CHAPTER-VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
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Decentralization, as a means for enhancing people’s participation, citizen orientation, responsiveness, service delivery and accountability, has been attached great importance by the academic and policy oriented studies since the dawn of nation-building process. It has acquired a major focus by the developed as well as the developing countries. Scholars and statesmen alike have also emphasized on decentralization and ‘people centric’ development through participatory approach. Keeping in view the importance of democratic decentralization and people’s participation in the decision making process the constitution of India has been amended under 73rd Amendment Act 1992.

Besides, dissemination of information about the land and people and generation of awareness about the developmental activities among all sections of the society are imperative needs for attracting the attention of the rural masses towards active involvement in the development process. The present generation is quite ill-informed about the past and also lack in attaining the present status of socio-economic development. Hence, it is necessary that the people should be made aware and awake in order to enhance their participation in the development process.

Further, it has been observed that the incidence of poverty and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in alleviating rural poverty has been sharp focus during the last five decades of planned development in the country. Yet much remains to be done to make dent on poverty.

Besides, since the main plank of rural economy is agriculture and allied activities which are also required to increase the potentialities of the rural masses for economic
generation through increase output. Further, it is also imperative for the rural people to enrich their traditional skill through injection of improved technologies to achieve incremental output. This role can be played by the public leaders, educated youth, NGOs by pursuing socio-economic activities, government officials and the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Nevertheless, the best solution to enhance people’s participation in the developmental activities does not rest with the role of group of individuals alone; rather, it also needs self initiatives and interest. Foremost, in order to improve the people’s participation in the developmental programmes it is necessary to enhance the knowledge base of the rural masses about the different developmental programmes meant for them.

In fact, it has been observed that due to the lack of awareness about the various programmes sponsored by the central as well as state government the people’s participation are negligible in the developmental activities. Hence, it requires rigorous campaign such as workshop, Demonstration, Seminar, Symposium etc. are best remedial measures to make full participation of the people in the developmental programmes.

Though, the task of reviewing and assessing developments made by the Panchayati Raj Institutions over the past decades and half is greatly facilitated by the valuable evaluations made by Experts Committees appointed by different State Government and the Government of India from time to time. Besides, a voluminous literature has grown upon the subject. Nevertheless, in the present context of decentralized planning and working pattern of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh there is scanty of literature on the subject. Since, Panchayati Raj as an institution of democratic decentralisation, it is imperative to
measures the role played by these institutions in the process of decentralized planning.

Thus, the present chapter is an attempt to evaluate the progress made by Panchayati Raj Institutions to meet the objectives of democratic decentralization in terms of functions, finance and functionaries as an institution of self-government as envisaged in the 73rd Amendment Act and to suggest some remedial measures for strengthening these institutions so that they can play an effective and efficient role in furthering socio-economic transformation in rural India.

Based on the detail study of the Panchayati Raj Act of Arunachal Pradesh, empirical information obtained from the field and our personal observation of the role and involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in decentralized planning the present chapter composed of two parts. The first part focused on the findings of the study and the second part reflects on suggestive measures based on the findings of the study, which may be considered by the people of Arunachal Pradesh for better functioning of PRIs in the state.

The major thrust of this research work has been to study the socio-economic background of the Panchayat leaders with a view to find out the equations among the various groups in the power structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Besides, the study also tried to understand the perceptions of the rural masses about the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions and also to measure the level of their involvement in the process of decentralized planning. Further, it also tried to measure the extent of people's participation in the formulation and
implementation of rural development programmes uninitiated by the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

**Findings**

The analysis of the Socio-economic background of the Panchayati Raj representatives and the power structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (Chapter III) reveals that the group of leaders who are in the higher rungs of socio-economic ladder continue to be at the helm of affairs controlling the power game. Nevertheless, the factors like sex variations, age differentiation, large family size and occupation are not important factors in determining the leadership position in the Panchayati Raj Institutions in West Siang District. The factors like educational background, annual income etc. are dominant factors for determining leadership in the institutions.

