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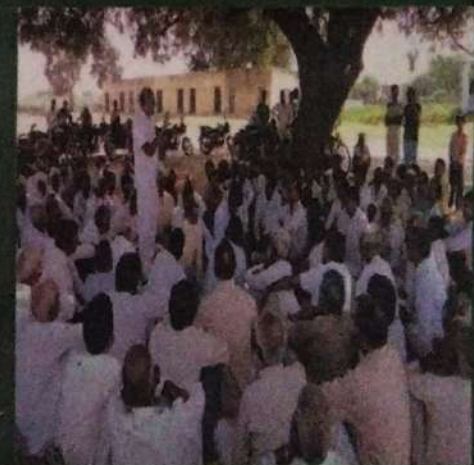
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**The Role of Local Government in
Rural Development of India:
Problems and Challenges**



Editor
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RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Democratization and decentralization are the interdependent processes. Dissemination of power from one centre helps in empowering the people and can also hold the government accountable for exercising political power. In India, as the democratic institutions started maturing, the tendency towards centralization of power is being increasingly questioned and the efforts of decentralization and participation of the citizen in the management of their local area, is being encouraged. Paucity of funds, lack of planning, excessive state control, etc. are some of the intriguing problems which resulted in inefficient and substandard governance. The newly recognized local self-government (henceforth, the term 'local government' would be used) is still in the transitional phase which is expected to acquire a new shape in the face of technological facilitation and the democratic change.

KEY WORDS- Urbanization, Local self Government, Municipality, People's participation.

INTRODUCTION

Local government and local self-government are used interchangeably. In fact, the term 'local self-government' is a product of colonial rule which has become inappropriate after achievement of independence and establishment of more or less autonomous government by local inhabitants through their elected representatives. Local self-government is the government at sub regional level. This government looks after the 'local' functions like water supply, Local Street, local market, sanitary facilities etc. Though these functions are the small scale but they are important functions for the governance of the local area. The geographical area. It also means intimate social relations of the people in a limited geographical space. The other word 'government' stands for public authority. In a liberal democratic system, a government may be arranged territorially, where at the central level there can be a national level

Local government is government at the village and district level. Local government is about government closest to the common people. Local government is the government that involves the day-to-day life and problems of ordinary citizens. Local government believes that local knowledge and local interest are essential ingredients for democratic decision making. They are also necessary for efficient and people-friendly administration. The advantage of local government is that it is so near the people. It is convenient for the people to approach the local government for solving their problems both quickly and with minimum cost. However, the system of Local Self-Government is not completely without any defect or drawback. The disadvantages of Local Self-Government are discussed below-

Finance Scarcity- The one of the most common problem which is faced by the local bodies is the scarcity of finance and funds. When compared to their functions, their source of income is insignificant. Their main sources of income includes different type of taxes. However, most of the income generating taxes is levied by

the union and state governments and, the taxes collected by the urban bodies are not sufficient to cover the expenses of the services provided.

Unplanned urbanization -Urbanization is the facet of the development and it is on the ascendance. The municipal authorities are not able to cope with the increasing demands of the people, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The situation is deteriorating due to the rural inrush in cities and hence, at times these have been converted in slums. The development of populace and enterprises displays an extraordinary test of environmental debasement and contamination of water, air and land.

Excessive State Control-Although the Act of 1993 guarantees higher autonomy than the pre-1993 condition, but still the de facto relationship-control over local bodies has not changed in considerable amount excluding corporations. The department of local government and the state director of local bodies of various states did not seem to have taken any significant initiative for relaxation of control or devolution of powers in this account. The state governments have the ability to supersede and break up metropolitan bodies in specific situations. The legal aspect i.e. the Indian Constitution is the gatekeeper of national's rights and different type of writs can be issued to keep the local organization inside their limits.

