

CHAPTER VIII

Summary of Findings and Concluding Observations

Decentralisation has become one of the most debated policy issues since 1980s throughout both developed and developing worlds. It is seen as central to the development efforts of countries as far a field as Chile, China, Guatemala and Nepal. And in the multiple guises of subsidiarity, devolution and federalism it is also squarely in the foreground of policy discourse in the US, UK and EU (Faguet 2003;2005). It becomes more popular among the developing countries than the developed where devolution of power may be the answer to central governments' sub-par achievement of good governance. Decentralisation as it was argued can make government more responsive to the governed by 'tailoring levels of consumption to the preferences of smaller, more homogeneous groups' (Wallis and Oates 1988). According to the World Bank, decentralisation 'permits a degree of institutional competition between centres of authority that can reduce the risk that governments will expropriate wealth' (World Bank 2005).

However, the positive impact of decentralisation on governance is not as obvious as it might look at first sight (Dreher 2006). Decentralisation can create coordination problems thereby delaying or preventing reforms (Oates 1999). Local governments are too susceptible to elite capture. Notwithstanding of these disadvantages of decentralisation, many countries in the world adopted the decentralisation as a major national policy in response to the many failings of centralized government. The local government is the bulwark against centralisation of state power. It makes the government more responsive, transparent and accountable. Thus decentralisation in all its constituent elements has a close relationship with responsive administration and good governance. Good governance, when seen in terms of effective decentralisation is equivalent to purposive and development-oriented administration, which is committed to the improvement in quality of life of the people (Pal 2003). In a unique econometric analysis of decentralisation as a tool to achieve good governance, Huther and Shah construct Governance Quality Index (GQI) and estimate the impact of decentralisation on that Index. The results indicate that the quality of governance is increasing with decentralisation levels (Huther and Shah 1998).

The case of democratic decentralisation is also predicted upon the notion that greater participation in local political affairs will improve the quality and reach of government services, particularly ones aimed at improving the lives of poor and politically marginal groups in society (Johnson 2003). Local resources for social and economic development can be more easily mobilized if such projects are decided by and implemented on the local level. Development activities undertaken with the participation of those involved allows for tailoring the activities to the specific needs of the local population (Pandey n.d.). Decentralisation has therefore two roles to play in fulfilling the good governance agenda and sustainable rural development. The World Bank also emphasizes that 'decentralisation can greatly enhance the state's capacity to accelerate local development and reduce poverty' (World Bank 2001). It is therefore, in many countries, one of the primary motives for decentralisation is the prospect of improving local development. The decentralised governance ensures the participation of people in the development process more particularly in the rural development. In

many countries, it is the government, which initiates and implements developmental programmes. It must gain the support of the people in the discharge of their responsibilities with regard to programmes, particularly at the cutting edge level. Such support would strengthen democracy as well as positive response of the community to developmental programmes, which should be the ultimate goal of good governance (Syndicate Paper 2001).

The cumulative impact of India's governance problems and a strong need for good governance led to her undertaking of decentralisation policies in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in the early 1990s. Governed by the constitution (adopted in 1949) and a parliamentary system of government, India's federal system leaves local governments under direct control of the states and union territories. The panchayats that have been present in Indian society for centuries have been entrusted with the responsibilities to implement the various rural development programmes in the country. In spite of the long and chequered history of local government institutions in India, till the passage of the constitution 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, the only reference in the constitution to local bodies was in the Directive Principle of State Policy which stated "the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to functions as units of self-government." Until 1992 the panchayats in India functioned as a non-statutory body. The establishment and support of panchayats by states was completely voluntary, and they therefore never could become viable means of local governance in India. This coupled with India's need for good governance, led to the 1992 Constitutional Amendment formally establishing and supporting panchayats and increasing local governance: the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution gave Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) constitutional status, bestowing upon them decision-making power in twenty-nine areas identified in the Eleventh Schedule (Montes 2002). An important object of this has been to establish institutions and structures that facilitate good governance, including the opportunity for participation by all sections of the population.

