CHAPTER I
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Contemporary South Asian societies are striving for social, economic and political justice through the modernization of their political and administrative institutions. The rising expectations of peoples and governments, their emotional commitment to democratic political ideals, administrative decentralization and economic development are placing increasing demands on the bureaucracy to implement socio-economic development programmes more effectively and with greater public participation. In this changing socio-political culture the local development bureaucracy faces a formidable task to promote economic development through democratic management, local autonomy and sharing of responsibilities with people’s representatives. Against this background, in India, the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts have given constitutional status to rural and urban local bodies to administer development and social justice. With the passing of the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, the democratic system has been deepened and strengthened through the local bodies. This has ensured the involvement and participation of the people in the preparation and implementation of plans of economic development and social justice.

Article 243-G of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act relating to rural local bodies and Article 243-W of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act relating to urban local bodies specifically provide for Local Self-Government Institutions to take up the responsibility of the preparation of plans for economic development and social, justice and the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice. Article 243-ZD provides for the constitution of a District Planning Committee which is mandated to consolidate the plans prepared by the three tiers of the
The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has been perceived differently in the present context in India as the economy, polity and society are undergoing a quick metamorphosis due to globalisation. It is felt that the basic objectives with which the Act was enacted have to be achieved whereby the expected impact could be created in the polity, economy and society at the micro level. It is obvious that there was a perception gap between the government and the people on most issues and policies which was ultimately responsible for the failure of schemes and programmes. The new Amendment Act has attempted to create far-reaching changes provided the people are oriented for a new task and responsibility. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act defines the Panchayat as “an institution of self-government constituted under Article 243–B for the rural areas” and it is a landmark in the history of democracy in India. But an analysis of the provisions of the conformity legislations enacted in the States in the light of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act reveals the need for restructuring many of the provisions in the State Acts to make Panchayat Raj institutions really self-governing people’s institutions.

The new Panchavat Raj System is not an institution of either the (central Government or the State Governments to implement their programmes and schemes to achieve development in rural areas. It is an autonomous self-governing unit with organic linkages with the higher level institutions such as the State Government and the Central Government to administer economic development and social justice. Its primary objective is to make the people participate collectively in the development activities from planning to execution of works and thereby increase human capabilities. The efficiency of the system lies in the sustainability of the
institution in the orbit of the political system along with its vitality. The New Panchayati Raj System offers the promises explained hereunder.

1. **Deepening Democracy**

   The democracy confined within the framework of the Parliament and State Legislatures has to be broadened to percolate into the society to the level of the last rung of the society. Collectivities which have been hitherto marginalized and deprived have to be brought into the fold of democracy. More numbers from among the women and Dalits have to be brought into the system of governance. This should be an affirmative action whereby the marginalized and depressed are given an exclusive space through reservation of seats in the local bodies. It is a process by which democracy is widened and deepened.

2. **Ensuring People’s Participation**

   People’s participation is the sine qua non for development. Development initiatives are to come from the people. People are the initiators and the government is the facilitator. To change the government to the role of facilitator from the role of provider the people have to take the initiative and accept new responsibilities. Their participation in development activities will bring about accountability on the part of the government. People have to assess their requirements and chalk out schemes and programmes according to their own needs. They should be people’s programmes and the government has to participate in the programmes by enabling the people to carry out the programmes on their own.

3. **More Responsibilities to the People**

   In the past fifty years all the responsibilities of the people and the community have been taken away from them and vested with government departments. Communities have an enormous responsibility to manage their
affairs on their own and they have their own management system. In the name of the nation-state, governments have expanded their departments. The expansion of the government has increased only the management cost and not the efficiency of delivery. To deliver services worth one rupee the government spends six rupees as delivery expenses. Moreover the quality of the service is also poor. In the process of this structural expansion of the government the people have lost their orientation towards the responsibilities that have to be discharged by them as citizens. Ultimately what we find in society is that the people have the voter’s orientation and they do not have the citizen’s orientation. In order to make the people responsible citizens more responsibilities have to be given to them. Hence development works should be carried out with the involvement of the people.

4. Reduction of Government Structure

Many of the countries in the world are facing a crisis as a result of the expansion of the departments of the government. The bigness of the government is a burden on society. It will pave the way for the disintegration of the nation. The unwieldy expansion of government departments becomes a threat to the elected representatives. Moreover people are terrorized by the government through its procedures, rules and regulations. The larger the size of the government the lesser the contact with the people. Hencencc there will be a gap between the people and the government. In order to avoid this complication of the bigness of the government it was felt that the structure of the government should be reduced to the minimum level and this will be possible only by giving more responsibilities to the people through institutions created legitimately.
5. Harnessing the Human Energy

It is a truism that the way in which human energy is being utilized determines development. Human energy has different forms and different levels. The state should find a way to raise the level of the energy of the people and more particularly the state should work out a detailed mechanism through which the energy of the people can be utilized. The developed nations have demonstrated to the world how best the energy level of the people can be enhanced and how best the enhanced energy can be utilized for activities to accelerate economic growth. An appropriate space can be created to utilize the energy of the people. An institutional mechanism can be created for this purpose. Local body institutions are one such institutional device or mechanism to make use of human energy for productive functions.

6. Administering Development and Social Justice

It is a well known fact that countries which are in the process of decentralizing powers have different objectives. In India, it was a conscious decision of the Central Government that Panchayati Raj Institutions have to work for administering development and social justice by evolving their own plan, of action. Traditionally, Panchayati Raj has been looked at as an institution meant for providing services and facilities. But, in the new context, it is meant for not only services and facilities but: also growth with equity.

7. Planning from below

So far the planning exercise has been done at the Central level, which resulted in large scale demands of the people being unmet. In fifty-two years of governance centralized planning has achieved tremendous results in the macroeconomics of the country and yet the rural realities have not been changed perceptibly towards achieving development. Still people are living
in subhuman living conditions in the rural and urban areas. In order to provide basic facilities, to make use of the facilities for growth and to promote economic activities the planning exercise has to be done at the micro level. This exercise had been thought of many times in independent India in terms of whether planning institutions can be created at the bottom either at the block level or at the district level. Now this concept has gained currency and the planning exercise is to be initiated at different levels, starting from the Gram Panchayat.

