

Research Article

Transformation of Rural Local Leadership through Grassroots Governance: A Study

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Abstract

At the grass roots level, there is a strong relationship between democracy and local self-governance institutions that nurture and sustain the element of liberty, which forms the very core of democracy. Scholars like Lord Bryce and Alexis de Tocqueville have held the view that the grass-roots democratic institutions are the best guarantee to the success of democracy. Political democracy flourishes best where its roots are planted deep in local self-governance. Mahatma Gandhi had also written that “the centre of power is not in Delhi or Calcutta or Bombay or in the big cities; it should be distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India” (Gandhi). So, the local self-governance is a bulwark against centralization and an insurance against tyranny. Besides, the local government creates among the citizens their common interest in common affairs. Whoever learns to be public spirited and upright in the affairs of the villages has learnt the first lessons of the duties of the incumbent as the political appointee of a nation. Local institutions train men not only to work for others but also work effectively with others. They develop reasonableness, judgment, sociability. A democratic polity involves the decentralization of power in a way that the affairs of the local people are managed by means of their positive participation. It implies that the extension and a fair deal to the institutions of democracy at the grass roots levels. Democracy should not only be exercised at the ‘top’ level of government but also at the ‘tap’ (bottom) level of the political system. The current credo “think globally but act locally” has added greater salience to democratic ethos. The present paper analysis on transformation of Rural Local Leadership through Grassroots Governance in Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Democracy, Liberty, Local Governments Power, Participation and Sociability.

1) Introduction:

India is acknowledged for its local administration through ages. The current local government structure has its roots in Lord Mayo’s approach of decentralization of 1870, followed by ‘Lord Ripon’s’ enunciation of local government in 1884; which had heralded a new-fangled trend of bringing people to the centre-stage in managing their own affairs. Mahatma Gandhi said that “the centre of power is not in Delhi or Calcutta or Bombay or in big cities; it should be distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India”. Local institutions train men not only to work for others but also to work effectively with others.

2) Statement of the Research Problem:

The significance of local government in India has considerably increased in the post-independent India. After attaining the Independence in 1947, a committee headed by Balvantrai

Mehta studied the problems of local government like absence people's participation and suggested ways and means for improving the implementation of 'Community Development' (CD) and 'National Extension Service' (NES) programmes, launched in 1952 and 1953 respectively, in a phased manner. The fractional success of both CD and NES had led to the creation of a three-tiered structure, called democratic decentralization, which later came to be known as Panchayati Raj (PR) through the recommendations of 'Balvantrai Mehta Committee'.

In cooperation the Central and State governments have enacted several legislations to give more impetus to local government, especially 'Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs)' over time. However, a constitutional status was accorded to them after a prolonged struggle. Even though many States have not revealed interest in establishing local self-government institutions, the States were forced to accept the PR as it has the backing of the Constitution 73rd Amendment of the constitution in 1992. This amendment fulfills the long-felt demand for the rejuvenation of the rural local bodies to have a meaningful mechanism at the grassroots. In other words, it gives a Constitutional mandate to the three-tiered PR system in India. The aim of this amendment includes:

- (a) Providing for regular and timely elections to multi-level PRIs through the State Election Commission once in five years;
 - (b) empowering weaker sections of the society, viz., Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and Women in local self-government through reservations in elective offices;
 - (c) Strengthening the Gram Sabha for direct participation of the people in identifying their felt needs and fulfilling the same through PRIs;
 - (d) Providing a mechanism (State Finance Commission) to ensure the flow of funds to rural local bodies to enable them to discharge their functions and responsibilities; and
 - (e) Ensuring devolution of functions as mentioned in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution.
- In sum, the main objectives of PR system include: (i) promotion of people's participation in local governance; (ii) ensuring representation of weaker sections, especially the SC's, ST's, BC's, minorities and women in the Panchayats at all levels; (iii) achieving rapid rural development and removing interpersonal and regional imbalances, etc. Thus, in fact the Constitution 73rd Amendment has become a landmark in the Constitutional History of India (T.N. Dhar & S. R. Gupta, 1995). To give effect to Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, the government of Tamil Nadu has enacted a new Panchayat Raj Act, known as the Tamil Nadu Panchayati Act of 1994. Tamil Nadu is one of the few states in the country, which has had a rich experience in establishing the PRI's since 1959. As per the Constitution 73rd Amendment, TN has not only introduced the three-tiered system, but also conducted elections to these bodies.

