluntary organisations are selected as random sample salires are for the in-dept examination of the voluntary organisations in Imphal East. The number of voluntary organisations selected for the study in Imphal West is 13 registered (5 in Imphal East I and 8 in Imphal West II) and 7 unregistered (3 in Imphal West I and 4 in Imphal West II).

Altogether the number of registered voluntary organisations selected for the study is 26 (13 in Imphal East and 13 in Imphal West) and unregistered number of voluntary organisations is 13 (5 in Imphal East and 8 in Imphal West). These organisations both registered and unregistered are taking vital role for the upliftment of rural people who are the members of the Gram Sabha.
TABLE I

IMPHAL EAST - I

Registered Voluntary Organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Sample No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lairikyengbam Leikai Meira Paibi Association, Lairikyengbam Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Laipham Khunou Development Association.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Laipham Khunou Mitong Lampak Nupi Chaokhat Lup, Laipham Khunou Mitong Lampak.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>United Youth Club, Lairikyengbam Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Salanthong Nupi Lup Social Economic Development Association, Salanthong.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table II

**IMPHAL EAST -I**

*Unregistered Voluntary Organisations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Organisation.</th>
<th>Sample No. 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Laipham Khunou Maning Leikai Meira Lup, Laipham Khunou Maning Leikai</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Luwangsangbam Mamang Leikai Nupi Lup, Luwangsangbam Mamang Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Luwangsangbam Mayai Leikai Nupi Lup.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE III

IMPHAL EAST- II

Registered Voluntary Organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Sample No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Eastern Sporting Association. (ESA), Top Tinsid road.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Netaji Memorial Club (NMC) Khurai Kongpal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kongpal Students Welfare Club, Kongpal Thongam Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Chaithabi Leirak Development Committee, Chaithabi Leirak.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tinisid Road Youth Organisation, Top Moirangkampu.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE IV

IMPHAL EAST – II

Unregistered Voluntary Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Sample No. 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.     | Khurai Ningthoubung Meira Paibi Lup,  
         | Khurai Ningthoubung. | 10           |
| 2.     | Kongba Kshetir Leikai Nupi Lup,  
<pre><code>     | Kongba Kshetri Leikai. | 10           |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Sample No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yarou Bamdiar Youth Development Association.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yarou Bamdiar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Paradise Youth Development Association.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwakeithal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Heinaupok Educational Development Organisation.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heinoupok.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tera Loukram Leikai Youth Development Association.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tera Loukram Leikai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Takyel Khongban Youth Club,</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takyel Khongban.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE VI

IMPHAL WEST – I

Registered of Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Organisation.</th>
<th>Sample No. 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tera Sapam Leikai Meira Paibi Lup,</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tera Sapam Leikai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sagolband Tera Khurijam Leirak Nupi Lup,</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khurijam Leirak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Heinaopk Maira Paibi Lup,</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heinaopak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE VII

**IMPHAL WEST – II**

Registered Voluntary Organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kwakeithel Makha Hainao Khongnembi Club, Hainao Khongnembi.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bright Way Club, Kwakeithel Lamdong Leikai</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The 20th Century Club, Chingtham Leikai</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Young Friend’s Union, Haobam Marka Keisham Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Social Union Nascent Club, Mangshangei.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE VIII

IMPHAL WEST - II

*Unregistered Voluntary Organisation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Sample No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chingtham Leikai Nupi Lup, Chingtham Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lourembam Leikai Nupi Chaokhat Lup, Lourembam Leikai.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kwakeithel Makha Leikai Maira Paibi Lup, Kwakeithel Makha Leikai</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both registered and unregistered voluntary organisations in Imphal East, there is an executive body consisting of office bearers. The head of the executive body is the president or Chairman. He is assisted by a Secretary and Assistant secretary in the discharge of the functions of the organisation. In addition, there is a Treasurer in the voluntary organisations, both registered and unregistered. He is mainly responsible for the financial maintenance and financial management of the organisation. The number of members in the Executive committee in both registered and unregistered voluntary organisation in Imphal East and Imphal West varies from 7 to 10. The members of the Executive committee are elected by the members of the organisation for a fixed period of one year or for a specific of 2 or 3 years.

