



# PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL BODY REPRESENTATIVES

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## **Abstract:**

One of the best indicators of Panchayati Raj on the rural community is their awareness of the functionaries and functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. By awareness is meant the consciousness or knowledge of rural people of the personnel and process of Panchayati Raj Institutions. This paper is the modest attempt to know whether the respondents have heard about Gram Panchayats, Mandal Parishads and Zilla Parishad, local body elections, knowledge and utility of rural development programmes, and image of panchayat raj institutions. These are minimum requirements of their awareness of Panchayati Raj and the same, were asked. And the detailed perception is emerged in this paper.

## **Introduction:**

There are many types of participation. They include political participation, administrative participation and social participation. The concept of political participation is crucial since the highest and the broadest fabric of society is the state. It thrives on its political ideals which bear the spirit and the principles of that society based on place, consent of the people and their institutional device of government- operative in nature and effective in administration. In a democratic form of government, with a mixed economic structure and a determined hierarchy of values-liberty, equality and progress arranged in the order of the first, second and third priority, the political participation is the most important variable.

Political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which the members of a society take part in the selection of rulers at different levels of the government, directly or indirectly associate themselves in the process of formulating a public policy. Their association in operation is classified as a political process. In other words, the political process involves those activities in various groups as they struggle for and use power to achieve group purposes.

With the advent of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the early 1960's, it was hoped that there would be enthusiasm among the rural communities to participate in the process of development. However, these hopes were denied. A number of committees were appointed to look at the problems and many recommendations have been made by them. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act is expected to provide a new lease of life to PRIs.

**Table 1**  
**Awareness of Respondents on Panchayati Raj Institutions**

(Multiple Responses)

S. No.	Levels of PRIs	Responses	State Wise Coverage of Respondents		Total
			Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
1	Village Panchayats	Yes	139	134	273
			(92.67)	(89.33)	(91.00)
		No	11	16	27
			(7.33)	(10.67)	(9.00)
2	Mandal /Block Panchayats	Yes	121	119	240
			(80.67)	(79.33)	(80.00)
		No	29	31	60
			(19.33)	(20.67)	(20.00)
3	Zilla Panchayats	Yes	118	109	227
			(78.67)	(72.67)	(75.67)
		No	32	41	73
			(21.33)	(27.33)	(24.33)

Source: Field Data

As per table 1 out of the total respondents, 91 percent have said that they know about the Village Panchayats. In this regard the respondents from Andhra Pradesh are ahead with 92.67 per cent. Only 9 per cent of sample respondents have said 'no' idea about the village Panchayat. This shows that a great majority of the respondents are aware of the existence of village Panchayats. On the other hand only 80 per cent have indicated that they have knowledge about Mandal Parishad/ Black Panchayats and 20 per cent of respondents have said 'no'. Here also the respondents from Andhra Pradesh were slightly ahead with 80.67 per cent than their counter parts in Karnataka (79.33 per cent). With regard to Zilla Parishad about 75.67 per cent of respondents have said that they are aware of district level Panchayat and 24.33 per cent of respondents are not aware of Zilla Panchayat. The data shows that greater number of respondents aware of lower tier of Panchayati system than the upper tiers. But this does not mean that the middle and upper tier has not made any impact on them at all.

### Chi-square test

Chi-square test was applied at 5° of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance. The result of the test is given below.

Chi-Square Value	At 5% Los Chi-Square Table Value	Df	Conclusion	Null Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis
2.567251586	11.07049769	5	Chi-square value(Calculated value)>Table value	H <sub>0</sub> Accepted	H <sub>1</sub> Rejected

The statistical chi-square value is lower than the table value. This implies that there is a close relationship between the awareness of sample respondents on Panchayat Raj Institutions and sample respondents in both the states.