An examination of the socio-economic background of the Panchayat leaders’ reveals that majority of them belong to moderately high-income group. Besides, the study also found that majority of the Panchayat leaders had better educational background, which indicates the trend of mobilization of young educated person in the leadership position. Further their affiliation to political parties is also indicates the sign of awareness about the political process. This tends of mobilisation shows that people in the rural areas also have shifted from the earlier considerations of wealth and position of a person to take up the leadership position to the education of the candidates. Further, the shift of focus has worked as an impetus for the young educated to come into the realm of leadership in the rural areas. Normally, the upward journey of the leaders in Arunachal Pradesh takes place from this level to the state Legislature in the
State and Parliament. Further, the shift of the focus to the education of the leaders has been a healthy trend for a backward State like Arunachal Pradesh.

It is general belief that given the opportunities with their reasonably better socio-economic and political background, the rural leaders are sure to enter into an arena of district and state level politics. The enactment of 73rd Amendment Act has also enhanced the 'representative's character' of the Panchayati Raj institutions, as it has provided 33 per cent of seats for women. Thus, the dominance of males in terms of composition of these institutions has undergone sufficient change. Even there are some instances where ever women got elected to the unreserved seats in the Panchayati Raj institutions. This shows the social transformation which has been brought about by the 73rd Amendment.

However, the study found that the involvement of women representatives is negligible with regard to attending the meetings, expressing their views, interactions with officials and in the decision-making process. In most of the cases, their husband act or attend the Panchayat meetings on their behalf. Most of them are merely absentee representatives and are not independent in taking any type of decision regarding their family, Panchayat and society. Thus, it can be hypothesized that it will take more time to enable the women leaders to participate actively in affairs of these institutions independently. The major reasons behind inhibitions of women leaders are prevailing social and cultural traditions in the society.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions were established to bring all-round development in rural areas. However, numbers of
research studies on the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions have shown a wide chasm between promise and performance. This has led us to question whether these institutions are potential enough to achieve the objectives of rural development.

With this in mind, at the very beginning we sought the opinions of our respondents (Villagers, Local Intellectuals and Panchayat members) concerning the objectives of the Panchayati Raj (Chapter V).

- The question was: according to you what are the main objectives of the Panchayati Raj.

An answer to this question was encouraging. According to them the main objectives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is for the overall development of the village; encourage village leadership with self-government and render service to the people.

- Further, we sought the opinion of the respondents about their perception regarding the provisions of 73rd Amendment Act.

- with regards to their awareness about the 73rd Amendment Act, it was disheartening to note that majority of the respondents are unaware about the 73rd Amendment Act. They only knew about reservations of seats for women and the five years terms for the elected representatives.

- To our further question whether the plan prepared by Panchayat Samiti and District Planning Committee (DPC) under SGRY take care of all-round development, the answer were discouraging. Majority of the common villagers and local intellectuals opined that no developmental schemes initiated by DPC under SGRY are useful to the villagers. They hold that
though many developmental works are taken up by DPC and Panchayat Samiti under SGRY, it mostly benefited to the individuals based on party line i.e. the person who happened to be a party member but not for the common interest.

- In regards to the decisions about selection and location of various schemes, majority of the villagers hold that the Panchayat Samiti and officials do not consult the villagers and they prepare the schemes as per their own convenience. Besides, they never incorporate the villager’s opinion and even consult them. Further, they hold that the beneficiary is not identified and assisted on the basis of criteria provided in the guidelines i.e. selection of the poorest among the poor in the first instance. It is because of the influence of the politician and few dominant people of the village. In most of the cases the politicians do interfere in the selection and location of the schemes. They wanted that most of the benefit must be benefited to their party members or their near and dear one. Besides, in location of schemes they wanted that the work should be done in their concern areas.