The voluntary organisations have their own objectives to perform the function effectively. The main objectives are,

- To render the best services for the welfare of the society.

- To arrange the awareness programme for new information related to the society.

- To uplift the status of sports person.

- To maintain the social and cultural values of society.

- To study the problem of area and try to solve it.
All the organisations have similar objectives like wise for the development of their localities but the women organisations have different, objective. The women organisations mainly consider to uplift the status of women and weaker section. The women organisations have formed Marup\textsuperscript{1} for their economic development within the groups. The members of the Marup help each other by contributing a fixed amount of money per month and each member is entitled to receive the total sum in turn or lottery system with agreed rat of interest. It helps the women to improve their economic status. These women are not only work for the women but also try to solve the drug and liquor problems in the society.

The main activities performed by the voluntary organisation are social services, sports activities, solving the problems of their area and helping the Panchayats in development works in the villages. The members of the voluntary organisations are always ready to solve any problem faced by the people of the area. In the same way the Panchayats also performed their activities for the welfare of the people. The difference is that, the Panchayats are discharging their functions through the channel prescribed by the government. The Panchayat can perform heavy activities for the development of the society with fund but the voluntary organisations can not do so due to lack of fund. In Manipur it is formed that the members of the

\textsuperscript{1} Marup is a kind of co-operative credit and saving organisation.
voluntary organisations had always given their co-operation to the
Panchayats in the process of executing developmental programmes in the
villages.

The two selected Districts i.e, Imphal East and Imphal West are
important Districts in Manipur having urban, Semi-Urban and rural
character. The voluntary organisations selected for the study represent the
Panchayat in the semi-urban and rural areas of the 2(two) district of
Manipur.

The number of sample collected from Imphal East is 150 (one
hundred and fifty). Out of 150, seventy (70) are men and eighty (80) are
women. The samples collected from Imphal West are (160). Hundred (100)
are men and the remaining sixty (60) are women. Altogether the number of
samples collected for the study is 310 (three hundred and ten) only, 110
women and 200 men. The data thus obtained are processed consolidated,
analysed and presented under the following heads.

Reservation:

The reservation of women in the decision making body, especially the
Panchayats has become a very important issue after the passing of the 73rd
constitutional Amendment Act 1992. As women are governed by traditional social norms and practices, they are not free to act as an individual. So majority of women welcome the reservation policy adopted by the Government of India by passing the 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment Acts. The decision makers, especially members of parliament thought the only way to empower women politically is to make reservation in the law making and decision making bodies like Panchayats and Municipalities in the first instance.\(^1\)

Out of the collected samples, as many as 271 respondents are in favour of reservation. The number of men is 135 and the number of women is 136. Only 39 respondents, 35 men and 4 women have expressed their views against the reservation of women in the decision making body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE IX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on reservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favour of the reservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus majority of the respondents had given positive response in them reservation of seats for women in the grass root level i.e, Panchayats. The large response of 135 men and 136 women shows that the reservation of seats for women in the local self government is a major step for the women upliftment in the political process of the state.

The participation of women in the political process of the state is very important in a democratic country like India. Women are given equal political rights and opportunities as citizens and voters of the country. Women are allowed to enjoy freedom in the shaping and sharing of power in the political process including the governance of the state. Women represent an important sector of human resource that cause national development and also the development of hall of the population i.e, women in grass root organisations.¹

Importance of women in Panchayats is oxidant that women’s movement, whatever may be its nature and intensity could lead to women’s reservation in local self-government institutions. The 73rd Amendment Act 1992, providing reservation for women can be considered as the greatest event for women’s political empowerment.

This will undoubtedly motivate lakhs and lakhs of women candidates to contest in the Panchayat elections. Here, it is necessary to realise that statutory representation is important not as an end in itself but as the first step for promoting political participation by women. It can facilitate the presence of women. So, reservation of seats is very much necessary for the women to improve their social and political status in the society.  

The less number of 35 men and 4 women respondents have given negative view in the reservation of seats for women in the panchayats. They still have the old traditional concept that women are more suitable in the household work. Women are considered to be a weaker sex, they are normally confined in the monotonous jobs requiring hard labour.