8. Building the Capacity of People

It is imperative in the process of decentralization of powers that people should take more responsibilities and discharge the same effectively and efficiently to deliver quality services to the people. To discharge the new responsibilities the capacity of the people has to be enhanced. Till date, people have developed the attitude that the government would provide everything and people have to receive the same. Now the role has been reversed. People have to manage their affairs on their own. Therefore the new system envisages a new task of building the capacity of the leaders and the people. In a market driven economy for every act people require skill and efficiency. People’s skills are to be updated and upgraded to match the requirement of the market. Against this background capacity building assumes significance.

9. Establishing the Principle of Subsidiarity

The whole exercise has to revolve round the principle of subsidiarity. Activities that can be earned out at the lower level can be allowed to be earned out at that level and activities that can not be carried out at the lowest level can be allowed to be carried out at the next higher level. In short, activities are to be earned out at the appropriate levels, depending on the capacity of the people. Based on the above principle, powers are to be devolved.
10) Putting the Last First

The past fifty years of development in India have demonstrated the postulate that development can not be achieved without the involvement of the people in the development process as stakeholders. In all these years development programmes have been the programmes and schemes of the government and not of the people. In the whole development process the people have been the last beneficiaries. What is more development was not achieved as planned. In the new scenario programmes should not be generated by the government but evolved by the people. Programmes and schemes are to be owned by the people. Governments have to participate in the programmes and schemes of the people. In other words, the people come first and the government comes next.

11. Establishing Good Governance

Administration, as practised till now, has alienated the people, which is very difficult to understand. Proliferation of administrative procedures, norms and regulations has made the system totally non transparent: As long as administration is being run in a non transparent way corruption will continue to contaminate even a nook and corner of society. To avoid such a malaise, the administration should simplify the procedures, norms and regulations. The whole process has to be initiated from below. Administration should not only be transparent but also accommodate every segment of society, especially women and the marginalized.

12. It Should Be Pro-Nature

The alarming environmental problems and global warming caution our policy makers and administrators that unless serious action is taken our life will become problematic. The global scenario calls for local action to protect the environment. The activities of the people should be oriental towards protecting the environment and maintaining the natural ore
While taking decisions at the micro level and implementing schemes and programmes for rural development adequate care should be taken to protect die flora and the fauna. All ponds, wells, tanks, channels and lanes are to be protected and maintained properly. All the commons are to be well secured and managed. There is a close link between environmental problems and poverty. The green is the lifeline of the poor. By protecting the green the poor can be given life.

13. It Should Be Pro-Poor

All the activities are to be decided upon on the basis of equity. While taking decisions and fixing priorities for rural development activities, the Panchayat has to decide whether the benefits will reach the poor. Normally, in the absence of basic facilities and amenities, the rich do not bother about it because they can afford to purchase the same. But, in the case of the poor, their life will be miserable in the absence of public facilities and basic amenities. Hence priority has to be given to the poor. 'Unto this last' has to be the policy of the Panchayat. The poorest of the poor have to be given priority in apportioning benefits.

14. It should Be Pro-Women

There is yet another important sector which needs care and attention. Panchayat activities have to be carefully designed so as to provide enough scope for women both in terms of participation and benefits. Hitherto women have been the neglected section of society. Now they need to be integrated into the mainstream of economic and political activities.

Further, among the problems faced by the rural society, 70 to 80 percent are being faced directly by women in the absence of basic amenities, facilities and services. Hence the decentralized political institutions nearer to the people should have sufficient resilience to accommodate womenfolk in their activities.
To achieve the above stated objectives two historical amendments have been brought into the Constitution of India. They are the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. All the States in India have enacted provincial acts to conform to the basic characteristics of the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. The operationalization of the principles varies from State to State. The impact of the Constitutional Amendment Acts has to be gauged in course of time. Studies are available at present to substantiate the proposition that decentralization will bring about development and peace.

It is against this background that one has to look at the functioning of the new Panchayat Raj System. The success of the new Panchayat Raj System largely depends on the congruence of the perceptions of the people, their leaders and the officials about the role to be played by the respective segments in the new system. Theoretically the new Panchayat Raj System has been created as a unit of self-governance with the objective of decentralizing powers not only to execute and implement schemes and programmes but also to evolve schemes and programmes to meet the local needs, to mobilize people to participate in all the activities of the community through the new institution, to reduce the size and the workload of the higher level governments, and, to leave the responsibility to the people to determine their destiny as per the new dispensation under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Acts. Of all the factors, the question of leadership at the micro level matters much in achieving the needed change at the grassroots. The Panchayat Raj Institutions have been activated through elections. They are now in position. It is a curious question as to what extent the Panchayats have performed their roles and responsibilities. In this context, this study examines the performance of the Panchayat Presidents...
for the development of the Gram Panchayats in Nilakottai Block, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu.

The performance evaluation is focused on (1) profile of the Gram Panchayats (2) socio-economic background of the Gram Panchayat Presidents, (3) functions of the Gram Panchayats, (4) resource mobilization, and, (5) development schemes for Gram Panchayat development. These aspects have to be kept in perspective while evaluating the functioning of the grassroots institutions. In this context an attempt is made here to evaluate the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents of the selected study area.

Statement of the Problem

The present study attempts to analyze the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents in Nilakottai Block of Dindigul District. This block has 23 Gram Panchayats. The Gram Panchayats have earmarked powers and functions as per the State Act of 1994.

Functions of the Gram Panchayat

Gram Panchayats are primarily responsible for the provision and maintenance of basic amenities like safe drinking water, street lights, link roads, streets, village sanitation and drainage. The functions of the Gram Panchayats are classified as obligatory functions and discretionary functions, based on the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act 1994.

This study focuses attention on the performance of the Presidents of the Gram Panchayats in respect of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them through the Act and Government Orders. There are two types of functions indicated in the Government Orders, namely obligatory functions and discretionary ones.
a) The obligatory functions are:

- The construction, repair and maintenance of all village roads, that is to say, all public roads in the village (other than those classified as National Highways, State Highways, Major District Roads and Panchayat Union Roads) and of all bridges, culverts, dams and causeways on such roads.

- The provision of house sites and the regulation of buildings.

- The lighting of public roads and public places in built-up areas.

- The construction of drains and the disposal of drainage water and suillage including sewage.
The cleaning of streets, the removal of rubbish heaps, jungle growth and prickly pear, the filling in of disused wells, insanitary ponds, pools, ditches, pits or hollows and other improvements of the sanitary conditions of the village.

The provision of public latrines and arrangements to clean latrines, whether public or private.

The sinking and repairing of wells, the excavation, repairing and maintenance of water works for the supply of water for drinking, washing and bathing purposes.

The opening and maintenance of burial and burning grounds.