Low Effectiveness-In perspective of insufficient accounts, the local bodies does not possess the capacity to satisfy their necessities. Therefore, they face a continuous outcry from the government as well as public. The necessity i.e., water cannot be supplied properly, drainage facilities is improper, unplanned colonies along with slums are on ascendance, danger of stray cattle on the streets continues, traffic is unplanned, streets are not legitimately kept up and risky structures are permitted, notwithstanding the conspicuous risk to the inmates and the tenants of the territory. Summing up, poor sanitation, poor cleanliness and lack of essential necessities make urban communities dangerous.

Multiplicity of Agencies- A huge criticism is leveled against the introduction of single purpose agencies. These are influenced by bureaucrats, which goes against the basic principle of democracy. The examples are state transport corporation, water supply department, state electricity board etc. These bodies function directly under the supervision of the state government and are not accountable to local government. The functions that have been assigned to them belong really to the elected urban bodies. This lowers the powers and prestige of the local bodies. The civil bodies need to add the monetary allowance to these offices while having no influence over them. Their functions shall not overlap. For example, in few states, the role of water supply has been endowed to the municipal bodies as well as improvement trusts. This arrangement of double control has weakened the obligation of each. The ordinary national likewise get confounded, when he needs to approach these associations.^[1]

Substandard Personnel- The civil workers and authorities are a monstrosly displeased parcel, undisciplined and untrained to serve the general population. Different sorts of work force frameworks exist in various states. Not to state of various states, even in single state, there is a concurrence of an assortment of work force frameworks, every fragment being responsible to various control focuses inside and outside the association.^[2]

Low level of People's Participation-In India, people experience a lot of disappointment and inconvenience in obtaining the civic amenities. As it is, most of them are so used to facing water, electricity and sanitation problems, that they feel that it is futile to look up to the urban bodies for any solution. Add to that, the assortment of special purpose agencies and other urban bodies confounds the general population about their limits.

Regionalism-Now and then it is reprimanded on the ground that it affects regionalism. The local pioneers gets entrapped in the arrangement of their own issue that barely they can see things past their nose and join the national standard.

Fail to address National problems-Critics comment that the local leaders neglect to value the state or national issues in their genuine point of view as a result of the very contrast in the nature and degree.

Unscientific distribution of functions-Local self-government plan is imperfect in so far as the appropriation of capacities between the structures at various levels has not been made along logical lines. The mixing of development and Local self-government functions has essentially abridged the self-sufficiency of the local self-government foundations. It has, for all intents and purposes changed over them into administrative offices.

Lack of cordial relation between officials and people-By and large there is absence of legitimate collaboration and coordination between the general population and the authorities like Block Development Officers, the District Officers and so on. Again the officers neglect to release the improvement obligations all the more effectively and genuinely.

Lack of conceptual clarity- There is absence of clarity as to the idea of local self-government itself and the targets for which it stands. Some would regard it similarly as a regulatory office while some others look upon it as an expansion of vote based system at the grass roots level, and a couple others think of it as a sanction of provincial nearby government. What is additionally interesting is the way that all these theoretical pictures could exist together at the same time having a tendency to militate against each other from time to time.

Administrative Problem-There is politicization of the local administrative units, absence of co-ordination between the prominent and bureaucratic components, absence of legitimate impetuses and promotion opportunities for regulatory work force and passionless demeanor of government servants towards improvement program and so on.

CONCLUSION

The accomplishment of vote based system relies on upon the decentralization of power. Through this arrangement of local self-government, individuals can acquire their democratic rights. Through this framework, power can be legitimately decentralized and each individual can get the degree to build up his or her identity completely and appropriately. The local self-legislative foundations are the best habitats for bestowing just considerations and instruction. Individuals incline toward local government since they need to live in a domain of equity and freedom. This system makes that degree for getting a charge out of majority rules system. It is through these local self-governments that the nearby issues can be considered and tackled sufficiently and appropriately. It additionally decreases the substantial obligations of the focal and the state governments and builds up majority rule government in a more extensive setting. Since the individuals from the local self-government are nearby individuals, they can understand and comprehend the gravity of neighborhood issues more genuinely than the executives of the State or Central government and can appropriately unravel them. Therefore, the local self-government is helpful for uniformity and freedom and the ideal medium for fulfilling the requirements and grievances of the general population at neighborhood and local level.

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