



Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Contribution to Rural Development in Odisha

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Abstract

The article discusses that Gram Panchayats are the primary governing bodies within the Panchayat Raj System. Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), the main element involved in the development and implementation of decentralised planning. Almost all rural development agencies have used the PRIs as their main tool for program execution since 1959. With the implementation of State Acts in line with the main principles of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, it has significantly contributed to rural development. To ensure consistency in the development of rural areas, the Government of India (GoI) implemented numerous development programs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, National Extension Service, Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment, and Community Development Programme. Three tiers of Panchayati Raj institutions were established by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992: Zila Parishads, Block Samitis, and Gram Panchayats. PRIs should be allowed more freedom to create their own rural development policies and programs since they are more aware of the difficulties that the local rural population faces. The article also argued that Odisha has adopted a decentralised planning approach to fulfil the objectives and preferences of the people; to ensure that policies and programs align with the needs of the people as perceived by them, a paradigm shift in the planning process is required.

Keywords: *Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Rural Development, Odisha, MGNREGA.*

Introduction

In an effort fulfil the needs and wants of the population, the Indian government has worked very hard since independence. Specific efforts have been undertaken to address the many issues that plague rural regions, with the assistance of the Rural Development Department and Panchayat Raj Institutions. To revive panchayat institutions, the 73rd Amendment Act was eventually approved. There are a number of rural development schemes that have been periodically conducted by panchayat raj entities. In an effort to provide Panchayats the capacity to function as functional local government bodies, the previous administration worked hard to encourage their formation. The state shall take measures to organise village panchayats and to invest them with such rights and authority as may be required to allow them to operate as units of self-government, according to Article 40 of the 1950 Constitution. In addition to relieving the state of its administrative load, the objectives were to promote democratic participation and include locals in the development.

The Programme of Community Development was launched in 1952 as part of the First Five Year Plan with the goal of igniting rural Indians' interest in the country's economic planning and social rebuilding initiatives. However, the community development project funded by the government was unable to include rural residents in planning or to make them willing and active participants in the village-level execution of plans. Block Advisory Committees were formed in order to enlist the assistance of the village populace. Later on, the Block Development Committee replaced the previous name for the Block Advisory Committees. However, people could not be extremely engaged in this system. It was believed that a community development project could not succeed and achieve its primary goals unless the populace was actively involved in its creation and execution. In the early years of Community Development, even Sri Jawaharlal

Nehru expressed enthusiasm for the plan. However, he later noted that the programme had lost its original meaning and had become a mere shadow of its creator.

Indian communities have been anchored by panchayats since the dawn of written history. Gramme Panchayats serve as the fundamental administrative entities under the Panchayat Raj form of government. The foundation of decentralised planning development and execution is comprised of Panchayat Raj Institutions, which have participated in the program's implementation. Panchayat Raj Institutions seek to become a useful instrument for rural development and rebuilding while implementing the Gandhian ideal of Gramme Swaraj, or village self-governance. Nearly all departments of rural development have been using PRIs to carry out their projects since 1959. In line with the spirit of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, State Acts are being implemented, and this will clearly define Panchayat Raj Institutions' role in rural development. The Panchayat Raj Institutions are being called upon more and more by the Government of India and the various State Governments to aid in the execution of various policies and programmes aimed at mitigating poverty.

Political decision-makers have often shown interest in and disinterest in rural development; nevertheless, this time around, they are expected to view it as a cohesive endeavour. Although there is no universal agreement on how to define rural development a phrase that is ambiguous and subject to individual interpretation there is general agreement that initiatives centred around rural regions should get greater attention. Among these are the expansion of agriculture, the construction of a social and economic infrastructure, equitable pay, housing and home sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, among other things.

The process of developing rural communities' socioeconomic situations and ensuring their involvement in the full exploitation of available human and physical resources to improve living conditions is known as rural development. It gives rural society's weaker and poorer segments access to the advantages of progress. Moreover, it strengthens the ability and potential of rural agriculture marketing units, socioeconomic development organisations, and administrative staff. Because about 74% of people live in rural regions, our founding fathers also regarded rural development as a means of transforming society. To guarantee consistency in the development of rural regions, the central government created many projects for rural development. Because there could have been regional disparities in rural development, the central government did not leave the task of rural development entirely up to the states. It is evident that a specific proportion of state money is needed to ensure the states' involvement in the execution of the central projects. The national government provides a large amount of funds for these programmes for rural development.

