Chapter I
Introduction, Scope, Significance and Methodology

Development and Empowerment is a matter of concern throughout the world, primarily in the developing countries. Most of the population in developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America resides in rural areas. Majority of these rural people are living in miserable conditions around the globe, with very low literacy rates, suffering from malnutrition, poverty, unemployment, hunger, thirst, starvation, diseases, scarcity of housing, poor infrastructure, and insanitation making a number of people victims of epidemics. So, relevance of rural development is strongly felt, for the survival of these countries. India also figures in the list of these countries with 72.2% of its population residing in rural areas (According to census 2001).

In view of the enormity, nature, complexities and urgency of the rural development problems, most of the developing nations initiated development programmes which led to the creation of a number of new institutions - political, economic, social and administrative. While creating these institutions greater attention was paid to people’s institutions. The reason behind this was that the programmes of development were to be carried out not only by the state bureaucracy, but also through active and effective people’s participation. Besides, effective people’s institutions have to be created to promote political development and social justice. Thus a local institution is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the accelerated rural development.¹

¹ Bajpai, Ashok, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Sahitya Prakashan, Delhi, 1997, p.05.
In India, various rural development programmes have been planned and carried out for rural development, in pre and post independence era. But, in the last decade of the previous century, concerted efforts have been made to strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) with the devolution of more powers and more responsibilities for the effective implementation of people centred rural development programmes. Therefore, in this process of democratic Decentralisation at grassroots level, PRIs have emerged as vital local organs of people’s empowerment for the effective implementation of rural development programmes.

**Democratic Decentralisation**

Democratic Decentralisation is aimed to facilitate empowerment of the people through their active participation in democratically elected local government institutions. Progressive devolution of legislative, financial, administrative, and technical powers from the central and state governments to the lower levels is expected to achieve this. Devolution of such powers would enable the local governments to prepare contextually relevant development plans that reflect the aspirations of the people without compromising the imperatives of sustainable development and to implement them with people’s participation. This is particularly relevant in the context of the failure of macro-level central planning strategies to respond to the growing regional disparities and drastic marginalisation of the poor people².

It has been recognized as a means through which local level needs can be effectively fulfilled. The people get experience in the functioning of the active democracy and a sense of empowerment to question the activities of the office holders and to make them more accountable. Another outcome of this process is the generation of better trained political leaders from the

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grassroots. Before moving further it would be appropriate to define the concept of democratic decentralisation

**Democratic Decentralisation as a Concept**

The word decentralisation literally means ‘away from the centre’. Decentralisation is the twin process of ‘Deconcentration’ and ‘Devolution’. Deconcentration is an administrative arrangement under which a superior officer, actuated by the desire to make his department function more effectively and efficiently, delegates to his subordinate field officials ‘the capacity of act’ in his name, without, however, transferring to them the authority he enjoys. Whereas, ‘Devolution’ implies the dispersal of authority where in power is transferred from one organ of government to another by means of an act of legislation. The Prefixing of the word ‘Democratic’ widens the implication of the term ‘Decentralisation’. It then amounts to the transfer of powers to those bodies which are not only democratically constituted by the people but also function democratically i.e. at every stage of their working and for every single act of theirs, they are responsible to the people, who in their turn, possess the power of censuring their conduct when they so desire.

Democratic Decentralisation is a political concept aimed at widening the area of people’s participation, authority and autonomy through the dispersal of powers from top to bottom levels in all the triple dimensions i.e. political decision, making, financial control, and management and administrative operations to be exercised by people’s representative organizations with least interference and control from higher levels. It is in fact a plea, to further democratise local self-government to enable it to

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3 Ibid. Ps 164-165
5 Ibid PP. 1-2
6 Ibid P. 187
enjoy more authority, shoulder greater responsibility, take more initiative and experience greater autonomy in the management of the affairs of the local area than what local self governing institutions have been doing so far.\(^7\)

Henry Maddick was of optimistic view by setting up an example of democratic Decentralisation for Indian government. In the form of the Panchayati Raj system.\(^8\)

So, in a democratic system of government, the concept of democratic Decentralisation means devolution of a decision making authority both at the level of formulation and implementation of plans and programmes within the framework of given political structure. In the Indian context, Panchayati Raj institutions are the live example of democratic Decentralisation, where people are authorized to manage their own affairs at the local levels.

**Democratic Decentralisation – The Empowerment Paradigm**

Democratic decentralisation through Panchayati Raj institutions is an effective means of people empowerment at the grassroots level. It facilitates the local people’s participation in decentralized governance.

The dictionary meaning of term empowerment is to give power, to give them capacity to perform some physical or mental activity, to delegate authority, to give legal rights, to enable to entitle, and to endow.\(^9\) It is difficult to measure empowerment. There is no single method for measuring it. It should be understood and defined through indicators. Indicators of empowerment should encompass personal, social, economic and political change. Empowerment is a term generally used to describe a process by which powerless people become conscious of their own situation and

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\(^7\) Ibid P 193
\(^8\) Maddick, Henry, Democracy, Decentralisation and Development. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963
\(^9\) Ravi, R Venkata, et. at., Empowerment of People – Grassroot Strategies and Issues, Kaniiska Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, 2004 P 1
organise collectively to gain greater access to public service or to the benefit of economic growth.\textsuperscript{10}

The UNDP, with a trace of instrumentalism, sees the value in investigating in people’s capacities and empowering them to make their own choices, and stresses as do other United Nations conferences that their empowerment is crucial to the goal of sustainable development (UNDP. 1995).\textsuperscript{11}

According to the Direction Pour le Development et la Cooperation “Empowerment is a must wherever inequalities in the share-out of knowledge, power and resources prevent individuals, groups of individuals, social strata or entire countries from improving their quality of life with autonomy and in an independent and focused manner.”\textsuperscript{12}

So, empowerment is generally viewed as a way of an individual acquiring power from another individual or agency to look after his own interests. As a consequence of empowerment, individuals are expected to voice their views and demands and also involve themselves in the process of fulfilling their needs. It is believed that power in the process of empowerment is provided or secured from outside.\textsuperscript{13}

So, democratic Decentralisation via Panchayati Raj institutions, in India, is an effective means of people empowerment, for the overall development of the rural areas i.e. rural development.

\textbf{Panchayati Raj in India}

\textbf{Origin and Growth} - Rural communities have been in existence in India since time immemorial. These rural communities used to be administered by

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, P 3.
\textsuperscript{11} Singh, Dr. Swinder, 'People’s Empowerment: Concept and Rationale in People’s Empowerment and local Governance, M.A. II Booklets, D.C. S. P.U. Chandigarh, 2005-206, P. 3.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. P.3.
\textsuperscript{13} Selvam, S, Empowerment and Social Development – Issues
the village Panchayats i.e. a local body consisting of elderly person of the concerned village, at local level. The ancient Indian Panchayat system could be considered as the counterpart of ‘The Minor’ in medieval England, ‘The Mark’ in German, and ‘The Mir’ in Russia.

The Panchayats have been in existence in India since the Vedic period. They find a mention in ‘Rigveda’, in ‘Manusmriti’, in ‘Arthashastra’ of kautilya (400 B.C.), and in ‘Ramayana’ and ‘Mahabharata’ etc. The Panchayats have been administering social, economic, political, cultural, and development activities, as well as dispensing justice to the rural people and maintaining social harmony, since the very beginning. That is why the members of Panchayats were called “Panch Parmeshwar” (five members of Panchayat are just like God). While observing the role of Panchayats at rural level, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the British Governor in India during 19th century had called them ‘The little Republics’.

