



PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTIONS IN GRAMAPANCHAYATHS IN RURAL KARNATAKA

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Abstract: *Local self governments existed in one form or another since antiquity. Panchayath Raj System was introduced in rural India, at least initially as instrument of economic and social development, the so-called community development programmes. Experience has shown however that in the existing unequal socioeconomic system upper-caste and upper-class people all along managed to monopolize higher positions in the system and that these positions were used and misused depending upon the exigencies of situation for self-aggrandizement.*

So much so, for a long time Panchayath Raj System became a mere puppet in the hands of the dominant caste in rural India. Working of this system had been plagued, among other things, by the penetration of party politics and Panchayath members were divided and subdivided almost along political party-lines, caste and class inequalities only added to this. Political rivalries, corruption, nepotism, violence and gross misuse of government funds meant to be used for ameliorating the conditions of the downtrodden have been confirmed by the increasing body of evidence brought out by studies. This has become a matter of serious concern of enlightened leadership but also made them rethink about the whole experimentation of democratic decentralization.

Following 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment, Panchayath Raj System was put on the path of reforms. Reforms have to do, among other things, two basic issues – 1) including the hitherto excluded that reservation of seats for Sc, ST and socially and economically backward population – OBC and women and hence Panchayath Raj system was used as instrument of affirmative action. In other words, deepening the process of democracy at the village level, 2) people's participation in the decision-making process, policy formulation, implementation, and taking the government benefits and services to the target-population. By these amendments the scope and significance of Panchayath Raj institution got extended beyond the pale of development.

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INTRODUCTION

My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbor for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity.”- Mahatma Gandhi.

Grama Panchayath or the Gram sabha is a foundation of the Panchayath Raj System. Panchayath Raj means democratic decentralization and modernization. It falls within the great tradition of our country. We often talk about Panch Parameshwar. It means that the god speaks through the Panch. Panch Parameshwara can never be prejudicial to everybody. It is how we understand about the Grama Panchayath. Our tradition of Gram Panchayaths is elaborately manifested in our long ages. Besides, we also have tradition of caste Panchayath. The caste Panchayath looked after the problems at local level. Sometimes, it also functions as inter-village Panchayath. In some villages, the caste Panchayath is also important. A large number of decisions pertaining to social and marital conflict, and disputes are solved by the caste Panchayaths.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The village administration is carried under the leadership of the Gramani. The villages are “self governing” and are free from central control. The main functions of the village institution are not only the civic duties but also all kinds of public affairs, industrial, social religious administration, judicial and legislative. Therefore, the village organization functioned as a centre of community life.

The concept of Panchayath Raj is relatively new. In the early days every village was a “republic and every village was having a Panchayath. It was based on democratic principles. It was used for rural self-government. Actually the village Panchayaths was meant for rural administration and particularly administration in the fields of social service and rural reconstruction. The village Panchayaths is a link between the people and the bureaucracy at the state level.

In our country, the system of village Panchayaths is very old, though its structure varied from time to time. There were villages Panchayaths in ancient age. This is the sole permanent basis of ancient history on which each dynasty of India has prospered (Panikar).

“In ancient India, Panchayath was very jealous of their liberties and it was laid down that no soldier could enter the village unless he had a permit. Panchayath also collected taxes out of



the produce and paid the Government share on behalf of the village” (Jawaharlal Nehru). During the medieval period the Grama Panchayaths become obvious or ineffective.

During the British period Grama Panchayaths could not make any success. Actually the area under the Grama Panchayath was very large. And what is worse, the funds given to them were not sufficient. “The Indian village communities are the little corporate bodies but then they have been thoroughly disintegrated” (Jawaharlal Nehru).

PANCHAYATHS AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

After independence, the statesmen, social workers, administrator have tackled many problems to rebuild the Indian society. The main aim was to get rid of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, diseases from India. Hence the Community Development Programmes initiated in the first plan was intended to develop the rural areas intensively and to organize the village people. It was started in 1952 on a pilot basis in selected areas called “Community projects”. In 1953, it was considered advisable to reduce the size of the projects and community development blocks were started in selected areas having a population of about 60,000 to 70,000. It was later on decided to establish “National Extension Service” all over the country with a development block as the lowest administrative-cum-development unit.

