CHAPTER – VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Panchayat Raj Institutions came into existence in India to achieve the goals of political decentralization, integrated rural development and inclusive development of marginalized sections of society. Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, Lohia and other national builders advocated the cause of power to the people. They also firmly believed that strong rural areas constitute sound India politically, economically and otherwise. After independence, several committees were constituted to examine the issues of panchayat raj and rural development on the basis of sound administrative and developmental mechanisms. The committees also suggested several progressive measures for the expansion and development of Panchayat Raj System in the country. The present investigation was carried out on the basis of primary and secondary data generated by the field and relevant agencies connected with Panchayat Raj and rural development. The study also specifically examined the role of PRIs in rural development in Karnataka State, the findings of the study, implications of the study and suggestions.

The organization of people’s government has made the administration more responsive towards people’s desires and needs. In a good measure efficiency has become the watchword and yardstick for judging issues. The induction of political parties at the grassroots level has helped the mobilization of rural people to a great extent. The net result of all these positive developments is greater participation of the people through political parties. It is therefore not surprising that political socialization of rural people is a reality in recent years. Moreover, such a process has helped political parties to broaden their base at
the grass roots through the instrumentality of these institutions. In spite of these achievements the new experiment is plagued with a number of problems, inadequacies and weaknesses which have been already dealt with within the study. The structural inadequacies like lack of organic linkage between the Zilla Parishad and the Taluka Panchayats have hampered the working of rural institutions to a great extent. An inadequacy of staff particularly at the Taluka Panchayat level is a persistent reality. The status of the block development officer is still under a cloud. The planning department at the Zilla Parishad level has inadequate staff. The planning personnel lacks training, these lacunae point out to the fact that existing bureaucracy is ill-suited to meet the momentous challenges of this bold and new experiment. The problem of finance is of a very acute nature. But it must be noted that the problem is not only lack of finance but centralization of finance thereby reducing the status of these institutions as mere agents of the state Government. The Taluka Panchayats have not exploited their powers in mobilizing resources to the maximum extent. The Zilla Parishad does not have taxation power. All these negative features go against the spirit of decentralization and self-reliance.

The emerging leadership in rural local self-government institutions is young and educated. This is a positive sign and may eventually throw up a king of rational leadership.¹ However, leadership is dominated by the dominant castes of the rural society, which violates the true spirit of democracy. Leadership must be representative of the rural masses. The poor and unorganized sections of rural society have not been able to capture the leadership in the Zilla Parishad, but to a small extent they have made their
presence felt in the Taluka Panchayts. Whatever the nature of leadership it must seek to bring about socio-economic development as early as possible.

The Gram Sabha conceived as a unit of direct democracy was successful in the initial stages. But of late this institution is declining because of the lack of interest of the rural masses.

Political parties have played a major role in mobilizing the rural people, but this has also created new problems like factions, groups, clashes and in certain instances rampant violence which is undesirable. Whatever is known from newspaper reports, journals etc., and the fact is that the impact of political parties is such that groupism among the rural folk has become the order of the day resulting in political violence. To a certain extent the rural population is disenchanted with the deleterious consequences of groupism and politics. This was evident to the researcher when he interviewed the functionaries and others in the Gulbarga ZP, TP and GP, Mysure ZP, TP and GP, Belagavi ZP, TP and GP and Dharward ZP, TP and GP.

The success of Panchayati Raj Institutions depends upon two important factors. One is commitment and the other one is independent finance. Commitment on the part of elected leaders to serve the people in a spirit of dedication is necessary. This is a basic requirement without which no system can flourish. Likewise commitment on the part of the development functionaries, the State Government and the State leaders is another important requirement. Adequate funding is a crucial ingredient in making these institutions self reliant and independent. Hence these bodies have to be provided with independent finance so that they can plan as genuine decentralized units of government.
In conclusion, it may be said that this study has consistently taken the position that rural socio-economic revitalization is sine-qua-non of the experiment of democratic decentralization of rural Institutions like the Zilla Parishad and Taluka Panchayats which have a crucial role in creating a new ethos and a new political culture at the grass roots level. These rural local self-government institutions can prove as the bedrock of Indian democracy. Hopefully this study based on empirical research has made a study of the various dimensions of the activities of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in Rural Development.

An important thing to make the Panchayati Raj system to work is to ensure direct and regular elections of the members every five years without fail. This must be organized to make it a successful political process, even if it is at the risk of affecting the social and political order of the State. If it is necessary a constitutional amendment may be brought about to have a uniform system throughout the country to hold elections periodically without much delay. An effort should be initiated by the Karnataka Government to mobilize the support of all the State Governments and public opinion, in favour of demanding a constitutional status to local government in India and to provide for a third tier of government along with defined sharing of powers by removing a few items from the state list to a separate local list in the seventh schedule of the Constitution. This would accord a degree of Legal Sovereignty to the Indian local government.2

Elected members of different Panchayat bodies, Legislative Assemblies and Parliament should not be allowed to have dual membership in different organizations. As members of Legislative Assemblies and Parliament are made
members of the Zilla Parishad, it may be done away with, to make clear
demarcation of functions and responsibilities among members of different
bodies.

