CHAPTER 7.

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The concept of people’s campaign, it is often claimed, have inherited from the grama swaraj idea of Mahatma Gandhi. The present study analyses the effectiveness of the present peoples planning campaign in Kerala on the basis of the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi.

The objectives of the study are to find out the role of participatory management in peoples planning, to see how far these powers are delegated to people by means of decentralization, to evaluate the extend of to which participatory management are more easily implemented in peoples planning, to study how far corruption of bureaucracy is eliminated in peoples planning, to study the extend to which developmental projects can be implemented by means of participatory management, to study whether the criteria applied for the allocation of resources to urban and rural local bodies be modified, to study whether there is overlapping of power and authority of panchayath Raj and Nagarapalika institutions, to evaluate the extend of employment generation through the people’s planning, to evaluate the practical problems in implementing the development plan though nominees of beneficiaries, to study the attitude of political leaders and panchayath/ Municipality members towards this novel approach to planning.

Integration is an essential aspect of planning which enhances the efficiency of the resources used. In productive sector, it implies increase in production and in the service sector it means better quality of services. Integration can minimize
wastages. For example, irrigation development projects in one place and crop
development projects in another place will not enhance agricultural production. A
plan is not a bundle of unrelated projects. The project will succeed only if the
linkages are properly taken into account and complementary measures are taken. A
project falls in one sector or department or one level, for administrative reasons. But,
the activities pertaining to it are not confined to that sphere alone. Complementary
activities/projects are required for the sustainability of the projects. Integration is to
be done at different levels (vertical) and also at different sectors and along other
levels (horizontal).

Integrated planning is easy in a centralized system; a system where all the
decisions are taken by a central authority (Tinbergen 1967, Frisch 1976). Internal
consistency can be ensured using input output analysis. Tinbergen suggested
‘planning by stages’. It is interactive approach with (1), a macro phase, (2), middle or
sectoral phase, (3). Micro phase or project phase. There should be conformity
between these three stages. But integration of planning is difficult in market
economy. It is all the more difficult in planning from below, where there is
multiplicity of independent decision making units. The local bodies are autonomous
and there is no hierarchical relationship among them. In people’s campaign each
local body is free to formulate and implement their plans independently.

For integrated planning structural and behavioral changes are required for
the institutions replacing vertical relation with horizontal relations, recognizing
mutual interdependence between different sections of bureaucracy, establishing a
two-way communication. Serious problems emerge when each locality suggests their
plans or wishes. Effective plan requires a definite framework available within which plan for localities can be prepared. There should be a consistency of plants among the different tiers (vertical integration) as well as among different sectors in each tiers (horizontal integration).

There was much overlapping of functions of the local bodies as envisaged in the Kerala Panchayath Raj Act 1994 and Kerala Municipalities Act 1994. Following the recommendations of the Sen committee, the Panchayath and Municipalities Acts were amended in 1999. In the amendment, there is well-defined demarcation of functions among the three tiers so as to properly integrate the plans based on an area approach. But still, the functioning of the local bodies can overlap. In the amended Act, it has been specifically noted that higher tier LSGIs should prepare their plans considering the projects taken up at the lower levels, making complementary projects. Thus the block panchayath shall prepare supportive complementary projects for the grama panchayath and district panchayath shall make complementary projects considering the projects at the lower levels. The DPC is expected to prepare an integrated district plan for the whole district—both rural and urban. Integrated development plans were visualized in the Panchayath Raj and Municipality Acts. The Gram panchayath presidents are members of block panchayath committees and block panchayath presidents are members of district panchayath. The presence of lower tier presidents in the upper tier helps in the coordination of projects at various levels. More over, in the planning process, it was directed to sent the proposals of the lower tiers of government to upper tiers to be considered in their plans.
The concept of integration has got various dimensions, although, in our discussion emphasis is on integration of plans of different tiers of Government and different facets.