During the pre-Mughal period these Panchayati Raj institutions worked with full autonomy. However during the Mughal period these institutions suffered down fall. During this period the administrative power of the empire was more and more centralized. After the decline of Mughal rule in India, British rule also continued with the Panchayat system in the country. The Britishers not only continued with it but also tried through various efforts to ameliorate the system whenever was required. They made the village Panchayat representative. Although the Panchayat System could not be successful, yet they had tried their efforts to make it successful. These efforts were the Lord Mayo’s Resolution of 1870, Lord Rippon’s Resolution of May 18, 1882 (considered as the Magna Carta of Local Government in India), and Royal Commission on Decentralisation 1909, under the chairmanship of C.E.H. Hobhouse, Government of India Act.
1919, and Government of India Act 1935. These efforts of Britishers to strengthen the Panchayats proved nothing more than futile.

These social ‘Republics’ (the Village panchayats) were not totally free from any social evil. These institutions were influenced by caste-ridden feudal structure of society. That is why Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a strong antagonist of the village Panchayats. While drafting the constitution, he excluded the mention of Panchayats from the draft constitution. While condemning the Panchayats in Indian rural scenario, he called it as “a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, Narrow-mindedness and communalism\(^{14}\). He further added that these small republics (Panchayats) had been the cause of ruination of India and played no creative role in the destiny of the nation.

Mahatma Gandhi was a strong protagonist of Panchayats in rural India. Gandhiji envisaged village Panchayats as a means to his philosophy of ‘Gram SwaRaj’. Ghandiji defined the philosophy of Gram Swaraj as “My idea of village swaRaj is that it is a complete republic independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which total independence is necessity. The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, males and females, possessing minimum prescribed qualification. These will have all authority and jurisdiction since there will be no system of punishment in the occupied sense, the Panchayat will be the legislature, Judicial, and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference even from the present government whose sole effective connection with the village is the execution of village’s revenue. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own

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\(^{14}\) Ambedkar, B.R., in the constituent Assembly on Nov. 4, 1948,
government. Gandhiji further commended that the “centre of power is now in Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India”.

As a result of strong efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and majority opinion in the constituent assembly Article 40 concerning to village panchayats was incorporated in Chapter IV on Directive Principles of State Policy of Indian Constitution Act of Art 40 says, “the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow with such powers and authority, as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.”

Jai Prakash Narayan advocated for making Panchayat Raj refrained from the interference of political parties, and said that self-government through faction fighting will not be self-government but self-ruination. He further observed that it is matter of great satisfaction that in our country a beginning has already been made in laying the foundation of participative democracy in the shape of Panchayati Raj or what was called at first democratic Decentralisation.

S.K. Dey observed about Panchayati Raj system that the people of India would govern themselves through their representative from the Panchayat to parliament and thus democracy would travel from Gram sabha to Lok Sabha. Jawaharlal Nehru opined about Panchyati Raj that to uplift lakhs of villages is not an ordinary task. The reason for the slow progress is our dependence on official machinery. An official is probably necessary because he is an expert. But this work can be done only if the people take up the responsibility in their own hands. The people are not merely to be consulted. Effective power has to be entrusted to them.

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16 Article 40, constitution of India.
17 Mishra, S.N. et al op. cit. P 10
To make Gandhiji’s view about the overall development of villages, operational, Panchayats were established throughout the country in the late fifties. But when it was realized that the Community Development Programme (CDP), which was started on October 2, 1952, was unable to motivate and involve the people in it, the Balwant Rai Mehta committee was constituted in 1957 to suggest a viable institutional structure for the people’s involvement. As a result of the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee, three-tiers Panchayati Raj system was introduced on October 2, 1959.

The three-tiers structure of Panchayati Raj system was Gram Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samiti at intermediate level and Zila Parishad at district level. Making a remark about the philosophy of Panchayati Raj, the committee hoped that it will establish a linkage between local leadership, enjoying the confidence of local people, and the government and translate the policies of the government into action. It put forward an elaborate scheme of endowing them with powers to carry out rural development programmes and related activities. The principal thrust of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee was towards the Decentralisation of the democratic institutions in an effort to bring decision making centers closer to the people, encourage their participation and put the bureaucracy under local popular control.

Rajasthan was the first state in the country to start PRIs on October 2, 1959, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Madras in the same year. Orissa and Assam established Panchayati Raj System in 1960 followed by Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 1961, and Maharashtra and Gujrat in 1962. Although Rajasthan had accepted all the recommendation of Balwant

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Rai Mehta committee report in toto, yet there were structural and operational variations of PRIs in different states. After a little success, this model of Panchayati Raj recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta committee was almost a failure.

In the backdrop of this decline the government of India set another committee under the chairmanship of Ashoka Mehta, comprising 13 members in the year 1977, to recommend healthy suggestions and means to make the PRIs a successful model in India. The committee submitted its report in 1979. The committee suggested for eliminating intermediate level as a unit of administration and recommended a two-tier set-up, instead of three-tier set-up suggested by Balwant Rai Mehta committee, at the district and mandal levels covering population of 15,000 to 20,000. Although no action could be taken at the central level, yet some states adopted some suggestions made by Ashoka Mehta committee. The model of Panchayati Raj suggested by Ashoka Mehta also was not successful.

In 1985, a 12 member committee was appointed under the chairmanship of G.V.K. Rao for reviewing the administrative arrangements for rural development and poverty alleviation programmes which recommended that the district should be the basic unit for policy planning and programme implementation. This committee emphasized the need for regular elections to PRIs. The seventh five year plan document admitted the extremely peripheral status to this institution and emphasized the need for radically changing the conventional methodology of planning for village and block level activities and for providing substantial funds and autonomy to the Panchayati Raj bodies20.

In 1987, yet another committee was appointed under the chairmanship of L.M. Singhvi to review the functioning of PRIs. It

recommended reorganization of village Panchayats in order to make Panchayati Raj System more viable. The committee suggested that the PRIs should get the constitutional safeguards and more financial resources should be made availability to them. The *Sarkaria Commission (1988) on center-state relations* also observed that many of the local self-governing bodies were not functioning effectively mainly because election to these bodies were not being held regularly and these bodies were being superseded on flimsy grounds. The need for uniformity of law in the states regarding holding of periodical elections and super-session of the Panchayati Raj bodies were also emphasized by the Sarkaria Commission\(^\text{21}\).  

In 1988 the Indian National Congress also appointed a committee on policy and programmes, headed by *V.N. Gadgil*, which was entrusted the task of examining how best Panchayati Raj institution could be made effective\(^\text{22}\). The Committee recommended a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj, reservation of constituencies for SC/ST and women, so that, adequate representation is given to the weaker sections, five year tenure for Panchayati Raj institutions, constitution of State Finance Commission and State Election Commission etc\(^\text{23}\).  

As a result of the recommendation of various committees a new scenario was created towards the concept of democratic Decentralisation via Panchayati Raj institutions. A political consensus was advocated for imparting constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institution.  

*A sub-committee of the Parliamentary consultative committee was set up under the Chairmanship of P.K. Thungan in 1988* to consider the type of political and administrative structure needed in the district of district

\(^{22}\) Power to the People, Panchayati Raj, District Planning and Devolution of Democracy, All India Congress Committee, 24 Akbar Road, New Delhi, 1988.  
planning. It felt that the PRIs should be constitutionally recognized and recommended that a constitutional provision should be made to ensure timely and regular elections to these bodies with their terms lasting for five years. The Zila Parishad should be the only planning and development agency in the district according to the sub-committee.24

The 64th constitutional Amendment Bill, 1989, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, could not be enacted, as it was not passed by the Rajya Sabha. It provided for constitution of Panchayats in every state at the village level, intermediate level, and district level with the exception of states having a population not exceeding 20 lakh, where states may not constitute the intermediate level.25

The period since mid eighties to early nineties of the 20th century was period of positive consideration biased towards conferring of constitutional status to PRIs. The initiative in this direction was taken by Rajiv Gandhi during his Prime Ministership. During this period unsound status of PRIs in most of the states was a matter of concern. It was widely admitted by the people that PRIs were not able to achieve the status and dignity of viable and responsive people’s bodies. The main causes behind this perception are absence of conducting of timely elections, prolonged supersession by the state government, improper representation of scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, minorities and other weaker sections of society, and a lack of devolution of power and financial resources to PRIs.