A programme for rural development with a specific focus on target groups' development. The programmes were created with the intention of covering those that pertain to a certain population. The fact that the initiatives only addressed a portion of the population, however, was criticised. The additional objections were as follows: (1) inadequate credit; (2) lack of cooperation across government ministries; and (3) absence of in-house personnel at the field level. Since the projects were unable to make much progress, attention was turned to the issue of unemployment. schemes such as the National Rural Employment Programme, the Fifth Plan's Food for Work Programme, and the Crash Scheme for Rural Employment. The Sixth Plan eras saw the launch of the Countryside Landless Employment Guarantee Programme and the Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment. Both the shows' audience and the individuals who had given them a two-point evaluation had to offer assistance.

The economically disadvantaged segments of society were therefore unable to gain any meaningful advantage from the many rural development projects that were designed to combat rural poverty since they were insufficiently funded and poorly integrated. The Integrated Rural Development Programme may offer the integrated approach that previous initiatives for rural development did not have. An examination of methods was thus necessary, as the Integrated Rural Development Programme demonstrated.

Objectives

The study's primary goal is to comprehend the function of rural development initiatives in Odisha. The secondary goal entails giving rural residents the tools they need to carry out plans and initiatives that will further their own interests. Examining the nation's and Odisha's progress towards financial inclusion is the third goal.

Rural Development through Panchayat Raj Institutions

The most treasured aim of development with social justice is actively pursued by Panchayat Raj Institutions, which bring the objectives of the Indian people for their involvement in the nation's development to life. Following the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, a distinct role for Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development has been imagined. Panchayat Raj Institutions are being called upon more and more by the Indian government and state governments to help with the execution of different plans and programmes aimed at reducing poverty. Among them, the state and federal governments' subsequent development initiatives have always aimed to meaningfully incorporate the Panchayat Raj Institutions. They have been assigned a special duty within the framework of the Eleventh Schedule and the Five-Year Plans. The Panchayat Raj Institutions are in charge of carrying out the following initiatives. Among these are the Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), the Swarnajayanti Gramme Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), the Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP), the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), and the Samagra Awas Yojana (SAY).

Rural Development Schemes in Odisha State (MGNREGA-2009)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act went into effect on February 2, 2006, after being enacted on August 23, 2005. By offering at least one member of every family whose adult members volunteer to perform unskilled manual labour at least 100 days of paid employment in a fiscal year, it seeks to improve livelihood stability in rural regions. MGNREGA offers a strong legal right and chance to accomplish the goals of the Constitution's 73rd Amendment. With the support of significant assured resources, the Act explicitly designates the Panchayats at all three levels as the primary authority for organising and carrying out the Schemes created under this Act. Panchayats are more than just tools for putting the Act into practice; they have inherent value in achieving the goal of improving the impoverished people's security of livelihood.

The following duties and responsibilities in the MGNREGA Gramme Panchayat implementation have been assigned to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs): After obtaining registration applications, Accepting applications for employment, providing date receipts for these applications for work, registering households, confirming registration applications, issuing job cards, No matter whether implementing agency is chosen, work must be assigned within fifteen days of the application being submitted or in the event of an advance application from the day work is requested. evaluating the need for jobs through regular surveys, Planning and organising the work, creating a project shelf, and deciding which projects are most important in what sequence.

Swayam Yojana

A new programme called the Swayam scheme was introduced by the Odisha government on February 12, 2024. This is used in one of the programmes run by the Odisha government, which was initiated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The primary goal of launching this programme is to assist everyone by providing interest-free loans. All financial assistants of ration holders are now able to participate in this programme. The Swayam programme is a fantastic effort by the Odisha government that will make it easy for many individuals to get a loan and launch their own business. This will increase employment on its own because, as firms expand, they will need more workers than they can handle. This will make it easier for many individuals to get employment.