Such other duties as the government may by notification impose.
b) The discretionary functions are:

> The planting and preservation of trees on the sides of all public roads in the village subject to mutually agreed terms and conditions between the Gram Panchayat and the authority which maintains the roads in case the road is not maintained by the Gram Panchayat itself.

> The lighting of public roads and public places in areas other than built-up areas.

> The opening and maintenance of public markets other than markets which are classified as Panchayat Union markets.

> The control of fairs and festivals other than those classified as Panchayat Union fairs and festivals.

> The opening and maintenance of public landing places, halting places and cart stands and public cattle sheds.

> The opening and maintenance of public slaughterhouses.

> The opening and maintenance of reading rooms.

> The establishment and maintenance of wireless receiving sets, playgrounds, parks, sports clubs and centers of physical culture.

> The opening and maintenance of literacy centers and centers for imparting social education.

> the construction of works of public utility and provision of other facilities for the safety, health, convenience, culture or recreation of the inhabitants of the village.

The Gram Panchayat shall prepare a plan according to the local resources and execute such a plan by identifying:

a. Infrastructural gaps like requirements of water supply, roads, street lights sanitation etc.

b. Plan for economic development on the basis of land and water resources.
c. Plan for the upliftment of the families living below poverty line by improving their income through providing / upgrading skills, access to resources and credit to take up self employment or find wage employment.

d. Plan for systematic improvement of social sectors, particularly in respect of health, education, women and child welfare and other aspects for better quality of life for the people.

e. Other activities related to the development perspective for the rural areas and based on the creative functions and any innovations for the development of the Gram Panchayats.

It is the duty of every Gram Panchayat to ensure that all the natural resources including manpower resources in the Panchayat are used efficiently to improve their productivity and provide full employment to even able bodied person in the Panchayat so that all families earn enough income to manage their livelihood.

This study will analyze how the Gram Panchayat Presidents have perceived their role and responsibilities and how they have performed their assigned roles and responsibilities. For the effective functioning of the Gram Panchavats, the Gram Panchayat Presidents have to play a vital role. The success of the Gram Panchayat is based on the role performance of the President. For instance, the Gram Panchayat President has to play numerous roles, namely, democratic role, civic role, administrative role and managerial role. I fence, the President’s performance is the sine qua non for the development of the Gram Panchavat. Gram Panchayat Presidents perform obligatory and discretionary functions towards achieving economic development and social justice at the Gram Panchayat level. With regard to performance, there are a number of problems and obstacles faced by the Panchayat Presidents. Against this background this study attempts to
evaluate the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents over a period of five years in Nilakottai Block of Dindigul District

Review of Literature: Historical Perspective

Local self government in Tamil Nadu has a long history. It is evident from the stone inscription at Uthiramerur in Kancheepuram District that “community groups and village councils” flourished during the 10th and the 11th centuries during the reign of the Cholas. Members of the Village Council were selected through the process of secret ballot called “Kuda Olai Murai”. These bodies functioned as self contained economic and administrative entities enjoying a great deal of autonomy with powers of taxation to fulfill local needs and administer justice in their limited areas. These Village Councils also had effective links with the Chola rulers. With the downfall of the Cholas, there was a decline of village autonomy and a rise of the centralized feudal administrative system. This continued till the British introduced local self-governance primarily as an administrative convenience for imperial government.

The advent of British rule and the impact of modern civilization led to the gradual and steady decay of the Gram Panchayats. However, even the British administrators realized their significance and the imperfections of the centralized form of government as early as 1882. In consonance with Lord Rippon’s resolution (1882), the Madras Local Boards Act was enacted in 1884. The historical background of local self-government in Tamil Nadu can be broadly classified into six segments/ They are:

1. 1884 -1920
2. 1921 - 1930
3. 1931 -1950
4. 1951 - 1958
5. 1959 -1986
6. 1987 -1996
A series of studies have been conducted on local self-government in India. Some of them are historical in nature\(^8\) while a few are legal\(^9\) and behavioral in nature.\(^{11}\)

Dharampal (1972), in his work The Madras Panchayat System: A General Assessment, presented an assessment of the performance of the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu. The author conducted a sample survey of Panchayati leaders for evaluation. The major achievements, weaknesses and potential have been indicated. Corrupt practices developed in the system have also been brought to light. The major problems have been discussed and projected for solution. He has developed a methodology to evaluate the performance of the Panchayati institutions at different levels.

S. Saraswathi (1973), in her work The Madras Panchayat System, Vol. I, focuses on the historical foundations of the establishment of the Panchayat System in the Tamil province. It brings to light the provisions of the Panchayat legislation of 1958. The author has extensively analyzed Panchayat finance and administration through some case studies. Rural Development schemes and their implementation have been thoroughly examined from the perspective of the involvement of the local communities. She brings out the efficacy and efficiency of the Local Body system in delivering services to the people. The author clearly indicates the operative objective of the British as well as the Central and the State Governments. The varied perceptions and intentions of these institutions have been brought to light. She gives a complete picture of the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu prior to the establishment of the new system after the enactment of the 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment to the Constitution of India.

C. Gnanaprakasam, (1986), in his work Local Government in Tamil Nadu (in Tamil), covers both rural and urban local bodies in Tamil Nadu prior to the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. The historical
background of these institutions is traced and their actual functioning is
examined. They are compared with those of other states. Local Body
elections, reforms in Local Body elections, personnel administration in
Panchayats and State control over Panchayats have been extensively
analyzed.

R. Rukumani (1998), in her work Panchayati System in Tamil
Nadu, traces the history of Local Government in Tamil Nadu before and
after Independence with the objective of identifying the course of the
Panchayati Institutions in the light of the passage of the 73rd Amendment to
the Constitution of India. It touches upon the basic structure of the
Panchayati institutions, powers and responsibilities conferred upon the
Panchayats and the finances made available to the Panchayats in different
periods. Performances have been evaluated, finally this study focuses its
attention on the State Conformity Act of 1994. An analysis has been made
of the pattern of the Panchayats that emerged over a period of time and the
problems associated with the emergence of the Panchayats and the strategies
adopted to overcome the problems.