Although Article 40 of our constitution directs the state governments to organize villages Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority, as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. Yet most of the states have actually paid only half-hearted

24 Ibid
25 Ibid.
attention to this directive. Therefore the union government strongly advocated for providing the constitutional status to PRIs and to ensure certain basic and essential features to make them viable.

For this purpose the bold initiative was taken by late Prime Minister Sh. Rajiv Gandhi to grant constitutional status to PRIs and endow them with such powers and authority as the participation and involvement of the people may be ensured with the preparation and implementation of various programmes of economic development and social justice in the rural areas. The 73rd constitutional Amendment Act 1992 is a positive and bold step in this direction. This act mandates a uniform Panchayati Raj system throughout the country except for some specified tribal and hill regions and states in which special arrangements exist.

**The Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992.**

Constitutional 72nd Amendment bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on December 22, 1992 and by Rajya Sabha on December 23, 1992 after having been ratified by 17 states legislative assemblies and President’s assent on April 24, 1993. This act has emerged as the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. This act came into force since April 24, 1993 onwards. So the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act 1992 is the culmination of various proposals made by earlier committees and sub-committees on Panchayati Raj system and thus according constitutional status and viable shape to PRIs.

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, has incorporated part IX to the Constitution of India with regard to the structure, composition, election, functions and scope of PRIs at village level, intermediate (block) level, and at the district level. The XIth schedule has been added to the constitution of India, which lists 29 subjects under which powers and functions could be given to PRIs, at village, intermediate, and district levels.
Before the existence of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, the formation, structure, composition, powers, functions, authority, elections and other matters in relation to Panchayati Raj used to be entirely looked after by the state government. With the coming into force of this act the legislative and executive actions of state governments regarding PRIs will have to be in accordance with the provisions of Part IX of the constitution. The salient features of the act are as follows:

1. There shall be a Gram Sabha consisting of all the registered voters of that Panchayat circle in which Gram Panchayat exercising such powers and performing such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may provide by law.

2. A three-tier system of Panchayati Raj has to be constituted from village to block and to district levels in a state, but the state with the population of less than 20 lakhs may not have the intermediate tier if it likes. The provision for the composition of the Panchayat at each level is to be made statutory by the state legislature. The election of all the members of PRIs at all the three levels will be direct, but the election for the post of chairman at the intermediate level and at district level will be indirect. The mode of elections of chairman at the village level has been left to the concerned state governments to decide. The state legislature however may provide for ex-officio membership at the district level and intermediate level Panchayats for chairpersons of Panchayats located at the level below.

3. Reservation of seats for SCs/STs has been provided in proportion to their population at each level. Not less than one third of total

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membership has been reserved for women (SC/ST) and these seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat. Similarly, reservation has also been made in respect of the office of the chairpersons for women.

4. A uniform term of five years has been provided for the PRIs and in the event of super-session elections to constitute the body should be completed before the expiry of six months from the date of dissolution.

5. The state legislature have been given the power of authorize Panchayats to levy, collect and appropriate suitable local taxes and also provided for making grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the consolidated fund of the concerned state.

6. Panchayats shall be constituted in every state at the village, intermediate and district levels, thus bringing about uniformity in the Panchayati Raj structure. However, the states having a population not exceeding 20 lakhs have been given the option of not having any Panchayat at intermediate level.

7. A finance commission has to be constituted once in every five years to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make suitable recommendation to the state on the distribution of funds between the state and local bodies.

8. With a view to enduring continuity it has been provided in the act that all the Panchayats existing immediately before the commitment of this amendment act will continue till the expiry of their duration unless dissolved by a resolution on that effect passed by the state legislature concerned.
9. The legislature of a state, may by law, make provisions with respect to the maintenance of accounts by Panchayats and the auditing such accounts.

10. The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a state election commission consisting of a state election commissioner to be appointed by the governor.

11. The provision of this act shall apply to the Union Territories provided that the president may direct that the provisions of this shall apply to any union territory or part thereof subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification.

12. This Act shall not be applicable to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, hill areas in the state of Manipur for which district councils exist, scheduled areas, tribal areas, and the hill areas of the district of Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Hill Council exists. However the legislature for the concerned state may extend this act to states and the same way parliament can extend this act to the scheduled and tribal areas.

13. Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters not withstanding in this constitution:
   a) The validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made under Article 243 K shall not be called in question in any court.
   b) No election to any Panchayat Shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority and in such
manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the legislature of a state.

14. In Clause (3) of Article 280 of the constitution, after sub-clause (b) the following sub-clause shall be inserted namely:

“The measures needed to augment the consolidated fund of a state to supplement the resources of the Panchayat in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by Finance Commission.

15. Disqualification from membership:

A person shall be disqualified from being chosen as a member of a Panchayat.

(a) If, he is so disqualified by or under any law, for the time being in force for the purposes of elections to the legislature of the state concerned.

Provided that no person shall be disqualified on the ground that he is less than twenty-five years of age, if he has attained the age of 21 years.

(b) If, he is so disqualified by or under any law made by the legislature of the state.

If any question arises as to whether a member of Panchayat has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (I), the question shall be referred for the decision of such of authority and in such a manner as the legislature of state may, by law, provide.

16. Powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats, subject to the provisions of the constitution, the legislature of a state, may by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institution of self government and such law may contain provision for the devolution
of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to:

(a) The preparation of plans for economic development and social justice.

(b) The implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in XIth Schedule.

With the enactment of Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 XIth schedule has been added to the constitution of India, consisting of 29 Subjects and all of which may be incorporated by the state legislature in the amended state Panchayati Raj Acts. These are as:

1. Agriculture, including agriculture extension
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor Irrigation, water management and watershed development.
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forestry.
7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small-scale industries including food-processing industries.
10. Rural Housing
11. Drinking Water.
12. Fuel and fodder.
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity.
15. Non-conventional energy sources.
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools.
18. Technical training and vocational education.
19. Adult and non-formal education.
21. Cultural activities.
22. Market and fairs.
23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries.
24. Family welfare.
25. Women and child development.
26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.
27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
28. Public distribution system.
29. Maintenance of community assets.

The state legislatures are required to incorporate the necessary amendments to their Panchayati Raj acts within a maximum period of one year from the date of commencement of the constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 so as to conform to the provisions contained in the constitution of India.

**Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996**

The provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 have come into force on December 24, 1996. This Act extends Panchayats to the tribal areas of eight states of India namely, Andhra

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27 Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, constitution of India
Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan with the intention to enable tribal society to assume control over their own destiny to preserve and conserve their traditional rights over natural resources. The state governments were required to enact their legislation in accordance with the provisions of the Act before the expiry of one year, i.e. December 23, 1997. States barring Bihar have enacted State legislation to give effect to the provisions contained in the Act.

**Panchayati Raj in Haryana**

After independence, The Panchayat Act, 1939 was replaced by the Gram Panchayat Act, 1952. Accordingly, the gram panchayats were set up at village level on a mandatory basis. This Act of 1952 was later amended in 1960 and hence when Haryana became an independent state in 1966, the local government institutions operating in the state had three-tiers. These included the gram panchayats (under the amended Act) and the panchayat Samities and Zila Parishads formed under the Punjab Panchayat Samities and zila Parishads Act, 1961. The basic pattern formulated on the lines of the recommendations of the Balwant Raj Mehta study team in 1957, was retained after 1966 as was the institution of Gram Sabha.28


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election commission, provision relating to the subjects included in XIth schedule of the constitution of India which contains 29 subjects. Out of these 29 subjects, Haryana government has handed over 16 different departments to PRIs. The Panchayati Raj institutions are supervising, coordinating, guiding and advising the activities of these departments for the effective rural development.

(Note: More details on Panchayati Raj in Haryana, has been discussed in Chapter No. 2 of this study.)

