

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Introduction

The notion of decentralisation and good governance are prominent in contemporary development discourse. It is now widely accepted that to be effective, governance should be pluralistic; authority should be spread across many levels and across 'multiple centers of authority' (Hooge and Marks 2003). India, considered as the largest democracy in the world, has had a long history of theory and practice in the field of decentralisation. Panchayats meaning 'assembly of five people', provide the institutional frame to the concept of democratic decentralisation in rural India. Since independence several attempts have been made to revitalize the system by constituting different committees and commissions. India has reached a landmark in the progress towards democratic decentralisation in 1992 when parliament passed a Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act. As a result, Panchayati raj institutions in the country are accorded with the constitutional status and came to be regarded as third tier of governance.

The most important thing in our country is that the majority of the people live in rural areas. The rural development thus becomes the foremost task of public policies. And development in India will have relevance only when people in the rural areas are made its beneficiaries. Thus, to achieve the goal of development, the decentralization of power to the local bodies is necessary which generates the people's participation and help in the implementation of rural development programmes. Indeed, decentralization and good governance have been the *sine quo non* for development in the developing countries in general and India in particular.

Sikkim, the erstwhile Himalayan kingdom, entered into the mainstream of Indian Union in May 1975 as a 22nd state. Prior to its merger, Sikkim was essentially a theocratic, feudal, agrarian and underdeveloped country and it had remained administratively in relative isolation for many years. The socio-political structure centred around hierarchy of lamas and monasteries and the absolute authority was exercised by the Chogyal (king).

The merger of Sikkim with Indian Union has, however, brought a lot of changes in all the fields - social, political, economic and administrative. Unlike the present form of local body, in the past, there were no codified rules and regulations to guide the affairs of villagers. Nevertheless, for regional and local administration, whole of the country was divided into different regions and each of the regions was looked after by the officer known as Dzongpons (District Officer) appointed directly by the king. However, the appointment of British Political Officer and the change introduced by the British particularly in the administrative field after 1890 had seriously disrupted the traditional political system. Eventually, a new pattern of regional and local administration emerged in which Kazis and Thikadars played the central role, displacing the Dzongpons as the main agents of the Sikkim government at regional level.

So far as the institution of local self-government is concerned, it was only in 1951 that the Local Area Panchayats were established as a result of Indo-Sikkim Treaty signed on December 5, 1950, where both the parties agreed on progressive association of the people with the governance of the state. The institutions so established became defunct soon after its formation, for the Government of Sikkim did not show any interest in the proper functioning of these bodies. Moreover, some political parties also boycotted the election of panchayats on the ground that the interest of the indigenous population had not been safeguarded.

The enactment of the Sikkim Panchayat Act 1965 was another major initiative taken by the government to associate the rural people for the better implementation of Sikkim's rural development programmes. The Act, therefore, extended the panchayats role in developmental activities and also provided it with certain executive functions like the maintenance of vital statistical records and the management of primary schools. Besides, the panchayats were also entrusted with some judicial authority to try some petty cases of the concerned area. The Act, however, stipulated for a single tier panchayat with block panchayat at the village level. The Block Panchayat established by this Act continued till 1982.

Again in 1982, that is, after seven years of its merger to India, the Government of Sikkim enacted a new Act called Sikkim Panchayat Act 1982. The object behind the legislation was to remove the inherent weaknesses that existed in the Act of 1965 and also to revive the democratic process at the grass roots level. This Act was, in fact, the first major step taken by the government in the process of democratic decentralization in Sikkim after its merger. The Act, by replacing the earlier one-tier system, introduced a two-tier panchayati raj system with Gram Panchayats at village level and Zilla Panchayats at district. The two-tier panchayati raj administration is still continuing though the Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993 has been passed to implement some major provisions of the 73rd Amendment (Constitutional) Act, 1992. The Act makes no changes in the existing two-tier system, but rather makes an arrangement for the delegation of more powers and authorities to the panchayats according to the provisions of 73rd Amendment Act 1992.