In spite of their valuable contribution to the rural economy, in our male-dominated society, women are regarded as inferior to men. Thus labour is not given due recognition and they are not adequately compensated for their labours.

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1. B.S. Bharagava and K. Subha, C. 'olitical empowerment of women through Decentralised Institutions (PRIs)', In karnataka, Panchayat Sndesh 15th National conference Special Issue, All India Panchayat Parishad, 1995, p.89.
Reservation Help Women:

The respondents were asked to express their views on whether reservation for women in the Panchayats helps women to improve their political status, help them to participate in the social work of the village and in the empowerment of women in the society or not. Out of 271 respondents as many as 136 women respondents have hold the view that the reservation of seats for women in the Panchayats help to raise their political status.

In addition the remaining 135 men respondents also share the same view point i.e. the reservation of seats for women indirectly leads to the raise of political status for women. Regarding the participation of women in social work and activities as a result of reservation of seats, more number of men i.e, 105 men came out with the view that the reservation of seats for women in the panchayats makes women to participate more. On the other hand, lesser number of women i.e, 96 have share the above view, other remain silent. It might be due to the fact that as Manipuri women are actively participating in the social life and activities before the introduction of reservation, this issue was not considered as very important by the womenfolk of Manipur.
The same may be said about the empowerment of women in the society i.e., whether reservation leads to the empowerment of women or not? Least number of women respondents has responded in the affirmatives and 97 men respondents also share the same viewpoint.

**TABLE – X**

Reservation Help Women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reservation Help Women</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in the political status.</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the social work.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment of women in society</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The opinion of the respondents who were in favour of women reservation of seats hold the view that the reservation of seats for women has resulted in improvement of the social and political status of women in the society. The majority of male member 135 and 136 female says that the reservation of women in the local self government institutions improve the political status of women. All the respondent has given multiple respond.
The contributively factors for active participation of women in politics are to make women conscious about their political responsibility and encourage them to participate and remove the visible and invisible gender bias.  

The major improvement in the empowerment of women is the Seventy-third constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 commonly known of the Panchayati Raj Act which provides reservation one-third of the seats in the elected bodies at the village blocks and district level, expressed by 97 men and 84 women respondents.

The 73rd Amendment Act expected to bring a radical change in women’s status and will generally increase their political participation. Increasing participation of women in politics enhance their lobbying power over public affairs and that will in turn result in their private life also. Women in Panchayats can play an effective role in resolving the social problem of dowry cases and other women related problems says by 105 men and 96 women respondents.

Women in Panchayats represent an important sector of human resources from half of the population. This important sector of human resources can be utilised properly for the cause of national development. It is

necessary that for an all round development of human personality as well as the nation, the participation of women in the decision making body, i.e Panchayats is extremely important.¹

It appears that women should get a chance to participate in decision making process, so that only women can consider the problem of women from their own angle and they should have authority to solve these problem.²

**Interaction Between Voluntary Organisations And Elected Women Members:**

As a result of the introduction of the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 democratically elected Panchayats have been constituted in most of the states. The revival and democratisation of the Panchayati Raj system is seen as a significant step in strengthening and institutionalising grass root democracy. The Panchayati Raj system has generated tremendous enthusiasm in the development sector as a representative institution, which will effectively voice the needs and aspirations of the people. It will also effectively and sincerely implement the development programmes for the area, being true to its representative character. The development programme

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undertaken by the Panchayats will have sanction of the beneficiaries, the people. This will help in prioritising the genuine needs at the grass roots and in successfully implementing the agenda beneficial to the community. All this is to be done within the paradigm of grass root democracy.¹

Every Non-governmental organisation working for the development of the rural poor has its own initiative, innovative, intervention into the socials and milieu. Each of them has objective and suggestion to the spatial dimensions in which they operate. Each of them have in short a programme methodology and implementation machinery, an ideological basis for organising the programme in totality with a brand of integrated rural development which takes consideration of the rural household in a manner which benefits a holistic approach of organising the services.²

The planning and implementing process of the programme are studied in term of their relevance, Cost-effectiveness of the programme consistency with the needs and aspirations of the people, utilisation of locality available resources, participation of officials, people’s representatives, voluntary organisations etc in the planning and implementation of these programmes.