**Rural Development**

Rural Development, as such, is nothing new to the third world countries. Many developing countries have been practicing or promoting rural development for a number of years and many of them have achieved significant success in their efforts. Like many developing countries India has accorded a high priority to rural development through public policies since independence.29

**Development** - The term ‘development’ means gradual growth or formation of something, especially a process in which a person or a thing matures changes or advances to another stage. It is a dynamic phenomenon towards better direction.

Development therefore stipulates a systematic, gradual, thoughtful and desired change in a designed direction and it does not confine itself to an individual level. It is a macro concept itself and an index indicating the advancement of a society over different periods of time. Development is a holistic concept which measures the development of a society in its totality. It dictates the social, political, economic, moral, spiritual manifestations of

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29 Mishra, S.N. and Mishra, Sweta, Decentralised Governance-Macro and Micro Perspective, Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2002, P-62
the world the different civilizations inhabiting the earth and the total personality of a society and individual\textsuperscript{30}.

So it is a process of change from one state to a better state. The word development therefore indicates change, change for betterment. It can not be confined to one particular sphere. But it is an all embracing holistic concept encompassing almost all manifestations of human personality. The strategies one adopts in particular sphere can be known by the same nomenclature say; economic development or moral development etc. In its technical sense, development is the name of a policy and consequent programmes designed to bring about a desired change in social economic political or technological spheres of life\textsuperscript{31}.

**Rural Development as a Concept**

Before understanding the concept of rural development we are required to define two terms which jointly constitute the phrase of rural development, these terms are ‘rural’ and ‘development.’

Webster’s dictionary defines the term ‘rural’ as the areas which pertains to the country as distinguished from the city or town. As per Longman’s dictionary *rural* means the country, country people or life. Further it defines rural as the general word for places that are neither towns nor totally wild, and the term suggests the existence of agricultural communities. The term rural means the non urban style of living with a distinct occupation structure, social organization and settlement pattern. Rural areas are those areas which are not classified as urban areas. They are outside the jurisdiction of municipal corporations, councils, committees and notified town area committees and the main occupation of the people living


\textsuperscript{31}Pandey, G.C., Strategies of Rural Development in India, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1989 P.01.
in that area is agriculture and allied activities coupled with other professions of primary sector\textsuperscript{32}.

Rural development according to World Bank is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor including small and marginal farmers, tenants and the landless\textsuperscript{33}.

According to Robert chambers rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor, rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development\textsuperscript{34}.

In the Indian Context rural development can be defined as integrated development of area and the people through optimum development and utilization of local resources physical, biological, and human and by bringing about necessary institutional structural and attitudinal changes by delivery of a package of services to encompass not only the economic field i.e. agriculture allied activities, rural industries but also establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the area of health and nutrition, sanitation, housing drinking water and literacy with ultimate objects of improving quality of life of rural poor and the rural weak\textsuperscript{35}.

Further rural development in India may be defined as maximizing production in agriculture and allied activates in rural areas including development of rural industries with emphasis on village and cottage industries. Generating maximum possible employment opportunities in rural areas especially for the weaker sections of the community so as to enable them to improve their standard of living and providing certain basic


\textsuperscript{34} Chambers, Robert, Rural Development: Putting the Last First, London Longman, 1983.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. P-147.
amenities like drinking water, electricity for productive purposes, link roads connecting village to market center and facilities for health and education.  

So rural development is a multi-dimensional process which includes the development of socio-economic conditions of the people living in the rural areas and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living conditions. It extends the benefits of development to the weaker and poor sections of rural society. It also enhances both the capacities and capabilities of administrative and socio-economic development agencies and agricultural marketing units workings in the rural areas.

In view of the enormity, nature, complexities and urgency of the rural development problems most of the developing nations initiated development programmes which led to the creation of a number of new institutions—political, economic, social and administrative. While creating these institutions greater attention was paid to people’s institutions. The reason behind this was that the programmes of development were to be carried out not only by the state bureaucracy but also through active and effective people’s participation. Besides effective people’s institutions have to be created to promote political development and social justice. Thus local institution is a necessary if not sufficient condition for the accelerated rural development.

The element of participation is central to rural development. It responds to the need to mobilize to use more effectively all the resources available or potentiality available in rural areas. In India since pre-independence era to till date various rural development approaches, strategies and rural development programmes have been planned and carried

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38 Bagui, Ashok, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Sahitya Prakashan, Delhi, P-05.
out through community participation. But since the last decade of the 20th century concerted efforts have been made to strengthen the panchayate Raj institutions with the devolution of more authority and responsibilities for the effective implementation of various rural development programmes. In the dynamic process of democratic Decentralisation by the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, Panchayati Raj institution have emerged as vital local organs at grass roots levels for the effective and successful implementation of various rural development programmes.

**Rural Development in India - Pre and Post Independence Scenario**

The concept of rural development is not new in India. From time to time several attempts have been pioneered in the direction of rural development in Pre-independence as well as post independence era.

**Pre Independence Era**

In the pre-independence period basic British policy in India was to restrict itself to the task of government and not to be involved in social and economic matters of the country. Rural development activities during this period were assumed by the British government in a highly restricted and narrow context of recurrent famines, as a humanitarian act without any executive or legal sanction. The Famine Commission of 1880 recommended, for the first time, certain land reforms and agricultural improvement strategies. With the introduction of dyarchy in the provinces under the Government of India Act, 1919, the subject of rural development became a transferred subject, placed under the charge of elected ministers of the provinces.

The concept of rural development received a fillip in the wake of ‘Non-Cooperation Movement, started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. It was perhaps the first attempt in India to mobiles the villagers and ruralise

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politics. Besides Mahatma Gandhi designed a comprehensive programme of rural development which included the use of khadi, promotion of the village industries, provision of basic and adult education women upliftment etc. Soon, Sevagram and wardha, where he was translating these ideas into action became household words in India upholding a vision of the future.

Rabindra Nath Tagore set up rural reconstruction centers initially in eight villages in 1908 and later on, he started his experiment known as Sriniketan Rural Reconstruction Programme under which an institute of Rural Reconstruction was set up in 1921, that aimed at making the rural population self reliant and self-respectful. Spencer Hatch’s Martandam experiment was started in Madras in the same year (1921) to bring about a complete upward development towards a more abundant life for rural people, spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and economically. F.L. Brayne, then deputy commissioners of Gurgaon also made a commendable effort when he launched an ambitious programme of rural reconstruction in 1927. It was a wide spectrum programme based on values and old fashioned virtues, hard work, self-respect, self control, self help and mutual respect.

In 1932, Baroda experiments were launched by the ruler of the princely state Sayaji Rao. These experiments were based on broad based programme of rural amelioration to promote the will to live better and a capacity for self help and self-reliance among the villagers. This process of rural reconstruction was further developed by V.T. Krishnamachary in the princely state of Baroda. Firka Development Scheme was launched in Madras in 1946 under the leadership of T.Prakasam. The Nilokheri experiment 1947, by Sri. S.K. Dey was another effort towards community

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41 Sriniketan Bulletin, No. 11, 1946.  
development. Mr. Albert Mayor’s The Etawah Pilot Project 1948 in Uttarpradesh was also of high relevance. So it is perceived that in pre-independence India, the process of rural development was primarily a task of voluntary organizations set by eminent personalities with self less commitment for the socio-economic upliftment of the rural masses.

**Post - Independence Era**

After independence rural development was a major policy concern of the country. So government of India initiated the process of rural development through various approaches and rural development programmes.