Thus, the process of decentralization in Sikkim, like the other states of India is slow but continuous. The Government of Sikkim has formulated and implemented various policies and programmes on decentralization and good governance after its merger to India. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is seen as a landmark in this direction as the former has rendered constitutional sanction to the panchayati raj institutions. In Sikkim also, the majority of people live in rural areas. Thus, to develop the state in general and rural areas in particular through the different developmental programmes, democratic decentralization and good governance are *sine quo non* for the development of Sikkim.

Objective of the Study

Given this general background, the primary objective of the present study is to make an in-depth study of the evolution, structure and process of democratic decentralization, good governance and rural development in Sikkim. The study seeks to find out how and to what extent the decentralization of power has ensured good governance and these two together helped in the proper implementation of the rural development programmes in the state and rural areas in particular. The basic objective of the study

is, thus, to find out the interrelationship between decentralization, good governance and rural development in Sikkim.

Theoretical Framework

Democratic Decentralization is one of the most popular terms used in the literature of development planning. The concept has been gaining ground in the present century both in the policy formulation as well as implementation and administration. It is indeed a broad term and covers many different phenomena and hence, lacks precise meaning and consensus (Mawhood 1985). In other words, it means different things to different scholars.

The Chamber Dictionary of 21st Century defined the term 'decentralization' as 'the process of transferring the functions from the central governments to the local units'. In the *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, it denotes 'the transference of authority-legislative, judicial or administrative -- from a higher level of government to a lower level'.

US Agency for International Development (2000) has defined decentralisation as 'a process of transferring power to popularly elected local governments. Transferring power means providing local governments with greater political authority, increased financial resources, and/or more administrative responsibilities'.

Jean-Paul Faguet (2003) defines decentralisation as the devolution by central (i.e. national) government of specific function, with all of the administrative, political and economic attributes that these entail, to democratic local (i.e. Municipal) governments which are independent of the centre within a legally delimited geographic and functional domain.

Perhaps the best general definition of decentralisation is by Rondinelli and Cheema (1983). They define decentralization as 'the transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organization, local governments and non-governmental organizations'.

Broadly speaking, the term decentralisation refers to a process of gradual devolution or transfer of functions, resources and decision-making powers to the lower level democratically elected bodies (Crook and Manor 1998, Litvack et al. 1998, Manor 1995, Mukarji 1989, Rondinelli et al. 1984).

Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) identify four main forms of decentralisation. These are: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization or deregulation. Deconcentration implies the outsourcing of central government functions to local or regional offices of the same. Delegation refers to the transfer of responsibility for the provision of public goods and services to parastatal or semi-autonomous institutions, which act on behalf of and are directly liable to the central government. Devolution is the creation of autonomous sub-national administrations, which dispose of full discretion over most local affairs. Privatisation or deregulation relates to the transfer of previously public functions or at least the right to implementation of those to private organisations and companies. Of these, devolution is considered to be an ideal form of decentralisation in its wider connotations. Devolution, which denotes the transfer of power, specific functions and resources to sub-national political entities is an evolved

form of decentralisation (UNDP 1993, Litvack1998, Oommen 1998, Shahid et al 1999).

The term decentralization, whatever may be the meaning and definition, is the result of over centralization and also because of the theory of the construction of minimal state and strong and active civil society. Since, the concept of decentralization is closely related to civil society and good governance in that the civil society is activated with decentralization and if the governing mechanism is dispersed and decentralized it results in good governance. Thus, if the governance is decentralized with the civil society operating freely and effectively, it will pave the way for good governance which in turn will ensure the all round development of the state.