Spatial planning is concerned with identification of choice of location. It takes into account physical resources, land uses and human settlement from smallest settlement to city. The provision of various orders of services should be planned so as to maximize the benefits. The location of a hospital or a public health center should be planned in such a manner that the people obtain maximum benefit. Suppose, three anganvadis are proposed for a ward and if, these three are located closely, the benefits will not be available to all the people in that ward. If the anganvadis are away from the human settlements it will not be useful at all. The physical resources available in the locality should also be taken into account. For example, location of water supply scheme should be in the area where there is enough water. The location of a waste disposal plant shall be spatially planned to minimize the inconveniences to the people. It should be in a very thinly populated area. But carrying the waste to a long area is costly and inconvenient to the people. The costs of locating a plant are to be worked out.

Sectoral integration implies the integration of different sectors. A project may fall in one sector, but the complementary activities of its success may fall in other sectors. Milk production is a good example. Grass and hay for the animals come from the agricultural sector. Cattle feeds are from the industrial sector, rearing of animals is in the animal husbandry sector. Milk production and marketing are activities of the diary department. Thus, success of a cow-rearing project depends on
the activities of the agricultural, animal husbandry, diary department and industrial sector. The input of one sector comes from another sector. Thus, there is strong intersectoral interdependence. Irrigation and agricultural developments are closely linked. These are to be spatially planned.

Financial integration aims at harnessing different sources of finance to implement a project. The sources of finances envisaged for the projects in peoples’ campaign were grants-in-aid (plan fund given by the state), own resources of the LSGIs, state sponsored schemes (SSSs), Centrally sponsored programmes (CSSs), finance from banks, co-operative sector, beneficiary contribution, voluntary contribution etc. A housing project of the local body can raise its finances from different sources. In such a case, the total plan outlay will be much larger than the plan assistance of the state government. For e.g. there are many agencies of housing development, central government has a similar project for the poor. There are also housing projects by government departments like fisheries, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. Banks are also financing housing projects. Individuals also contribute for housing. Many charitable institutions also finance housing. The local bodies also allocate funds for housing. Integrating all these finances for a housing programme in local bodies is highly beneficial. While making the housing project for the local body, the finance available from different agencies have to be ascertained. So financial integration aims at harnessing different sources of finances for the implementation of plans. This will greatly help in increasing the scale of operation of the scheme in the local body. Integration of the district credit plan with the annual plan of the local bodies is essential. The Lead Bank Scheme and service area
approach were evolved to provide an appropriate organizational framework for ensuring participation in a coordinated manner by the various financial institutions along with consent of governmental agencies.

To solve a problem, we may have to integrate the activities of many agencies. For e.g., poverty eradication requires different programmes like land reforms, skill upgradation training, credit facilities, housing, social welfare activities like pensions, rationing etc. This requires coordinate action of different departments like Revenue, Industry, Social welfare, Banking etc. All these activities are to be coordinated. Independent unrelated programmes will not be much helpful in solving the problem.

With the growing concern of the state to improve the lot of vulnerable and deprived people of the society and a large number of people below the poverty line, various special programmes are launched; the problem of coordination at the local level has assumed importance. Thus poverty alleviation programmes are treated, as they have to be provided with considerable external support. The industrial project of the local bodies can also be integrated with departmental programmes. The rigidity of the norms of the centrally sponsored or state sponsored programme is a problem for proper integration. This is more relevant in the case of Block panchayaths since most Centrally Sponsored Schemes are implemented through blocks.

A key element in the success of a plan is the creation of new organizational forms capable of sustaining planned changes. New organizational forms are to be evolved for successful implementation of some of the projects. Some of these may be bureaucratic, but decentralized planning requires democratic forms of
organizations. But, this may require integration of official and unofficial agencies. For example, new societies (co-operative, charitable) will have to be formed for the projects of self-employment, drinking water etc. New farm management institutions, labour banks are examples for new organizational integration.

Another aspect of integration is rural-urban integration. There is a need to integrate the rural activities particularly with small and medium towns. The small and medium towns have to function as focal points for agricultural activities and for the provision of higher order services and amenities such as marketing facilities, banking services, repair workshops etc. Ware housing, marketing, repair facilities etc. are to be created for the sustainable functioning of the rural activities.