This is an interest-free loan of up to 1,00,000 rupees for young individuals in rural areas who are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. All of the young people participating in this project will receive assistance in starting and growing their businesses. This is primarily intended to indirectly provide work for a large number of people. Numerous people will launch their businesses and generate a large number of employments thanks to this plan. Young's primary objective is to assist the people of Odisha by providing interest-free loans.

Kalia Yojana

The Kalia Scheme is an assistance programme for farmers. Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation is known by the acronym KALIA. The Odisha government established this programme in an effort to decrease poverty and promote agricultural prosperity in the region. Small and marginal farmers, vulnerable agricultural households, landless agricultural workers, sharecroppers (actual cultivators), and

landless agricultural households can all profit from the system in different ways. The programme would reach 60 lakh families in total. On September 20, 2023, in honour of Nuakhai, the Odisha government announced the allocation of Rs. 900 crores as farmer support under the KALIA Yojana. Relief was deposited into the bank accounts of 44.56 lakh small, marginal, and landless farmers by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. A sum of Rs 2000 has been given to each farmer as financial help. Through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) method, the money was immediately paid to the farmers' bank accounts.

Odisha's 2023–2024 budget delivered on February 24, 2023, by the finance minister. FM stated that the state administration launched the "Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA)" programme in the 2018–19 fiscal year with the goal of accelerating agricultural success and lowering poverty in the region. The state has already received assistance under this initiative for around 41.08 lakh small and marginal farmers, 18.69 lakh landless agricultural household farmers, and 18.69 lakh landless agricultural families.

Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSK)

"Every life is valuable." The government of Odisha's Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana is a programme that attempts to proposal universal health coverage with a focus on the protection of women's and economically disadvantaged families' health. This programme was introduced on August 15, 2018. The programme serves over 70 lakh households. The state administration approved a 250-crore budget. There will be cashless medical aid available.

All health services provided to patients (regardless of their income, status, or place of residence) in state-run healthcare institutions, from subcentral level to District Head Quarter, Government Medical College Hospital, and blood bank level, shall be fully funded by the state government. For over 96.5 lakh economically disadvantaged families in the state, the state government will pay the cost of healthcare received in accredited private hospitals; this equates to an annual health coverage of Rs. 5 lakhs per family, with an additional Rs. 5 lakhs for the women in the family after the initial cap is reached. The state government pays all health service fees for all patients at government health institutions up to Government Medical College Hospital, including those for medications, diagnostics, dialysis, cancer chemotherapy, OT, ICU, in-patient admission, blood bank services, etc.

Families with BSKY Smart Health Cards can receive cashless care at any accredited private hospital, both inside and outside of the state, by using their cards at any affiliate private hospital. Families of card holders can use BSKY-eligible hospitals to get services such registration, consultation, medical testing, diagnostics, treatment, IPD, and follow-up consultation. The State Government will pay for these services up to the yearly coverage amount.

Nua O Yuba Odisha (Naveen Odisha)

The goal of the NUA Odisha plan is to provide opportunities for ongoing skill development, reskilling, and upskilling to the youth of Odisha. The programme prioritises Aspirational, Tribal, and Remote communities when delivering training in all 30 districts through collaborations with companies and new and existing skilling institutions. Offerings for training include supplemental courses, digital and online courses for students in higher education, and new skill development for young people. The plan calls for developing sophisticated labs, rewarding training providers, creating curricula, and providing trainers with training. The programme will be put into effect for three years at first. As a public sector initiative under the plan budget, FY 2023–2024–2025–2026. With the appropriate authority's consent, the plan may be continued based on its results.

Under the guidance of strong policy and capable leadership, Odisha has seen significant sectoral changes in the last few years. Understanding the value of skilled labour, the state has moved proactively to create a robust environment for skill development. But as time goes on and new needs arise, it becomes increasingly important to provide Odisha's young the most up-to-date skills. This will make it possible for the state to efficiently utilise its demographic dividend and drive industrial growth. The Nutana Unnata Abhilasha (NUA) programme aims to improve employability skills, establish industry connections, and provide high-quality training in order to alleviate the shortage of qualified labour in developing trades. Additionally, it will aid in closing the skills gap in conventional sectors' adoption of cutting-edge technology.

Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana

The "Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana" was introduced on January 17, 2018, by the Odia Language Literature and Culture Department, Government of Odisha, to support and sustain elderly artists who, in spite of their impoverishment, have devoted their lives to enhancing, showcasing, and conserving Odisha's artistic and cultural heritage. As per the policy, the state government offers pensions to artists who are impoverished and in hardship, even if they have made significant contributions to our art and culture during their lives. The implementation of this system is subject to certain conditions about the artist's age, income, and the financial and physical well-being of her family. This provides a Rs 1200 artist's support to artists from all throughout the state. The Chief Minister of Odisha established this plan, which provides artists with a monthly stipend of Rs 1,200. The beneficiaries of this Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana (MKSJ) would be over 50,000 artists.

Mo Jami Mo Dihas

In order to safeguard the land rights of the impoverished, the state government initiated the "Mo Jami Mo Diha" campaign in 2007. This was one of the creative ways in which welfare revenue administration was provided to the less fortunate portions of society. The campaign aims to accomplish the following three goals: (a) defend and uphold the land rights of the impoverished who were previously granted government land leases, or to reclaim land that has been lost; (b) achieve conjunction with development schemes so that land allottees are better positioned to use the land; and (c) aid the impoverished, with a focus on helping members of ST and SC communities to keep their homesteads and land within the current legal framework.

There were "Mo Jami Mo Diha" melas in every Tahasil. Applications from ceiling surplus land allottees, a homestead land lessee, agricultural and lessees, ST persons who were given land restoration orders under the Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable property (By Scheduled Tribes) Regulation 1956 or ST/SC persons who were given land restoration orders under the provisions of the Odisha Land Reforms Act were collected at these melas by sub-collectors, Tahasildars, Additional Tahsildars, and the grass-root revenue staff. Providing complete physical proof of the allottee's possession of the land was the task at hand. There are two approaches. One side uses the Campaign technique to gather complaints from allottees who are not in actual possession. In order to pursue 100% of the instances for physical verification, on the other hand, the Tahasil records were also confirmed. The goal of this campaign is to protect and strengthen the poor people's benefits from land reforms. It includes parts to apply for legal help for the people in the aforementioned groups. It also has a legal component that allows for the prosecution of powerful members of society. Under this campaign, a total of 6,58,230 applications were received; as of April 30, 2013, 6,21,751 of those applications resulted in the restoration of actual possession in the recipients' favour.

Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana

The Odisha government never stops introducing new programmes aimed at improving the welfare and empowering of its people. In a similar spirit, the Odisha government introduced the "Biju Yuva Sashaktikarana Yojana," which aims to provide free computers to deserving students throughout the state. The programme was first introduced as the Free Laptop Distribution Programme, but as of 2020–21, the government has changed it to become the Direct Bank Transfer (DBT) programme. Instead of giving recipients computers, the government now offers cash transfers so they may contribute to the money received and buy better, more expensive laptops or comparable equipment for their further education.

The Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Scheme was introduced in 2013 by the Odisha Chief Minister. The program's goal is to give out free computers to deserving children who graduate from high school with honours. This programme benefits fifteen thousand students a year throughout the state. For this initiative, a budget of Rs. 45 crores have been approved.

Biju Kanya Ratna Yojana

In the state of Odisha, there is grounds for worry over the diminishing child sex ratio. From 967 in the 1991 census to 953 in the 2001 census, the child sex ratio has decreased. By the time of the 2011 census, it had further decreased to 941. Odisha's statistics is better than the national average, however the state's lowest child sex ratios (855,877,889, and 908 respectively) are found in the districts of Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Angul, and Ganjam. The dropping child-to-adult ratio in the state as a whole and in the districts with low child-to-adult ratios specifically is a problem that the Odisha government is determined to solve. The government of Odisha has pledged to provide a climate for girls that supports equal opportunities, eradicates

discrimination, and ensures empowerment via alterations in social attitudes through the 2014 Odisha State Policy for Girls and Women. A great deal of creative work has been done to support the growth and empowerment of women and girls. In a campaign mode, the department of women and child development of the Government of Odisha would mobilise the community and all stakeholders towards guaranteeing the birth, survival, and development of the female child in order to directly address the issue of dropping child sex ratio.

