

People – Centred Development through Local Governance in Rural Jharkhand.

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Abstract: Elected local Governments (Panchayats) have played an important role in the implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes in rural Jharkhand. This paper shows that these people-centric programmes have potential to all round development of rural masses. The government of Jharkhand has successfully presented a bottom to top approach to develop the rural governance of Jharkhand by making the governance to reach the grass root level. The Rural department of government of Jharkhand with the support of Panchayati Raj institutions is engaged in the people centric development and upliftment of the socio economic condition of the rural communities. Strengthening local governments (LGs), is one of the most important governance challenges in today's India. This paper has the insight to review the running facts of this local governance in Rural Jharkhand. It also evaluate and analyze how much the government machinery has been able to full fill the aspirations of the people of Rural Jharkhand.

Keywords:- Panchayat, Rural Development, Jharkhand, Yojna Banao Abhiyan, Gram Sabha.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades our country has witnessed unprecedented official development policies and impressive economic growth in global level. Yet the economic gap between rich and poor people is growing day by day. Poverty, hunger and disease remain widespread and women and girls continue to comprise the majority of poorest people in everywhere. When we consider the topic of development it is important to realize that all conception of development necessarily reflect a particular set of social and political values.

A publication by the Dag Hammarskjöld foundation of *What Now: Another Development* showed alternative view point of development. This alternative conceptions of development argued that the process of development should be (1) need- oriented (material and non-material), (2) endogenous (coming from within a society), (3) self-reliant (in terms of human, natural, and cultural resources), (4) ecologically sound and (5) based on structural transformations (of economy, society, gender, power relations).¹ Since then various NGOs such as the world development movement has campaigned for a form of development that takes aspects of this alternative approach on board. Grass roots movements have often grown up around specific issues, such as dams (Narmada Bachao) or access to common resources.

Democracy is at the heart of the alternative conception of development. Grass-roots movements are playing an important role in challenging established structures of power in today's democratic societies. In the face of increasing globalization with the further erosion of local community control over daily life and the further extension of the power of the market and transnational corporations, people expressed their resistance through the language of human right. They are making a case for local control and local empowerment as the heart of development. They are protecting what they identify as the immediate source of their survival -water, forest and land. They are rejecting the dominant agenda of private and public sphere and setting an alternative one.

The world development report stated that 50 previous decades of development experiment had clearly indicated that growth does not trickle-down and more comprehensive approach to development is needed; that Institutions do matter and the development should be sustainable and be rooted in process that are socially inclusive and responsive to changing circumstances.² All the theories and strategies which were previously understood interpreted missed an important link that studies, strategies of development should be around people who ought to have been in the centre of development both as the ends and the means of development. The South Commission also stated that the base for a Nation's development must be its own resources both human and material fully used to meet its own needs. Development has therefore to be an effort of by and for the people. True development has to be people-centered' (South Commission 1990: 10-11).³

State in this modern era, function as a change agent and as a facilitator of people's self development. Civil society also works in this direction and state take help from civil society in implementation of several of its programs. It can be recognized that government business and voluntary organizations all have essential roles in development.

II. PRI AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS IN JHARKHAND:-

The government of Jharkhand has successfully presented a bottom to top approach to develop the rural governance of Jharkhand by making the governance to reach the grass root level. The rural department of government of Jharkhand with the support of Panchayati Raj institutions especially with the sitting of gram sabha discussions and all resolution in consent to uplift the socio economic condition of the rural communities and the dearth condition of the people living below the poverty line by providing all the possible livelihood security with the optimum utilization of funds available with the Panchayati Raj institutions. The government of Jharkhand through its recent policies illustrated its confidence in decentralized governance more specifically in nurturing the Panchayati Raj institution.