M. Aram and CL Palanithurai (2000), in their work “Tamil Nadu”, in
George Mathew (ed), Status of Panchayati Rai in the States and union
Territories of India, analyse the state of the Panchayati Raj System in
Tamil Nadu. They deal with the historical background and the genesis of the
Panchavat system before and after Independence and pre 73rd Amendment
and post 73rd Amendment. They discuss in detail the structure and the
functions of the Panchayati Institutions created through the Tamil Nadu
have been analyzed and to some extent performance is also analyzed. It is a
text portraying the status of the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu.
There are a few studies, books, and articles on the legal aspects. G. Palanithurai (1993), in his article “Need for Revitalizing Panchayati Raj Institutions in Tamil Nadu”, in the Southern Economist, has traced the road map for the establishment of the New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu based on the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. He has stressed that the Madras Panchayat Act of 1958 was a landmark Act and the same can be followed with the addition of the basic principles to be taken into account for enacting conformity legislation in Tamil Nadu.

G. Palanithurai, in his work “Empowing People or Bureaucracy”, in the Southern Economist has reviewed the Tamil Nadu Panchayati Act of 1994. The author has critically evaluated the main provisions of the Panchayat Act in terms of the basic framework developed by the Central Government for devolution of powers through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. The has indicated the major deviations of the Tamil Nadu Act from the spirit of the Constitution. The bureaucracy has been given the power of control over the Panchayati institutions. People should have been given supervisory and control powers over the Panchayats. It indicts the overriding power of the District Collector, ft makes a fervent plea for changing such provisions.

There are numerous studies, books and articles related to the behavioral aspects. C. Harichandran (1983), in his work Panchayat Raj and Rural Development: A Case Study, examines the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development by making a detailed analysis of the income and expenditure and the physical achievements.

G. Palanithurai (1993), in his work “Needing Social Action for Effective Panchayati Raj”, in Kumkshetra indicates the fact that in the process of democratic decentralization of powers the initiatives come from the center and not from the people. But, to ensure success to this dispensation, the initiatives have to come from the people. Social action, community participation, owning the institutions and taking responsibilities are the imperatives for the success of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the process of devolution of powers people have to come to the forefront pushing the Government to the background. He has underlined the importance of conscientization of the people on the role of the people in governance at the grassroots.

G. Palanithurai (1994) in his work Empowering People for Prosperity: A Study in New Panchayati Raj System examines the realistic scope for establishing a governing system at grassroots to deliver services and goods with the active participation of the people. It examines the reasons for the establishment of the New Panchayati Raj System. It further analyzes the difficulties involved in the process of establishing the first government at the grassroots. This book suggests a variety of means to overcome the problems and hurdles in the process of decentralization of power. It analyzes the people’s perception of grassroots democracy. On the whole it envisages a new economic scenario in the rural areas if decentralization is perceived properly. In the orbit of governance, it maintains that the establishment of institutions at the grassroots for
governance creates a new scenario in Indian federalism. The likely relationship among the three tiers of governance has also been discussed.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{13} (1994) in his article “Empowerment of Women—A Novel Exercise” in Kurukshetra, describes an exercise done in a village with rural women. This exercise was done before the enactment of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act. In this article, the perception of women of the institutions involved in development and the role of development functionaries and the people has been analyzed. Further the missing link between the people and the government is identified. It clearly demonstrates to what extent women can take up the responsibilities under the new dispensation. The capacity level of the women has also been highlighted.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{14} (1995) in his article “Role of Women in New Panchayati Raj System” (Tamil) in Thittam, indicates the possible roles to be taken up by women in the rural areas both individually and collectively in the Panchayat activities by which women and Dalit issues can be effectively solved. An array of activities have been indicated which have no financial implications. The Panchayats can make use of such resources for administrating development.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{15} (1996), in his work New Panchayati Raj System Status and Prospects analyzes the outcome of a State level conference held in Gandhigram on 17\textsuperscript{th} September 1994 to exert pressure on the Government of Tamil Nadu to hold elections to Local Bodies in Tamil Nadu. Academics, representatives from NGOs, activists, Gandhians and representatives from the Government presented their perspectives about how the Panchayat system could be established and indicated the way forward. This work is a collection of articles touching upon a wide variety of subjects like democratic decentralization, empowerment of people, devolution of powers, planning, women empowerment and rural
development activities. This work is almost a vision building exercise based on past experience.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{16} (1996) in his work Empowering People: Issues and Solutions, collects fourteen articles converting the entire gamut of Panchayat system in India with focus on Tamil Nadu. The articles touch upon a variety of subjects like New Panchayat Raj System, barriers to the devolution process and suggestions to remove the barriers, historical evolution of the Panchayati Raj System, Panchayati Raj democracy, decentralization, NGOs, grassroots institutions and significance of Panchayat management.

G. Palanithurai, B.R. Dwaraki and S. Narayanasamy\textsuperscript{17} (1997), in their work Major Issues in New Panchayati Raj System present the outcome of a sub-regional workshop conducted by the Department of Political science ad Development Administration, Gandhigram Rural Institute. The first part comprises the articles presented at the workshop. The articles focus upon a wide variety of subjects like, defects in the Act enacted in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in 1994, globalization of economy and decentralization of powers, non-conventional sources for New Panchayati Raj System, resources for Gram Panchayat development, common property resources, empowerment of women, planning process from the grassroots level, resources for Panchayat Planning and linkage between the NGO sector and New Panchayat Raj Systems. The second part comprises the reaction of the participants to the presentations and major recommendations.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{18} (1997), in his work Dimensions of New Panchayati Raj System (Tamil), touches upon the conditions under which the new dispensation was thought of, how the promises of decentralization could be realized, and what could be done at the state level, at the level of officials, local body leaders and the people. The major activity areas have
been underlined for popular consumption. It will dispel the clouds
surrounding the new Panchayati Raj System.

G. Palanithurai19 (1997) in his article “Capacity Building Exercise for
Elected Representatives in Tamil Nadu”, in Journal of Rural
Development, has underlined the need for building the capacity of the
Local Body leaders as roles and responsibilities have been fixed for the
leaders of the three tier Panchayati Raj System. Further he has indicated the
methodological nuances to be adopted to conduct the capacity building
programme for Panchayat leaders by keeping in mind the leaders’ level of
understanding as they come from different socio-economic backgrounds.
He has indicated the necessity for preparing a module and a manual for
training, which should be State specific. More particularly the training
institutions have to be identified and they arc to be equipped.

G. Palanithurai“” (1997) in his article “New Panchayati Raj and Rural
Economy” (Tamil) in Thittam, analyses the existing economic condition of
the rural areas and suggests wavs and means of reconstructing the rural
society through this new Panchayati Raj System. A new system has been
created which has to be perceived as a system for development and not for
politics. By playing a critical role both the leaders and the people can
improve the rural economy substantially, for which Local Body institutions
have to be perceived properly.