Sikkim has embarked on the path of decentralisation even before its merger to India. Sikkim became a 22nd state of Indian republic in 1975. Till then the Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim was ruled by king called Chogyal meaning Dharmaraja. It was however interesting to note that even during the rule of monarch, various initiatives were undertaken to decentralise the power for achieving the goal of good governance and development. The Panchayat Act of 1965 was the first such initiative in which an effort was made to transfer the powers of central government to the government at the cutting edge level. Before this also numbers of rules and resolutions was passed for the creation of decentralised governance to ensure the participation of people in the decision making process. The Act of 1965 was however, the first Act that created single tier decentralised government in the state with block as a unit of development administration. The objective was to bring the administration closer to the people and provide honest and responsive administration. The Act continued even after the merger of the state to India. It was repealed only in 1982 when the Government of Sikkim enacted a new legislation called as Sikkim Panchayat Act 1982. The Act has created two-tier local government viz., Gram Panchayat at the village level and Zilla Panchayat at the district level. In conformity with the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act 1992, the Sikkim Government has amended the earlier Act and passed a new legislation called Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993. The amended Act has incorporated almost all the major provisions of the Seventy-Third Amendment Act that includes constitution of Gram sabha, direct election, five years tenure, reservation of seats, formation of SFC

and SEC etc. With the enactment of this Act, PRIs have been entrusted with the specific responsibilities to initiate, plan and execute the developmental activities. In addition many of the functions listed in XI Schedule of the constitution are transferred to the PRIs in Sikkim. This also includes rural development programmes and other schemes related to social justice. The measures have been adopted for the devolution of functions, finance and functionaries. In the case of devolution of functions, the principle of subsidiarity i.e., what can be done best at a particular level should be done at that level and not at higher levels has been followed. The PRIs elected and accountable to the people has been empowered to take decisions on local development policies. It has opened up the avenue for people's participation and has the potential for good governance.

Though all these measures adopted by the state are doing well with the desired objective of the decentralisation of power for the good governance and rural development, an empirical investigation was thought to be imperative to evaluate objectively first, the growth of decentralised governance and second how the decentralisation of power lead to good governance and (rural) development in the context of Sikkim. Given this an empirical survey was conducted in four Gram Panchayat units from four district of Sikkim. The survey was conducted on the basis of a structured questionnaire administered to 48 officials and 51 PR representatives from the state and 219 common citizens from the selected four Gram Panchayats. The structured questionnaire included questions relating to the socio-economic status of the respondents, levels of knowledge and awareness, decentralised governance, transparency and accountability, good governance, rural development and the like.

Major findings of the study are summarized hereunder:

Officials

Official come from mixed socio-economic background like sex, age, caste, education, and income. Sex wise, 52.50 per cent of officials were male and 47.50 per cent female. As many as 32.50 per cent of officials belong to the age group of 31-40 years. About 17.50 and 32.50 per cent belong to the SC and ST categories. Education level of the officials is high as majority of them have education above primary level.

It was found that majority of officials (95 per cent)) have elementary knowledge of the PR system in Sikkim. On the question of awareness about powers and functions of PR representatives, large numbers of officials (55 per cent) have no knowledge of it. It is disheartening to note that majority of the officials do not have any idea on the devolution of function to the PRIs under Eleventh Schedule. Only 25 per cent had knowledge on the devolution of function and XI schedule.

Similarly, it was found that majority of officials were of the opinion that adequate functions and finance are yet to be transferred to the PRIs by the government to make them fully unit of self government. On the performance of panchayats, the officials were satisfied moderately only.

Regarding the meeting of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, overwhelming majority of the officials (80 per cent) said that meetings are held regularly in the villages. On the participation, it was however found that very small number of officials were participate in the meeting of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats.

It was found that majority of officials (52.50 per cent) were of the opinion that there are no organic links between the two-tiers of PRIs in Sikkim.

On the question of proxy representation, overwhelming majority of officials (80 per cent) said that in Sikkim there is no proxy representation. Responses of the officials regarding the reservation and participation of weaker section of population is quite positive as large number of officials (65 per cent) were of the opinion that provision of reservation of seats in PRIs has enhanced the participation of SC, ST, and women in the functioning of panchayats.

Regarding the participation of political parties in panchayat election, 50 per cent of officials were in favour of party-based election while 30 per cent were against it.

On the question of decentralisation and good governance, majority of the officials opined that decentralisation is prerequisite for attaining the good governance.

It was found that there is no transparency in the working of panchayats as 52.50 per cent of officials opined that Gram Panchayats function in a non-transparent basis.

The panchayats is considered as a major instrument of rural development. This view is supported by 80 per cent of officials in Sikkim.

