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ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

DR. SUBHASISH CHATTERJEE

PROFESSOR& DIRECTOR,
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT,
SUMANDEEP VIDYAPEETH, VADORA,
GUJRAT.

ABSTRACT

It was understood just after post independence era that social change of India is possible by continues development of rural sectors, but despite knowing it, the main importance was given on Industry, communication, education and health. But, when it was realized that social change and rest of the progress is not possible without appropriate improvement of rural sector than Panchayat Raj Institution was introduced and furthermore a special emphasis has been given to bring the people from grass-root level into the lime light of Indian democratic panorama. But, in early few years, the Panchayat Raj Institution was under the grip of elite society, who used to control different villages by virtue of their muscle and money power. It started changing after introduction of 73rd amendment in the year 1992; a special reservation policy i.e. 1/3 reservation policy has been implemented for scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and OBC (other backward class) candidates. Special provisions of 1/3 reservations policy has also been initiated for women candidates in all tiers new Panchayat Raj Institution. With the help of this scheme, Govt. of India started dreaming for wonderful rural India in future. There are many social changes have been watching by the rural people for last few years. It has been tried to discuss few structural changes occurred due to introduction of new Panchayati Raj Institution (a village councils in India) since 1992. The entire shape has been given of this article with the help of secondary source followed by necessary analysis.

KEY WORDS: independence era, Panchayat Raj.

Introduction

Society is fundamentally a dynamic organization. A social change means establishing a blueprint of Social relationship and change of status, value and entire structure. ” The term social change is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of social relationships and hence social change means change in the system of social relationships. These are understood in terms of social processes and social interactions and social organization. Augusta Comte the father of Sociology has posed two problems- the question of social statics and the question of social dynamics, what is and how it changes. The sociologists not only outline the structure of the society but also seek to know its causes also. According to Morris Ginsberg social change

is a change in the social structure.¹”The sociologists not only outline the structure of the society but also seek to know its causes also. According to Morris Ginsberg social change is a change in the social structure” Partial change is very common in social change”. Social Change in any system/ equally introducing law that recommend punishment for turn the untouchables down to access in any Hindu temple or law that compel to stop the child marriage or exploitation to the people belong to lower rung of the society is simply considered as partial change. Despite enacting law and various norms we never came across to total change of social system.

Institutional change is the most important aspect in the social change. Since independence, many political and social development stalwarts have uninterruptedly been trying to fight against poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, inequality, irrationality and oppression but no proper machinery has been formed to reduce.

In the year 1992, the 73rd amendment of the constitution of Panchayati Raj in India played a significant role to commence the process to offer an empowerment to the poor. It gave an opportunity for eradication of poverty. It also started improving the quality of life of underprivileged society and that makes them self confident, conscious & powerful.

With the introduction of 73 amendments in 1992, a great sign of social change took place, which are as follows : - (i) Maximum amount of social and economic power have been transferred to the rural people to enable them and to establish their own future. (ii) Maximum involvement of women representatives in the village has started. (iii) Maximum involvement of SC/ST/OBC has commenced and those increases their capabilities as well as make them understand about the grassroots level planning and democratic process.

Social advancement is the process of planned institutional change to bring about better adjustment between human needs and aspiration on the one hand and social policies and program on the other. It is declaring war on poverty, Illiteracy, ignorance, inequality, irrationality & oppression prevalent in Society. It aims not merely at the upliftment of the weak, the under privileged and the disadvantaged people, but improving the quality of life of all citizens. It is privileged of all people to enjoy the benefits of this participation in common efforts.

With the introduction of 73rd amendment of the constitution on Panchayati Raj System in India, the Panchayati Raj (a village council in India) has been established on a sound footing & has been developed to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to them. The most significant role of Panchayat (a village council in India) in poverty eradication is to help in the process of empowerment of the poor. When a development program involves poor people, it helps them to become self confident, conscious & powerful.

73rd amendment of Panchayati Raj gave a nice base to the village people to make them self reliant and the blueprint of Panchayati Raj has been established on a incredible platform and has also been developed to make them responsible to do their duties in systematic process.

Since then for the first time one third of the seats at every stage are reserved for women. Formerly the lower rung of the various social categories exclusively SC, ST, OBC have not found a considerable place in panchayat. But this changes happened in the system of election, have been mobilizing the people & the response of the community in this matter. The present study is to keep up a correspondence the changes cropped up in terms of

¹ <http://www.sociologyguide.com/social-change/>

participation of ST, SC, OBC people of the village who have been deprived all the time by the village elite, the most powerful communities. The present role that played by Panchayati Raj is to give the governance to the poor people of the village followed by a great social change in terms of participation of women and the most backward class in all angle i.e. socially, politically and economically.

Simply removal the old institution and establishing the new institution or somehow changing the existing one is not enough to meet up social change. It is also required to understand, whether any true functional changes occurred or not?

It is through the discussion of major findings derived from historical survey, official-reports of Panchayati Raj(a village council in India) Institutions, reports published in the local newspapers many information's have been collected.