Community Development Programme was an ideal type for the many sided development of the entire community. Its organized activities were confined to the field of agricultural extension and consequently the group of agriculturists benefited the most from them. A closer analysis of the agricultural extension work itself reveals that its benefits went to the elite group and to the more affluent and influential agriculturists. The gains to poor agriculturists were considerably smaller. For the economic development of the artisan and agricultural labourers, no programmes were initiated by the project.

Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was appointed to suggest measures to eradicate the problems of community development programmes in rural areas. This Committee made study on the same and submitted its historic report on 24th November 1957. On January 12th 1958, The National Development Council endorsed the recommendations of the Mehta Committee. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee suggested that an agency should be set up at the village level which would not only represent the interests of the village community but also take up the development programmes of the government at its level. The Grama



Panchayath which was to constitute this agency was, therefore, perceived as an implementing agency of the government in a specific, namely, developmental sphere (Mohanty Bidyut; 1995).

The Mehta Committee suggested a three-tier structure for Panchayath Raj. These tiers could be altered vis-à-vis the needs of the state. The bottom tier constituted of Gram Sabha which was constituted on the basis of population size. Sometimes it included a big village but generally two or three villages on the strength of the population size constituted a Gram Sabha. This was the lowest rung of Panchayath Raj. The second tier was coterminous with the tehsil of taluka. And, at the apex level was the district. The three-tier structure thus consisted of the elected non-officials who implemented the programmes of development on the technical and bureaucratic guidance of the officials.

Ashok Mehta Committee to suggest changes in the pattern of Panchayath raj recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. In 1977, the Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a fundamental change in the Panchayath Raj System. It asked for transformation of the Panchayath from an implementing agency to a political institution. In order to implement this recommendation the need for constitutional amendment was felt. It, however, took more than a decade for the first steps in this direction to be taken in the form of the 64th Constitution Amendment Bill which was defeated in Rajya Sabha. In 1992, legislation, the 73rd Amendment Bill was introduced in parliament which adopted it in the same year.

The 73rd Constitution Amendment act allows political parties to enter into election fray. In other words, elections to Panchayath Raj today are contested on party basis. The present Panchayati Raj is not an implementing body to the development programmes, it is a decision making body and rules over the governance of the village. One very conspicuous aspect of the present Panchayati Raj is that it empowers the women and weaker sections of village in the wielding of power. The members of weaker sections including women are given representation by a fixed quota fixed by the constitution. In other words, membership to Panchayath Raj Institution (PRI) is reserved vis-à-vis the members of the weaker section. The Panchayath Raj thus has empowered the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes other backward classes and women.

SOME IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE ACT ARE GIVEN BELOW:

- Panchayaths will be considered political institutions in a truly decentralized structure.



- The Gram Sabha shall be recognized as the life-line of the Panchayath Raj. The voters of the village of clusters of villages will constitute its membership.
- There will be direct elections in all the three tiers of governance: (i) Gram Panchayath at the village level, (ii) Panchayath samiti at the intermediate level; and (iii) Zilla Parishad at the district level.
- So far as the empowerment of women is concerned, the Act has provided that at least one-third of the total seats at all levels shall be reserved for women of whom one-third shall be from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In this context it is important to note that at least one-third of the total posts of the office bearers at all levels will also be reserved for the women.
- Each PRI will have tenure of five years and in case it is dissolved by the state government fresh election will be held within a period of six months.
- The election to local bodies has to be conducted regularly.
- There will be a separate Election Commission and also a Finance Commission for PRIs in every state.
- It is obligatory on the part of centre as well as the state to provide adequate funds for the PRIs to enable them to function properly. In addition, the PRIs will have their own fund raising capacity on the basis of the local resources.
- Some states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Orissa have debarred the candidates, having a view to controlling population growth, given the low average age of marriage of girls (19), they would have crossed the two children norm by the time they contest for elections. Hence, it will be difficult for the states to get suitable women candidates for the Panchayath Raj elections.
- Some states like Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka have provision of Nyaya Panchayath to settle the disputes at all the three levels.