### Respondents' awareness of Panchayat Raj Leaders

In order to go further deep into the awareness aspect of the respondents, they were asked to tell the names of Village Panchayati leader, Mandal Parishad President, Chairman of Zilla Parishad, Mandal Parishad

Territorial Constituency (MPTC) member and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) member. Respondents' awareness of the names of these is tabulated in table 2

**Table 2**  
**Respondents Awareness of Panchayat Raj Leaders**

S. No.	Designation of Leaders	Responses	State Wise Coverage of Respondents		Total
			Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
1	Village President	Know	139	134	<b>273</b>
			(92.67)	(89.33)	<b>(91.00)</b>
		Don't Know	11	16	<b>27</b>
			(7.33)	(10.67)	<b>(9.00)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>300</b>
			<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>
2	Mandal /Block Presidents	Know	111	117	<b>228</b>
			(74.00)	(78.00)	<b>(76.00)</b>
		Don't Know	39	33	<b>72</b>
			(26.00)	(22.00)	<b>(24.00)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>300</b>
			<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>
3	Zilla Presidents	Know	96	84	<b>180</b>
			(64.00)	(56.00)	<b>(60.00)</b>
		Don't Know	54	66	<b>120</b>
			(36.00)	(44.00)	<b>(40.00)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>300</b>
			<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

Table 2 shows that 91 per cent of the respondents know the name of their village Panchayati President. Only 9 per cent of respondents are not aware of their village Panchayati President. Among the Andhra Pradesh Respondents 92.67 per cent are aware of the name Panchayat President. They are followed by Karnataka respondents with 89.33 per cent.

About 76 per cent of respondents are able to name of their Mandal Parishad President. Nearly 24 per cent of respondents do not know the name of their Mandal Parishad President. Coming to state wise respondent's awareness, the respondents from Karnataka, with 78 per cent top the list in mentioning the name of Mandal Parishad/Block Panchayat President. They are followed by Andhra Pradesh respondents with 74 per cent.

The Zilla Parishad is somewhat a distant benefactor to the rural masses, because only 60 per cent of respondents are able to recollect the name of their Zilla Parishad Chairperson. About 40 per cent of the respondents do not know the name of Zilla Parishad Chairperson. Among them, some respondents are able to recollect the sex (female) of Zilla Parishad Chairperson, but they are not able to mention the name of the Zilla Parsihad Chairperson.

Around 64 per cent of sample from Andhra Pradesh are able to know their Zilla Parishad President. Remaining 36 per cent respondents do not know the name of the ZP President. There is only 56 percent of sample from Karnataka are able to know the ZP president and remaining 44 per cent of sample do not know their ZP presidents.

### Respondents' image of Panchayati Raj

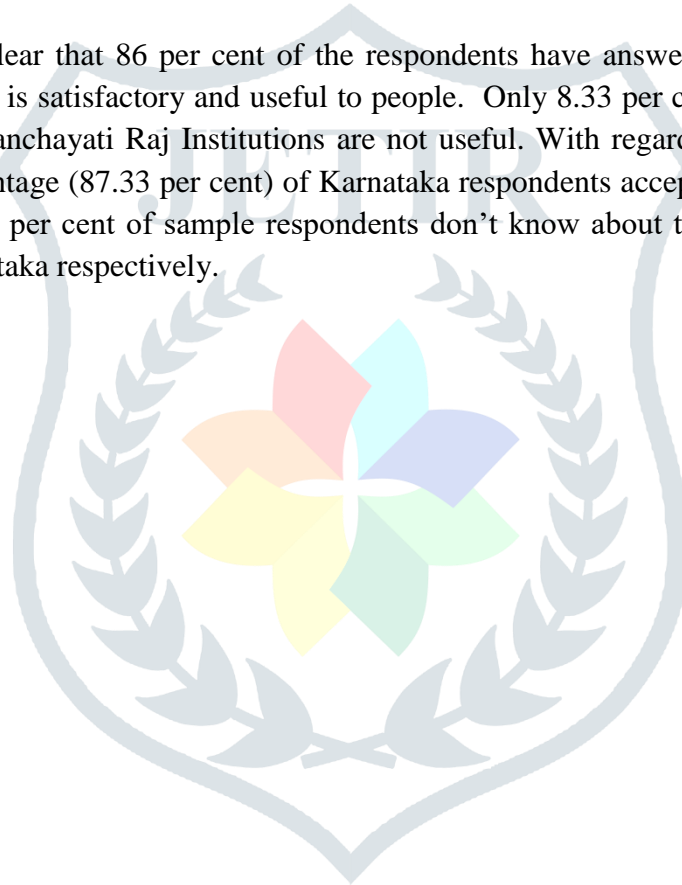
Image of Panchayat Raj means the impression or opinion which the people have of the functioning and functionaries of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The public image on the usefulness of services of PRIs is presented in the table: 3