3) Justification of the Study:

The new PR system is the outcome of various movements to liberate the people from the clutches of the massive government systems. It is also one of the new policy options to Rajiv Gandhi to integrate our system of political and economic activities with those of the developed societies. The new arrangement of decentralization, comprising devolution and de-concentration of powers leading to empowerment of people is equated to developing resourcefulness of the people or entrustment of more responsibilities to the people through elected representatives and to turn the government from the role of a provider to that of facilitator through which the role and functioning of the government will be trimmed down and the governmental responsibility in the present context needs to be redefined. Success of any system needs a thorough understanding of the arrangement by the implementing organization. In order to make the new PR vibrant and active, the people are to be made aware of the full implications of the new system, which envisages more of responsibilities rather than powers and authority.

What is now needed, in this 25th anniversary year of constitutionally buttressed Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palika Institutions, is a re-stocking of the experience of all states which will enable us to review and appraise the time-bound implementation of decentralized planning process at the grassroots. Besides providing for good governance at the grassroots through local institutions in India will be examined through the Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts make the Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palikas any better than their pre-Constitutional phase? Will the district plans consist of only those devolved to the local bodies? What are the factors contributing to the disempowerment of Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palikas in contemporary India? Are the local governments having full potential to prepare their plans; and thereby measuring up to the expectations and aspirations of people? And what sorts of reforms are necessary to promote the decentralized planning more effectively for delivering goods and services at the grassroots? Hence the study particularly the role, working status and decision-making components of local government institutions as a public delivery system at the grassroots besides exhibiting higher significance and relevance in the context of the completion of 20 years of journey of the Constitutional 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts. It is necessary to appreciate the functioning of the system by scrutinizing whether the constitutionalization of PR is a progressive foot-step at the door of rural transformation. **4) Grassroots Devolution:**

When the Panchayat Raj experiment was started two decades ago, there was a certain degree of naïveté in believing that effective devolution would just happen, Mr. Aiyar recalls. "Unlike the West, with its local government experience in parishes and counties, here local government was imposed from above. We had to devolve, while the West evolved from local governments." But, ours was the first such experiment at grassroots devolution leading to tangible social engineering, says Mr. Aiyar. The Committee's recommendations include a Centre-drafted model Gram Sabha law to motivate State legislation; freezing of rotation of reserved seats to two or three terms to incentivize good work and facilitate capacity building of Panchayat leadership; incentivize PRIs for transparency and accountability and the States to devolve; re-orient the outlook of lower bureaucracy to Panchayats. The report also prescribes collateral and institutional measures such as electronic tagging of funds, setting up of a National Commission for Panchayat Raj, and strengthening Gram Sabhas in PESA areas (Tribal areas to which the Panchayat system has been extended by legislation).

The report recommends the MGNREGA Scheme and BRGF (Backward Regions Grant Fund) model that locate PRIs as central to implementation. "We have wonderful examples in MGNREGA and BRGF. MGNREGA was initially worked out without a role for Panchayats. On my personal intervention and literally in a midnight, government's amendment to the Bill, (and) a strong role for Panchayats came by. Today, it is a highly functional scheme," as Aiyar noted. While the Committee advocates strong Gram Sabhas that the panchayats are accountable to, the Bill on Land Acquisition lends only consultative powers to the Gram Sabhas. Even as Mr. Aiyar sees no inherent conflict between intent and action, he does believe there are vested interests. "The Sub Committee under me strongly recommended consent by Gram Sabhas. But, there are always vested interests." Also, most States have not legislated on powers for the Gram Sabhas. According to the report, effective devolution leads to better outcomes, which in turn engenders political will. It was lack of bureaucratic will and not political will that has stalled effective devolution, says Mr. Aiyar. "My recommendations as Chairperson of the Empowered Sub Committee of the NDC (National Development Council) were not acted upon by the Planning Commission. The Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission and the Cabinet Secretary are not elected and their inability to enforce their own circulars reflects lack of bureaucratic will." The political class did not bear down on the bureaucracy like it did with MGNREGA. "It is bureaucracy that will have to produce the methodology of devolution. But they did not. Now our report illustrates how to do it through Activity Mapping. They just have to implement it."