The Rajiv Gandhi Chair’s 21 (1997), Manual for Capacity Building
Exercises to the Local Body Leaders (Tamil), is a module as well as a
manual prepared by the Chair to cater to the needs of the training
institutions to conduct capacity building exercises for the Local Body leaders
at different levels. It explains the methodology’ to be adopted for conducting
capacity building exercises and the content to be given to the leaders of
various levels from Gram Panchayat Ward Members to District Panchayat
Presidents.
S. Subramanian\textsuperscript{22} (1997) in his work \textit{CT Tamil Nadu}, in G. Ram Reddy’s Patterns of Panchayati Raj in India makes an in-depth analysis of the structure and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Tamil Nadu in the light of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act of 1958. He has evaluated the performance of the Panchayat Raj system in Tamil Nadu. It has indicated the problems and issues which are affecting the process of devolution of powers and the activities carried out by the Panchayats. The has also suggested measures to improve the conditions.

P. Jeyapal and Dravidamani\textsuperscript{23} (1997) in their article “Women Pachayat Presidents” in Social Welfare analyse the level of awareness of the women Panchayat leaders of Lalgudi Panchayati Union against the backdrop of their social, economic and political conditions. Their performance is evaluated. The study concludes that their motivation and awareness are low and that they are being guided by their husbands or other males of their families.

The State Planning Commission\textsuperscript{24} (1997) Report of the Working Group on Decentralized Planning- and Panchayati Raj is the report of the working group constituted under the leadership of K.V. Sundaram by the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu, for evolving guidelines and methodological nuances to prepare plans at different levels through the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu under the new dispensation. The report has twelve chapters which deal with different aspects of the planning process. Keeping the history and the devolution of powers in Tamil Nadu in the backdrop, the working group evolved the framework to prepare plans in Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats. Further it has also developed the approach for planning at the micro level. Apart from the above there are three important major aspects included in the report, namely, the creation of the needed administrative structure, building the capacity of the leaders and the officials
involved in the planning process and devices to mobilize the people for their participation in the planning process.

The State Planning Commission (1997) *Entrustment of Responsibilities* to Panchayat Institutions is a report submitted to the Government of Tamil Nadu by a committee constituted by the State Planning Commission to suggest ways and means of entrusting responsibilities to rural Local Bodies. In this report an analysis has been made of the existing position of the Panchayat structure and a new one has been suggested in conformity with the legislation, indicating the possible problems that will emerge in the process of operationalization. It is one of the best reports available in India for devolution of power to Local Bodies.

G. Palanithurar (1998) in his article “Planning for Village Development” (Tamil) in *Thittam* explains the importance of empowering people. The Panchayat brings power to the people. Now Panchayats are under the clutches of the bureaucracy. This position has to be changed. Development activities are being carried out in a supply driven mode and this is to be changed. Unless the activities are changed to a demand driven mode, people cannot own the responsibility. To perform this task, planning has to be done at the grassroots where their needs and priorities will be finalized and their vision protected. Hence the article indicates planning as an instrument to empower the people.

CL Palanithurai (1998) in his article “Planning for Village Development” (Tamil) in *Thittam* highlights the steps to be followed in plan preparation. It indicates the essential conditions for effective involvement of the people and the officials in the process of preparation of perspective plan. It explains the two-way process in this exercise. It should be both an annual and a five year integrated plan. The article underlines the importance and implications of the process and pleads for such an initiative.
G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{28} (1998) in his article “Capacity Building for Women Local Body Leaders” (Tamil) in Thittam explains the aspects to be considered for preparing a training module for women Panchayat leaders. It clearly explains the circumstances in which the leaders are drawn towards Panchayat institutions and also their socio-economic background. Realizing the role expected of the women leaders, the gap has to be identified and what skill they require to fill up the gap and what has to be instilled in their minds have to be indicated in the module.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{29} (1998) in his article “New Panchayat Raj System in the Development Process” (Tamil) in Thittam explains the process of development at present and indicate the opportunities available for Panchayats to make use of them for the benefit of the people. Panchayati leaders should enhance their capacity and understand the process and take initiatives at their level to tap these opportunities. The Panchayat by its proactive function poses a challenge to globalization.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{27} (1998) in his work Good Governance at the Grassroots presents a manual for Gram Panchayati leaders with the objective of identifying the activities to achieve social development. Without investing more money activities can be carried out in villages with the support and the active involvement of the people.

G. Palanithurai\textsuperscript{30} (1998) in his work Recommendations for Effective Functioning of Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu giving a detailed report about the loopholes in the Panchayati System in Tamil Nadu recommends suggestions to make it conform to the spirit of the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment to the Constitution of India. It indicates the structural and functional weaknesses and suggests methods by which the loopholes can be plugged.
V.B. Athreya and K.S. Rajchswari (1998) in their work *Women Participation in Panchayati Raj: A Case Study from Tamil Nadu* attempt to explore the socio-economic and political background of women Panchayat leaders, their problems and perspectives and the support they receive from various quarters in the process of contesting in the elections and managing the Panchayats. The study finds that political background and family support are important factors for women to enter the political arena and socio-economic characteristics like age, education and income influence the leadership of women.

G. Palanithurai (1999) in his work *Perception of Grassroots Democracy* and Political Performance deals with grassroots democracy. He argues that the perception of the stakeholders and that of the elites who are at the helm of affairs have to be conceived properly for proper implementation of the concept. This study examines perception of the elites composing both leaders and functionaries of the administrative system who handle power.

G. Palanithurai (1999) in his article “Glittering Women Leadership” (Tamil) in Thittam studies the impact of the training programme conducted for women leaders of Gram Panchayats in five districts in Tamil Nadu. While evaluating the impact of the training of the women leaders it finds that they are conscious of their roles and responsibilities and that they are serious about the issues of women and the poor. More particularly there are certain skills they have acquired very fast while performing their roles in Panchayat administration. It indicates that there is a partiality for women in managing the institutions at the grassroots.

G. Palanithurai (1999) in his article “Gram Sabha: A Civil Society at the Bottom” in R.C. Choudhury and S. P. Jain (eds.), *Strengthening Village Democracy*, explains the basic principles of Gram Sabha and its place in the Panchayat Raj System. He has analyzed the actual functioning of
the Gram Sabha in Tamil Nadu. The gap between the intent and the reality has been explored as per the perception of the leaders and the people about the Gram Sabha and its implications. The major deviations have been indicated. Inferences have been drawn from a case analysis of eleven Gram Panchayats. Suggestions have been made to set light the malady in the functioning of the Gram Sabha.