² Dr. Sujit Kumar Paul and Dr. Kakati Paul; ‘Role of Panchayats and NGOs, Towards Sustainable Rular Development’ ; Yojana, Vol. 47, No 6,2003,p.19.
A vast majority of the schemes and programmes are assigned to the higher level of the Panchayats. The reason usually assigned for is that the Gram Panchayats do not become too big an entity for easy reach of the woman, especially in the rural scenario. The Gram Panchayats are also provided with a special grant in aid for the development of the locality.

The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 came into existence after wide ranging consultations not only with the representatives of the different political parties but also with intellectuals and the general public in different forms. The final outcome which has to necessarily incorporate only common acceptable provision, particularly to the states, envisaged the establishment of a three-tier system of strong, viable and responsive Panchayats at village, intermediate and district levels. The State was expected to do devolve adequate powers, responsibilities and finance upon these bodies so as to enable them to prepare plans and implement schemes for economic development and social justice. While the Act provided a basic framework for decentralisation of powers to the PRIs at different levels, the responsibility for giving it a practical shape in the field was with the state.

The Act came into effect on 24th of April, 1993 and well over ten years have now completed. The implementation of the provisions of the Act varies in content and degree from state to state. While some states have felt that the provisions of the Act are too rigid to implement and do not fit in with the culture of the State, some Panchayats feel that the provisions of the Act require more teeth to make decentralisation mere effective. Both of them however feel that another amendment may be necessary to clarify certain issues.¹

Article 243 (G) of 73rd constitutional Amendment Act has provide the function of Panchayats. Under the act, 29 subjects are listed in the eleventh schedule to be given to the Panchayati Raj institutions for the socio-economic development of the villages.² Those subjects are developmental in nature. Important subjects namely education, health, sanitation, communication, agriculture, miner-irrigation, small-scale industries are in the list etc. These activities to be assigned to the Panchayats enable them to functions as units of self government in the villages. While setting Panchayati bodies at different levels, women members will play an equal role as their male counterpart in considering these subjects and taking decision the developmental process in the villages.³

². Govt. of India (Publication Division), The constitution of India, Eleventh Schedule.

In order to bring conformity with the constitution 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 was passed and it came into force on 23 April 1994. Act provides for a two-tier system comprising gram Panchayats and Zilla parishads. There is no provision for Panchayat Samitis or Nyaya Panchayats.

Section 35 and Section 61 of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 have provided enormous functions of the Gram Panchayats and the Zilla Parishads. Under these sections, 35 as many as 30 subjects are given subject to such conditions as may be specified by the government from time to time. And Zilla Parishads have to discharged function relating to 22 subjects. The gram Panchayats and the Zilla Parishads shall perform the functions delegated to them. The subjects included for the development of the rural areas are education, Rural housing, poverty alleviation, women and child development, social welfare, agriculture, animal husbandry cottage industries, markets and fairs etc. These are important for the development of the society.

1. Govt. of Manipur, Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, Section 35.
2. Govt. of Manipur, Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, Section 61.
The Gram Panchayat and Zilla Parishad shall perform such functions which may lie within their competence and jurisdiction to be specified by the Government, in respect of items enumerated in the Eleventh Schedule of the constitution of India. The government notification of Panchayat and zilla Parishad functions has not published a clear cut demarcation of various functions to be carried out by the Gram Panchayat and Zilla Parishad separately. From that a joint meeting of Ministers, MLA, officers and representatives of the Manipur state Panchayat Parishad held on 29th June 1999 under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister. The expert committee held discussion regarding the given subjects of the Panchayats with the commissioners, Secretaries and heads of the Departments. After having discussion the concerned Departments recommended the power and functions to be transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institution giving a clear cut demarcation to be carried out by the gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads respectively with due regard to the relevant provisions of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 and Rules framed hereunder.

1. Govt, of Manipur (Publication division) New notification No.2/23/96-Leg/L.
2. Govt, of Manipur (Publication division) order No. 9/13/95-Dev(P)/Pt-III A 2000.
In spite of the Gazettee Notification issued by the Government for devolving powers and functions to the Panchayati Raj Institutions covering activities of 22 line departments in conformity with the items listed in the eleventh scheduled for the constitution of India, the Panchayati Raj Institutions are still not in a position to implement the same fully due to non-issue of orders, non identification of Budgetary allotment of funds to be earmarked for the schemes, works and non-transfer of funds and staff etc. by the line department.