The basic postulate under democratic decentralization is that there should
be a mutual sense of regard and understanding between the administrative
machinery and the respective local bodies. Observations in the light of this
postulate, however, show that the existing pattern of relationship between the
two is not as stipulated and is far from satisfactory. If the officials have nothing
but contempt and resentment for the non-officials, it is observed that non-officials
are no saints, and they reciprocate similar feelings with equal vehemence.

Nomination to Taluka Panchayats to give representation to Backward
Classes should be scrapped as they cannot represent the true backward
classes’ people. Instead an election may be proposed exclusively for the
particular backward classes depending upon regions, so that a true
representation to backward classes may be made.

The present financial dependence of Panchayati Raj institutions may be
rectified. As these bodies depend on the State Government, it will encourage an
attitude of financial irresponsibility which is widely debated in the area of federal
finance. If a Panchayati Raj body spends the revenue which is raised by State
level of government, it will not have any fear of wasting the public funds. Such
financial irresponsibility must be replaced with responsibility in money matters.

The present scheme of Panchayati Raj bodies spending on earmarked
schemes and programmes of the higher authority, will conflict with the objective
of encouraging local initiative and development from below. The whole exercise
of decentralized democracy is to materialize the felt needs of the local people and decide developmental priorities at least in areas which concern the Districts and talukas. In order to encourage grass root level plan formulation and implementation, Panchayati Raj bodies shall have the power to earmark the priorities in their respective area and make suitable measures to realize it.

There is ambiguity in the provisions of the Zilla Parishad Act dealing with the powers and functions of various functionaries like the Ahdyaksha, Upadhyaksha and the Standing Committees. As there is scope for conflict among different functionaries in the Zilla Parishad, it would be necessary to define more clearly the powers and functions of various functionaries.

A serious effort should be undertaken to delegate all important revenue and developmental functions to Panchayati Raj bodies, as they continue to be with the State Government. Revenue, police, electricity and other important categories of functions should be delegated in the course of time to Panchayati Raj bodies.

With the introduction of Chief Secretary in the Zilla Parishad Administration, there will be possibility of overlapping and conflicts between the Chief Secretary and the Deputy Commissioner within the district.\(^3\) A clear demarcation of jurisdiction of these two should be made to avoid possible conflicts.

The District planning process should be hastened under the guidance and supervision of a technical committee at the state level. It is necessary to have a periodical review of implementation of various projects and schemes at the
district level. The decentralized planning and programming of activities can ensure a greater commitment of the people to action.

There have been tension and conflicts between elected representatives and officials. As it is seen, the newly emerged leadership has been enthusiastic and eager to implement the different programmes. In the process tension and conflict arise as they also belong to different socio-economic background and cultural milieu. A suitable and conducive atmosphere should be created and proper education should be imparted to both elected representatives and officials.

Women are introduced to Panchayati Raj system in a large scale as 50 percent of the seats are reserved for them. As women are ignorant of the political process, they should be given periodical training at their respective district headquarters. Women have both domestic responsibility and added political responsibility. Besides, due to their traditional background and backwardness, they refuse to take active interest in politics. They should be drawn into the development functions and implementation process so that women’s development is materialized to a greater extent.

A large number of men also have entered the Panchayati Raj system as representatives in Taluka Panchayat and Zilla Parishads. They need to be trained, updated and given political education. Many representatives belong to Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Trbies. As there are various universities and research centers in Karnataka, they may be properly used for periodical training and orientation programmes. This should be a continuous process as the majority of the population constitutes illiterates and semi-literates. Various university departments-Political Science, Rural
Development, Economics and Sociology, may be utilized to impart training and undertake research on the functioning of Panchayati Raj in Karnataka.

Officials should also be trained to suit the requirements of Panchayati Raj system in Karnataka. IAS officers are placed as Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Panchayts and all these officers are to be trained to reorient their functions and approaches towards Panchayati Raj system.

There is always a good deal of similarity between the principles of co-operation and those of Panchayati Raj. They are the two facets of the process of self government at the local level. In fact co-operatives would be the natural allies of Panchayati Raj institutions and the two must function harmoniously in perfect co-operation and co-ordination for the overall development of the community. In order to ensure the desired co-ordination and harmony, co-operatives should be a political. It is very difficult to have a situation where a co-operative society is controlled by one political party and the Panchayati Raj body is controlled by another political party.4