Recounting a personal conversation with Rajiv Gandhi in 1989, Mr. Aiyar says the former Prime Minister envisioned a generation's time for effective devolution. "It is only 20 years now; we have five more years to realize that dream, if our recommendations are implemented." As referenced earlier, the Behaviouralist movement had sensitized the scholars in comparative politics field to shift their research focus from the static aspects of structural, legal, and historical analysis of the PRIs to the dynamic aspects of the role performance of these bodies like Panchayati Raj Institutions. This area has received impetus especially from academics having been oriented in the methodology of the functionalists. After having gone through the above-mentioned literature on PR system, the researcher found that those works gave priority to the structural, financial and administrative as also implementation aspects of local governance system. Not many have attempted to study the behavioural facets of the elected leaders of PR system. Hence, the present study is an attempt to contribute to the new areas of research on Panchayat Institutions. And the present status of PR, as envisaged by Committee led by Mani Shankar Aiyar lends added emphasis for the proactive role of the grassroots institutions in the nation building pathways for action in the time to come.

5) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) Locale of the Study

The rationale for choosing Cuddalore district for this study is that the researcher has familiarity with this coastal region in Tamil Nadu. According to few studies both recent and past ones, Cuddalore happens to be a 'median' district in terms of development indicators like density of population; postal and banking facilities per 1,000 population; length of roads in the district (in proportion to the geographical area); percentage of irrigated area to area sown; cropping intensity and percentage of non-agricultural workers to total number of workers. The 2011 Census shows a steep rise in the literate levels of both males and females in the district. In spite of all the major political parties, which are in favor of conducting elections on non-party basis as far as possible at the Panchayat level, the political parties willy-nilly enter the election fray in one guise or the other. Besides, enormous amount of money was spent on local body elections especially at the Village Panchayat level. Many leaders having rural background of this district have become members of the Legislative Assembly and Parliament at a later stage. Since Cuddalore has been considered a political training ground for state politicians, it has also proved the theory of 'Circulation of Elites', as propounded by the famous sociologist Wilfred Pareto.

6) Objectives of the Study

- 1) Examine Structure of Panchayats (of all the three-tiers) in Tamil Nadu in the post-Constitution 73rd Amendment;
- 2) Whether the linkages between the tiers have addressing people felt needs in the district?
- 3) How relevant is Panchayat Raj in the everyday lives of the people?
- 4) What is the role of PRIs in poverty alleviation and human development?
- 5) Is poverty alleviation possible through a peripheral role for Panchayats as conceived in various Central sector schemes in the context of Tamil Nadu?

Besides the study analyze coordination between the State Government and District administration, i.e., from the State to District Panchayats down to the Village Panchayats.

It will Endeavour to evaluate the powers and functions vis-à-vis the 29 items entrusted to PRI's as per the Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution; and

(a) Study Hypotheses

Based on the aforesaid with the effective functioning of panchayat Raj system in Cuddalore district study to focus on the following indicators:

1. General participation in Gram Sabhas is dependent on factors such as socio-economic background, employment, chance to be selected as beneficiary, political affiliations, and the special interest shown by the ward members.

2. There is a relationship between the motivation of people to attend panchayat meetings and likelihood of being selected as beneficiaries of various development projects.
3. Inter-panchayat and Intra-panchayat rates of participation as well as among selected panchayats
4. Density of population and the general poverty of the region.
5. Participation of gender dependent in effective functioning of panchayats.
6. Religion is associated with the effective performance of Panchayats.
7. Caste is associated with the effective functioning of Panchayats.
8. Status of Education is associated with the effective working of panchayats

(b) Study Techniques

Primary source of this proposal is based on field survey research. It mainly focuses on the data collected by employing interview schedules from among the select Panchayats in Cuddalore district and also the information collected through discussions with officials, non-official members and citizens as to the developments over two decades in the PR.

(c) Data Collections & Pilot Study

The primary data have been collected through an interview schedule by the researcher with the Panchayat leaders and public. Before doing so, while keeping in view the objectives of the study in question, a questionnaire was pre-tested among 25 Panchayat leaders, who were not included in the random sample, drawn for the study. The pilot study had helped in gathering preliminary information; and, thereby in identifying the problems involved in the field study. The pilot study had also helped in designing the study tools / techniques, specific to objectives of this research.