- In regards to the supervision of Panchayat member on the works initiated by the villagers, the Panchayat members supervise the works to whom they entrusted the works but not frequently. Further, the extension staff of Panchayati Raj Institutions which is regarded as the promoters of rural developmental activities is not motivated them in terms of benefit sharing. It may be due to the fact that most of the field staff is technically not sound and most of them are unaware about the guidelines of the various schemes sponsored by the central and state government.
To our further question whether they were satisfied with the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions; the answer to this question was that people are completely unsatisfied with the working pattern of Panchayati Raj representatives. They hold that no meaningful developments are taking place in the area and few works taken up by them are not benefited to the actual beneficiaries and useful to the villagers as a whole. This was mainly due to the existing groupism and party politics, which in turn was affecting the working of the institutions.

With regards to the bureaucracy having the final say in the preparation of district plan, it was found that to a great extent the bureaucrats have the final say in preparing the district plans. It is because, in the District Planning Committee meeting the bureaucracy and experts do not implement all the schemes prepared by the Panchayat Samiti. They either try to modify or rejects the schemes prepared by Panchayat Samiti.

Thus, an interesting finding of the study is that there exists a dubious nature of relationship among the officials and Panchayati Raj representatives in certain cases. This development is contrary to the assumptions and expectations that a positive relationship between these two will have a direct bearing on bringing the gap between the role expectation and the role performance of Panchayati Raj institutions regarding rural development. Hence, the present position of relationship between the officials and Panchayati Raj representatives is leading to creation of factions and rift instead of bringing goodwill and cooperation.

Further, about the politician and dominant person having final say in the preparation and implementation of the village
plan, we found that the politicians and dominant people of the area do not play a decisive role in the preparation of the village or district plan. However, few respondents opined that the dominant persons and politicians dominate the people's representatives in such a way that they always try to get their work implemented be done in their respective area and attempt to make benefited to their relatives and ensure that benefit are to go to the members belong to their party. In turn, it could be stated that the politicians and influential people always try to ensure that the beneficiaries are selected in such a way that, it will go to their near and dear ones.

• In regards to the perception of the respondents regarding the performance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh, we draw that majority of the respondents are not at all satisfied with the way of working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh. They pointed out that the prerequisite condition of these institutions is the devolution of power. However it is observed that power is not yet transfer to these institutions. As a result many hindrances come in their way of working. Sometime the dominant people and state government try to dominate the Panchayati Raj representatives and do not allow them to function independently. Rather, some of the MPs and MLAs try to get the work done in their respective area. Besides, due to lack of adequate financial support many developmental works are not done satisfactorily but for the namesake only and benefits meant for the poor people is not adequately reach to them.

• Panchayati Raj institutions can achieve its desired result only when there is active participation of the rural masses in the developmental activities, especially for implementing state and
centrally sponsored schemes for the development and welfare of the rural masses. As such their requires full participation of the people in any developmental activities initiated by these institutions and for this the Panchayati Raj institutions is considered as a means for encouraging people's participation at the grass-roots level. Hence in order to measure the extent of the people's participations in the developmental programmes undertaken by the Panchayati Raj institutions, we sought their response, whether they are taking part in the Panchayat election and visiting Panchayat office (Chapter VI).

- Answer to this question were encouraging, that all the respondents hold that they are take active participation in the Panchayat election either by involving in party campaign or cast their vote and contest election.

- In regards to the query, whether the villagers visit Panchayat office, they hold that they are rarely visiting the Panchayat office not by their own initiative but as and when called by Panchayat leaders and Government officials. An examination of their negligible visits shows that the socio-economic conditions of the people are not conducive to visit the Panchayat office frequently.

- Meeting is regarded as one of the important indicators for assessing the working of an institution and also to measure the people's participation in the discussion. However, the data collected revealed that most of the respondents are not attended the Panchayat meeting. It has observed that neither the Panchayat leaders nor government officials invite the villagers or inform about the time schedule of the meeting. Beside, Panchayat meeting is not regularly conducted at the village level
and even if conducted, it is conducted only with the sitting of some influential persons and few village elders.