**Table: 3**  
**Respondents image of Panchayati Raj**

S. No.	Views of Respondents	State Wise Coverage of Respondents		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
1	Useful	127	131	258
		(84.67)	(87.33)	(86.00)
2	Not Useful	14	11	25
		(9.33)	(7.33)	(8.33)
3	Don't know	9	8	17
		(6.00)	(5.33)	(5.67)
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>300</b>
		<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

Table 3 makes it clear that 86 per cent of the respondents have answered that the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is satisfactory and useful to people. Only 8.33 per cent of the respondents have said that the services of Panchayati Raj Institutions are not useful. With regard to state wise responses of respondents, highest percentage (87.33 per cent) of Karnataka respondents accepted the usefulness of PRIS. About 6 per cent and 5.33 per cent of sample respondents don't know about the usefulness of PRIs from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka respectively.



### Participation of Respondents in Local body elections

Local Self Governments are established with a view to train the rural people in the democratic process. The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) give training to the people by giving an opportunity to exercise franchise and to contest in the elections. Elections to PRIs in the state of Andhra Pradesh were held in 2013 and 2014. Elections to Grama Panchayats were held in 2013 and elections to Zilla Parishad and Mandal Parishads were conducted in 2014. Whereas, in Karnataka Gram Panchayat, Block and Zilla Panchayat elections were held in 2017. In these elections good number of respondents exercised their franchise. Besides exercising franchise the people have to actively participate in political campaign, political mobilization, political meeting. During field survey the respondent's political participation other than voting in elections was registered. Table 4 give the details of respondent's active participation in canvassing, participation in political party meetings etc in three tiers of local body election in recent elections in both sample states.

**Table – 4**

#### Respondents Participation in Recent Local Body Election in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka States (Multiple Responses)

S. No.	PRIs	State Wise Coverage of Respondents				Total		Grand Total
		Andhra Pradesh		Karnataka		Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No			
1	Gram Panchayat	89	61	82	68	<b>171</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>300</b>
		(59.33)	(40.67)	(54.67)	(45.33)	<b>(57.00)</b>	<b>(43.00)</b>	
2	Mandal/Block Panchayat	64	86	93	57	<b>157</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>300</b>
		(42.67)	(57.33)	(62.00)	(38.00)	<b>(52.33)</b>	<b>(47.67)</b>	
3	Zilla Panchayat	52	98	54	96	<b>106</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>300</b>
		(34.67)	(65.33)	(36.00)	(64.00)	<b>(35.33)</b>	<b>(64.67)</b>	

Source: Field Data

As per table 4 the level of participation of respondents of both states is not evenly distributed. The participation of Karnataka State respondents at upper and middle tiers is 36 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. On the other hand the participation of Andhra Pradesh respondents at upper and middle tiers stood at 34.67 per cent and 42.67 per cent respectively. The participation in lower tier elections is higher among Andhra Pradesh respondents (59.33 per cent) than the Karnataka respondents (54.67 per cent).

In all 57 per cent of sample respondents actively participated in Grama Panchayat elections. The participation in middle tier elections is deteriorated and stood at 52.33 per cent. In case of upper tier the participation of respondents further deteriorated and stood at 35.33 per cent only.

### Knowledge about Rural Development Programme

The developmental schemes under taken by Panchayati Raj Institutions intended to assist various sections of the society. They are helpful to cultivators, agricultural labourers, unemployed youth, women, businessmen etc. Table 5 gives the details of respondents' knowledge about development schemes.