PANCHAYATH RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN KARNATAKA:

Karnataka has the distinction of enacting a comprehensive Panchayath Raj Act, which incorporates all the essential features of the 73rd constitution Amendment. The Act came into force from May 10, 1993 within a few days of the 73rd Constitution Amendment being adopted. The Karnataka Panchayath Raj Act 1993 provides for an elected three-tier system at the Village (Grama Panchayath), Taluk (Taluk Panchayath), and District (Zilla Panchayath)



levels. The salient features of the Act are establishment of three tier Panchayath Raj Institutions; holding of Grama Sabha in each village; Reservation of seats for SCs, STs, BCs and Women. Reservation of offices of chair persons to SCs, STs, BCs and Women, Constitution of State Election Commission; Constitution of State Finance Commission once in every five years to review the financial position of Panchayaths and to make suitable recommendations to the State on the distribution of funds between the State and local bodies; and Constitution of the District Planning Committees in each districts.

There are 30 Zilla Panchayaths in the State. According to 2001 census, the population of every constituency of Zilla Panchayath is 40,000 (in Chickmagalur and Uttar Kannada districts one seat is earmarked for a population of 30,000 whereas in Coorg district, this proportion is 1:18000). There are 176 Taluk Panchayaths in the State and population for one Taluk Panchayath constituency is 10000. Elections to Zilla and Taluk Panchayath were held during June 2000. The total number of Grama Panchayaths is 5627 and population of each Grama Panchayath constituency is 400, among them 41577 women members are included.

Table-1 Details of Elected members of Panchayath Raj Institutions in Karnataka (Category-wise)

Three Tier Panchayaths	Total No. of Elected members	S.C.	S.T.	Backward Classes			General
				A	B	Total	
Zilla Panchayats	890 (339)	158 (63)	54 (31)	239 (84)	60 (25)	299 (109)	379 (136)
Taluk Panchayats	3255 (1375)	583 (252)	244 (182)	876 (361)	217 (71)	1093 (432)	1335 (509)
Grama Panchayats	80073* (35922)	14871 (7218)	7499 (5873)	21079 (10281)	5573 (435)	26652 (10716)	31051 (12115)

Note 1: Figures in the bracket indicate women members

2: *Elections have been held in respect of 5648 Grama Panchayaths only.

The following table shows the details of category wise elected members to Panchayath Raj Institutions, details of allotment of seats of Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha of Zilla, Taluk and Grama Panchayaths.



Table-2 Details of Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha of Grama Panchayaths in Karnataka

Categories		Adhyaksha			Upadhyaksha		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
S.C.		626	407	1033	626	407	1033
S.T.		123	173	296	123	173	296
Backward Classes	A	987	529	1516	987	529	1516
	B	209	161	370	209	161	370
	Total	1196	690	1886	1196	690	1886
General		1570	874	2444	1570	874	2444
Total		3515	2144	5659	3515	2144	5659

Under section 206 of Karnataka Panchayath Raj Act 1993, annual grant to each Grama Panchayath has been enhanced from Rs.1.00 lakh to Rs.2.00 lakhs. Also as per Section 205 of the Act a provision for levying surcharge on stamp duty has been made given to the Taluk Panchayath. At present annual grant to each Grama Panchayath 10 lakhs, 1 crore to the taluk panchayath and 2 crore to the zilla panchayath. For effective achievements of Panchayath raj institutions 692 crores rupees of amount released in the 13th financial planning.

In Karnataka, one-third or 33 per cent of all seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and another one-third for the Backward Classes under the two categories A and B. Of this BCM (Backward Communities) A, which accounts for 26.6 per cent of the Gram Panchayath seats, comprises 192 communities and includes Muslims, Buddhists and Dalit Christians. BCM (B), which accounts for just 6.4 per cent of the seats, comprises nine communities and has an income qualification as well.