Most unfortunately, the low level of social and political consciousness of the elected representatives can make the new Panchayati Raj degrading. The main reasons behind the no up gradation of the Panchayati Raj Institution are low level political awareness and the prevalence of feudal authority and feudal values. Though, after the introduction of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Madhya Pradesh was the first state to hold the election to the Panchayats, and thus the elected local bodies have come into existence, but news are appearing in the newspaper that most of them are not been able to cope with their functioning.

Research Methodology

The primary concern in this subject as stated in the beginning; is directed to study a social changes and status of the Panchayati representatives and rural people in all categories of the society and to probe into the factors that are related to the society and its change.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION:-

For gathering pertinent information the data available from a range of Public documents that was readily obtainable for collecting essential information.

At present/ many agencies & scholars are working under the umbrella of local government or self government. But it is a bitter truth that this field of research is still lack up communication and cross-fertilization of techniques & models. Many a research institutes are formed to study local government & local politics. They have been set absolutely with the intention of rural studies connected with the rural advancement & expansion. Some important institutions are - Central Institute of Research & Training in Panchayat Raj, NIRD Hyderabad, New Delhi, and Indian institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, New Delhi, Planning Research & Action Institute, Lucknow, All India Institute of Local self Government, Central institute of Research & Training. Bombay and Administrative staff College, Hyderabad and IIM, Calcutta & Hyderabad. The author has attempted to gather related data from aforementioned secondary source.

Mathematical assessment has been composed from the preceding research papers, who have offered an exact mathematical presentation of data, and the percentage and also a methodical explanation.

For an appropriate investigation and statistical treatment of the research subject/ data is made in a suitable mode and has been attempted to be presented right through the black and white analysis in an organized way.

In the light of the arranging analysis of the current study, it would be constructive to narrate in brief the works done in the field of Panchayati Raj institutions on a variety of feature & of their procedures & problems.

In the area of Panchayati Raj, a huge number of books and periodicals are existing that comprises of a variety of information's on behalf of Central Government & State Government. There are invariably numerous standard books & papers on the historical evaluation and theoretical concepts as well as on the problem of Structure/ functions control and supervisions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in India & in the States likes Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan. While the theoretical and Indian literatures were of massive help.

Available literature on Panchayati Raj is depending upon the preceding analysis; and for the purpose of our study the total literature. Structure can be classified under the various categories.

Author has also collected some information's from his own PhD thesis written on the basis of primary and secondary sources both.

Analysis

1. **Majority of elected representatives** are grown up young and middle aged. This indication shows that there is a possibility of impressive change in the society in near future as they are capable enough to work in the ground level.

3. **Majority of the representatives** is married and majority of percentage have got married between 19-23 years of age. As it is customarily understood that married people are more responsible and matured than bachelor, so maximum representatives shall habitually show their responsibility in development work.

4. **Majority of the members** come from. Schedule caste (SC) and Schedule tribes (ST) are proportionate as per the provision of the 73 amendment.

5. In 1992 maximum elected representative were illiterate but now majority of representatives generally come from the people of average educational levels. even few representatives have been found highly educated up to Post Graduate level and even PhD also.

6. **Majority numbers of representatives** belong to joint family. A joint family of moderate size (neither too big, nor too small) expected to allow the members time to time for outside work families of large or medium size can afford to release its members in terms of responsibility.

8. So far as women representatives are concerned, there is an endeavor to follow that **one-third reservation policy** was introduced in 73 amendments.

9. **More than three-fifth of the members** have told that women participating in discussion of social, political and economic issues. Female members from Zila (District) & Janpad Panchayat (a village council in India) are more interested and prone in these

particular matter then village Panchayat members. But majority of the respondents discuss with each other after the completion of the entire discussion.

10. **More than 80% of the representatives** used women right of Franchise.

11. **More than three-fourth** of the female members have expressed their interest in participating in Panchayat meeting.

12. As far as degree of interest of women is concerned, it has been observed by many investigators that **three fourth of the members** have opined that they have equal (sometime more) interest as like those of male members.

13. Only **around half of the members** react positively when women raise any issue. Although in Zila (District) & Janpad (Block) Panchayat almost all are reacting positively, but overall impression is not good enough.

14. **More than three-fifth of the female members** used to get invitation for Panchayati meeting. In Zila (District) & Janpad (Block) Panchayat almost all are getting invitation to attend Panchayati meetings.

15. As far as participation of female members are concerned, **more than four-fifth of the members** are participating in decision making process though fairly good number of Zila (District) & Janpad (Block) members are participating in decision making process

16. Representatives from Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Tripura and Rajasthan have already taken an initiative to increase school enrolment while Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Uttarakhand were the poor performers. In Maharashtra 100% men and 81% female pradhans worked to increase enrolment in schools. In Gujarat this ratio was 73: 90 while in Rajasthan 97% men compared to 84% women pradhans took initiatives. (Source -AC nelson-org through Vineeta Pandey, Panchayats leading social change)

17. **All members** irrespective of any cast, creed and commune get invitation to attend Panchayati meeting.