(d) Sample Selection

After completing the pilot study, the Interview Schedule was modified by taking into consideration the people- felt needs as expressed by the Panchayat leaders. Thereupon was administered to the selected sample of the respondents. The total number of Village Panchayats in Cuddalore district is 682. The panchayats were selected from all 13 Panchayat unions represented in Cuddalore district. A sample size of 20 per cent of Panchayat's, which comes to 140, is selected for this study. By following the stratified random sampling procedure, the respondents for the study were selected. The researcher used descriptive, analytical and statistical methods for the presentation of the data.

This chapter attempts to analyze the role perception among Village Panchayat presidents in Cuddalore district. India liberated itself from the colonial yoke and set for itself a parliamentary form of government. Ever since India set out for the conquest of independence, it worked simultaneously for the conquest of socio-economic development. It is natural that every country has its own distinctive development problems and must solve them according to its own tradition, capacities, and values. Countries vary in their resources, population, tradition, and value base, but what matters is the spirit with which the people approach the socio-economic challenges offered by the environment. There are several fundamental matters, which are essential for the development of the society (Arthur M.Schlesinger, Jr, 1962).

There are education, skill, extensive transport facilities, more sophisticated networks of communication, pressure of physical necessity or physical opportunity, motivating urge for change, openness to new ideas, awareness of opportunity, knowledge for exploitation of the opportunity apart from capital and technology (Garry Jacobs, 1982). It is confirmed fact the practice of economic progress of any nation is linked with the commitment of the society and the nation to self-government and representative institutions. It is found that there is no better way than grassroots democracy to develop capacities and talents of its human folks. Another related factor has been the conviction of the importance of personal freedom and personal

initiative. To drive out the energy of the individuals for the development of the self and society, grassroots democratic institutions are sine qua non.

How can a democratic institution work successfully involving the people in development activities? It is a fundamental question (Hari Mohan Mathur, 1986). Unless the Presidents are made aware of their own problems, priorities, and opportunities, development is only a dream (Ramashray Roy, R.K. Srivastava, 1986). How could the presidents be made aware of their needs, and solutions? It is only through education. Education does not mean formal, structured, and institutional pattern of learning.

Education can happen in any mode or form. Long back Ambassador Galbraith rightly said "A dollar or a rupee invested in the intellectual improvement of a human being will regularly bring a greater increase in national income than a dollar or a rupee devoted to railways, dams, machines' tools or other tangible capital goods." Any effort in the direction of bringing awareness about the ongoing process of development among the people would definitely result in a remarkable change.

It is unfair on our part to accuse the leaders, administrators, and practitioners of development that they have not contributed for the growth and development of the economy of the country. The economic growth and social change in India is unprecedented and a surprise to the development thinkers of the world (Garry Jacobs, N.Krishnamurthy and Ramakrishnan, 1988). The speed of growth and development is much faster in India than in the developed countries. The daunting problem is the ever-increasing population and the unprecedented population growth has eaten away the accrued richness of the country.

Moreover the faculty distribution system characteristically makes India a poverty stricken nation. All these maladies in the system are due to the persistent gap between the people and the leaders on their perception on the process of growth. The conceptualization on the leaders of progress has not so far percolated into the minds of the people. The objectives, programmes, and schemes of the government towards development have not brought any significant impact in the minds of the majority of the populace.

For most of the failures, it is attributed that there is a persistent perception gap between the planners and practitioners and between the practitioners and the people. Development ideas, action programmes, and schemes are to be taken to the people, and both the planners and the practitioners of development should have the same vibration. For winning independence, people have been mobilized by Indian National Congress. It was made a mass movement. It was successful only because it was a mass movement.

Likewise, economic growth and development of the society could be achieved only through a mass movement. The economic history of Japan or of the USA or for that matter of any country in the world strongly opines and believes that socio-economic development is the result of an understanding interaction between the rulers and the ruled on a common programme as a movement for prosperity. But in India, there was no such movement in the past for prosperity (S.R.Maheswari, 1985).

Development thinkers, who have analyzed the factors of development in India, have repeatedly indicated the fact that, even-though the other factors are present, development could not be achieved as the people have not been involved in any of the programmes for development. The people have never been considered as a contributory factor for socio-economic development, but they are considered only as consumers of the benefits accrued out of the programmes and schemes of the government (S.C.Dube, 1988). From Gandhian constructive works at the grassroots level to the practitioners for rural development in the World Bank have unequivocally underlined the fact that development could be achieved only by involving the people from planning to evaluation of development schemes. To emphasize this

fact, a series of book and articles in journals has been written from the experience to third world countries (Robert Chambers, 1983).