**Table – 5**

#### Respondents' Knowledge on Major Rural Development Schemes (Multiple Responses)

S. No.	Schemes	State Wise Coverage of Respondents		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
1	MGNREGS	141	139	280
		(94.00)	(92.67)	(93.33)
2	Housing Scheme	122	119	241
		(81.33)	(79.33)	(80.33)
3		89	76	165



	Watershed Programme	(59.33)	(50.67)	(55.00)
4	SHGs	138	135	273
		(92.00)	(90.00)	(91.00)
5	Rajiv Aarogya Sri / Swasthya Bharath	137	133	270
		(91.33)	(88.67)	(90.00)
6	CLDP	99	83	182
		(66.00)	(55.33)	(60.67)

Source: Field Data

The data in the table 5 show that around 93.33 per cent of sample respondents are aware of MGNREGS. Here the respondents from Andhra Pradesh were ahead with 94 per cent. Housing Scheme is known to 80.33 per cent of total respondents. The knowledge with regard to Watershed Programme stands 55 per cent. In this regard the Andhra Pradesh respondents were ahead with 59.33 per cent and they are followed by Karnataka respondents with 50.67 per cent. The awareness on Comprehensive Land Development Programme (CLDP) stood at 60.67 per cent. Here also there is a clear edge between Andhra Pradesh (66 per cent) and Karnataka respondents (55.33 per cent). The reason behind the poor knowledge about these programmes is limited scope of these programmes. About 91 per cent of total respondents are aware of SHG programme. The knowledge with regard to Rajiv Arogya Sri/ Swasthya Bharath is 90 per cent.

#### Chi-square test

Chi-square test was applied at 5° of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance. The result of the test is given below.

Chi-Square Value	At 5% Los Chi-Square Table Value	Df	Conclusion	Null Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis
1.384508	11.0705	5	Chi-square value(Calculated value)>Table value	H <sub>0</sub> Accepted	H <sub>1</sub> Rejected

The statistical chi-square value is lower than the table value. This implies that there is a close relationship between the knowledge of sample respondents on rural development programmes and their participation in those programmes in both the states.

#### Utility of Rural Development Programme

The rural development programmes/schemes are intended for the comprehensive development of rural areas. During the field study the respondent's perception were recorded about the usefulness or non-usefulness of these programmes and the same was tabulated in the Table: 6

**Table – 6**

#### Respondents views on the Utility of Development Schemes

S. No.	Views of Respondents	State Wise Coverage of Respondents		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
1	Useful	108	117	225
		(72.00)	(78.00)	(75.00)
2	Not Useful	35	27	62
		(23.33)	(18.00)	(20.67)
3	No Response	7	6	13
		(4.67)	(4.00)	(4.33)

