

Dynamics of Transparency and Development at Grassroots Level

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Abstract

The efficiency of a government can be seriously reduced, if its regulatory policies are not considered legitimate by the public at large. Regulations and policies can be accepted as legitimate only if they are fundamentally transparent and based on objective criteria. In order to legitimise their policies, governments must provide transparency about state actions, as well as about the procedures that underpin the carrying out of state actions. Transparency requires that governments not only do not impede the flow of information to the public, but also involve actively to make the necessary provisions to ensure that public information can have a feedback effect on governmental performance, since it empowers the public to put pressure on government to deliver services and to do so properly. It can thus strengthen the legitimacy of government. In order to instill a stable and predictable policy environment, governments must therefore subject themselves to the scrutiny of the public. This involves subjecting their operations to regular and independent financial audits.

Key words: *Transparency Development 73th Constitutional Amendment panchayat ra.*

73th Constitutional Amendment makes provision for the establishment of panchayat raj institutions. Madhya Pradesh was the first state to launch panchayat raj, according to the 73th Amendment. After the establishment of PRIs rules deterring their development were modified. Panchayat has been imposed with a significant role to strengthen the democracy. In determination of socio-economic condition, village development plays a vital role because even today a large number of population our country is residing under the poverty line. Socio-economic conditions of the people have to be changed. To achieve this end, human development is a best instrument. It has multifaceted role which includes social, economic and political development as well as the development of social infrastructure of the backward region.

A major of proportion of population that lives in villages is underdeveloped. This is worrying subject. Only significance of the development lies in these facts that it should reach to the marginal men of the society. For this purpose government has started several programme but the reality is that needy have not benefited by all these programmes in expected manner. In this scenario, the roles of panchayat raj become prominent. Provisions of panchayat institution provide the rules that the work of human development should be accomplished through the panchayat. Works of land development, social forestry, housing, employment, road construction, public distribution system and social welfare have been handed over to the panchayat.

Village development is considered as the centre point of the people. Panchayat should complete its responsibility. Representatives of the panchayat raj institutions should perform their duty and include the villagers to design the development programmes of the village. Only this way panchayat raj institution may be successful.

Efforts have been made to empower people through legislation but there are indications that the level of participation of people at grassroots level is very low and the grassroots institutions like-gram sabha are almost formal institutions with no role to play in various assigned works. It is unfortunate that both the grassroots leadership and grassroots bureaucracy have not been able to strengthen the gram sabha. In village, there is a stronghold of traditional leadership, which creates hindrances for the smooth functioning of panchayats. Low participation can be attributed mainly to a strong and invincible social and economic stratification in villages. The performance and efficacy of panchayat members are strongly influenced by the social stratification and class distinctions. Moreover, gram panchayats are not adequately accountable to gram sabha. The gram sabha is not aware of the gram panchayat's functioning. The idea of participation, as an important part of panchayat raj, has rarely been observed in practice. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that persons of influence would look at larger community participation with hostility.

Against this backdrop, the study is designed to investigate the human development through grassroots governance as well as analysis and interpretation of panchayat representatives, who are the operators of the system. A structured interview schedule was administered for this purpose. Besides, informal discussions and field observations also proved to be helpful in providing inputs to strengthen the arguments in analysis. This chapter analyses in detail the various facets of grassroots governance from the point of view of panchayat raj representatives. The chapter has been divided in nine parts where the part first provides the background information of respondents and analysis of basic questions pertaining to panchayat raj. Remaining parts are classified as indicators of governance.

The efficiency of a government can be seriously reduced, if its regulatory policies are not considered legitimate by the public at large. Regulations and policies can be accepted as legitimate only if they are fundamentally transparent and based on objective criteria. In order to legitimise their policies, governments must provide transparency about state actions, as well as about the procedures that underpin the carrying out of state actions. Transparency requires that governments not only do not impede the flow of information to the public, but also involve actively to make the necessary provisions to ensure that public information can have a feedback effect on governmental performance, since it empowers the public to put pressure on government to deliver services and to do so properly. It can thus strengthen the legitimacy of government. In order to instill a stable and predictable policy environment, governments must therefore subject themselves to the scrutiny of the public. This involves subjecting their operations to regular and independent financial audits.

1. Analysis and Interpretation of Panchayat Representatives

The information of respondents depicts the overall scenario of leadership at the grassroots level. The respondents have been classified in the categories of General, OBC, SC and ST to make an assessment with regard to different caste categories. The caste categorisation is done keeping in view the analysis pattern wherein all the indicators have been cross tabulated with caste category. The caste category wise representation of respondents in sample is as follows: General (18), OBC (36), SC (20) and ST (01) totaling 75.