In pursuance of the above said order the following 15 line departments had issued orders for devolution of powers and functions to Panchayati Raj Institution.

1. Veterinary and Animal Husbandry services.
2. Horticulture and soil conservation.
3. Forest and Environment.
4. Power.
5. Commerce and Industries.
7. Food and Civil supply.
8. Works.
10. Rural Development.
12. Minor Irrigation.
13. Agriculture.
15. Science and Technology.¹

The remaining seven (7) line department which have not yet issued orders for devolution of power and functions to Panchayati Raj Institutions are:-

1. Transport.
2. Tribal Development.
3. PHED
4. Irrigation and Flood control.
5. Education.
6. Medical and
7. Market and Fairs.

But in pursuance of the said order no line department has so far transferred their budget resources etc. to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It means that the given power and functions to the Panchayst is only for the name sake. The state government had not given any developmental programme to the Panchayats.²

¹Govt. of Manipur, (publication division), List of 22 subjects related to power and function of Panchahati Raj in Manipur, 2000.
²Govt. of Manipur, (publication division) list of 22 subjects related to power and function and function of Panchahati Raj in Manipur, 2000.
So the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Manipur has taken some of the central sponsored schemes and programme for the development of the rural areas under the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Government of Manipur. The funding pattern of those programmes is 75:25 from the central and state governments respectively. But the said programmes had been implemented only from the central fund because state had given their 25 percent fund to the Panchayats at the end of work. The name of the central sponsored programme which has been implemented through the DRDAs under the administrative control of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department Government of Manipur are as follows:

1. Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)
2. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
3. Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojna (SGRY)
4. Prime Minister Grameen Yojna (PMGY)
5. Prime Minister Gram Swarojgar Yojana (PMGSY)
6. IWDA.

The scheme-wise achievement made by the Panchayati Raj during the year 2002 and 2003 are as follow.
SGSY:
The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) was launched with effect of 1st February 1999 by merging the erstwhile schemes namely IRDP, DECRA, TRYSM, GKY and MSW. During the year, 1999-2000, the Government of India released a sum of Rs. 119.092 lakhs as first instalment of central share. The government of Manipur also had accorded sanction for an amount of Rs. 39.698 laksh as its matching share. During the year 2002-2003 no fund was released under normal SGSY.  

The main function of SGSY is to given financial loan to the poor people. But during the last year the loan is not yet given to the people due to lack of fund. Srimati M. Babita Devi, Adhakshya of Imphal East had expressed that the scheme is not implemented in her area due to lack of fund. But the special project under the SGSY is planning to implement in the area of Imphal East.  

IAY:
Indira Awaas Yojana is the scheme for new construction of house for below poverty line people. IAY is also centrally sponsored scheme which has been implementing since the year 1996-97. Now the scheme also not work effectively due to non-release of fund.

Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana was launched in the year, 2000-2001 by merging the erstwhile schemes of EAS and JGSY. This is not an employment generation programme. The funding pattern is same as SGSY. These scheme is divided into two, SGRY-I and SGRY II, SGRY –I is for the Gram Panchayat and SGRY-II is for the Zilla Parishad.

The function performed under SGRY is. Earth work and singling, construction of culvert, repair of village drains, construction of market set and waiting ser, construction of community Latrine, Urinals and Halls etc. Some of the poverty alleviation programme was taken in their area. The giving of loan to the below poverty line people and construction of water tank also included under these scheme.

Those programme covered all the area of Imphal East and Imphal west in different forms. The two Adhykshas of Zilla Parishads of Imphal East, Smt. M. Babita Devi and Smt. H. Sandhyrani Devi of Imphal West expressed that majority of their areas are covered under the SGRY Programms. They had constructed the community Halls, Community latrine and urinals and repair the drains of their localities. The Pradhan and members of gram Panchayat and Zilla Parishad also expressed that they have
done some of the development work like repair of village link roads, construction of culverts repair of community ponds etc.¹

The Panchayati Raj institutions have already got approval of some other projects for the development of the locality. They are Hariyali, Innovative housing Scheme Swajal Dhara, Total Sanitation Programme, Prime Minister Gramin Yojana etc. Those projects are waiting for implementation.