An Evaluation Agency should be created to assess and evaluate the working of Panchayati Raj institutions in Karnataka. A separate autonomous agency under the Planning Board should be created consisting of eminent people in public life, headed by a knowledgeable specialist, with appropriate staff. It may be assisted by the department of economics and statistics in Government both at the State headquarters as well as District levels. An Evaluation of Panchayati Raj at all levels – villages, Taluk and District, should be undertaken by different non-governmental academics or researchers to assess its working in an objective and impartial way.
The Voluntary organizations all over the country relating to almost every aspect of life. There have been very good service rendered by many voluntary organizations. These should be utilized properly for the successful working of Panchayati Raj system. Yuvak, Mandals, Mahila Mandals, Kisan Mandals, and other organizations will be of much use in this direction.\textsuperscript{5}

There has been tremendous growth in communication and mass media. Newspapers should play a vital role in popularizing the message of Panchayti Raj system and strive towards this end. Audio–visual media have enormous potentialities – Television can play a magnificent role as the country constitutes a majority of illiterates and uneducated. Television should be harnessed of all its potentialities and make a beginning in development communication. There have been many instances in Cuba, Nigeria and Latin American countries, where Television has successfully played the role of development communication.

The role of political parties in Panchayti Raj election is widely debated with all the consequences. As local level elections allow a greater scope for conflict and interpersonal rivalry, political parties have to restrain themselves without indulging in such acts. An important social responsibility of all the political parties is to maintain social transqulity in the villages, which are already beset with caste and faction rivalries. The Government should prescribe a code of conduct for all the political parties, which participate in the election of Panchayat Raj.\textsuperscript{6}

Thus, to sum up, the elite of the nation must strive selflessly to work for the uplift the educational level of the masses. If the upper classes manipulate and pay no attention to the needs of the villagers, as the old rulers did, they are setting the stage for violent upheavals. There are vested interests, many well
entrenched, which will oppose attempts to ameliorate social and economic conditions. Tradition oriented groups are interested in maintaining the status quo. Any decree in social stratification that might create new rural elite will occasion discontent among the privileged. However, the administrative and political elite have to realize the inviolable realities. The genuine concern among the people and the impregnable alliance of urban officialdom and the rural rich has to begin. This might herald a new age of metamorphosis of Indian Villages and stop the probable travesty of democracy.\(^7\)

But due to reservation and quota system, there is emergence of leadership among the SC/ST, OBCs and Women also. But political parties and economic consideration play an important role in this phenomenon. Increasing election costs and campaign costs also acts as a deterrent. Hence, these issues need to be addressed on priority for the success of Panchayati Raj institutions in Rural Development. The present study has made an attempt to discuss the theoretical concept and prospects of Rural Development and growth of PRIs in India and Karnataka State. The study also covers the organization of PRIs in Karnataka in Rural Development.

Based on available literature, empirical data and personal observation and interactions, an attempt has been made to list the problems and prospects of PRIs in Rural Development in Karnataka. The elected representatives, the officials as well as bureaucracy, the NGOs, public and the students need an exposure, systematic training and hands an experience on the functioning of PRIs, people participation and emerging of rational leadership would help the systematic growth of PRIs in India and Karnataka.\(^8\)
Findings of the Study:

The Panchayati Raj Institutions were established with a view to provide opportunities to the rural people especially the downtrodden sections of the society to actively participate in the governance and development of the rural areas. Through the present study the following findings are observed.

- Except from the seats reserved for particular community, the downtrodden sections of the society are not getting elected from the general category seats.
- Most of the women who are elected as the representatives of local bodies are remained as puppets in the hands of their family members especially their husbands.
- Party affiliation is dominating the scene of getting benefited under various schemes, or programmes. So the real beneficiaries are not getting such schemes and unable to be benefited.
- The role of Gram Sabha in selection of beneficiaries is confined only to paper.
- Financial sources are very limited to the PRIs.
- Grants-in-Aid given by the State Government is not sufficient to the local self Governments for Development Activities.
- Grants should be released timely.
- There is no proper co-ordination between officials and elected representatives.
- The elected representatives does not know their powers and how to exercise their powers and functions. So there is a need of orientation.
Suggestions:

The following suggestions are much useful to the better performance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural Development.

The Suggestions are:

- To achieve the desired results, a massive awareness generation campaign should be launched in rural areas.
- The training and non-training needs of the PRIs and implementing agencies should be analyzed and identified and they should be trained.
- A strict monitoring mechanism should be developed to ensure proper implementation of works and payment of weekly wages.
- While lifting food grains from the FCI, for the distribution the fair average quality should be ensured.
- Storage facilities should be created at the village level for proper storage of food grains.
- The State Governments should release their share of funds in time and also ensures the full and proper utilization.
- For the involvement of technically qualified local youngsters for the contribution of their work in the development of PRIs, a proper strategy should be worked out for that purpose, last it should not be possible to visualize the participation of the locally perennial youth.
- The guidelines for the implementation of rural development programme should be modified in view of the grounded realities.

The State Governments should make adequate efforts for generation of awareness among the people.
Committees should be formed for involvement of local people in the developmental activities.

Social audit should be necessary in all the welfare programmes.

Male domination should be restricted and women are allowed to perform their functions effectively. So that the policy of women reservation is fruitful.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibid., p. 61.