Source: Field Data

As per table 6 about 75 per cent of the respondents considered that rural development programmes are essential for the development of rural areas. In this regard, Karnataka respondents top the list with 78 per cent and they are followed by Andhra Pradesh respondents with 72 per cent. Nearly 20.67 per cent of sample respondents expressed negative impact of these programmes. Here Andhra Pradesh respondents are tops the list with 23.33 per cent and followed by Karnataka respondents with 18 per cent. Overall 4.33 per cent of sample respondents denied to response.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ☞ It is evident from the study that the knowledge of sample respondents with regard to MGNREGS stood at 92.83 per cent. The next important programme on which sample respondents were highly aware is National Social Assistance Programme (91 per cent). Around 86.17 per cent of sample respondents were aware of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission programme is known to 83.33 per cent of total sample. The awareness on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana stood at 73.50 per cent. Only 59.33 per cent of sample respondents were aware of Deen Dayal Upadhyay – Gramin Kaushalya Yojana.
- ☞ It is evident from the study that with regard to awareness on Mandal/ Block Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats the Andhra Pradesh respondents were ahead than the Karnataka respondents. Among Karnataka respondents 74.67 per cent declared that they are aware of Upper tier of Panchayat Raj Institutions. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh respondents, who declared awareness is slightly diminished and stood at 73 per cent.
- ☞ With regard to middle tier Panchayats 83.67 per cent and 79.67 per cent of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka respondents declared their awareness. In case of lower tier 94.67 per cent of Karnataka respondents and 92.67 per cent of Andhra Pradesh respondents declared their awareness
- ☞ It can be inferred from the study that the involvement of sample respondents of Karnataka state in rural development programme implementation is higher than the Andhra Pradesh respondents. Among the Karnataka respondents 74.67 per cent stated that they actively involved in the implementation of rural development programmes. With regard to Andhra Pradesh respondents the involvement in rural development programmes is reported by 68.67 per cent. Around 27.67 per cent of sample respondents from Andhra Pradesh and 16.33 per cent of respondents from Karnataka reported that they will never involved in the implementation rural development programmes.
- ☞ It can be noted from the study that large number of respondents in both states expressed their willingness to assign pre-eminent position for PRIs in the implementation of Rural Development programmes. To be precise 90.33 per cent and 87.67 per cent of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh respondents accorded pre-eminent role for PRIs in the implementation of rural development programmes. Such pre-eminent role is not essential as per the opinion of 12.33 per cent of Andhra Pradesh and 9.67 per cent of Karnataka respondents.
- ☞ The study shows that the opinion of sample respondents of two states is alike with regard to allocation of funds as per priority requirement different areas in the state. The backwardness of the area shall be criteria for allocation of funds as per the views of 44.67 per cent and 43.67 per cent of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh respondents.
- ❖ As per the study, out of the total representatives, 91 percent have said that they know about the Village Panchayats. In this regard the representatives from Andhra Pradesh are ahead with 92.67 per cent. Only 9 per cent of sample representatives have said ‘no’ idea about the village Panchayat. On the other hand only 80 per cent have indicated that they have knowledge about Mandal Parishad/ Black Panchayats and 20 per cent of representatives have said ‘no’. Here also the representatives from Andhra Pradesh were slightly ahead with 80.67 per cent than their counter parts in Karnataka (79.33 per cent). With regard to Zilla Parishad about 75.67 per cent of representatives have said that they are aware of district level Panchayat and 24.33 per cent of representatives are not aware of Zilla Panchayat. The data shows that greater number of representatives aware of lower tier of Panchayati system than

the upper tiers. But this does not mean that the middle and upper tier has not made any impact on them at all.