A survey of the intellectual discourse of decentralization reveals three broad categories of theories: the classical liberal theories, development theories and neo-liberal theories. The intellectual case for decentralisation originates in the most basic arguments concerning democratic government and the effective representation of citizens' interest. The classical liberal democratic theorists like Mill, de Tocqueville, Laski, Madison and Wilson were the first to make a strong case for decentralisation considering possible benefits to be percolated to the national and local levels. One of the well-known proponents of this theory, John Stuart Mill (1835) provided two important arguments for democratic decentralisation: (i) local political institutions are a 'school of political capacity', making citizen capable of genuine and informed participation and (ii) such institutions would be more efficient if informed by local interests and local knowledge. Madison another important proponent of the theory, in several of the Federalist Papers, theorized about the prevention of tyranny via a balance of powers not only among the branches of central government, but between central and regional and local government as well (Madison cited in Faguet 2000). The political philosophers of this period (17th and 18th century) distrusted autocratic central government and held that small democratic unit could preserve the liberties of free men. In the writing of these scholars, it is implicit that decentralisation and more specifically local government are beneficial to the political health of a nation.

There was another school of thought who advocated a developmentalist stand and stress the importance of decentralization for social, political and administrative change in the developing countries. Scholars like Maddick, Rondinelli, Cheema, Mawhood, Conyers, Uphoff and Esman were the proponents of this theory. They have seen the decentralisation as 'way of increasing effectiveness of rural development programmes by making them more relevant and responsive to local needs and conditions, allowing greater flexibility in their implementation and providing means for coordination to the various agencies involved at the regional or local levels' (Rondinelli 1981, Cohen 1981, Conyers 1981). Decentralisation is regarded as a means to improve government responsiveness to the public and also as a necessary condition for social, economic and political development. Thus the ultimate objective of decentralization is development of the rural masses. Through the decentralization the state moves towards the avowed goals of development in view of the needs felt for the better coordination of local bodies in the effective implementation of all the rural development schemes meant for the people living in the countryside. Thus, the rural development through decentralized governance is assumed as necessary precondition of development.

The idea of decentralisation is however the inevitable logical outcome of the neo-liberal theoretical construction of minimal state and strong and active civil society (Yasin and

Sengupta 2004). The assumption underlying the paradigm is that if the state is minimized for effective democracy and individual freedom, and if the governing system is decentralised to involve and ascertain the choices of the people, it will lead to good governance that will result in development. It suggests that an order of minimal state with decentralised good governance for the existence and effectiveness of the civil society based on social capital will make the civil society vigilant on the governing process. It is on this neo-liberal premise that emphases have been shifted to decentralisation and good governance as the sine quo non for development (ibid).

However, in recent years, the normative character of decentralization has been subjected to scathing criticism by a number of scholars who view these theories as rhetorical and camouflaged with ideological overtones (Yasin et al 2003). Conceptually rooted to the works of Marx and Gramsci, the writings of Fesler, Samoff, Heyden, Smith, Rakodi, Slater and Heaphey demonstrate with empirical evidence that decentralization had rarely facilitated development in the developing countries. Heaphey (1971) goes to the extent of arguing that decentralization is an obstacle to development. Similarly many have also criticized the argument put forward by the neo-liberal in support of decentralisation and said decentralisation need not necessarily imply downsizing the state, a favourite argument of neo-liberals. Decentralisation is a means of making the state more effective. Devolution can be a strategic response of the 'affirmative democratic state' to the neo-liberal onslaught (Fung and Wright 2000). As a result of these criticisms, there emerged an alternative paradigm in the study of decentralisation. One of the important paradigms that is emerging is privatization as a form of decentralisation in contrast to decentralisation through the local government entities. Another form of decentralisation that took place in several developed countries during the 1990s is what can broadly be called distributed governance or the system of agencification i.e. devolving government functions to specialised agencies such as the "Special Operating Agencies" of Canada, "Crown Entities of New Zealand and the "Next Steps Agencies" of the UK. These agencies help government decouple policy implementation from policy making to allow managerial autonomy, freedom from political interference, professional oversight, etc. (OECD 2002). Despite the emergence of new paradigm, the discourses on decentralisation still revolve around the three important theories as discussed above.

Given these broad theoretical frameworks, the present study is a modest attempt to test the three theoretical frameworks in the light of the findings on Sikkim.