On the awareness of rural development programmes, overwhelming majority of officials (90 per cent) had knowledge on the various rural development programmes. Only 10 per cent of officials have said that they had no knowledge on it.

The various on-going rural development schemes launched for the welfare of rural poor have benefited the vast section of population. The response of officials also supports this view. The 67.50 per cent of officials expressed that rural development schemes are beneficial for the rural poor.

Active participation of people in the formulation and implementation of plan is essential for success of programmes. It was however found that people's participation is almost absent in formulation whereas some people were involved in the implementation of rural development programmes.

In regards to the question on planning from below, 75 per cent of officials' supported the idea that planning process should be decentralized.

It was found that only 45 per cent of officials were satisfied with the system of implementation of rural development programme, while 47.50 per cent were dissatisfied with the implementation of rural development programmes. On the question of structural arrangement for programmes implementations, 55 per cent of officials were satisfied with the present structural arrangement for programmes implementation, while 22.50 per cent expressed their dissatisfaction and said that further improvement in the arrangement is required for proper implementation of programmes.

In spite of various programmes launched for the development of rural poor and rural areas, the rural areas still lag far behind in the matter of development. It is observed from the field that corruption and lack of accountable officials and people's

representatives are some of the inherent factors that cause the slow development of rural areas. However, the officials were of the opinion that corruption and lack of accountability is not the genuine cause of slow development of rural areas. They further said that slow development in rural areas is due to inactive gram Sabha and the people at the village level.

In regards to the state control, officials were of the view that slow development is not because of excessive state control.

PR Representatives

Like officials, the PR representatives interviewed for the study come from mixed socio-economic background like sex, age, caste, education and income. Sex wise, 55 and 45 per cent of PR representatives interviewed for the study were males and female. As many as 92 per cent of representatives belong to the age group of 18-40 years and are evidently energetic and mature. Majority of representatives were from OBC and MBC category (33 & 41 per cent respectively). Only 8 per cent of representatives were illiterate and remaining have the education ranging from primary to graduate level. Majority of the representatives (80 per cent) come from the economically weaker income groups.

As expected, it was found that the knowledge and awareness level of the PR representatives were high on the PR system in Sikkim and also the powers and functions of PRIs.

As regards to the Eleventh Schedule and the devolution of functions, responses of representatives are not encouraging as quite large number of them do not know about the schedule and those who know about it also do not have clear and adequate knowledge about total number of subjects contained in XI schedule.

On the question of functioning of Gram Panchayat, large numbers of representatives (61 per cent) were moderately satisfied and 20 per cent representatives were most satisfied with the functioning of Gram Panchayat. Similarly, in regards to adequacy of powers, only 45 per cent of representatives said that powers given to them to meet development goal are of large extent.

Finance is the first and foremost necessity of any institution for its sustenance. On the question of panchayat finance, 55 per cent of representatives feel that financial devolution to the panchayats is not adequate. They opined that panchayats need more funds and finance to meet the development goals. In the absence of adequate financial clout, functioning of the PRIs has been severely constrained.

The response of representatives is quite encouraging as 94 per cent of them said that they are attending the meeting of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat regularly. It was found from the field study that proxy representation of women in the meeting of Gram Panchayat is totally absent in the state.

On the question of the coordination between two-tiers of panchayat, 51 per cent of representatives feel that two tiers of panchayats work independently of each other and have no coordination between them as well as between the members of higher and lower level panchayats.

Majority of representatives (55 per cent) were of the opinion that reservation of seats in PRIs has enhanced the participation of SC/ST and women in the functioning of PR system.

As regards the participation of political parties in panchayat election, 59 per cent of PR representatives were in favour of party-based panchayat election while 41 per cent favour partyless election of local bodies.

A total of 82 per cent of representatives viewed the decentralisation of powers as precondition for good governance. On the transparency in the functioning of Gram Panchayats, 72 per cent of representatives said that Gram Panchayat functions in a very transparent manner.

A large number of representatives (92 per cent) consider the PRIs as a major instrument of rural development. On the question of awareness of the rural development programmes, 76 per cent of representatives were aware of various rural development schemes launched by the central/state governments.

People's participation in both formulation and implementation of programmes is essential for the success of the programmes. It was however found in the field study that people were hardly involved in the formulation and in the case of implementation, 47 per cent of representatives said that people are hardly involved while implementing the schemes in the villages.

On the question of planning from below, large numbers of representatives (82 per cent) subscribe the idea of planning from below.