Table 1.1
Information about to the Schemes in the Meetings of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat

S. No.	Information about to the schemes in the meetings	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total (%)
1	Yes	11(61.1)	25(69.4)	13(65.0)	0(0.0)	49(65.3)
2	No	7(38.9)	11(30.6)	7(35.0)	1(100.0)	26(34.7)
	Total	18(100.0)	36(100.0)	20(100.0)	1(100.0)	75(100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.1 throws light on the information about to the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. 65.3 per cent respondents are of the view that the information about the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. This response is comparatively high among OBC and SC categories. This show that majority of respondents agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings.

Table 1.2
The Procedure Adopted by Panchayat for Selection of Beneficiaries for Different Development Programmes

S. No.	Procedure adopted by panchayat	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total* Responses (%)
1	Through gram sabha	8 (44.4)	12 (33.3)	13 (65.5)	1 (100.0)	34 (45.3)
2	Through all the members of the panchayat	12 (66.7)	17 (47.2)	7 (35.0)	0 (0.0)	36 (48.0)
3	By sarpanch	13 (72.2)	25 (69.4)	7 (35.0)	1 (100.0)	46 (61.3)
4	By village head/ patel	5 (27.8)	11 (30.6)	7 (35.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (30.7)
5	By secretary	8 (44.4)	21 (58.3)	5 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	34 (45.3)
6	Do not know	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.0)

*Multiple Responses

Source: Primary Data

PRIs have been bestowed with the roles and responsibilities of selection of beneficiaries for different development schemes being implemented through gram sabha. Table 4.20 describes the procedure adopted by panchayat for selection of beneficiaries for different development programmes. 61.3 per cent respondents are of the view that the beneficiaries for the development programmes are selected by sarpanch. 48.0 per cent respondents are of the opinion that the selection is done through all the members of panchayat. Equal number of respondents (45.3%) feel that the selection is done by gram sabha and secretary. 30.7 per cent respondents find that village head/patel is involved in selection. 4.0 per cent respondents do not know about this. It explains that a sizeable majority of respondents are in favour of sarpanch, which has not officially been assigned this work. The involvement of all panchayat representatives is a welcome sign.

Table 1.3
Information about Budget, Income and Expenditure of Schemes

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Budget, income and expenditure of schemes</i>	<i>General (%)</i>	<i>OBC (%)</i>	<i>SC (%)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
1	Yes	10 (56.6)	17 (42.2)	16 (80.0)	0 (0.0)	43 (57.3)
2	No	8 (44.4)	19 (52.8)	4 (20.0)	1 (100.0)	32 (42.7)
	Total	18 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	1 (100.0)	75 (100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.3 throws light on the information about budget, income and expenditure of schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. 57.3 per cent respondents are of view that the Information about to the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. This information is provided in the highest number by SC category respondents. This show that majority of respondents agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings.

Table 1.4
Attempt to Obtain Information about Budget, Income and Expenditure

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Obtain Information about budget, income and expenditure</i>	<i>General (%)</i>	<i>OBC (%)</i>	<i>SC (%)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
1	Yes	9 (50.0)	12 (33.3)	18 (90.0)	1 (100.0)	40 (53.3)
2	No	9 (50.0)	24 (66.7)	2 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (46.7)
	Total	18 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	1 (100.0)	75 (100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.4 shows the attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure. 53.3 per cent respondents are of the view that the attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure. This view point is endorsed to the highest level by ST and SC. It is clear from the above illustration that majority of the respondents are in attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure and this is indeed a positive feedback.

Table 1.5
Whether Government Officials Inform about
the Powers of Pachayat from Time to Time

S. No.	Whether government officials inform about the powers of panchayat from time to time	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total (%)
1	Yes	8 (44.4)	12 (33.3)	9 (45.0)	0 (0.0)	38 (29.7)
<i>If not, reasons*</i>						
2	Not provided due to inefficiency in understanding legal and technical aspects due to illiteracy	9 (90.0)	13 (54.2)	7 (63.6)	0 (0.0)	29 (63.0)
3	Unwillingness of the administration to provide information	5 (50.0)	18 (75.0)	7 (63.6)	1 (100.0)	31 (67.4)
4	Women lack information due to veil system, social bondage and participation of their husband	3 (30.0)	12 (50.0)	7 (63.6)	1 (100.0)	23 (50.0)
5	Not answered	0 (0.0)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.2)

*Multiple Responses

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.5 interprets whether government officials inform about the powers of pachayat from time to time and if not then why it is so. 29.7 per cent respondents are of the opinion that government officials inform about the powers of pachayat from time to time. 67.4 per cent respondents say that there is an unwillingness of the administration to provide information. 63.0 per cent respondents point out that information is not provided due to lack of understanding about legal and technical aspects owing to illiteracy prevalent in the village. 50.0 per cent respondents are of the view that women lack information due to veil system, social bondage and proxy of their husband. This information is lesser among ST as compared to others. Thus, it is clear from the above analysis that the small groups of the respondents agree that the information is provided by the official, which is indeed a not big number and not positive sign for panchayats.