The 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution in the Indian democratic republic saw the dawn of powerful local governments all over the country. From its formation, Jharkhand too has seen two elections to the three tiers of PRIs. The state also falls in the jurisdiction of the fifth schedule under which 13 districts are fully and 3 districts are partially under PESA. Under the 11th schedule of the constitution the state has also devolved 22 subjects out of 29 subjects. The 22 subjects are under the purview of 14 departments. In the state's PRIs the women's participation is above 52% which is higher than the women-representation in both the houses of Parliament (around 11%) and state legislature (around 10%).⁴

There were not many urban agglomerations during the formation of Jharkhand state and it hasn't grown in a desirable pace in the last decade. Due to this reason the growth and development which takes place in the urban areas of the state, does not easily percolate to the rural areas. The issues related to the development of rural areas are taking a center stage in the broader vision and goals of the development of the Jharkhand state. The Panchayat system in Jharkhand recognizes the importance of creating opportunities for the rural population of the state in areas like employment, livelihood, skill development, enhancing agricultural production and delivering better services in areas like education, health, drinking water, sanitation, housing, infrastructure etc.

Jharkhand has 36,827 villages spread across 24 districts. The Rural Development department of Jharkhand has successfully presented a bottom up approach of development, by making the governance reach the grass root level. This very approach is based on the idea to create a planning and development framework at the gram panchayat level. This will surely cause to get a holistic development vision for the state. With the robust implementation of an innovative program like "Hamari Yojana Hamara Vikas" the government made an effort to transfer the power of assessing the developmental needs of rural Jharkhand in the hands of people. The main goal of this initiative is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural population, arrangements for providing wage employment so that the people living below the poverty line can be uplifted, self employment through income generating activities and also by creating permanent assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure.

Most of the programmes implemented by the Rural Department were targeted for poverty alleviation, reduction of unemployment or to give additional employment to enhance livelihood security of the people living in the Gram Panchayat areas. Apart from the implementation of various central and state programs, the department made an effort to make people aware of their rights, about the different types of governmental programs offered and tried to strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism. For this, meetings and assemblies with the department officio at different levels viz. District, zila panchayat, Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha were conducted. The convergence of three departments' viz. the Rural Development Department, the Panchayati Raj department and Rural Works Department also successfully showed unidirectional implementation of various schemes complimenting each other.

The progress made by the execution of Panchayat system in Jharkhand State and especially in Santhal Pargana division can be analyze and discuss by taking stock of the development work undertaken and its impact on the rural population. The GoI along with the Rural Development Department of Jharkhand has been able to achieve 100% Electrified and 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in the state. This fiscal year (2018-19) the department's focus has been on the e-services and community-participation in the developmental process. Recently the web portals for various services like SECURE, e-Saksham have been launched and various SHGs are promoted to work with the government to ensure that no household is left behind in availing the benefits of the state government's programmes.

Local governance is all about development from below. It stands for human growth defines in terms of Greater rationalization of human potentialities. Every government policies try to create an enabling environment within which people can effectively meet their own needs. State government is more of an enabler now or can be called a facilitator other than a provider. It has thereby enabled locals who are people at Grass root level to

become arenas for testing experimenting and working out policies which can be visible in Yojana banao Abhiyan. Localities have become a significant site of action it can be called Gram Sabha. Giving rise to local activism and what has been described as grassroot democracy or local governance as Panchayati Raj.

III. HAMARI YOJANA HAMARA VIKAS- TRANSFORMING PANCHAYATS THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In 2015- 16, Yojana Banao Abhiyan for the first time gave opportunity to the Gram Panchayats for preparing the holistic development plan for the panchayats. One of the major outcomes of Yojana Banao Abhiyan was that it made the panchayats responsive towards their own needs and urged them to take up a systematic planning for development.⁵

For the inclusive development of the villages it is very necessary that villagers with coordination of their local government means Gram Panchayat should be active partner for planning, execution and observation of the programme of social security and development related to their life.

The campaign was a great step toward people participation in democratic setup of government. This campaign is being successful by the active participation of the Gram Panchayat and the villagers. The main source of employment for the rural people of Jharkhand is agriculture, forest produce, livestock and unskilled labour. These sources are based on mainly natural resources like water, forest and land. Majority of farmers in the state are dependent on rain feed agriculture. But lack of arrangement to check rain water in proper capacity, lack of irrigation facility and degradation in the quality of natural resources the employment based on agriculture are in danger. For the improvement of agriculture related employment it is very important to plan rain water harvesting and proper management of natural resources. So as other sources of rural employment like livestock forest produced needed management of available resources for improvement. For inclusive development of village reform is necessary in all aspects of villager's life like health, education, drinking water other than mere employment. By assessing present situation of basic amenities related to these aspects like Aanganbadi Kendra, school building, Hand pump etc there is necessity of choosing proper planning to strengthen them. In yojna banao abhiyan villagers with coordination of their Gram Panchayat chooses participatory planning to strengthen basic necessity and employment need related to life. Large-scale capacity-building programmes and focus on standardizing dissemination of information helped in ensuring the improvement in the quality of planning as per the objectives of the Abhiyan across the state.