**Approaches to Rural Development**

Various approaches were adopted by the government of India for meeting the requirement of rural development. These approaches are as given below:

**Area Development Approach:** This approach lays emphasis on the development of under developed regions. Under this approach a pin-pointed area is taken for the development. Under this approach a backward area is identified for concerted efforts. The programmes which come under this approach are Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Command Area Development Programme (CADP), Tribal Development Programme (TDP), Hill Area Development Programme etc. This approach has been criticized on two grounds firstly the schemes tend to suffer from a programme design that is too ambiguous and complex calling for exceptional leadership that can not always be made available on a sustained basis and secondly they may distort priorities in allocation of resources among sectors.\(^4\)

**Minimum Package Approach:** This approach is limited purpose approach which takes a particular part at a time and tackles it in depth. The main

\(^4\) World Bank, Rural Development Sector Policy Paper, P-47
purpose of this approach was to achieve higher agricultural production and marketable surplus. The Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) launched in 1960-61 is a minimum package programme. The Intensive Agricultural District Programme advocated a selection selective area approach to agricultural development and the achievements of intensity of cropping. The emphasis on agricultural development led the introduction of high yielding variety of seeds, promotion of new agricultural technology, increased supply of fertilizers, irrigation, facility, mechanization and credit availability, thus ushering in the Green Revolution in the country.43

**Target Group Approach:** In the target group approach a particular group is taken for an in-depth study and after that the plan priorities are accordingly modified. Under this approach a client oriented design is produced and the final goal is to transfer all the responsibilities of planning and development to the clientele themselves. The programmes which fall under this approach are Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Drought Prone Area Development Programme (DPAP) Command Area Development Programme (CADP) etc.46

**Integrated Rural Development Approach:** This approach is viewed as a package of action which covers a series of mutually supporting project and activities concerned with different sectors of rural communities. This approach is open to all rural poor and comprises four types of activities namely (i) increased production in agriculture and allied sectors such as animal husbandry fishery, forestry and horticulture (ii) emphasis on village, cottage, handicrafts and tiny industries. (iii) Tertiary sector which would confer artisans and the requirements of skilled workers in several rural

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43 Mishra, S.N. and Mishra, Sweta, Decentralised Governance-Macro and Miccro Perspective. Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2002.PP-66-67,
46 Ibid. P-67.

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activities and (iv) labour mobilization which included training in skills and organized employment for labour class.

**Rural Development Programmes:** After independence we have launched various rural development programmes for the socio-economic upliftment of the rural people.

**Following table No. (1.1) Shows the names of various rural development programmes, five-year plans wise.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Five-Year Plans</th>
<th>Name of the Rural Development Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| First Five Year Plan        | 1. Community Development Programme, 1952.  
                               | 2. Village Housing Projects scheme (VHPS), 1957.  
                               | 3. Multi Purpose Tribal Development Blocks Programme (MTDBP)- 1959  
                               | 4. Package Programme- 1960  
| Third Five Year Plan        | 1. Applied Nutrition Programme, 1962  
                               | 2. Rural Industries Projects, 1962  
                               | 3. Intensive Agricultural Area Programme, 1964  
                               | 4. High Yielding Variety Programme, 1966 |
| Annual Plan 1966            | 1. Farmers Training and Education Programme, 1966  
                               | 2. Well Construction Programme, 1966 |
| Annual Plan 1968            | 1. Tribal Development Block, 1968 |
| Annual Plan 1969            | 1. Rural Man power Programme, 1969  
                               | 2. Rural Works Programme, 1970 |
| Fourth Five Year Plan       | 1. Crash Scheme for Rural Employment, 1969  
                               | 3. Tribal Area Development Programme, 1972 |

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Plan Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>4. Pilot Projects for Tribal Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Drought Prone Area Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Command Area Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>6. Drought Prone Area Programme</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>7. Command Area Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1. Hill Area Development Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Special line stock Production Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Food for Work Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Whole Village Development Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Training for Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1. Integrated Rural Development Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. National Rural Employment Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Prime Minister’s New Twenty Point Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Rural Landless employment Generation Programme (RLEG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. National Drinking Water Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Millon Wells Scheme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Jawahar Rojgar Yojana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1. Supply of Improved Tool kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Employment Assurance Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3. Ganga Kalyan yojana (GKY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar yojana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Jawahar Gram Samridhi yojana</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Food for Work Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Sampoorana Gramin Rozgar yojana</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Annapurna scheme</td>
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</tbody>
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Rural Development in Haryana

Rural development through the implementation of various rural development programmes has been in operation in the state of Haryana also, since its establishment as a separate state in 1966. (Rural development in the Past and Present context in Haryana has been explained in detail in chapter no. 3 of this study).

Review of Literature

Prashad, Sivalinga V. (1981), in his research work, A Study of Organization and Working of Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh, concluded that the structure of Panchayats tends to be feeble because of inadequacy of powers and resources, lack of trained and competent staff, concentration of powers in the hands of sarpanches, ineffective linkage and channels of communication, improper supervision and lack of guidance, insensitive bureaucracy and absence of proper priorities. He further adds that while everyone agrees that the village Panchayat should be strengthened so that it plays a vital role in rural development, not much has been done to give shape to these hopes. Most people indulge in platitude and lip sympathy when it comes to Decentralisation of powers and when an attempt is made towards Decentralisation it stops at the district level, it does not percolate down to the village.48

Singh, Swinder (1983), in his Ph.D. thesis, Role of Bureaucracy in Integrated Rural Development in Punjab, submitted to Panjab University Chandigarh, observed that overall picture that emerges, indicates more of alienation and less of active participation of the citizens in the administration. The rural development programmes designed for the upliftment of the people are being made use of by a handful of people or by

the selfish officials and leaders for their own uplift. He further adds that role of Panchayati Raj institutions to make the people participation in rural development programmes is not satisfactory.

Bava, Noorjahan (1984), in her Ph.D. thesis on People’s Participation in Development Administration in India, submitted in the University of Delhi, suggested that the need of the hour is to revive and rejuvenate the Panchayati Raj bodies by holding elections to them at stated intervals, by developing adequate resources and power to these local government institutions by according adequate representations in such bodies to members of weaker sections such as women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, compulsory reservation of seats, by eradicating poverty through structural changes in society including more effective implementation of land reforms, by increasing production and productivity through science and technology, by generation of employment opportunities and by providing a purposeful education to our children and adults and inculcating national unity.  

Mishra, S.N. (1986), in his book on Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy and Rural Development, is of the view that in nutshell the three primary goals of Rural Development are; raising agricultural and rural institutionalization of equality. The author visualize that these goals of rural development can be achieved only through the dedicated service on the part of local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives. He further adds that the targets of rural development programmes are not achieved due to the apathy on the part of local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives. Author also found that to accelerate the pace of development in rural areas

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49 Bava, Noorjahan, People’s Participation in Development Administration, Uppal Publishing house, New Delhi, 1984.
some structural changes in local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj institutions are required.\(^{50}\)

Avasthi, I.C. (1990), in the paper entitled Decentralisation Perspectives and Rural Development concluded that the success of decentralized planning largely depends upon the implementation of various programmes which requires people’s participation at each stage. The local level planning has an advantage that it provides an adequate degree of participation of people in formulation and implementation process. The participation of local level people assures better implementation at all levels because they have an intimate knowledge of local conditions.\(^{51}\)

Chopra, Parvesh Kumar (1992), in his Ph.D. Thesis, Rural Alleviation programmes in Haryana: A Critical Study, submitted to the Panjab University Chandigarh, concluded that rural poverty alleviation programmes in Haryana are highly centralized and bureaucratic, government’s programmes and the people concerned with it, or affected by them have no say either in policy making or implementation. The researcher further adds that there is lack of adequate coordination among different departments, between District Rural Development Agency’ and other departments, and between DRDA and financial institutions.

Kashyap, Chaman Lal (1993), in his Ph.D. Thesis entitled Policy and Administration of Rural Development in Himachal Pradesh: A Critical Study of Mandi and Shimla Districts, submitted to the Panjab University Chandigarh, observed that organizational structure for rural development is highly centralized which causes delay and red-tapism in the implementation of rural development programmes, there is inadequate delegation of powers

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\(^{50}\) Mishra, S.N., Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy and Development, IIPA, New Delhi, 1986.