Teekathir’s (1999) in its Special Supplement for Local Bodies brings out the struggles of the Panchayati leaders in the grassroots institutions to realize the basic objectives of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. Experts’ views, Panchayat leaders’ interviews, excerpts from documents on devolution of powers and finance have been brought out for popular consumption. It has rich material for research. Raw data have been packed in this supplement.

The Madras Institute of Development Studies (1999) has published An Evaluation of Functions & Finances of Rural Local Bodies in Tamil Nadu. This study is about the actual functional and financial devolution that has taken place after the elected Local Bodies came into being in October 1996. This study analyses the relationship between the responsibilities assigned to the rural local bodies and the finances made available to them. It also brings out some of the problems involved in the management of rural local bodies in terms of finance.

G. Palanithurai’s (2000) in his work Grassroots Democracy in Indian Society analyzes the present scenario of governance in India and its implications for the society from the perspective of people’s participation in the process of development. It is a collection of essays touching upon a wide variety of subjects, like, election, governance, people’s participation, development, devolution of powers, reconstruction of the political structure, planning exercise done by the people, food security and building the capacity of the people and their leaders at the grassroots. It focuses mainly
the positive aspects of the devolution of powers and people’s participation in the process of economic development and social justice.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in his work New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu (Tamil) explains the details of the decentralization of powers, the history of local governance, the problems involved in decentralization of powers, the role of the Centre and the State Government in the process of decentralization of powers, how women can make use of the reservation of seats for women and how Dalits can make use of the reservation of seats for Dalits. Subjects like education, health and employment have been discussed in the context of the devolution of powers. The changes to be made in the Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act of 1994, the basic details of the schemes and programmes of rural development and the steps taken to devolve powers to Panchayats have been elaborately discussed in this book intended for popular consumption.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in his article “Plan Preparation with the Participation of People in Tamil Nadu” (Tamil) in Thittam highlights the importance of people’s participation in the process of development of the rural society. It underlines the efficacy of people’s participation in preparation of perspective plan for the development of the rural society. It indicates the methodological nuances to be adopted for plan preparation. It outlines the steps to be taken to bring the people in to the planning process.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in “Corruption at Micro Level and Ways to Contain” in N. Narayanasamy, M.P. Borain and M.A. Jayaraju (eds), Corruption at the Grassroots: The Shades and Shadows, points out that corruption in grassroots institutions has been reported as being on the increase and against this backdrop a case was taken up for analysis. Vadugampadi Gram Panchayat was selected and analyzed for the dimensions of corruption at the Panchayati level. This Gram Panchayat has been selected as a test model and the experiment has been reported in this work-
It contains an action framework for eliminating corrupt practices in the process of development.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in his monograph Towards Decentralizing of Powers explains the details of the different kinds of motives behind the ongoing democratic decentralization process. The decentralization process varies from one society to another, one country to another and one community to another. It promises several things to several individuals and groups. These promises have been explained in this work.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in his article “Plan Preparation with the Participation of People in Tamil Nadu” (in Tamil) in Thittam highlights the importance of people’s the participation in the process of development of the rural society. It underlines the efficacy of people’s participation in preparation of perspective plan for the development of the rural society. It indicates the methodological nuances to be adopted for plan preparation. It outlines the steps to be taken to bring the people in to the planning process.

G. Palanithurai (2000) in his work Capacity Building for Local Body Leaders states that modules have been developed manuals have been designed and training programmes have been conducted for these leaders at different levels. It is an exercise in an experience sharing. It contains rich material for analysis.

G. Palanithurai (2001) in his article “The Genre of Women Leaders in Local Bodies: Experience form Tamil Nadu” in The Indian Journal of Public Administration explains the process of recruitment of women leaders to the local bodies and how they handle power in their institutions. It analyzes the problem of the women leaders while performing their roles and responsibilities. Different types of leaders with varying backgrounds and intentions have come to these positions. In the given environmental setting how they struggle to perform their functions has been analyzed in this work.
It indicates the need of the hour for the women leaders to perform their roles efficiently. At the end of the five years’ tenure how the women leaders look at their space and how they design their public life have also been analyzed.

G. Palanithurai (2001) in his article “Women Leadership & Women Empowerment” in Thittam stresses the need for leadership training. Given the environmental backdrop of the women leaders in the Indian rural setting, the mindset of the leaders has to be changed. It requires a clear understanding of the condition of women in Indian society and the role expectations of the women leaders. Specific programmes have to be evolved, modules have to be developed and thereby their leadership quality has to be developed. Empowerment of women can be made possible only by bringing the right kind of women leaders to the institutions at the grassroots.

G. Palanithurai (2001) in his article “Synergization of Institutional Arrangement for Development: and Social justice at the Grassroots: A Case Analysis” in S.P. Jain (ed.), Emerging Institutions for Decentralized Rural Development, makes an in depth analysis of a case of different types of organizations functioning in a village very harmoniously, delivering services to the maximum level. The Panchayati institutions work in tandem with other organizations very effectively as Panchayat leaders perceive these organizations as supportive. The article indicates the factors, which are essential for the success of the organizations.

G. Palanithurai (2001) in his work Empowerment of Women: Problems Faced by the Elected Women Representatives’ Experience from Tamil Nadu, presents a report about the problems faced by the women Gram Panchayati leaders in managing Panchayats and public affairs. The problems have been taken from the reports of the training programme conducted for women leaders by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj
Studies. It explains how the women leaders have been facing the problems on different fronts, like, family, society, party, bureaucracy, Panchayat Council and Gram Sabha. The women leaders have indicated their needs. They strongly demand a support structure. It gives the details of the issues involved in Panchayat administration while dealing with women’s problems.

G. Palanithurai and V. Ragupathy, 49 (2001) in their work Empowering People through Panchayts: Problems Faced by the Elected Panchayat Leaders in Tamil Nadu, present a report on the training programme conducted for Panchayti leaders during the first period after the implementation of the 1994 Act in Tamil Nadu. In all the training programmes, the leaders had been asked to indicate the problems faced by them in managing the Panchayati affairs. This was done purely for policy advocacy. In this report the authors have indicated the administrative, financial and political problems faced by the leaders while administering development through the Panchayat. The needs of the leaders have also been indicated.