- ❖ The study shows that 91 per cent of the representatives know the name of their village Panchayati President. Only 9 per cent of representatives are not aware of their village Panchayati President. Among the Andhra Pradesh Representatives 92.67 per cent are aware of the name Panchayat President. They are followed by Karnataka representatives with 89.33 per cent.
- ❖ As per the study 76 per cent of representatives are able to name of their Mandal Parishad President. Nearly 24 per cent of representatives do not know the name of their Mandal Parishad President. Coming to state wise respondent's awareness, the representatives from Karnataka, with 78 per cent top the list in mentioning the name of Mandal Parishad/Block Panchayat President. They are followed by Andhra Pradesh representatives with 74 per cent.
- ❖ The study shows that 40 per cent of the sample representatives do not know the name of Zilla Parishad Chairperson. Among them, some representatives are able to recollect the sex (female) of Zilla Parishad Chairperson, but they are not able to mention the name of the Zilla Parishad Chairperson. Around 64 per cent of sample from Andhra Pradesh are able to know their Zilla Parishad President. Remaining 36 per cent representatives do not know the name of the ZP President. There is only 56 percent of sample from Karnataka are able to know the ZP president and remaining 44 per cent of sample do not know their ZP presidents.
- ❖ The study makes it clear that 86 per cent of the representatives have answered that the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is satisfactory and useful to people. Only 8.33 per cent of the representatives have said that the services of Panchayati Raj Institutions are not useful. With regard to state wise responses of representatives, highest percentage (87.33 per cent) of Karnataka sample representatives accepted the usefulness of PRIS. About 6 per cent and 5.33 per cent of sample representatives don't know about the usefulness of PRIs from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka respectively.
- ❖ The study shows that 93.33 per cent of sample representatives are aware of MGNREGS. Here the representatives from Andhra Pradesh were ahead with 94 per cent. Housing Scheme is known to 80.33 per cent of total representatives. The knowledge with regard to Watershed Programme stands 55 per cent. In this regard the Andhra Pradesh representatives were ahead with 59.33 per cent and they are followed by Karnataka representatives with 50.67 per cent. The awareness on Comprehensive Land Development Programme (CLDP) stood at 60.67 per cent. Here also there is a clear edge between Andhra Pradesh (66 per cent) and Karnataka representatives (55.33 per cent). The reason behind the poor knowledge about these programmes is limited scope of these programmes. About 91 per cent of total representatives are aware of SHG programme. The knowledge with regard to Rajiv Arogya Sri/Swasthya Bharath is 90 per cent.
- ❖ The study makes it clear that more than half (55.34 per cent) of the representatives have expressed satisfaction over the selection of beneficiaries for various development programmes in both the sample States. The remaining 44.64 per cent of the representatives has expressed either dissatisfaction or there is no response. To be precise about 40.33 per cent have expressed dissatisfaction, while 4.33 per cent have expressed neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction.
- ❖ As per the study about 75 per cent of the representatives considered that rural development programmes are essential for the development of rural areas. In this regard, Karnataka representatives top the list with 78 per cent and they are followed by Andhra Pradesh representatives with 72 per cent. Nearly 20.67 per cent of sample representatives expressed negative impact of these programmes. Here Andhra Pradesh representatives are tops the list with 23.33 per cent and followed by Karnataka representatives with 18 per cent. Overall 4.33 per cent of sample representatives denied to response.



## Suggestions

- There is every need to enhance the knowledge of rural mass with regard to ongoing rural development programmes. For the improvement of the knowledge of the people wide canvassing is needed by the Panchayat Raj leaders as well as officials.
- The scope of the rural development programmes is to be enhanced to cover all the poor people in rural areas, irrespective of caste or religion.
- For the successful implementation of the rural development programmes, the involvement of Panchayat Raj leaders is to be enhanced, by reducing the official role in implementation.
- To increase the role of Gram Sabha in the implementation of rural development programmes, the meetings of the Gram Sabha must have to be held at least once or thrice in a month. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act is to be amended to this effect.
- For the furtherance of relations between Panchayat Raj leaders and people, it must be made obligatory for leaders to conduct village level meetings at least once in six months.
- It is very much essential to develop capacities and competence of PR leaders and particularly of the GP leaders. Therefore, first of all, the elected leaders of these institutions should be at least literate who can read and write in mother tongue. This measure will help to promote literacy among the village folks, an essential component of social progress. It will also help to evolve better leadership in rural power structure.
- The comprehensive training programmes can improve upon the competence and capacities of rural leaders. The methods of imparting and components of training course should be devised after careful examination of training needs of specific leaders.
- It has been found that Gram Panchayat meetings are not held regularly and the agenda of these meetings is not prepared and circulated among Sarpanches as per the stipulated time. Moreover, the meetings are usually held at the residence of Sarpanch instead of public place.
- The guidelines for the implementation of rural development programmes should be modified in view of the ground realities.
- The productivity and the service delivery mechanism need to be improved and targeted programmes to achieve the desired goals of balanced development of rural areas.
- Public representatives should know that officials have the right to give advice and accordingly it is also expected from them. Officials should also understand that elected representatives have the right to disagree with the advices of officials.
- Capacity building of newly elected people's representatives alone will make the PRIs as real institutions of self-government.
- The state level political leaders should be serious and sincere about empowerment of the PRIs.

## Conclusion

In the end we can wrap up whole the study that the purpose of the 73rd Amendment Act was to take democracy to the grass root level so that the people should manage their own affairs at that level. Only the people themselves know what is best for them and what needs to be done. So the idea was not only to entrust the people with the power of decision-making but also to give them the authority and capacity of governing themselves.