- Decision-making process is considered to be a collective activity. However, our study reveals that the decisions are made by Panchayat members (especially chairman) and officials with the sitting of few influential person of the village. Hence, no majority decisions are seen in the decision-making process because the common who are the actual beneficiaries are not participating in the meeting. Most of the decisions are taken on the basis of staged managed discussions.

- In regards to abiding the decision of the Panchayat meeting, the villagers are always abide the decision taken by the Panchayat members without participating in the discussion because even if they try to oppose the decision taken by the Panchayat themselves, the Panchayat members are not ready to hear their voice. Thus, it also directly indicates that, the common villagers are not getting an opportunity to discuss their problems with the Panchayat members and officials.

- While analysing the observations, it was found that the Panchayati Raj representatives forestall people’s participation in the formulation and implementation of the plan projects, the data reveals that Panchayati Raj representatives forestall the people’s participation because they neither invite the villagers nor involve them in the discussion. Rather, most of the decisions for the formulation and implementation of the plan projects are done by themselves or with few influential and dominant person of the area.

- An examination of the factors that affecting the people’s participation, it is found that, they are either busy in their
household management, daily routine in their cultivation, lack of information about Panchayat meeting, lack of leaders encouragement. Apart from these it is due to lack of awareness about different developmental programmes. It due to the fact that till date no training programme is being conducted by the Panchayat leaders and government officials at the village level to enhance the knowledge base of the rural masses. Besides, the literature related to rural developmental programmes published by the central and state government are not made available to the villagers and local intellectuals.

- The provisions of reservation of seats for women have provided ample scope for women to participate in any developmental activities. However, it has found that involvement of women representatives in the decision making process is not effective. It is because; in most of the cases their husbands and some local elites try to minimize the role of women representative in the Panchayati Raj Institutions by exerting control over them and acting as de facto member.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

Analysis on the finding of the present study and exhaustive field experience, in the present context some recommendations have been given to strengthen the decentralized planning process in the study area in particular and Arunachal Pradesh in general. Though our recommendations are confined to the micro situation of West Siang District, yet we feel that these recommendations have their relevance for the state as a whole.

In this study we have tried to deviate from the conventional mode of presenting our views, suggestions and recommendations in the form of an itemized summary because our main endeavour
throughout the study is to lay down a new approach towards the Panchayati Raj Institutions – not in the usual point-by-point way rather holistically, as they depend on one another. The formulation of structures, functions, and the utilization of financial, administrative and human resources of Panchayati Raj Institutions should be determined on the emerging functional necessity of management of rural development. Hence, the present study attached importance to the direction rather than specifics on certain items usually done and hitherto highlighted in various study. The institutional, structural and functional specifics of Panchayati Raj would vary, over time as well as space; we can do no more than indicate the spectrum of possibilities while the various state Governments would have to work out the actual details keeping in view their changing requirements. Whatever be the variations, they have to be round the crucial theme of linking institutions of democratic decentralization with socially motivated economic development.

The institutional, structural and functional contours of Panchayati Raj have to be in conformity not only with the accelerating pace of development but also with its strategies and policies. New structures of development administration or local level development management should be taken into account based on the functional necessities of the on-going development thrust. Panchayati Raj Institutions in the years to come should, therefore, be equipped to undertake democratic development management under conditions of rapid changes, continuous growth and sustained innovations in all sphere of rural life. Hence, by keeping all the conditions of rapid development into account, in our present study we made various suggestions as follows:
• First, in the power structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions, factors like, personal efficiency and educational background could be given preference to become leaders in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

• Secondly, the elected leaders of these institutions needs to be atleast literate who can read and write, so that they could guide and tell the villagers about the various provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act.

• Besides, literature related to the various provisions of rural development should be provide to the Panchayat leaders as well as to the common villagers so that they will be more acquainted with their functions and various developmental schemes. Further, any guidelines of centrally sponsored schemes should be made available to them.