18. **Around eighty percent** members of the members from SC & ST attend meeting regularly. It was very negligible before 1992 because few elite members used to take the decision

19. **Four -fifth** of the members of SC & ST category participate in decision making process.

20. It has been understood on the way of **reviewing literature**, Women reservation is a short term relief for women that is why Govt. of India started few programs to strengthen the 'Women Components' under the observation of Ministry of Rural Development line Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), Indira Awas yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program (ARWSP), Restructured Centrally Rural Sanitation Program (RCRSP), Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), Development of women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCR) and Jawar Rojgar Yojana (JRY).

Apart from those there are lots programs have been implemented in the grassroots levels for alleviation of poverty and for making the women components as self reliant and self employment.

Those programs are as like a) Support for Training and Employment program (STEP) for developing their skills and income b) Swadhar (Short stay at home) scheme to provide home for women at distress. c) Kishor Shakti Yojana (KSY) and Nutrition Program for Adolescent girl (NPAG) AND Integrated child development service ICDC), which are implemented school dropout girl. All those programs are rooted through Pachayati bodies in the rural areas and it has also been understood that elected representative are taking splendid interest to make those scheme successful with Impressive support of govt. official.

Summary of Findings

1. One customs that still gives the ugly impression today is the preference of sex selective births i.e. having a boy rather than girl child, but it has been observed that maximum elected representatives are strongly taking interest to stop this customized issue.
2. They are also firmly trying to prevent the child marriage, which is common practice in India.
3. Panchayati representatives are continuously trying to tackle the problems of gambling as well as alcoholism too. It has been reducing onwards from 1992.
4. They have also taken up the assignment to increase female literacy rate and checking the incident of domestic violence.
5. School enrolment, particularly for girls, was an area of priority for many panchayat leaders and members.
6. The most important aspect has been noted by the investigator that in many places, elected representatives have started a new scheme by visiting door to door to resolve any problems confined within the family members. They also started awareness generation camps and trying to understand the reasons for escaping meeting regularly. They also resolve this problem in a cool and systematic process.
7. A remarkable number of SC/ST & OBC representatives are introduced in the system. The class background of the elected representatives has undergone a change from poor to rich, specifically in Gram (village) Panchayat level. Marginal farmers and landless laboures, who contribute majority number in Panchayati Raj seems to have shared some position in the rural politics.
8. Majority members are taking interest as well actively participating on health related campaigns matters,
9. Majority of elected representatives are also very much concerned about developmental issues and drinking water followed by road construction and sanitation as an area of priority.

10. While a huge number of elected women representatives passionately concern about the issues concerning to women and child, and sanitation, to provide street lights, drinking water, construction of bus shelters.

11. Women are carrying low educational back ground, still it has been observed by different researcher that maximum time woman representative are more responsible than their male members despite their low educational background.

12. “A 2006 nation-wide independent study designed by leading Indian sociologists, titled “Untouchability in Rural India,” suggests that members of the scheduled castes remain discriminated against in most of their interactions with others. Among dozens of other instances of daily discrimination, members of the SCs remain barred from entry into places of worship in more than 50 percent of the surveyed villages. They are denied access to water facilities in more than 45 percent of the villages, and denied seating among other villagers in 30 percent of the villages. Atrocities and physical violence against SC/STs also remain disturbingly common towards that SC/ST village serving in political office²”.

Suggestion

1. Special weightage should be given for adult education; particularly for the members of Village Panchayat But as soon as they would come to realize their rights and responsibilities through the light focused by education, they would be more prone to their duty and thus would help to make the change of traditional and social structure.
2. More women organizations are to be introduced in all Villages and that should have functional connection with P.R.I; Thus women can establish them not only in Panchayati system, but also in the social structures too. And through these organizations women would be able to bring their voice before government's attention and can argue for their development and thus would be able to establish themselves as a united force in the society.
3. Provisions are to be made in such a way by which it would be possible to minimize the caste discrimination. As long as the caste discrimination remains in the society, the progress of the society would be in a half. Above all, every one of us is human beings and that is our ultimate identity. So caste discrimination should not only be minimized but should be tried to be abolished for the benefit of Panchayati Raj, as well as to make the society a refreshing one
4. There are many researchers gave their ideas after thorough investigation pertaining to the process of untouchability in many parts of rural area. They affirmed that even after introduction of 73rd amendment followed by modified Panchayati Raj in the year 1992, the problems of untouchability either remain unaltered or very negligible changes occurred till now. Still there are many empirical researches are required to be conducted in the vicinity of untouchability and its remedy. The legal

or policy implication is not enough to reduce this problem; it may be possible by changing of people's perception and by strengthening the interpersonal relationship.

2 The Hindu, Business line, Simon Chauchard, Panchayati raj and untouchability June 5th 2012

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