The activities of the Yojna Banao Abhiyan have helped in unlocking Panchayat Bhavan and have given an opportunity to the newly elected Gram Panchayat representatives of the state to set development priorities for their Gram Panchayats for the coming years. The campaign has also helped in deepening democracy by enhancing the participation of women and vulnerable families in local governance. The yojna banao abhiyan is the process of capacity building programmes by helping the large number of beneficiaries for the skilled cadre of grassroots planners. At least fifteen thousand community based planners in the functioning of local democracy, techniques of participatory planning and the principles of integrated natural resource management must be oriented with the required skills for the abhiyan. These skills will enable the planners to support the Gram Panchayat in planning and implementation of developmental programmes in future as well.

IV. CONCLUSION

Jharkhand follows an alternate development paradigm where "Gram Uday" (Development of the villages) is followed by "Jharkhand Uday" (Development of Jharkhand). With very high percentage (75.95 per cent) of population residing in rural areas of the state, the government policies in the last fiscal years have specifically targeted the challenges and issues of the rural populace of the state.

The test of any programme of decentralization is arguably the actual powers and functions that are devolved to the institutions of local government and the autonomy they enjoy in the exercise of these.⁶ Insufficient devolution of functions, excessive dependence on state and Central Government and the dominance of mainstream Administrative department and functionaries among the factors contributing to the poor performance of the Panchayati Raj institutions in Jharkhand. Resource constraints increase the dependence on state Agencies and their Institute structures. All the panchayats in state have neither the capacity to finance development programs nor the power to influence the existing programs. The financial autonomy is important and states must play their role to ensure it but this is not the whole story.⁷

Elected members of the panchayat who are also have some reputation at the local level often behave like contactors while the poor are excluded from participation. Zilla Parishad is inefficient and Panchayat Samiti is also not properly utilize the devolved fund. There is always pressure to distribute the funds equally between all members who decide which scheme to implement and to which contractor the work should be awarded. And it always come to notice that using scheme the one that offer the most opportunity for commission and are the most difficult to monitor.

Many Panchayats are mostly busy implementing construction oriented schemes which promote contractor. These types of developmental work do not require participation of the poor as equal. The dependency of the poor on Sarpanch and block staff goes up. In this situation the activities which are necessary to be conducted in Gram Panchayat get reduced to collision between the sarpanch and block engineers. Overall Panchayats are not active in education, health, self-help group, watershed, pasture and Forestry program.⁸

Identification of beneficiaries and scheme, Public Work to be undertaken are two of the more important functions of Gram Panchayats and decision in this regard should be taken in the Gram Sabha but the overall weakness in the democratic process that we have observed earlier provides room in a number of cases for the Pradhan and the Bureaucracy to manipulate the names of beneficiaries and to select scheme of their choice.⁹

Recent developments in governance in terms of transparency, accessibility and accountability provided by e-services and social audits have further helped the department get closer to its goal of poverty-alleviation. The department of rural development under its various schemes and programmes is working towards the upgradation of the rural populace of the state. With increased community-participation in the developmental process the quality of work has improved along with a higher level of awareness among the rural people about their rights under the various schemes. The lives and livelihood of the rural people have improved in various developmental indicators.

Things will not even begin to improve unless the power returns to the people at the grassroots where it belongs.¹⁰ There is no denying the fact that the implementation of PR scheme is facing uphill task in practice at the grass root levels for several reasons. An ideal situation, the PR should be the main source of planning and development at the grass-root levels; responsive and accountable to Gram Sabhas, have adequate funds, powers and functionaries to discharge its obligation. However, all this is in direct conflict with the prevalent vested interest of power and patronage centers at the lower levels of politicians/elected representatives, bureaucracy and caste-based power seekers, who are busy either cooping or strangulating the PRI's.

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