

Preface and Acknowledgements

Decentralisation is one of the most popular as well as much debated issues in the literature of development planning in both federal and unitary system of governance. Since World War II, there has been a pronounced move towards decentralisation all over the world. Many third world countries after their independence establish the decentralised governance system for the over all development of country. To quote a recent World Bank study, 'Out of 75 developing and transitional countries with populations greater than 5 million, all but 12 claim to have embarked on some form of transfer of political power to local units of government'. In the case of India, democratic decentralisation is a part of a large struggle for self-reliance and attempt to involve and mobilize people towards socio-economic reconstruction. The panchayat in India provide the institutional frame to the concept of democratic decentralisation in rural areas. The advocates of decentralisation believe that decentralisation with local institutions that work in a devolved manner could chart a path for achieving goal of good governance and development. To achieve this goal, the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act was passed in 1992. The Act for the first time accords the constitutional status to the panchayat in the country. As a sequel to this Act, many states in the country enacted a conformity Act to establish and strengthen the PRIs as genuine structures of decentralised governance.

Sikkim being one of the youngest states of Indian Union is no exception to this general global and Indian trend. Many initiatives were undertaken for the decentralisation of power by the Sikkim government both before and after merger to India. Along with decentralisation, many developmental programmes were launched in the state which are committed to the improvement in quality of life of the people and fulfilling the agenda of good governance.

The primary objective of the present study is to understand the ground realities of decentralised governance in the state. The study focuses mainly on decentralisation, good governance and rural development in Sikkim. The study seeks to find out the progress of decentralisation and its impact on good governance and rural development. The study is based on the field survey of four GPU from four district of Sikkim.

The dissertation has been organised into eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical perspective of the study that comprises the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, method and as assessment of the conceptual and theoretical issues put forward by scholars in current literature.

The second chapter deals with the historical evolution of decentralisation and rural development in India. It shows that how, over the years, the democratic decentralisation has developed in India and also provides an overview of the central Amendment Act.

Chapter three examines the emergence of democratic decentralisation in Sikkim. It provides an account of the status of decentralisation during pre-Chogyal period, Chogyal period, British period and post-merger period.

Chapter four is devoted to Decentralised Governance in Sikkim: The Present State. Chapter five contains Good Governance in Sikkim. Chapter six deals with Rural Development in Sikkim. Chapter seven deals with Democratic Decentralization, Good

Governance and Rural Development in Sikkim-The Experience from Field. Chapter eight is devoted to summary and conclusions.

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