Inter-tier integration (vertical integration) in planning aims at integrating the plans of higher and lower tiers of planning. This implies that, the plans of Grama panchayaths are to be integrated with the plans of Block panchayath, which is the upper tier. District panchayath plans are to integrate Block as well as Grama panchayath plans. District planning committee is the statutory agency visualized in the 74th constitutional amendment to formulate and integrate plans of rural and urban bodies and thus to make a comprehensive district plan.

The general introduction of this thesis illustrates the historical legacies of local government, the panchayath raj institutions etc. In this chapter an attempt is made to find out the steps taken by the central government to mobilize popular participation in the development projects. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments are discussed briefly. A discussion on people's campaign and people's planning programe are dealt with. The structure and function of Grama Sabhas is
also discussed. The chapter also contains the objectives and methodology of the present study.

The distribution of plan fund was studied in 10 panchayaths functioning under Kottayam and Alappuzha district panchayaths. The data on distribution of fund in both 9th and 10th plan was gathered from the published reports of the panchayath. The physical achievements of 10 panchayath are evaluated on the basis of the report published by the panchayath. The people’s participation in the plan period was also evaluated.

Two municipalities Kottayam and Alappuzha are selected for the present study. In order to study the planning programme in panchayath level 20 panchayath were selected and studied. The people residing in this area forms the participant as sample for the study. The sample was collected on a stratified random basis from the total population. The response of selected respondants at random from each group was used for analysis. Primary data required for the study were collected through various data collection methods. The published report of the panchayath forms the major source of secondary data. A structured interview was conducted with the municipal and panchayath employees, resource persons, participants and local leaders of the community. The questionnaire was designed both in English and Malayalam after identifying the various areas needed for the study. After conducting pilot study necessary changes in the questionnaire were made and finalized. The investigator collected the responses personally. Discussions are carried out with the experts and other officials in this field of study before analysis of the data and arriving at a conclusion.
The function of various local bodies were observed as point of study and required data were collected. The researcher closely observed functioning of the local group, inter-personnel interactions between resource persons and people, and the response of people. Lack of equal response from all category studied and biased data presented in secondary sources forms the limitations of the present study.

The definition of planning, given by various authorities, its conceptual framework, genesis, chronology, typology, functions and the historical background of planning and illustrations of the detailed account of planning process in India after independence and decentralized planning constitute the second chapter.

An attempt has been made to explain Gandhi’s concept of political and economic decentralization separately in the thesis. Gandhi’s ideas of gramswaraj and panchayathi raj institutions are shared. An in-depth analysis is done to link his ideals on non-violence, democracy and decentralization. Gandhi’s visualization of villages to be ‘self sustained autonomy’ is dealt in detail. His noble objectives on decentralization are also covered. This also includes political and economic decentralization and concept of village as a republic.

The decentralized planning in India gives a detailed account of Indian planning in pre and post independence days. The significance of decentralized planning, comparison between the centralized and decentralized planning and its inevitability etc. are also dealt in detail. The decentralized planning under gone in various states of India with special reference to decentralised planning in Karnataka, West Bengal and Kerala are also discussed in the thesis. The problems associated, the reasons for certain drawbacks are pointed out. This also includes the guidelines
for the planning. People's participation in turn facilitates additional local resource mobilization for planned development, prevents misuse and leakage of resources and contributes towards efficient implementation and social monitoring of the programmes.

The thesis evaluates the physical achievements under various sectors. An evaluation of the physical achievements in various panchayath in their 9th and 10th plan period is carried out. The evaluation is based on the data collected from grama panchayath and municipalities. The achievements are evaluated under different heads like, general, SC/ST and production, service and infrastructure etc. The data of distribution of plan fund for various sectors is also evaluated. The people's campaign has yielded benefits in the agricultural, social and infrastructure sectors. The major achievements of the past years of the people's campaign illustrates that the primary objective of the campaign has been realized.

The present investigation focuses on the participation of people both as beneficiaries and as participant in the people's planning programme organized in various panchayath and municipalities. It is observed that the process generated a new set of values and style of public functioning that emphasis transparency and public participation. These have got now to be institutionalized if the decentralized planning process is to be made sustainable and the local bodies are transformed into units of local self-governments as envisioned in the constitution. The campaign has contributed to create an environment conducive for effective institutionalization.