This experience was initiated the beginning of the 'ninth five year plan' instead of top-down process, it was initiated from bottom, and it is called bottom-up planning. To make it a reality, a new device called panchayati raj has been introduced. Panchayati Raj is not only a structure, and a governing institution, but also a movement by itself. It is to be considered primarily as 'a prosperity movement'. By giving adequate powers and resources to the people, it is planned to achieve development through the new structure of panchayati raj.

The question is whether the leaders realize the objectives of the government? Are they well-equipped to the carry out the new responsibility assigned to them? Unless the leaders realize the importance of the power devolution, achieving development would remain only a dream. To study the perception of the village Panchayat presidents towards the 'New Panchayati Raj Act', an attempt has been made. The bulk of our respondents stated that PRIs are primarily established to provide the political expression of the village needs. The basic need of our times is modernization; which can only be realized by the development mindedness of people as well as the Political Will on the part of State and National leadership. As the lowest rung of Indian polity, Panchayati Raj is relatively better placed than any other agency, to kindle interest among the rural poor to bring about, albeit slowly, the much needed change, so that the projected transformation can be brought about. A politically articulated rural poor would be self-dependent and can force the leadership to become more responsive as well as responsible. Otherwise, the urban biased ruling elite will not bestow attention that it deserves on the rural poor, especially their needs, aspirations and problems.

7) Political Awareness

Political awareness refers to the knowledge about political phenomenon, political institutions and processes and is a key concept in the understanding of the political system. Since people seek to promote their economic and material well being, ultimately through political means, the knowledge of such means is intimately connected with their level of utilization of political means. In this sense political perception is the key to political efficiency (Hyman, H. 1959).

In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the village president's levels of understanding of the Panchayat Raj system, role perception and role patterns of elected village Panchayat presidents of Cuddalore district of Tamilnadu. Here, we try to analyse what different education group people feel regarding the performance of the Gram Sabha, various state Govt. development plans, whether they know RTI or not, their view on women participation etc.

Table 1.1 Distribution of Respondents Perception on Education by Gram Sabha Useful Institution

Count		Gram Sabha Useful Institution				Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Education	Primary	35	13	8	10	66
	Secondary	20	30	6	35	91
	UG	3	0	0	0	3
Total		58	43	14	45	160
Pearson Chi-Square value = 26.78 (P-value : 0.00)						

Source: Computed

Out of 160 sample size, 101 of the respondents have agreed that Gram Sabha is a useful institution and 59 of the respondents have opined that this Gram Sabha is not useful, Also Pearson chi - Square value is 26.78 and it's significant, which means that there is a difference of opinion between the respondents, regarding the usefulness of Gram Sabha.

Table 1.2 Distribution of Respondents Education on Gram Sabha Support to Implementation of Government Programmes

Is Gram Sabha Useful Institution			
Category	Agree	Disagree	Total
Primary	54	12	66
Secondary	86	5	91
UG	2	1	3
Total	142	17	160

Source: Computed

Table 1.2 clearly presents the Gramsabha support towards the implementation of Govt. Programmes. From this table it is clear that, about 142 respondents agree to this who is the majority and only 17 respondents disagree to this view

Table 1.3 Distribution of Respondent Education on Duties of Village Panchayat

Count		know Duties of Village Panchayat				Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Education	Primary	50	12	4	0	66
	Secondary	56	33	1	1	91
	UG	1	2	0	0	3
Total		107	47	5	1	160
Pearson Chi-Square value = 11.24 (P-value : 0.08)						

Source: Computed

The above table provides the chi-squared test result, regarding the duties of village Panchayat. Out of 160 sample size, 154 respondents have agreed that they are aware of the duties of Gram Panchayat and only 6 respondents feel that they are not aware of the duties of gram Panchayat. , Also Pearson chi - Square value is 11.24 and it's insignificant, which means that the education does not matter when it comes to the duties of Gram Sabha.

Table 1.4 Distribution of Respondents Education on Women Members Participation

Count		Women Members Participation				Total
		Poor	Satisfactory	Good	V.Good	
Education	Primary	7	48	10	1	66
	Secondary	11	76	1	3	91
	UG	1	2	0	0	3
Total		19	126	11	4	160

Source: Computed

When the respondents were questioned regarding the women participation, only 5 respondents opined that they were good and about 19 responded felt that women's participation was not satisfactory bad and 126 educated respondents felt that it's satisfactory.