G. Palanithurai’1” (2002) in his work Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj Systems in India, Vol. I, presents a collection of articles written by various scholars on the experience of devolution of powers in different states. G.Palanithuri, in his article “Towards Decentralization of Powers” underlines the imperatives and implications of democratic decentralization of powers in the world, the has brought out the promises available in devolution of power.

E.S. Yenkataramiah’s article “Panchayati Raj Institutions in India” gives a total historical picture of the evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India.

K.Y. Sundaram, in Ins article “The Local Planning Process: Evolution and Transition to a New System” touches upon the important aspect of
decentralization of powers, namely planning from below. He indicates the imperative need of the hour to shift the exercise from top down planning to bottom up planning.

“The Panchayats of the Scheduled Areas” by B.R. Purohit explains the distinct characteristics of the tribals in India and the system of Panchayats to be established in the tribal areas through this new provision in the Constitution. M.P. Borian, in his article “Governance from the Grassroots,” succinctly explains the nexus between the people and the Government in the new context. Prabhat Datta and Chandan Datta examine the functioning of the Panchayati Raj System in West Bengal. Sunny George and K.N. Lalithabhain analyze and evaluate the performance of the Panchayati Raj System in Kerala. N. Sivanna, in his article has taken Karnataka as a case for analysis and evaluated (his current status of the Panchayat Raj System in Karnataka. M. Sarumathy, in her article has brought out the details of the working of the Panchayati Raj System in Andhra Pradesh. Scholars who have written articles on the states have touched upon the history, structure, functioning and performance of the Panchayat Institutions of the respective states.

Raj in Andhra Pradesh” by B.S. Bhargava, “Restructuring and Reform of Rural Administrative Institutions in Mizoram: A Study in the New Panchayati Raj System” by R.N. Prasad, Democratizing Democracy: An Appraisal” by Yatindra Singh Sisodia record the experience of the respective states in terms of the devolution process. The authors have covered the historicity, structure, function, performance and difficulties involved in the process of devolution of powers.

G. Palanithurai” (2002) in his work Empowerment of Women: Experience of the Elected Women Representatives in Grassroots Institutions brings out the issues of the women leaders who are in power for the past seven years in both urban and rural local bodies against the backdrop of the new dispensation. It questions the logic of reservation with the expectation that they are going to form a critical mass and examines whether and the critical function has been performed and if not, why. All these questions have been analyzed in this work. It is the outcome of the capacity building exercise done in Gandhigram for elected women representatives.

G. Palanithiirar” (2002) in Ins article “Impediments to Empowerment of Women: Experiences of Elected Women Representatives in Panchayats in Tamil Nadu m The Indian Journal of Political Science, investigates the problems faced by the elected women representatives as they manage the local body institutions. I le has classified the nature and intensity of the obstacles and hurdles in the process of governance and explained how these problems are being tackled by them, and with whose support. The article has brought to light the ways and means In which the problems can be tackled, what the need of the leaders is and how they can be met by external agencies.
A. Celine Rani (2002) in her work Emerging Pattern of Rural Women Leadership in India studies the process by which the women leaders are emerging to the political front to manage the Panchayat system. By evolving a framework suitable to this study, the process of emergence of the leaders has been analyzed. In this work it has been established that the socio-economic status is a significant factor in determining the emergence of rural women leaders. Different kinds of categories of leaders have been identified. This reflects the conditions in Tamil Nadu.

The Rajiv Gandhi Chair (2002) Manual for Leadership Training for Women is a training manual exclusively prepared to give leadership training to women Panchayti leaders. It contains the information needed to conduct leadership training for women on the aspects of attitude, behavior and performance. Very many exercises have been suggested for this training and women’s issues and the strategies to solve the problems of women have been presented in this manual.

The Rajiv Gandhi Chair (2003) Management of Gram Panchayat (Tamil) is a guidebook for the Gram Panchayati Presidents regarding their powers, duties and responsibilities to be performed in the Panchayats. It gives details of the powers conferred upon the Panchayats. How these powers could be handled has been explained in this handbook.

G. Palanithurai (1999) in his work New Panchayati Raj System at Work: An Evaluation studies the functioning of the New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and the 'Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act of 1994. It focuses attention on the structural and functional aspects of the system. Further it touches upon the problems that have emerged in the process of establishing the institutions, the perception of the Panchavat leaders about the new dispensation, officials’ outlook on the new system, people’s participation in the development programmes and process, the relationship between the
Government and the local bodies, the linkages between MPs, MLAs and local body leaders for constituency services and the functioning of the tree tiers and the Gram Sabha. All these aspects have been explained through case analysis. It suggests various ways and means by which the grassroots institutions can be placed properly to reflect the spirit of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. It highlights the struggles and achievements of the New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu.

These works mostly trace the structural, planning and functional aspects of the Panchayati Raj System and do not explain the performance analysis related to Gram Panchayat Presidents. No serious study has been carried out on the performance of the Panchayat President in the new Panchayati Raj System after the introduction of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. Thus there is a gap in the existing literature on the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents in the New Panchayati Raj System. The present study “Performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents: An Evaluation” Nilakottai Block, Dindigul District is a modest attempt to fill the gap.

**Theoretical Framework:**

Evaluating the performance of the government either at the federal level or at the regional level will not draw the attention of the academics because of methodological reasons. There are a variety of methods, scales and frameworks available in the West for evaluating the performance of the government. But they cannot be adopted as such without modification to suit Indian requirements. Rajni Kothari strongly pleaded that Indian students of Political Science should make a realistic attempt to evaluate the performance of the government.
Performance analysis, so conceived, involves a significant comprehension and understanding of the dimensions of the total operation. It involves alternative mapping operations models and paradigms of scientific research and efforts at measurement of performance. Above all it involves a broad methodology that is not just analytical and classificatory but diagnostic, evaluative, normative and futuristic. So far fledged evaluative methods have not been evolved to evaluate the performance of the State and Central governments. But now academics have started exercise in evaluating the performance of the Panchayat as the unit is manageable. Against this background an attempt is made to evaluate the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents in a block in Tamil Nadu.

Evaluating the performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents is an analysis of role performance. Hence role analysis is essential in this evaluation. Basically role analysis typology has been evolved from the role orientation categories originally developed by Wahalke and his associates. They carefully proceeded from the fundamental concept of 'role' since it has been given various shades of meaning. Generally 'role' refers to the actions of an actor pertinent to others in accordance with the expectations or norms of behavior that are associated with a position in a social structure. There are a variety of theories, which deal with the concept of role and function.