• All the developmental schemes prepared by the Panchayat Samiti and District Planning Committee needs to be given due importance. Besides, beneficiaries should be made benefited on priority basis rather than party line. Further, every one of the village should be taken into account so that no section or group of the village will feel segregation from the developmental programmes taken up by the Panchayati Raj institutions.

• In regards to the selection and location of various schemes, prior consultation with the villagers is necessary for effective planning process. Besides, the selection of the beneficiaries should be done by the concerned Block Development Officer (BDO) and Panchayati Raj bodies based on the latest census report of below poverty line i.e. as per the guidelines- selection of the poorest among the poor in the first
instance. Further, the preparation of the plan at the grass roots level by the technocrats should have to take into account the common villagers aspiration at the formulation stage.

- Supervision of works by the officials and Panchayat leaders is necessary whom the works are entrusted, so that the works will be done as per the schemes and ensure that no temporary work will be done, otherwise the work done will remain meaningless and will not be useful for the village and villagers..

- There should not be any groupism and party politics in terms of planning process i.e. selection and location of schemes rather genuine implementation of the projects are necessary for strengthening the decentralized planning. Otherwise, no fruitful development will come out and people as a whole will not elicit due benefit from the institutions.

- It is to be further suggested that decentralize planning will be more effective if the bureaucracy, politician and Panchayati Raj representatives advance a concerted effort.

- There should be well-defined arrangement of power and function for the District, Block and village level where there is a chance of conflict between Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zila Parishad and Block Development Officer respectively.

- Politician and influential person should not interfere in the working of Panchayati Raj representatives. However, it should be remembered that the participation of the political parties in Panchayat elections on the other hand would ensure clear orientation towards development programme and facilitate healthier linkage with higher-level political process. Direct
elections coupled with programme-based efforts, would offer
great scope to weaker sections for availing of the opportunities
offered by the political system.

- The administrative wing and local politicians associated
  with the Panchayati Raj Institutions should not dominate the
elected representatives. They should be placed under respective
elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions instead of
their administrative superiors at least in those matters, which are
under the purview of these institutions. Besides, there should be
cordial relationship and team spirit between the members
irrespective of party affiliation and with government officials for
overall development of the state.

- Further, comprehensive training programmes can improve
  upon the competence and capacities of rural leaders. The
  methods of imparting and components of training course should
  be devised after careful examination of training needs of the
  specific leaders.

- It is to be suggested that training should be imparted at
district level, Block level and village level. During the training, the
elected representatives ought to be encouraged to discuss their
problems and the officials imparting training should suggest how
they could get the problems solved. It may prove best to empower
and to develop capacities and competence among them. In fact,
in order to make these training programmes more realistic, there
should be setting up of training centres in adequate numbers in
the state and ensure that training of all newly elected
representatives is completed within a year of their election.
Refresher courses are to be organized at suitable intervals.
• There should be three types of training: (i) for officials (ii) for elected representatives; and (iii) combine courses for both officials and elected representatives together. The programme content would vary as suited for each participating group.

• Apart from these, broad principles would have to be laid down for assigning a role to each of three tiers. The Gram Sabha should be assigned with the task that he would list out the priorities and assist in the selection of beneficiaries for various programmes and schemes. In this way the aspiration of the people would be articulated. Thereafter, planning process would begin from below with the preparation of village plans and they would be incorporated into the intermediate level plans and finally merged into district plan.

• A continuous assistance by the state government is highly needed in every sphere of activities. The state has to ensure that the objectives of full employment and raising the income levels of the rural poor are also pursued by the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They will have to provide financial and physical parameters within which the district level technical group can plan for developmental subjects.

• Constitutionally, it has been prescribed under Article 243 Z(D), that "while preparing the draft development plan, District Planning Committee will keep in view: (i) matters of common interest between the Panchayats and municipalities including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources, the integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation; (ii) the extent and type of available resources whether financial or otherwise; and consult such
institutions and organisations as the government may, by order, specify”.