Within each of these categories, a further one-third is reserved for women. In order that no constituency returns the same category candidate twice, the seats are rotated for every election (held once in five years). Thus, if a two-member constituency is reserved for a general category man and a Scheduled Tribe woman, it could well be reserved for a BCM (B) woman and a Scheduled Caste man in the next.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

- To understand the socio-economic profile of elected representatives of weaker sections in Grama Panchayaths.
- To find out how weaker section members are elected by an electorate.
- To assertion the relation between the education and variations in attitudes, perceptions and values of the weaker sections.



- To analyses the relation between the education and variations in the working style or the functioning of weaker sections.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of collecting primary data from the elected members of gram Panchayaths of Hoskote Taluk of Bangalore rural district a list of Grama Panchayaths was obtained. Considering the relatively large concentration of SC, ST and OBC population, and its proximity to Bangalore City and because of which marked changes in the occupational structure Hoskote Taluk became very visible. Elected members belonging to SC, ST and OBC which include category-I, IIA and IIB and IIIA, IIIB and women were contacted and personal interviews were carried out with the help of an interview scheduled. In all 50 respondents were actually contacted and huge body of information was collected.

Table-3: Grama Panchayaths & elected members of weaker sections.

Sl. No.	Name of the Grama Panchayath	GOVERNMENT CLASSIFICATION							Total
		SC	ST	CAT I	II A	II B	IIIA	IIIB	
1	Devanagundi	3	1	1	1	1	4	0	11
2	Dodda Arelegere	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	10
3	Doddagattiganabbe	2	2	1	4	0	3	1	13
4	Ettasandra	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	7
5	Tavarekere	1	0	1	4	0	2	1	9
Total		9	4	6	12	4	13	2	50

Source: Field Survey December 2006

In a democratic setup particularly at the local level educated, well informed leaders not only will have greater capacity to deliver the services but also comparatively more responsive to the needs and aspirations of their supporters in particular and the general public in general. Traditionally villagers are either not educated at all or less educated, given the fact that village leaders had hitherto from come upper castes and classes which were anyway hereditary position. With the introduction of democratic decentralization through the Panchayath Raj system, things however began to change. Partly because special reservation provisions of increased awareness of the socially excluded section are need to participate in political affairs. As a result people from the lower castes and classes and women in particular began to contest in recent times for position of leadership. Though first timers may be handicapped due to lack of knowledge and skills which are required for playing an effective role in formal offices yet they have come to know what it means occupying



positions of responsibility. Importance of education in the making of leadership in villages cannot be overemphasized.

The Socio – Economic Background of the Weaker sections Leaders.

While studying the Socio – Economic background of the respondents' age, education, occupation, marital status and residence before and after marriage are taken an important factor.

Sex Composition of the sample: Women have been the most marginalized and discriminated section of almost all man-dominated societies and Karnataka rural society is no exception. Social mobilization against gender discrimination has been going on, yet it hardly brought about improvement in the status and predicament of women. In recent years, Governments have introduced a bewildering variety of programmes providing limited material relief and reform including reservation of seats in the Panchayath Raj institutions preferably to women coming from weaker section of society like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes.

Table-4 Sex composition of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	32	36
Female	18	64
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006

It can be seen from the table 2 that nearly one fourth 36 percent of the sample are women and the remaining 64 percent being men. This is a significant and most striking aspect because for the first time in village situations a sizable number of women have been able to make it to the position of leadership in formal institution of political power. It might take long time before they could convert this position as a means of empowerment

Age: Age is a very important factor, which has greater influence on affecting political participation. There is a general view that young and middle aged participates actively in Grama Panchayaths. Young people are relatively dynamic, dashing and likely to respond to situations which confront them quick if not always quite responsibly.



Table-5: Age wise distribution of respondents

Age group	Number	Percentage
Young Age (21-35)	14	28%
Middle Age (35-50)	32	64%
Aged (50 above)	04	08%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006

It can be seen from above the table that middle age groups 35-50 years have years have a greater participation among weaker sections in the Grama Panchayats. Old weaker sections (above 50) are very less representation in my samples. It proves that these aged weaker sections are less interest in this activity. Young age people can be drawn into electoral process and political awareness and aspiration are likely to increase. The presence of young weaker sections in considerable member points some indication of social change in rural society.