Conclusion:

The extent to which citizen they participate in politics and the ways in which they do so are largely the responses to the stimuli provided by the social circumstances. The conditions include how individuals exist, the type of role perception are an embedded in, how much and what they have, the sort of work they are engaged in, how much they receive, and the opportunity they have for civilizing their life. Social conditions influence the level of resources accessible on role perception and serve up to advance or inhibit progress of attitude and beliefs that under lay a variety of role perception. The indicators of social situation include such uniqueness as age, sex, religion, education, caste, income status and social standing etc. (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978).

The phenomenon of leadership in the panchayati raj institutions has perhaps been discussed leadership at the State level or the National level of Indian polity after national independence. More widespread are the researches, which dwell on the personal attributes of the leadership such as honesty, integrity, broad social outlook, and imaginativeness in planning, industriousness and amenability to the constituents.

Every society finds ways of identifying and rewarding success of an outstanding kind, and it needs to celebrate the success and to praise the successful. When a country chooses to confer state honors on some citizens, it identifies "role models", successful individuals, who become sources of inspiration for the rest of society. Panchayati raj system has become a mode of governance in Indian polity ever since Mahatma Gandhi has emphasized the need to people's power to tackle their socio-economic problems rather than party power. When Mahatma Gandhi pronounced this system as the role of Indian democracy, the concept of "big government" was gaining currency in the West. When India was freed from the shackles of the foreign yoke, the concepts of industrialization modernization and westernization began to dominate the governmental actions both in the east and west. It also true that the nations both the developed and developing are broadly functioning under a set of dominating principles of governance. But the adoption of the principles is purely relied on the prudent governance of the nations by the governing elites (constitution of India). Countries, which have closely analyzed the attitude of the presidents and adopted a system of governance to the level of the perception of the presidents successfully, tackled the socio-economic crises.

As regards Tamil Nadu the present pattern of panchayati raj in the state is functioning under the Tamilnadu New Panchayati Raj Act 1994, which was enacted in light of the constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1993.

India the largest democracy in the world has completed half of century of the democratic existence. Yet studies on democratic India mostly pertain to the explanatory centrality of the state from liberal and Marxist persuasions and not on the links of mass democracy. And again, there are more studies on political elites and not contributions from the political intermediaries of citizens. It is in this context the research study explores on Status and working of Grassroots Governance in Tamil Nadu during 1992-2012 in Cuddalore district.

The study sets out of examine the objectives: 1) Examine Structure of Panchayats (of all the three-tiers) in Tamil Nadu in the post-Constitution 73rd Amendment Act; 2) Whether the linkages between the tiers have addressing people felt needs in the district? 3) How is relevant Panchayat Raj system in the daily life of the people? 4) The role of PRIs in poverty alleviation and human development 5) Is poverty alleviation likely through a peripheral role for Panchayats as envisaged in a variety of Central government schemes in the background of Tamil Nadu?

This research study has been collected from two basic sources: secondary and primary. The essential instrument for the primary data has been on interview schedules. The rigorous process of having responses from 160 village panchayat presidents have been pursued and data have been collected and analyzed by using SPSS 22.00. To begin with, the research work describes the panchayati raj system in Tamil nadu, as the necessary setting for this study. The Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act is a watershed in Indian political and administrative history it fulfills the long felt demand of common man of India. The rural local bodies should have constitutional backing, continuity and stability with real powers of Local self-Government. The significance of amendment lies in the fact, that for first time, it gives a Constitutional status (as different from statutory status) to the three-tier Panchayati Raj System (with some exceptions) in India. It provide for the establishment of Panchayat Act the district, village, and intermediary levels uniformity in all the states (except very small ones). The main purpose and aims of this constitutional amendment are to (a) empower of weaker sections in the society, viz., Schedules casts and Scheduled tribes through Local self-government (b) provide constitutional status to Panchayats at Village, Block, and District levels (c) empowerment of women managing Local self-government (d) provide a mechanism (state finance commission) to ensure flow funds to rural Local Governments to discharge their functions and responsibilities (e) ensure devolution of function as state that in XIth Schedule of the 73rd

Constitutional Amendment Act and (g) this Act provide for usual and timely conduct election to multi-level Panchayats through State Election Commission and eliminate indefinite suppressions.

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