As a result, the state would introduce a new programme called Biju Kanya Ratna (Ama Kanya Ratna) in the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal, and Ganjam beginning in 2026 and lasting for three years. With the exception of Nayagarh district, three of the four districts with the lowest child-to-sex ratio will be implementing Biju Kanya Ratna.

Ahar Yojana

Ahar was the chapter that was introduced in Odisha in 2015, and it is comparable to the initiatives that provide inexpensive food around the nation. The state's mission shakti organisation is helping to feed the urban poor by providing meals on a daily basis for about 5 rupees. The basic foods given to the beneficiaries in a clean and respectable setting are rice and daalma. A significant portion of the state's hunger has been reduced because to this initiative.

The Ahar Yojana programme gives impoverished urban residents access to subsidised food. The Odisha government took the initiative to open several Ahar Canteens, where food is provided at extremely inexpensive prices. At Ahar Canteens, food that normally costs Rs. 20 is offered for Rs. 5. These canteens are located in busy areas with a high concentration of impoverished people, such as bus stops, stations, marketplaces, and municipal hospitals. There are already 12 centres with Ahar Canteens, however there are currently over 100 canteens waiting in queue. This is a great idea for those who cannot afford expensive meals, and the programme is helping the underprivileged. The canteen is available to everyone and does not have any restrictions limiting who can enter. The cafeteria, sponsored by the Odisha Mining Corporation, is open daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to provide food for the underprivileged.

Ama Clinic and Anmol Yojana

The Odisha government has started the Ama Clinic Scheme and Anmol Yojana to improve the state's healthcare system. While Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) will get table computers under the Anmol project, Ama Clinics will build many more healthcare facilities in metropolitan areas. After that, the impoverished and in need will receive the most up-to-date and superior healthcare treatments through these 2 programmes. Additionally, from January 1st, 2018, the Odisha government began implementing these programmes.

About 45 lakh individuals in urban areas would benefit from services like specialised guidance in obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, medicine, etc., provided by the state Scheme, giving them access to government under the Ama Clinic initiative. ANMs will get Amol Tablets from Anmol the newest equipment for tracking patients' needs in real time.

Conclusion

The concerted efforts of the Indian government, coupled with the active involvement of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), have been fundamental in addressing the multifaceted challenges prevalent in rural regions since independence. The enactment of the 73rd Amendment Act marked a significant milestone in revitalizing Panchayat institutions and empowering them to serve as effective units of self-government at the grassroots level. Through various rural development schemes and initiatives, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swayam Yojana, Kalia Yojana, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSK), Nutana Unnata Abhilasha (NUA), and others, the government of Odisha has endeavored to uplift the socio-economic landscape of the state.

These programs aim to provide employment opportunities, financial assistance, healthcare benefits, skill development, and support for marginalized communities and vulnerable sections of society. Furthermore, initiatives like Mo Jami Mo Diha, Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana, Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana, Biju Kanya Ratna Yojana, Ahar Yojana, and Ama Clinic & Anmol Yojana reflect the state government's

commitment to addressing diverse societal needs, ranging from land rights protection to youth empowerment, cultural preservation, healthcare accessibility, and affordable food provisions.

The implementation of these schemes underscores a holistic approach towards rural development, emphasizing inclusivity, sustainability, and equitable growth. By leveraging the potential of PRIs and aligning state policies with grassroots aspirations, both the central and state governments have strived to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the nation's progress.

As Odisha continues on its developmental journey, it is imperative to sustain the momentum of these initiatives, foster innovation, and adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities. By nurturing a conducive environment for socio-economic empowerment, fostering community participation, and fostering collaboration between stakeholders, the vision of a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient rural Odisha can be realized, paving the way for a brighter future for all its citizens.

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