Education: Education enables one to act rationally. Some previous study shows that higher education leads to greater commitment. In the opinion of Jorgen, education is not to be regarded as an important factor for political participation. For the purpose of my study, weaker sections leaders in the sample are divided into four categories, such as elementary, secondary, intermediate and higher education category and illiterate.

Table-6: Educational qualification of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Number	Percentage
Elementary (5 th class/below)	12	24%
Secondary	28	56%
Higher	00	00%
Illiterate	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006

From the above data it is clear that secondary educated background weaker sections are greater representation. So according to this there should have greater role in developmental work. One in elementary education and an illiterate is still having a negative show in the samples as they may be in the trouble while doing their official business.

House condition: Another question regarding their house condition which is social indicator is as follow: so most of the weaker sections leaders about 56 percentages live in tile/asbestos house which is a positive sign, five members live in pucca house. When a



someone lives in a good house, it will definitely increase his/her potentials in their respective fields. It is to be mentioned that some houses of those women leaders are built with Indira Avas Yojana.

Table-7: House condition of respondents

House type	Number	Percentage
Thatched	08	24%
Tile/asbestos	28	56%
Pucca	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006

Occupation: Occupation is an important ingredient in molding participation. I have been mentioned two things in the above table first for weaker sections leaders themselves occupation and other for their husband's occupation.

Table-8: Occupation pattern of weaker section leaders

Occupation	No.	%
Farming	32	64%
Daily Labour	14	28%
Other	04	08%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006

Above the data show that most of the weaker sections about 64 percentage of weaker sections depend upon farming, 28 percentage of people daily labours and 8 percentage of sample are doing other jobs in their region. So it proves that weaker sections are from among the farmers and the wage labourer.

The mode of participation of elected weaker section members in Grama Panchayaths.

Concept of participative management has been immensely popular since the days of Marx and got extended to other spheres of life. This is surprised to usher in 'Gramswaraj'-the dream of Gandhiji, participative management understood in the context of Grama Panchayath practically means, following the rules, statutes and circular issued by the government, ability and willingness to argue out their respective point of view, attend the meetings, interacting with local level officials, interacting with members of their respective constituencies, recording the minutes of the meetings, to mention a few. Viewed in this way, the whole thing is a serious business. The process of participating has been beset with



several problems and constrains. Stemming partly from the system and partly from the inadequacies the members may have vis-à-vis the working of the Grama Panchayath.

Table- 9: Frequency of attending meetings

Attending Meetings	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Regular	18	56.52	8	44.44	26	52
Irregular	05	15.62	3	16.66	8	16
Not Attend at all	01	3.12	01	5.55	2	4
Whenever convenient	8	25	6	33.33	14	28
Total	32	100	18	100	50	100

Source: Field survey Dec-2006

It can be seen from table-3 that when seen in terms of gender difference 56.52 percent male reported to have attended regularly, only 44.44 percent female reported to have done so. The responses have been classified into 'regular', 'irregular', 'not attended at all' and 'whenever convenient'. It can be seen from the above table that 56.52 percent of the male respondents of the sample reported to be 'regular', whereas 44.44 percent of the female reported to be so. As far as regularity of attending meeting is concerned there appears significant gender difference that the latter not being on regular as the former. With regard to matter for convenience relatively more percent female reported to give more preference to convenience than the male respondents of the sample. With regard to being irregular whereas only 16 percent reported to be so and two times more than that is reported to be so by the female respondents. 'Not attending at all', being very negligible in both cases. The analysis of the responses, though only in terms of frequency only seem to suggest many implications.



Table-10: Knowledge of the Agenda of Meeting

Knowledge of the Agenda of Meeting	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	56.25	6	27.77	24	48
No	14	43.75	12	66.66	26	52
Total	32	100	18	100	50	100

Source: Field survey Dec-2006

It is interesting to find from the table-4 that almost 67 percent of women members reported to have no knowledge of the agenda so also almost 43 percent of male members. This shows that meetings are conducted casually without following procedures even if they do more often than not it is done almost in a personal manner. With no prior knowledge of the agenda participation in the meeting will be meaningless and the members become increasingly vulnerable to manipulation by vested-interests.