The distribution of plan fund in all panchayath inevitably falls under three main heads, the production, services and infrastructure development, while it is
noticed that the lack of in-depth awareness, the priorities were overlooked. This created insufficiency in fund for the proper development of the needy sector. The real situation in certain panchayath revealed that the present implementation of the plan cannot achieve its maximum due to many factors. The majority of the skilled persons are not involved in the formulation of projects or even during the implementation, in certain panchayath. The lack of cooperation from this side made many mistakes in the formulation of projects as well as distribution of money to the various sectors. The ignorance and indifference of the people in recognizing the importance of the Grama Sabha as the grass root level of democracy is a major impediment for the proper functioning of the planning program cannot be overlooked.

Lack of integration of planning at the time of formulation of projects results in wastages of resources in the studied panchayaths. Planning board developed a methodology to integrate the plans of lower tiers of Local Self Government Institutions to be followed by block panchayaths and district panchayaths. In the beginning of the second year of planning an order was issued that individually oriented distribution projects shall be at the lowest level of LSGI except in the case of housing and sanitation. A negative list of goods was published which prohibited the distribution of certain goods. The amendment of Panchayath and Municipalites Act in 1999, defined the functions of the three tier local bodies and insisted that higher tier local bodies should make complementary projects considering the plans at the lower tiers. In the present study this kind of integration among the projects at various level is not at all noticed. This reflects the lack of planning expertise at the
lower levels, departmental thinking and lack of flow of information and communication, limited time used for plan formulation and the preference of equal distribution of funds among wards and preference of beneficiaries based on politics etc. In this respect the present planning programme satisfies only about half of its expectation.

Most of the panchayaths were failed to identify the critical gaps and substitute project to achieve similar development. Fruitful discussions with committees at block, district and grama panchayath were not reported at any of the study site. This results in overlapping of projects along with unfilled gap in many projects. Such projects were found to fail in due course. Participation of people cannot able to do anything in such cases.

Peoples participation in various levels and stages of planning like problem identification, project formulation and implementation was found to be insufficient and in majority of cases their role reduced to nothing but that of the individual beneficiaries. Thus they believe that this is a fund distributing programme of the ruling party then in power. Thus the programme cannot bring down democracy to grass root levels in a manner envisaged by the Act or the visionaries. The transparency envisaged by the Act has also greatly contributed to the gaining of decentralization of powers.

During interviews with the participants they had made it clear that they attend Gram Sabhas because they expect some personal benefits as stated by their political leaders. Most of the participants cannot attend the group discussion due to lack of awareness and transparency. Participants felt that the discussions in the Gram
Sabhas were for the benefit of the backward only and nothing to do for the creamy layer. It was observed that number of participation in Grama Sabha and about the awareness of plan is clearly a matter of skill of the local leaders, ward members and their relationship with community. Personal invitation is found to be more effective than mike announcements and notice etc for the attendance. But this was made only to certain creamy layer of the society.

It is thus recommended by the author that it has become essential to practice the proposals of the Sen Committee's reports for the effective functioning of the Grama Sabha. Decentralization of power and decentralized planning would be a success only if the participants of Gram Sabhas represent an actual cross section of the society in the panchayath area.

Role of political parties has definitely increased with the implementation of people's campaign. To provide sufficient awareness to the people and to mobilize people for the campaign, political parties have taken a lot of strain.

When the political leaders were asked to reveal their view on the role of political party in development activities they feel that the development is independent of political difference.

In terms of the objective to study the extend to which developmental projects can be implemented by means of participatory management it is understood that developmental projects can be implemented to any extend by means of participatory management. The production, service and infrastructure developmental activities stands testimony to this finding. So developmental activities planned and implemented suggest that participatory management is the only alternative for
making villages self-sufficient and self-reliant as envisaged by Gandhiji. Centralized planning can thus be confined to large scale production units in energy sector and infrastructure developments on nation wide programmes.