\(^{51}\) Avasthi, I.C., Decentralisation Perspectives and Rural Development in, Kumar, Ashok (ed.), Planning, Development and Disparaties in Rural India, Common Wealth Publishers, New Delhi, 1990.
from top to bottom, which makes organizational structure non-performance oriented. He further adds that policy formulation for rural development takes place at national level without the proper involvement of local level needs. There is need for multi-level planning. He is of the view that lack of trained and competent staff is hampering the implementation process of rural development programmes.

Krishna, Sudhir (1994), in his paper, Restricting the Institutional Arrangements to Strengthen Panchayati Raj, presented at National Seminar on Panchayati Raj: Agenda for the Nineties, held at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Mussorie, points out that though Panchayati Raj bodies are in existence for decades, yet the past experience has shown that they have more often remained as showpieces of democratic Decentralisation. He further adds that the states have generally created parallel institutions for implementation and monitoring of development programmes, leaving the Panchayati Raj bodies a national entity. In many cases the PRIs have been reduced to the status of glorified petitioners, representing the cause of glorified petitioners, representing the cause of their constituency before even petty government officials.52

Mukherjee, Nirmal and Bandopadhayaya, D. (1994), in their report on the Panchayats in West Bengal entitled New Horizons for West Bengal Panchayat, found that in the decade and a half of their existence Panchayats have achieved much that in tangible, especially in the land reforms and rural development. But more than this they have helped to generate social and political awareness among the people and facilitate the development of new

leadership. The intangible achievement has strengthened the roots of democracy.\textsuperscript{53}

Shah, B.L. (1994) in his research work on The Role of Panchayats in Integrated Rural Development mentioned that the transformation of Indian rural masses into a socialistic pattern of society for solution of their socio-economic problems is possible only through a non-violent process by a progressive creation of a network of village panchayats enabling them to participate in the administration and community development programmes of rural construction.\textsuperscript{54}

Singh, Hoshiar (1995) in his book entitled Administration of Rural Development in India mentioned that it is a fact that Panchayati Raj System in the country was not functioning in the right direction, therefore it required revitalization. He further added that the basic need is to evoke a comprehensive concept of Panchayati Raj, which should clearly mention the role expected from the Panchayati Raj bodies. The theory of representative participation is not relevant in the context of the Indian socio-economic power structure, which seems to be different task or to strengthen the position of weaker sections in the rural areas so that they can raise against their exploitation. Further the author observed that the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act is certainly an attempt in this direction and will revitalize Panchayati Raj for Decentralisation and rural development.\textsuperscript{55}

Singh, Surat (1995), in his study, Haryana New Panchayati Raj Legislation- A Critical Review, came to the conclusion that 73rd Amendment Act will ensure that Panchayati Raj bodies have become living institutions on permanent basis. These institutions will involve people in


their planning and will be vibrant bodies performing necessary development, regulatory and general administrative functions. In the new set up, empowerment of weaker sections and women would certainly ensure the social justice and emergence of new leadership. The system would expose them to the art of self-government from grassroot level upwards.56

Ghosh, Arbinda (1996), in his research work on Panchayats and Rural Development in West Bengal, highlights that works executed under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana in West Bengal are remarkably poor oriented compared to the rest of India as whole. This trend of relatively high expenditure in directly productive economic assets in this state where land reform a major component has made a significant contribution towards secured access of assets for poor people to productive assets, largely accounts for not only enhancing the sense of self respect of this poor group and making them believe in their own ability and organization and also in raising the rate of foodgrains productivity to the level of 6.5% per annum during 1981-82 to 1991-92. It is highest among seventeen major states in the country. This will lead support to the view that land reform is a sine-quo-non for Decentralisation of planning and people’s participation in developing process through PRIs. The author further adds that PRIs can be effective organizations for development with a human face in rural areas only if it is preceded by a genuine land reform programme.57

Dr. Panda, Snehalata (1998), in her study on Decision Making in Panchayats: Role of Women, concluded that Village Power Structure located in PRIs is dominated by men and higher castes, even after the mandatory inclusion of one-third women in the PRIs. She adds that women have

occupied positions in the PRIs out of the dominance of males, so far as their position in the power structures is concerned is visible as almost all sarpanches as well as the chairman of Panchayat Samities were all men. Therefore viewing from the positional approach women have not occupied the highest office in PRIs. 58

Dr. Singh, Mohinder (1998), in his study Role of Gram Panchayats After 73rd Constitutional Amendment: A study in Haryana concluded that according to the provisions made in the act, representation has been given to Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, Other Backward Classes and Women in Gram Panchayats. However the role of women has not been effective because of proxy. Despite the constitutional status given in Gram Sabha, this body could not be activated and remained on papers. Although the Gram Panchayats have played an important role in different programmes and schemes meant for developing the weaker section, yet there remains enough scope for improvement. 59

Rajendran, T. and Kumaresan, B. (1998), in their study, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development: 73rd Amendment, found that the development of rural economy depends upon the extent to which rural development takes place in our country and this depends upon the way in which the rural development programmes are implemented by the newly created and elected Panchayati Raj Institution under the New Panchayati Raj Act in India. 60

Singh, Raj (ed.) 1999, in his book, New Panchayati Raj, - A Functional Analysis, reveals that centralized power of planning which the country has followed for the last four and half decades severely constrains Decentralisation and local autonomy. Besides it, inadequate devolution of

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58 Dr. Panda, Snehlata, Decision Making in Panchayats: Role of women, Yojana, July 1998.
powers, finances, lack of staff and bureaucratic control have not allowed the Panchayati Raj institutions to function according to the spirit of the constitution. He further adds that as high as 98% women representatives particularly of weaker sections were not aware of their duties and rights under the Panchayati Raj and in most of cases, male relatives accompany there them in official meetings. Interestingly husbands of women sarpanches introduce themselves as sarpanch.⁶¹

Madhu, and Poonia, R.K. (1999), in their research work, Knowledge About Panchayati Raj Institutions Among Male Members of Panchayats – A study of Hisar District, presented in the regional seminar on ‘The Functioning of New Panchayati Raj Institutions in North – Western Region’ at CCS HAU Hisar, concluded that knowledge about Panchayati Raj institutions, specifically after the 73rd Amendment Act is crucial for the functional affectivity of the institution. In spite of the male domain, the knowledge of the male members of panchayats is not of required level, because about half of them have low or medium level of knowledge. It is necessary to bring these members at par with others for better functioning of the institution. Socio – economic factors like age, education, caste, land holding, family size and mass media exposure should be given due consideration in formulating training programmes or refresher courses for specific group of panchayat members. There is a need of such programmes for enhancing their knowledge, by making Panchayati Raj institution more effective.

Singh, Surat (1999), in his research work, Functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana – An Appraisal concluded that flowing from the concept of PRI as units of local government, the main function of

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panchayats should be the planning and implementation of economic development programmes. Ideally, as units of government, the panchayats should have full autonomy in deciding their priorities and determining the allocations to different programmes. But in reality the system of centralized planning which the country has followed for the last four and half decades severely constrains local autonomy. He further adds that inadequate devolution of powers, finances, lack of staff and bureaucratic control have not allowed the Panchayati Raj institutions to function according to the spirit of the constitution.62

Joshi, Sandeep (2000), in his study – Panchayati Raj Institutions and Poverty Alleviation, found that functionaries at grass roots level have inadequate knowledge of the rules and procedures and infrastructure resulting in tardiness and unsystematic transition of the work. It is also found that gram panchayats in the new system have been entrusted with various important works which is very difficult for them to perform in the absence of adequate staff and a number of other required infrastructural facilities. He further observed that majority of the elected representatives of PRIs are ill-informed about powers, procedures and functioning of the PRIs. So effective training is an urgent need for them.63

Mishra, S.N., and Mishra, Sweta (2002), in their research study, Decentralised Governance, conducted in Haryana found that Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994, provides too much of governmental control and interference in the working of the panchayats. The Act is silent about the participation of the political parties in the panchayat elections. The MPs and MLAs are still controlling the PRIs working of Gram Sabha and