- Further, Article 243Z (D) (4) has also laid down that the “chairperson of every District Planning Committee shall forward the development plan recommended by it, to the state Government. In other words, the state Government, while drafting the state plan, will coordinate the district plans, which, expectedly, will be integrated with the sector plans”.

- The state Government should not supersede the Panchayati Raj Institutions on partisan ground and if super session becomes necessary, these should be replaced by an elected body within six months. The state government should not postpone elections of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

- Further, Gram Sabha meeting should be held regularly at the village level and agenda of these meetings is to be prepared and circulated among the villagers in writing as per the stipulated time. The notice for such meeting including agenda should be pasted outside the place where the meeting is to be held. Instead of holding meeting at the residence of the Gram Panchayat, it should be held at Dere (Community hall). The agenda of the meeting should be discussed item wise and it must be see that the unanimous decision is reached.

- Further, in order to encourage the participation of women there should not be any social restriction. Women representatives should be supported by the family members and society as a whole. Husband should not put any restriction and they should not attend the Panchayat meeting instead of their wife, rather the
husband should encourage and support the cause of their wife to make them active participant in any programme.

- Besides, in order to make women participation more effective, efficient and successful there is a need of vital changes in traditional, social attitude and patriarchal values of society. There is also need for positive attitudinal change and mental make-up of the male folk in favour of women’s participation. Further, there is also need for launching more and more awareness campaigning in favour of women’s empowerment. Mass media, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Political Parties, Self Help Group (SHGs) etc have a significant role to play in this context.

- Hence, the devolution of power is the pre-requisite condition for effective decentralization of planning. The study observed that, inadequacy of power has hampering the process of planning at the village level. Therefore, the state government should take necessary steps for transferring of power to these institutions which may enrich these institutions to undertake all those functions, which are entrusted to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

- Another immediate step to enrich these institutions is the transferring of financial powers. Therefore, it is to be suggested that the state Government should release their share to the Institution in time. Besides, the Finance Commission should take feasible steps for the transferring of financial power to these institutions as soon as possible. Infact, for the devolution of power, neither the political parties nor the NGOs nor the media can ensure the real empowerment of the Panchayati Raj Institutions unless the rural masses and the elected

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representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions have the necessary will for it.

- Over and above the effective implementations of different poverty alleviation programmes in the rural areas are rest with effective delivery agency. None of the anti-poverty programmes can have impact unless they are implemented with clarity of purpose and a commitment to the task. For this, the District Rural Development Agency must coordinate effectively with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Under no circumstances will they perform functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions. They should be a facilitating and supporting organization to Zila Parishad by providing necessary executive and technical support in respect of poverty reduction efforts.

- Besides, The District Rural Development Agency should take necessary step to improve the awareness of the villagers regarding rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. Further, keeping in view, the substantial investment that are being made in poverty alleviation programmes, the DRDAs should ensure financial discipline in respect of the funds received by them, whether from Central or State Governments.

- The District Rural Development Agency should also ensure that the accounts are properly maintained including in respect of the funds allocated to banks or implementing agencies in accordance with guidelines of different programmes. In addition to the above functions of the District Rural Development Agency, they should coordinate and oversee the conduct of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) Census and such other surveys that are required from time to time. Besides, the DRDAs should also carry
out action research or evaluation studies that are initiated by the Central or State Government.

• Finally yet importantly, as per personal experience it is observed that, in many of the rural development projects implemented in the past, there was a large gap between plan and implementation. Hence, the concept of poverty alleviation programme came up to fill the gap with the participation of the rural population, which, hitherto, has been a mere object of projects. Thus, the success of Rural Development Programmes depends on the degree to which a population can be motivated. This again depends on how much their interest, their felt needs are taken into account and to what extent they are involved in the planning and decision making process. Thus, the question of motivation leads to the problem of decentralization of planning i.e. to a discussion that has been going on for years under the slogan of “Development from below”. Although, the difficulties are great, the solution of the problem of local participation and motivation is a key to the success or failure of any rural development programme.