Rural areas lagged far behind in the development in spite of the fact the more than 200 rural development programmes are in operation under different names for the development of rural areas. Some of the factors that hinder development of rural areas are corruption, lack of accountability, inactive local institutions etc. On the question of corruption, 43 per cent of representatives said that slow development in the rural areas is due to corruption at administrative and political level. And in regard to lack of accountability, 31 per cent of representatives opined that local level bureaucracy posted at district and block level are not accountable which has direct impact on the development of rural areas.

Slow development of rural areas is also caused by ignorance of rural people about their role and responsibilities and the inactive Gram Sabha. 64 per cent of representatives said that slow development in the rural areas is mainly due to inactive role of Gram Sabha and the people's lack of knowledge on the schemes meant for rural areas. Further, 33 per cent of PR representatives feel that state's excessive control over the implementing agencies at the lower level also cause the slow development of rural areas.

Common Citizens

Common citizens interviewed for the study come from mixed socio-economic background as is reflected from their sex, age, caste, education, occupation and income though the percentage is found to be skewed in favour of lower age groups, scheduled tribes, upto secondary level of education as well as agriculture as the occupational background and less than Rs. 5000 as income.

On the questions of the PR system in Sikkim and its power and functions, it was observed in the field study that common citizens are aware of the PR system in the state and the powers and functions exercised by panchayats. However, it was found that majority of respondents (75 per cent) were not aware of the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution which enlisted 29 subjects to be transferred to the PRIs.

Panchayats need adequate powers if it is to function as unit of self-government and also to meet development goals. It was found from the response of common citizens that panchayats were not given adequate powers and functions in the state. 56 per cent of respondents in all express this view.

On the performance of Gram Panchayat functioning, 21 per cent of respondents were most satisfied and 37 per cent of them were moderately satisfied with the functioning of Gram Panchayats in the state.

Finance is essential precondition for the survival of any institutions. Thus, for the survival of PRIs, adequate transfer of funds is necessary. The picture in this regard is quite dismal as 63 per cent of respondents opined that finance at the disposal of panchayat is not adequate.

Panchayati Raj Institutions provide an opportunity to the people to participate in deliberation and discussion in the decision-making process. For this, meeting of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, which are the forums for such deliberations, is essential. It was evident from the responses of majority of common citizens (64 per cent) that the meeting of Gram Sabha and gram Panchayats are held regularly. On the participation of people in the meeting, 58 per cent respondents said that they were attending the meetings regularly. On the question of proxy representations, it was found from the responses of common citizens that it was totally absent in the state.

The coordination between different developmental agencies and also the different tiers of PRIs is essential as the success of the implementation of development programmes solely rest on it. It was found in the field that there is a complete lack of coordination between two-tier of PRIs in Sikkim.

Reservation of seats ensures the participation of all sections of people in the decentralised governance. On the question of reservation and participation, common citizens feel that with the introduction of reservation in PRIs, the SC, ST, and women are found to play a significant role in the political process. They said that their participation has been increased in the PR system in the PR system as a result of reservation of seats.

As regards the participation of political parties in panchayat election, in all 37 per cent of common citizens was in favour of party-based panchayat election and 32 per cent were against the election in party line.

Decentralisation is an alternative approach that removes all the ills of centralisation. It is widely viewed as a way to make government more efficient and responsive to the needs of peoples in the delivery of good public services. On the question that decentralisation has brought good governance, majority of respondents (67 per cent) agreed with this statements and said that decentralisation of more powers to local government replace the bad governance by good governance.

Devolution of powers is one of main attributes of good governance. The devolution of powers and functions is therefore necessary to establish good local governance. As regards to the devolution of total powers, the response of common citizens was not so encouraging as 48 per cent of them opined that in the state complete devolution of powers to local bodies is yet to take place. Only 26 per cent of respondents assert that in devolution of powers, state is far ahead of other states of India.

Good governance can be possible only when there exists the transparency in the working of any institution. Non-transparent administration paved the way for misgovernance. Thus, transparency is important in the functioning of PRIs also. In regard to transparency in working of panchayats, it is disheartening to note that 41 per cent of respondents feel that there is no transparency in the working of panchayats. Only 26 per cent of them said that panchayat function in a transparent manner. Due to non-transparent way of working, it would not be out of place to mention that the Presidents of Gram Panchayat and few individuals have control over decision-making of Gram Panchayat.