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62 Dr. Singh, Surat, Faculty Member HIRD, Nilokheri, Kamal, Haryana.
involvement of women in PRIs is very dismal. They further added that according to the provisions of the new Act, 29 subjects have been given to the Panchayats. But their findings reveal that very few of these subjects have been transferred to the panchayats and are neither substantial nor meaningful. They are only supervisory in nature.\(^{64}\)

George, Sunny and Leilithabhai, K.N. (2002) in their study, Panchayati Raj Decentralized Planning and Development in Kerala, observed that the initiative of women headed villages in development planning has been admirable. While scrutinizing the development projects submitted for the action plan for the ninth five year plan for the state planning board has observed that the village panchayats which have been headed by women, have submitted largest number of projects which were relatively realistic as well as technically feasible and economically viable. Women in local administration are mainly new comers to the field. Therefore, they are able to work the development of the panchayats without any prejudice. Their civic consciousness and responsibility have increased due to the reservation of seats in local bodies and they have taken it as an opportunity to do more efforts in attaining development of panchayats.\(^{65}\)

Narwani, G.S. (2002) in his book, Training for Rural Development highlighted that on the way to devolution of powers to PRIs in Haryana, the panchayats are not adequately empowered because the administrative and financial control is still vested in the respective departments and only planning, monitoring and supervisory powers have been given to PRIs.\(^{66}\)

Rajaram, Indira (2003) in his book, A Fiscal Domain for Panchayats, highlighted that without a defined fiscal domain panchayat will remain, 

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\(^{64}\) Mishra, S.N. and Mishra, Sweta, Decentralised Governance-Macro and Mircro Perspective, Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2002.  
notwithstanding their constitutional status as the third tier in India’s federal structure after the 73rd Amendment to the constitution, mere expenditure agencies rather than units of self government. He further advocated for the transfer of the right to levy taxes on agriculture to panchayats will lead to revenue additionality in the Indian fiscal. System taken as a whole and with jurisdictional retention of the revenues so raised for infrastructure improvements in accordance with local priorities and preferences will encourage compliance and promote growth.\[67\]

SelvaRajan, E. and Elango, R. (2004) in Rural Development Programmes and Externalities—The Report of the Project funded by Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, recommended that continuous improvement of the skills and knowledge of Panchayati Raj functionaries and elected representatives is of paramount importance to improve the efficiency of rural development machinery. Elected representatives are required to train about the skills and details of various ongoing rural development programmes immediately after assuming the office. Due to scarcity of training institutes, the state governments should seek the assistance of universities, Research institutes and NGO’s etc. in order to complete the training schedule within a stipulated time frame.\[68\]

Kaushik, P.D. (2005) in his paper Panchayati Raj Movement in India: Retrospective and Present Status perceived that the democratic Decentralisation using Panchayati Raj institutions seems to have been derailed. There is lack of political will and bureaucratic support, the understanding of the constitutional perception of Panchayati Raj is also inadequate. There is an urgent need for another round of structural changes

coupled with sustained pressure from the electorate. He further added that rural development programmes in India are often conceived and implemented as part of a national development strategy. Thus serious problems remain in enabling local bodies to genuinely articulate and implement the aspirations of the poor and to remain insulated from bureaucratic interferences and elite manipulation and capture. Again, he highlights that all PRIs have a poor fiscal base. While resource mobilization by the PRIs is generally limited, it is imperative to provide PRIs with revenue raising powers of their own in order to reduce their excessive dependence on the state and central government. He diagnosed that under the 73rd Amendment Act States are required to set up District Planning Committees (DPCs) to facilitate decentralized planning under Article 243 (ZD). Various states have not yet set up DPCs. Thus evading constitutional responsibility without being punished.69

Selvam, S. (2005), in his book Empowerment and Social Development: Issues in Community Participation, concluded that the process of empowerment of weaker sections in village communities in India has to be accompanied by constant efforts for structural and institutional changes. Success of Panchayati Raj will certainly depend on the development and continuous strengthening of secular values and democratic norms in Indian social life. Otherwise Panchayati Raj would certainly remain in the realm of a mere discourse rather than a pragmatic effort leading to definite changes in the institutional base of village communities.70

Palanithurai, G. (2005), in his study, Emerging Dimension in Decentralisation observed that in Tamil Nadu, paradoxical situations are

visible in the Panchayati Raj system. The devolution process is painful. Limited powers have been devolved. More responsibilities have been devolved and very little resources are allocated to the panchayats. No functionary has been transferred to panchayats. Yet success stories are abundant. With the limited power and finance, gram panchayat presidents have made a unique contribution in the social development sector. The representatives have formed their own associations and exerted pressure on the government to devolve powers. Instead of begging they have started demanding powers. Further they have assumed certain powers and demonstrated their potential.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{71} Palanithurai, G. Emerging Dimensions in Decentralisation, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2005
INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE LITERATURE

After having reviewed the literature on the topic ‘Democratic Decentralisation and Rural Development’ in India, the following points of inferences have been drawn:

1. The structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj in India have been feeble due to lack of sufficient powers and resources.

2. Prior to the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act 1992, the structure of PRIs was not uniform throughout the country, and elections were not conducted at proper time. Both the factors have been the causes of weakening the Panchayati Raj system in the country.

3. Vulnerable section of the society i.e. S.Cs, STs, B.Cs, O.B.Cs, Women etc. has been given mandatory representation in PRIs, but its functioning is still dominated by the men of higher castes.

4. Despite the constitutional status given to ‘Gram Sabha’ this body could not be activated and remained only on papers.

5. Poor fiscal base and lack of financial support from union and state governments to PRIs, have been major problems in rural development.

6. Poor level of educational qualification of Panchayati Raj leaders has been the weakening factor in the structure and functioning of PRIs towards rural development.

7. There has been a lack of awareness among Panchayati Raj leaders about Panchayati Raj System and rural development in the country.

8. Lack of trained and competent Panchayati Raj leaders and Panchayati Raj officials is hampering the effective implementation of rural development programmes.
9. State governments are not willing to empower the PRIs for rural development.

10. Centralized Planning and bureaucratic dominance have severely constrained rural development through PRIs.

11. Inadequate devolution of powers, finances, lack of own staff and excessive bureaucratic control have checked the PRIs to function according to the constitutional spirit.

12. Excessive political interference does not allow the autonomous functioning of PRIs.

13. PRIs have been used as agents of union and state governments, not as autonomous bodies of local governance, and rural development.

14. Process of devolution of powers to PRIs is imbalanced by transferring of less authority and more responsibility.

15. As per the XIth schedule of the Indian constitution, 29 subjects may be transferred to PRIs by the state governments, but in reality only a few of them have been transferred, which are neither substantial nor meaningful. They are only supervisory in nature.

16. Target of rural development programmes has not been achieved due to apathy on the part of local level bureaucracy and lack of power and resources on the part of PRIs.

17. There has been a lack of cooperation between rural bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj leaders, Since the very inception of PRIs in the country.

18. Implementation of rural development programmes has been less effective due to prevalence of corruption in the system.

19. For the effective implementation of various rural development programmes, coordination between the PRIs and various
departments on the one hand, and coordination among the three –
tiers of Panchayati Raj system on the other, is a pre – requisite,
which is not noticed in the Indian context.

20. Role of PRIs in the implementation of rural development
programmes is little bit reflective only at ‘Gram Panchayat’ level,
while ignoring the intermediate and apex levels of PRIs.