Caste and Participation: In India caste has often been used as a tool of domination and suppression. It is therefore very easy to presume that participation in decision-making at local level is correlated to caste and that the Scheduled Castes and Tribes members are reported to have great difficulty in voicing their opinion. Research conducted in other parts Karnataka revealed a slightly more positive picture although in no way this can be assumed to be true of the whole rural India.

Low caste bias in connection with the working of Grama Panchayath system is the outcome of the power of positive discrimination towards Scheduled Castes and Tribes, since independence. The government has ensured special seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in public offices, universities and colleges, and in Karnataka since 1987 in the political system. Through positive discrimination, members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have come forward and gained some respect and self-confidence. The higher castes have had to become used to dealing with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in positions that they would not have thought possible before independence.



Table-11: Reasons for not being able to participation in meetings

Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of knowledge (procedures)	9	69.23	4	30.76	13	100
Unable to understand the issues being discussed	5	62.5	3	37.5	8	100
Not holding key position	6	75	2	25	8	100
Because women	-	-	4	100	4	100
Unable to communicate effectively	3	75	1	25	4	100
Caste discrimination	4	80	1	20	5	100
Lack of support from the political parties	2	66.66	1	33.33	3	100

Source: Field survey Dec-2006

Table-5 shows that, self-assessment of their participation is another thing that the present study seeks to highlight. Lack of knowledge of the rules and underlying procedures was mentioned 69.23 percent times by men and almost 30 times by women. "Not holding key position" was mentioned greater number of times 75 percent by men, whereas only 25 percent times it was mentioned by women, "Being Women" was mentioned 80 percent times, "unable to communicate effectively" was mentioned by men whereas it was mentioned by women only by one fourth of times. 'Caste Discrimination' was mentioned by men 66 percent times and 33.33 percent times by women.

Table-12: Feedback on his/her service (From the members their constituencies)

Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	40	12	24	32	64
No	12	24	6	12	18	36
Total	32	64	18	36	50	100

Source: Field Survey, Dec 2006



This is corroborated by the data in the table-6 that follows as almost the sample percent of the sample reported they get feedback on their performance. All this shows that members and the people of their constituencies are in constant interaction with one another and this can be said to contribute to the positive aspect Grama Panchayath System

CONCLUSION

The new status supposedly afforded participants of the decentralization process, as a new face of development, is not supported by this research in Karnataka. The potential has been noted, but a neglect of context has left the weak without genuine influence. Developing country governments and development practitioners have to move beyond the generalized delegation schemes which originate from political slogans of democracy. They will have to play a more proactive role, through increased awareness of the social context.

The concept of democratic decentralization and the spread of education have engineered tremendous social transformation in the Karnataka villages. The most risible changes are the change in political outlook and politics in the rural India.

Empowerment of weaker sections, though a desirable thing is hardly achieved completely in the existing socioeconomic legal system. Grama panchayath system theoretically and practically helps in the distribution of political power which had been hitherto concentrated in the hands of rich people has got to go a long way. It is one thing to talk of distribution, it is entirely another thing to talk of how exactly people who have the power exercise that power. The latter, depends, among other things the knowledge, experience and resources that the players are able to bring to bear upon their positions. Discussion in the paper shows that majority of elected representatives coming as they are from reserved categories are naturally handicapped due to lack of requisite skills and experience in order to be able to exercise the power that the positions they occupy bestow upon them. Being first-timers that too women they are not always successful in delivering the services not because of their. On the one hand they come in direct confrontation with the power that be and on the other they are not able to break the shackles which enslaved them for ages. It is therefore felt that NGOs and other government organisations must help the elected representatives to acquire the necessary wherewithal to be able to be effective and successful in their struggle. The need for what number of studies described as “capacity building” arises more sharply than ever before.



Another thing the study shows is that notwithstanding the inherent limitations the elected members have shown lot of zeal for serving the cause of the weaker section. How for the elected representatives can really usher in social democracy in village situation time alone will give the answer. Evidence shows that they are long way to go before they can achieve this goal – empowerment of weaker sections.

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