Majority of the respondents (70 per cent) were agree with the view that panchayat is the main instrument of rural development. It was further observed that large number of common citizens were aware about the rural development schemes launched by the central/state governments. 53 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that all schemes of rural development are beneficial for rural poor. It was however disheartening to note that majority of people was excluded from being involved in plan formulation and implementation. It was found that 74 per cent of respondents in all said that people have never been involved in the formulation of project and 61 per cent of respondents opined that in the implementation of project also people were never given a chance to have a say. Since people are not involved in the implementation of programme, they are not able to visualize their role. And, as informed by the people during the survey, the implementation of works is normally the discretion of the officials/panchayats.

As regard to planning from below, an overwhelming majority of respondents (70 per cent) opined that decentralisation of planning process is must for the development of rural areas. They further said that plan without involvement of people yield no desired result.

It was found that majority of respondents (52 per cent) were not satisfied with the implementation of rural development programmes. Only 38 per cent of them expressed the satisfaction on the implementation of rural development programmes by the panchayat and bureaucrats. It was further observed from the field that large numbers of respondents (42 per cent) were of the opinion that present structural arrangement between bureaucracy and panchayats is not suitable for proper implementation of programmes.

The development would have become possible where the administrators, politicians and others are committed to work and do not indulge in corruption. Accountable and corruption free administration is required for rapid development of the areas. On the question that slow development of rural areas is due to corruption at the administrative and political level, 50 per cent of respondents said that slow development in the rural areas is due to corruption at these levels. It was further observed that lack of accountability is another major reason for slow development in rural areas.

The people's ignorance about their rights and responsibilities and inactive gram Sabha are other important factor for slow development in rural areas. It was found that majority of respondents (57 per cent) opined that slow development in rural areas is mainly due to lack of people's assertiveness. Further, 50 per cent of respondents said that gram Sabha in the state is also not so active to guide and direct the Gram Panchayats in proper manner for development of areas. And 48 per cent of the respondents also said that excessive state control over the PRIs had a direct impact in their working as they could not function independently which in turn affects the development of rural areas.

Concluding Observations

Decentralisation is often presented as an essential means of improving accountability achieving 'good governance' and reducing poverty in the context of development. A principal aim of this dissertation is to find out in detail the extent of democratic decentralisation and its impact on governance and development in the state of Sikkim. The state has embarked on programme of decentralisation long before its merger to India with an aim at involving the local people more effectively in the development process. The state Act has been amended from time to time to make it more effective in establishing PRIs as a genuine structure of decentralised governance. All these amendment aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the rural people to involve themselves in the planning process with respect to their priorities. In a nutshell, the purpose of the amendments was to bring good governance and development in the rural areas in particular and state as general.

Unlike in the past, the decentralised governance ensures the participation of all section of population in the management of local affairs. The traditionally subordinate groups like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women have been able to make their presence felt in local institutions. This is evident from the study that majority of PR representatives and common citizens are from poor economic background. The panchayats in Sikkim is thus, not captured by a dominant elite. The finding goes against the argument of many scholars (eg. Dreze and Sen 1996; Moore and Putzel 1999) who assert that decentralisation empower local elite.

The decentralised governance facilitate the participation of people in the development process which in turn help to implement effectively the developmental programmes in the rural areas. In other words, decentralised and democratic arrangements can encourage more flexible government programmes and policies (in particular, ones that move away from agricultural productivity) enhance government commitment to rural development and reduce economic disparities within region (Manor 1999). This is evident from our study that various rural development programmes have been implemented by the PRIs for the development of the rural areas. As the success of programme implementation depend on community participation, the decentralised governance in this respect provides an opportunity to take part in the management of local affairs by local people. It is thus found that the decentralisation of powers if followed and implemented properly help certainly to remove the ills of governance and ensure more responsive, transparent and accountable governance. Decentralisation coupled with good governance reduces inequalities and regional disparities for the sustainable holistic development.

Finally we can conclude that there is a positive linkage between decentralisation, good governance and development. But how can the goal of empowering local governments to act as efficient providers of services and as agent of local development be achieved? The democratic decentralisation being carried out in Sikkim still has a very long distance to travel before its ideals can be achieved. Practical experience indicates several conditions necessary for successful decentralisation. The active participation among broad elements of society and representatives, substantive autonomy, adequate funds, accountability and strong political commitment from higher level are some of the prerequisites of successful decentralisation. However, as stated earlier, much needs to be done as yet. Gram Sabha are yet to perform their role in the panchayati raj system, as far as functioning of panchayats is concerned, the level of awareness about attending meetings and active participation at Gram Panchayat level is very low. There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the working of panchayats and involvement of people in formulation and implementation of plans is also very poor.