21. Role of women in PRIs has not been noticed effective due to proxy.

22. District Planning Committees (DPCs) have not been constituted by
various states.

23. Prior to the enactment of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, PRIs were not
functioning in the right direction. The implementation of this Act is
certainly an attempt in the right direction, and it revitalizes
Panchayati Raj for effective democratic Decentralisation and rural
development.
THE PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Panchayati Raj institutions are the effective means of people’s empowerment for decentralised governance and rural development. In a long journey of these institutions from Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report 1957 to Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, their focus had been towards overall development of rural areas. 73rd Amendment Act, has definitely been a major milestone in the journey of PRIs. In conformity with this Act almost all the states and UTs have enacted respective Panchayati Raj Acts. The state of Haryana has been one of the leading states in the implementation of this Act by constituting Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.

73rd Act has been instrumental to reshape the structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj System in India through certain compulsory provisions. But the major thrust area of rural development is still noticed ignored mainly due to ineffective functioning of these institutions. Government of India as well as various states and U.T. Governments have been continuously endeavouring to empower the people through the PRIs. Every day at National Level and at State Level we notice a number of slogans directed towards strengthening these bodies. As perceived through various research studies and day to day observation it can be concluded that PRIs could not become the third-tier of the Governance of the Country inspite of a long history of efforts.

After the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act, various research studies have been conducted to evaluate the functioning of PRIs and their role in rural development in various parts of the country. But in Haryana such type of serious research studies, specifically, evaluating the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of rural development
programmes could not take place after the introduction of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 through Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. Hence, the present research study entitled “Democratic Decentralisation and Rural Development: A Comparative study of Karnal and Kaithal Districts in Haryana” has been an endeavour towards the same.

**LOCALE OF THE STUDY**

In the present research work, “Democratic Decentralisation and Rural Development: A Comparative Study of Karnal and Kaithal Districts in Haryana, the districts of Karnal and Kaithal have been chosen as geographical area of the study. In these two districts Karnal district is identified as developed district, whereas, Kaithal as less developed one, on the basis of various parameters as - percentage of total literacy, employment of labour force in non – agricultural sector, gross value of agriculture output per capita (rural), metalled (surfaced) roads per hundred sq. kms of area, degree of urbanization and industrialization, total number of health centres and density of population etc.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

In the present research study, “Democratic Decentralisation and Rural Development: A Comparative Study of Karnal and Kaithal Districts in Haryana”, an attempt has been made to study the role of Panchayati Raj institutions in rural development. The working and achievements of Panchayati Raj institutions have been assessed in the implementation of rural development programmes. For this purpose two rural development programmes i.e. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) have been selected for the in depth study. The time period from 1995 to 2003 has been suitable, because elections to PRIs in Haryana
were held in December 1994 and 2000 in accordance with the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act 1992.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the set-up of democratic decentralisation in Haryana, in the light of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:
   (i) Devolution of political, administrative and financial powers to PRIs
   (ii) Representation of women, scheduled castes, and backward classes in PRIs and rural development.
   (iii) Existing administrative structure of Panchayati Raj, Haryana.
2. To study the functional aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana.
3. To examine the working and implementation of ongoing rural development programmes, particularly Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY).
4. To evaluate the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of rural development programmes.
5. To measure the level of awareness among Panchayati Raj leaders regarding Panchayati Raj system and rural development.
6. To examine the role of government-run training programmes for Panchayati Raj leaders and officials.
7. To assess the nature and extent of people’s participation in Panchayati Raj and rural development.
8. To study the relevant literature on Panchayati Raj and rural development.
HYPOTHESES

1. Devolution of powers to Panchayati Raj institutions is not in conformation with the provisions of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992.

2. Rural development programmes have not been successful mainly due to lack of effective Panchayati Raj system.

3. Role of Panchayati Raj institutions in the implementation of rural development programmes is minimal.

4. Awareness level among Panchayati Raj leaders regarding Panchayati Raj system and rural development programmes is low.

5. There is a lack of effective training arrangement for Panchayati Raj leaders.

6. Training system for panchayati raj and rural development officials is ineffective.

7. Women participation in panchayati raj system is quite low.

8. S.C and B.C panchayati raj leaders have no influence in the working of PRIs/rural development.

Research Methodology

In the present research work two districts in Haryana i.e. Karnal and Kaithal, were selected for the study. From the selected districts, two Zila Parishads, four Panchayat Samities, and Twelve Gram Panchayats were studied in depth.
TABLE NO. (1.2) NAMES OF THE SELECTED PRIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Zila Parishads</th>
<th>Panchayat Samities</th>
<th>Gram Panchayats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>Kharajpur, Bada Gaon, Kunjpura.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nissing</td>
<td>Bastali, Manjoora, Nissing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kaithal</td>
<td>Kaithal</td>
<td>Baba Ladana, Dilanwali, Landar Keema.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kalayat</td>
<td>Julani khera, Ramgarh Pandwa, Vajir Nagar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were four stakeholders in this research work i.e.

1. Panchayati Raj leaders of all the three tiers of PRIs.
2. Panchayati Raj officials, attached to PRIs.
3. Beneficiaries of Rural Development Programmes.
4. General People.

So, all the four stakeholders of this study were interviewed with the help of structured and guided question-schedule. The sample was selected on the basis of stratified random sampling. Attempts were made to select the sample in such a way that each and every section of the society is properly represented. The sample size is as followed:

1. Panchayati Raj Leaders ------ 180 (90 each district)
2. Panchayati Raj Officials ------ 60 (30 each district)
3. Beneficiaries of Rural Development Programmes (JGSY and IAY) ------ 120 (60 each district)
4. General People ---------- 120 (60 each district)

Total Sample Size = 480
In addition to the total sample of 480 respondents two rural development programmes were also selected for the in depth study. These rural development programmes are -

(1) Jawahar Gram Samridhi yojana (JGSY)
(2) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY).

**Methods of Data Collection**

As regards the methodology of data Collection, Survey Research Method was followed. Data and information were collected through the secondary and primary sources.

**Secondary Sources**

The secondary sources included the study of Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, study of the material published by the state government from time to time, official records and other publications, rural development programme manuals, progress report of selected rural development programmes, and also published material in article form available in journals, magazines, and newspapers.

**Primary Sources**

The primary sources included interviews, interactions with the Panchayati Raj leaders, Panchayati Raj officials, beneficiaries of rural development programmes, and the people. Data and information were collected with the help of structured and guided question-schedules. Four sets of question-schedules were prepared and served to the stakeholders i.e. Panchayati Raj leaders, Panchayati Raj officials, beneficiaries of rural development programmes, and general people. The questions in the question-schedules were of two types i.e. fixed-answer questions, and opinionative ones. In addition to that Participant observation and discussion methods were also used to get further information.
**Methods of Data Analysis:**

The data and information so collected were further tabulated, classified, and analysed. Simple percentage method of data analysis was used to test the data.
CHAPTER SCHEME

First Chapter is concerned with Introduction, Scope, Significance and Methodology of the study.

Second Chapter Panchayati Raj in Haryana – Past and Present, defines origin, growth, structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj system of Haryana.

Third Chapter Rural Development in Haryana – Past and Present, explains the working of various rural development programmes in Haryana in the past and present context.

Chapter Fourth Socio-Economic Profile of Panchayati Raj Leaders and Officials, gives a detail of various socio-economic indicators of Panchayati Raj leaders and officials.

Chapter Fifth Awareness and Role Perception of Panchayati Raj Leaders, in this chapter an attempt has been made to know the role of PRIs in the implementation of rural development programmes, the awareness of Panchayati Raj leaders regarding Panchayati Raj system and rural development has been explained.

Chapter Sixth Bureaucracy and Development: Role Perception of Officials, in this chapter role perception of officials regarding Panchayati Raj and rural development has been explained.

Chapter Seventh Participation and Development: Focus of Beneficiaries, in this chapter level of Awareness of beneficiaries regarding Panchayati Raj and rural development has been explained.

Chapter Eighth Participation and Development: Awareness and Involvement of Masses, this chapter explains view points of general masses regarding panchayati raj and rural development.

Chapter Ninth Summary, Findings and Suggestions, this chapter is the concluding chapter of the study which presents a summary of the study, its findings and suggestions.