2. Analysis and Interpretation of Gram Sabha Members

The information of respondents depicts the overall scenario of gram sabha members at the grassroots level. The respondents have been classified in the categories of General, OBC, SC and ST to make an assessment with regard to different caste categories. The caste categorisation is done keeping in view the analysis pattern wherein all the indicators have been cross tabulated with caste category. The caste category wise representation of respondents in sample is as follows: General (42), OBC (83), SC (23) and ST (02) totaling 150.

Table 2.1

Information about the Schemes in the Meetings of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat for Human Development

S. No.	Information about to the schemes in the meetings	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total (%)
1	Yes	19 (45.2)	31 (37.3)	6 (26.1)	0 (0.0)	56 (37.3)
2	No	23 (54.8)	52 (62.7)	17 (73.9)	2 (100.0)	94 (62.7)
	Total	42 (100.0)	83 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	150 (100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.1 throws light on the information about the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. 37.3 per cent respondents are of the view that the information about to the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. This show that majority of respondents do not agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings.

Table 2.2

The Procedure Adopted by Panchayat for Selection of Beneficiaries for Different Development Programmes

S. No.	Procedure adopted by panchayat	General (%)	OBC (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	Total* Responses(%)
1	Through gram sabha	18 (42.9)	19 (22.9)	9 (39.1)	0 (0.0)	46 (30.7)
2	Through all the members of the panchayat	20 (47.6)	51 (61.4)	11(47.8)	0 (0.0)	82 (54.7)
3	By sarpanch	30 (71.4)	59 (71.1)	20(87.0)	1 (50.0)	110 (73.3)
4	By village head/ patel	12 (28.6)	34 (41.0)	5 (21.7)	1 (50.0)	52 (34.7)
5	By secretary	14 (33.3)	31 (37.3)	6 (26.1)	1 (50.0)	52 (34.7)
6	Do not know	5 (11.9)	13 (15.7)	1 (4.3)	1 (50.0)	20 (13.3)

*Multiple Responses

Source: Primary Data

PRIs have been bestowed with the roles and responsibilities of selection of beneficiaries for different development schemes being implemented through gram sabha. Table 2.2 describes the procedure adopted by panchayat for selection of beneficiaries for different development programmes. 73.3 per cent

respondents are of the view that the beneficiaries for the development programmes are selected by sarpanch. 54.7 per cent respondents are of the opinion that the selection is done through all the members of panchayat. Equal number of respondents (34.7%) feels that the selection is done by village head/patel and by secretary. 30.7 per cent respondents find that gram sabha is involved in selection. 13.3 per cent respondents do not know about this. It explains that a sizeable majority of respondents are in favour of sarpanch and all the members of the panchayat, which has not officially been assigned this work. This involvement is not a welcome sign.

Table 2.3

Information about Budget, Income and Expenditure of Schemes

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Budget, income and expenditure of schemes</i>	<i>General (%)</i>	<i>OBC (%)</i>	<i>SC (%)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
1	Yes	10 (23.8)	9 (10.8)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	22 (14.7)
2	No	32 (76.2)	74 (89.2)	20 (87.0)	2 (100.0)	128 (85.3)
	Total	42 (100.0)	83 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	150 (100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.3 throws light on the information about budget, income and expenditure of schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. 14.7 per cent respondents are of view that the information about the schemes in the meetings of gram sabha and gram panchayat. This shows that majority of respondents do not agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings, which is not positive sign for panchayat.

Table 2.4

Attempt to Obtain Information about Budget, Income and Expenditure

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Obtain information about budget, income expenditure</i>	<i>General (%)</i>	<i>OBC (%)</i>	<i>SC (%)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
1	Yes	6 (14.3)	13 (15.7)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	21 (14.0)
2	No	36 (85.7)	70 (84.3)	21 (91.3)	2 (100.0)	129 (86.0)
	Total	42 (100.0)	83 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	150 (100.0)

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.4 shows the attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure. 14.0 per cent respondents are of the view that the attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure. It is clear from the above illustration that majority of the respondents are not in attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure, which is not a positive feedback.

To conclude, majority of respondents agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings. A sizeable majority of respondents are in favour of sarpanch, which is not officially assigned work. The involvement of all panchayat representatives is a welcome sign. Majority

of respondents agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings. Majority of the respondents are in attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure and this is indeed a positive feedback. The small groups of the respondents is agree that the information is provided by the official, which is indeed not a big number and not positive sign for panchayats.

Majority of respondents do not agree on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings. A sizeable majority of respondents are of the opinion in favour of sarpanch and all the members of the panchayat, which has not officially been assigned this work. This involvement is not a welcome sign. Majority of respondents is not agreeing on this point that the information is provided in gram sabha and gram panchayat meetings, which is not positive sign for panchayat. Majority of the respondents are not attempt to obtain information about budget, income and expenditure, which is not a positive feedback.

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