The evaluation of the criteria applied for the allocation of resources to urban and rural local bodies revealed that it requires modification because the urban areas are a consuming economy where as rural productive. The urban areas depend mostly on the rural areas and inturn discharge the waste generated to the rural areas. The allocation of resources thus requires some modification.

The block and District panchayaths should take this aspect into consideration and should recognize the role of rural areas – the dependence of urban population on rural areas – and hence allocate more funds to rural areas. The published data of various panchayath indicate a steady progress in the system of planning due to introduction of peoples planning programme. The plan in paper and the rules and regulations are found to be foolproof. The real situation in various panchayath revealed that the present implementation of the plan cannot achieve its maximum in any of the panchayth. The majority of the skilled persons are not involved in the formulation of projects or even during the implementation, in various panchayath. The lack of cooperation from this side made many mistakes in the formulation of projects as well as distribution of money to the various sectors. In most of the panchayath the coordinators are not follow up the project, they believe that their duty stops with the release of the amount. This leads to the spending of money for the purpose other than stated. The important benefit of the plan is found to be the physical achievement in the basic sector. This really leads to development in
panchayath. An evaluation of the project implemented reveal that most of them in the general sector is not having a long lasting return. The money allocated are not utilized properly in this sector.

The fears about the future of the de-centralisation experiment in Kerala are coming true. People are staying away from the gram and ward sabhas in the panchayaths, municipalities and corporations in the state and as a result the most exciting programme to empower citizens is seemingly running into trouble. As people’s interest in local governance wanes, slowly, but surely, the tendency towards centralization of powers engulfing the Panchayath raj system in the state will surface.

The ideal cherished by the Gandhian tradition – of assemblies of people in every village discussing and deciding development project, the sharing of public goods, and services and keeping a watch on their elected representatives and officials – was believed to have been implemented in its true sense finally in Kerala during the past eight years, through the democratic decentralization experiment called ‘peoples’ plan Campaign 1996. But now the Government Departments are trying to impose parallel programmes over development plans drawn up by the Panchayaths.

State officials are trying to reclaim their lost notions of power over the people. Politicians and even members of majority of local self-government institutions, have once again started believing themselves as the all-power dispensers of “favours” to the people. A number of newly empowered local self-government institutions are swaying under the onslaught. If the unhealthy trends are not stemmed. India’s most effective experiment soon comes to naught.
De-centralization, as it then happened in Kerala, did not stop with merely transferring powers and responsibilities to the local self-government institutions. By envouraging a system of vibrant grama-sabhas, it should facilitate the exercise of legitimate and legal authority by the people. It must put an end to the various-extra-constitutional power centers influencing development at the grass root level. It should transfer the power of the state to bring about development and social justice vertically down to local bodies. The role of government departments and officials were dramatically redefined as of facilitators, helping the people in taking decisions and then carrying them out, as they wanted it.

The major conclusion is that the participation programme at present is effective in its physical sense but not effective in its ethical sense as imagined by Mahatma Gandhi.

SUGGESTIONS

- The people’s planning programme has a high social significance. As a result of the study I can make several suggestions for the efficient working of this programme. One of the important suggestion is to improve the existing system of the awareness programme

- Most of the people in the rural areas are poor and they work for daily wages. They are often underemployed. The Grama Sabhas are sometimes conducted during the working hours of these people. Therefore the timings of the sabhas must be suitably changed.
- Sometimes political parties show discrimination to people during the time of selection of beneficiaries. So political interference in selection of beneficiaries should be prevented.

- To improve the condition of women in rural areas, there must be separate projects for women. Proper vocational training facilities must be given for women so that they can get employment in industrial units.

- There must be change in the attitude of the officers to the people. Active steps may be taken to remove corruption in the implementation of the projects and selection of beneficiaries.

- When the government change and the priorities are redefined the strength of people's planning programme may be wiped out of eclipsed. So there shall be special attention to retain the strength of this programme.

- The people's planning has greatly changed the basic structure of the society. It has given more power to the people. It has given new meaning to the democratic planning. Thus we can summarise that if implemented regularly and properly, this programme can be of benefit to millions of people, which will ultimately lead to the development of the countries economy as a whole.

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