Before discussing the role performance we must understand role theories, which are linked related to role performance. Sarbin (1954) states that role theory is an inter-disciplinary theory in that its variables are drawn from the disciplines of culture, society and personality. Parsons (1951) has utilized it in his theoretical framework for the analysis of social systems. Newcomb (1951) and Sarbin (1954) have given it a place in social psychology. Linton (1936) has manipulated it in linking American social anthropology- with social structure. Mead (1934) has used role theory to
construct a theory of the development of the self, while Cameron (1950) has used it for the analysis of pathological behavior.

Parson’s Theory

Linton’s Role theory: For Linton a social system is a blueprint for behavior, it is “the sum total of the ideal patterns which control the reciprocal behavior between individuals and between individuals and society”. He further states that statuses and roles are controlled by reciprocal behavior.

Sergeant (1951) says “A personal role is a pattern or type of social behavior which seems situationally appropriate to him in terms of the demands and expectations of these in his group”. Thekkamalai says that a role is mainly concerned with the office bearer’s role related to administration, implementation of development programmes and helping the people.

Parsons and Shills Approach to Role Theory

Parsons and Shills developed a role theory with the help of role, personality, actor and the alter ego. According to the theory, the individual or ego can fulfill his wants only to the extent permitted by the environment. A role consists of a set of behavior which is more or less characteristic of all the occupants of a position. A prescribed role includes all the approved ways of carrying out the necessary functions required of the occupants of a position. According to Davis, it is how an individual actually performs in a given position, as distinct form how he is supposed to perform.

Based on this theory, role analysis is undertaken according to the following framework.
Hence this study aims at analyzing role performance in terms of the manner in which a Gram Panchayat president carries out or actually performs his/her roles in the new Panchayat Raj System. Based on the role theories discussed the following objectives have been formulated for this study.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are

1. To study the socio-economic background of the Gram Panchayat Presidents
2. To study the role perception of the Gram Panchayat Presidents
3. To evaluate the role performance of the Gram Panchayat Presidents
Operational Definitions

The following concepts have been used in this study: Panchayats, socio-economic background, role, role perception, political socialization and role performance.

Panchayats

Panchayats are the rural local governments established by the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act 1994 to facilitate people’s participation in development programmes at the grassroots level. For this study the Gram Panchayat is taken as the unit.

Socio-Economic Background

For this study the socio-economic background of the Panchayat Presidents is mainly determined by the occupation, caste, education, income and wealth of the Presidents. Analyzing the socio-economic background of the Presidents is important to assess the social status and analyze the performance since the socio-economic background plays a significant part in the development process of any individual.

Role

For this study role refers to the duties, powers, functions and responsibilities of the Panchayat Presidents for the total development of the Gram Panchayat.

Role perception

For this study role perception has been defined as how the gram Panchayat Presidents perceive the roles to be performed by them in the Panchayat.

Political Socialization

For this study political socialization is assessed in terms of the respondents’ early age remembrance of political events, the political affiliation of the parents of the respondents, political discussions in the
family, political activities in educational institutions and attending orientation camps organized by political parties.

Role Performance

In this study the performance of Presidents is assessed in terms of the duties assigned to them.

In the light of the above concepts this study aims at analyzing the performance of the Panchayat Presidents for the total development of Gram Panchayats in Nilakottai Block.

**Indicators**

1. Indicators used for measuring the performance of obligatory functions:

   The following indicators throw light on the performance of the obligatory functions of the Presidents.

   i) Provision and maintenance of basic amenities


   b. Provision of house sites and the regulation of building.

   c. Construction of drainage and disposal of drainage water.

   d. Cleaning of streets, disused wells, insanitary ponds, pools, ditch pits and other improvements of the sanitary condition of the village.

   e. Provision of public latrines.

   f. Opening and maintenance of burial and burning grounds.

   g. Sinking and repairing of wells and maintenance of water works for drinking, washing and bathing purposes.
if) Other **Statutory** Functions

a. Conducting Gram Sabha meetings four times in a year.
b. Selection of beneficiaries in the Gram Sabha meetings.
c. Approval of the annual plan in the Gram Sabha.
d. Accountability and transparency of Panchayat development activities while conducting the Gram Sabha meeting.

2. Indicators used for measuring the performance of discretionary functions

a. Planting and preservation of trees on roadsides.
b. Lighting facilities in the newly but it up areas.
c. Opening and maintenance of public markets.
d. Control of fairs and festivals.
e. Opening and maintenance of public landing places, halting places, cart stands and public cattle sheds.
f. Opening and maintenance of public slaughterhouses.
g. Opening and maintenance of reading rooms.
h. Establishment and maintenance of wireless receiving sets television sets, playgrounds, parks, sports, clubs and centers of physical culture.

Methodology

In this study case study method has been adopted, hive cases have been selected from a block for intensive evaluation. Two cases are drawn from the SC segment (one male headed and the other female headed) and three from the Backward Class segment (one male headed and two female headed). The case analysis includes the socio-economic background of the leaders, their perception, recruitment process and their performance. I he cases have been evaluated through descriptive analysis.
Delimitations

In the three tier system only the Gram Panchayats have been taken into consideration in this study. This study is confined to five Gram Panchayat Presidents in Nilakottai Block and from 1996 to 2001. The other 2 tiers, namely, the Union Panchavāt and the District Panchayat have not been taken into consideration. The urban local bodies are also not covered by this study.

Plan of the study

The first chapter introduces the study, states the problem, reviews the available literature, furnishes the theoretical perspective, states the objectives of the study and furnishes the conceptual definitions, the methodology, the delimitations and the plan of the study.

The second chapter provides a brief history of local bodies in Tamil Nadu.

The third chapter evaluates the performance of the Panchayat Presidents. It covers their socio-economic background, perception and performance.

The fourth chapter constitutes an integrated analysis.

The fifth chapter presents the major findings of the study and the conclusions.


5. Ibid; p.29.


K. Venkataramam, State Panchayati Raj Relations: A Study of Supervision and Control in Tamil Nadu, Madras: Asia, 1974;


31 G. Palanithurai, Recommendations for Effective Functioning of Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu, Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 1998.


40 C. Palanithurai, “Plan Preparation with the Participation of People in Tamil Nadu” (in Tamil), Thittam, Vol.32: No.3 (November 2000).


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52. G. Palanithurai, Empowerment of Women: Experience of the Elected Women Representatives in Grassroots Institutions, Rajiv Gandhi (Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2002.


55. Rajiv Gandhi Chair, Manual for Leadership Training for Women, Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi (Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2002.