Thus to strengthen the decentralised governance in the state, more measures need to be adopted. Though it appears vivid that there might be causal relations between decentralised governance and development yet the process of decentralisation furthers responsive and accountable government which in turn promote development. Following recommendations is suggested to strengthen the decentralised governance in the state for achieving the goals of both good governance and development.

- ❖ The success of PR system will be judged by the quality of governance. It is expected that for good governance, the basic needs of people should be attended to, people's participation in the discussion should be encouraged and decision-making should be made transparent.
- ❖ Decentralisation would be successful only when there is a complete devolution of powers and functions to the local bodies. The measures should therefore be adopted to transfer complete functions contained in the XI schedule to the PRIs and proper delineation of such powers and functions is required to do away with anomalies and overlapping.
- ❖ Adequate resources are fundamental to positive development and democratic outcomes in decentralisation. To make the PRIs financially self-reliant, government should devolve adequate resources to them by making requisite provisions in the Panchayati Raj Act.
- ❖ The recommendations of the State Finance Commission relating to sharing of taxes, levies and fees etc. to improve the financial positions of PRIs should be accepted and implemented honestly. The timely implementation of recommendation helps the PRIs to raise and augment their resources to meet the development goals.
- ❖ The high level of human resource development is one of the crucial indicators of social and economic development. Thus to enhance the HRD level of PR representatives, officials and people a well conceived capacitation programmes through education and training should be launched.
- ❖ Most of the panchayat members in the state are illiterate and ignorant of their responsibilities which is going to have impact on their abilities to deliver and sustain it in future. Hence, in order to ensure that people get basic services and in turn good governance at the village level, the capacity building programmes for panchayats should be made mandatory.
- ❖ The capacity building programmes should also be extended to the public officials dealing with PRIs particularly those working in the areas of rural

development, agriculture, health law and order etc. with special emphasis at the grass roots level.

- ❖ The state government and concerned departments should play a key role in capacity building of panchayat members and officials by conceptualizing and providing required infrastructure for the local relevant training programmes to them.
- ❖ Good governance demands participation of all section of people at every stage of development. In order to create enabling environment for the participation of people, The state should take steps for building environment in villages through different programmes like distribution of literature on development issues, display of development activities through poster and charts, cultural programmes and orientation and training programmes.
- ❖ To provide good governance at the cutting edge level, the power and functions of Gram Sabha have to be specified and at the same time it must be reinvigorated in actual terms to enable it to perform the role of mini-parliament at the village level.
- ❖ E-governance facilities should be provided to improve communication between the public and the local government bodies and also for improving the quality of the services provided. Besides, the implementation of e-governance solutions can help in improving the customer interface and quality of life of citizens and would also result in improved financial viability for the local bodies through improved collection of taxes.
- ❖ Government should take the help of civil society, NGOs, CBOs and neighbourhood groups for strengthening the local level institutions and also in the implementation of various developmental programmes in the state. The involvement of civil society in the governance of local bodies can considerably improve the quality of governance. These organisations can not only assist in delivering some of the local services but can also help in aligning public opinion with the local governance agenda.
- ❖ Lack of guidance and too much control are the factors responsible for low efficiency level of PRIs. So there should be working relationship which implies on the part of state government an increased emphasis on guidance, research, advisory and consultancy service, so that the PRIs can make the decisions and implement speedily and efficiently.
- ❖ To help promote responsiveness and transparency in local governance, efforts should be made to introduce provisions for right to information, social audit etc. in laws relating to PRIs.
- ❖ The provisions should be made to strengthen the institutions of Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabha in the state. Provisions should be made to convene meeting of Gram Sabha at least four times a year in place of present two times. For this date has to be specified by enacting the legislation preferably on January 26, May 1, August 15 and October 2. The attendance of concerned government officials should be made compulsory for which the state authorities should issue and ensure compliance of appropriate instructions.
- ❖ To check the corruption and administrative lapse, separate institutions of Ombudsman and Appellate Tribunals should be established at the different part of state. Such measures would help to check corruption and ensure accountability which in turn facilitates good local governance.

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