In the implementation of all the development programme, the voluntary organisations are not officially involved. Although they help indirectly in the preparation of the proposal for their area development. The indirectly help in the selection of beneficiary and area for the work of Panchayats.

The function is only performed by the Panchayati Raj Institution. But for that work the involvement of local rural people is necessary to fulfil the peoples need. So, the Panchayat members had a group meeting with the organisation for the selection of area and the beneficiary of the schemes to be select for the effective work of the area.

¹Interview with :-
K. Angoubi Deve, Member Konthoujam Gram Panchayat 12 July 2004.
Sougrakpam Ibeleyma Devi Member Irom Meljrao Gram Panchayat 12 July 2004.
People's participation in the implementation of the programme's is seen only as beneficiaries of the programmes and not as one of partners. People still regard Panchayats as their saviours and benevolent institutions. Hence, the question of people participating, as contributors, in the implementation of programmes hardly arises. However, some of the beneficiaries expressed that for the effective implementation of schemes like water supply there is a need for the constitution of people's committees which in turn monitor, maintain and preserve the assets created by the Panchyat.1

The members and office bearers of voluntary organisations work for the upliftment of the rural people. The members and office bearers of the selected voluntary organisations in Imphal East and Imphal west expressed that they always work in co-operation with the panchayats of the areas. It has been recognised that voluntary agencies plays a very creative role in motivating the people and in supervising the distribution of the resources with a view to ensuring their proper utilisation. They also make the panchayat members aware of the matching projects which may be taken up in the village.2

There are also some members of the voluntary organisations constituting about forty percent who have expressed that no panchayat has done regarding the assessment of the resources based on the village economy, raising and auditing the resources carefully and seriously. Barring some important developmental activities in the grass root levels, Panchayats have been discharging functions in a “Jack of all trades”. The panchayats have become a vote catching machinery which is running with all its bureaucratic red-knots.

The ‘give and take’ politics pursued by some members of the Panchaayats and their rapacious nature make the common people not to think and do for the betterment of the village and of the whole society.

Almost all the respondents of the selected voluntary organisations have expressed their willingness to render help and co-operation in the implementation of the developmental programmes by the Panchayats. In addition, they have also pointed out that lack of awareness coupled with absence of voluntary service in the mind of the general public help and co-operation to the Panchayats. It is also necessary for the members of the Panchayats to seek support and co-operation from the members of the voluntary organisations in particular and general public as a whole.

The Panchayats can organise awareness programmes, interaction meets with the villagers, making them aware of the various developmental programmes to be taken up by the Panchayats from time to time. Such awareness programmes, interaction meets will act as a motivating factor for effective participation in the socio-economic developmental programmes of the village. The villagers may act as partners in the process of development of the village. They in course of time enjoy their participation as beneficiaries of the various programmes taken up by the Panchayats. A meaningful realisation of decent realised planning and governance is possible only when people's representative's officials, voluntary organisations and the local people take active part in the planning and governance of the village.¹

Regarding the performance of women members:

The women members of Panchayats are being well performance in the implementation of programme though their success has not been adequately highlighted by the people. Success stories of women Panchayat members need to be continuously highlighted.

The women Panchayat at members number is increased now. They are therefore, a force to reckon with. They are also the future legislators and parliamention of country. Above all, they are the most glaring examples of India's tryst with democracy.¹ In making panchayati Raj system we should see the success of the people.

Local NGOs, and other organisations were taking vital role in the training and consultancy to the panchayat functionaries for implementation of micro plans and programmes. Local organisations have a position to cash in their skills, knowledge and innovation ideas for the betterment of villages in collaboration with Panchayats.

The strategy of the Panchayat is the "Management for the people for over". And the strategy of the NGOs is the "Management for the People (in the beginning) and then with the people" are not competitive but supple menmtary.

So for effective sustainable rural development collaborative relation between the non-governmental organisation and Panchajyats is very essential.

¹ Mshipal ‘Women in panchayat, Experience of a training group,' Economic and political weekly, Vol XXXIII, No. 4, 1998, P 150.