Review of Literature

The search for sustainable development and good governance has triggered broad processes of institutional innovation aimed at increasing efficiency and equity. These processes have contributed the spread of notion of decentralisation around the world especially among the third world countries. As a result a strong body of scholarly literature has emerged analyzing different aspects of decentralisation and its impact on governance and development.

Craig Johnson (2002) opines that the democratic decentralization implies more than the downward delegation of authority. It entails a system of governance in which citizens possess the right to hold public officials to account through the use of elections grievance meetings and other democratic means. The democracy and decentralization are often considered as an essential means of improving accountability, achieving

'good governance', and reducing poverty particularly in the context of international development.

Axel Dreher (2006) analyzes the impact of decentralization on governance employing four indicators of governance and five measures of decentralization. The result of the study shows that decentralization-measured as the share of sub-national employment, revenues or respectively, expenditures -improves governance.

The attraction of decentralization, according to Smith (1985), is not merely an opposite of centralization and therefore can be assumed to be capable of remedying the latter's defects. It has a positive side. It is commonly associated with a wide range of economic, social and political objectives in both developed and less-developed societies. Economically, decentralization is said to improve the efficiency with which demands for locally provided services are expressed and public goods provided. Politically, it is said to strengthen accountability, political skills and national integration. It brings government closer to people and promotes the liberty, equality and welfare.

Norman Uphoff (1986) refers decentralization as the physical dispersion or shifting of the offices or the seats of decision making whereby decision makers are located closer to the activities and persons for whom they work but to be accountable to the central authority.

Meenakshisundaram (1994) believes that common strands and patterns join all local government systems, and that by identifying such features, national systems can be made more productive if one has the willingness to learn from others. The author, therefore, in the book, examines the models of decentralization; compares them on a set of common parameters such as the environment in which the local units operate.

For the decentralized governance system to operate more effectively, Aziz and Arnold (1996) opine that there should also obtain a conducive environment for carrying out decentralized decision-making in the appropriate manner. To effect such an environment, it is first necessary that the decentralized political structures provide all citizens access to the decision-making process. The authors here examine the theoretical underpinnings of decentralization, the origins of the various systems, their common and distinctive features and their efficacy in terms of ensuring the meaningful participation of citizens.

Narain, Kumar and Mathur (1970), have outlined the different kinds of control - institutional, administrative, technical and financial - to the local bodies by the state governments. They also provide the suggestion to enable the PRIs in India to meet the new challenges posed by the twin objective of development and democracy.

Palanidurai (1991) has traced the chronologically developments relating to establishment of Local Self-Government Institutions in the country. The author narrated the experience of a few states which have attempted democratic decentralisation.

Mathur (1997) holds the view that the concern for decentralisation was technical: it was the improvement of the planning process; it was to counter the allegation of too much planning from below.

Rondinelli (1981) reviews the arguments offered by development theorists for promoting decentralisation, describes the rationale for and procedures of devolution and offers prepositions about the prerequisites for successful decentralisation in the Third World based on the lessons of the Sudan experience.

Jathar (1964) made a deep study of local self-government, particularly of the history of panchayats, initiatives taken by the British Government, of the Resolutions passed by the Government of India, of the recommendations of the committees, commissions and study Group appointed by government. He says that the introduction of panchayati raj in the rural areas of India is an epoch making event of far reaching importance in the fast moving momentous and revolutionary period after independence. He also believes that panchayati raj is a panacea for all sorts of rural ills.

Dwight Ink and Alan L. Dean (1970) provide the conceptual framework of what is meant by the term 'decentralization'. The major purpose of decentralization, according to them, is to bring about the most effective administration possible for domestic programmes which entail annual expenditures of many billions of dollars. They hold the view that failure to decentralize the decision-making authorities dilutes the policy formulation and programme planning functions of the headquarters.

Decentralization, according to Crook and Manor (1998), does not necessarily imply democracy. The outcome of a decentralization policy will depend not just on the relative weights of devolution and deconcentration in the institutional and fiscal structures, but also in their combination with two other important elements – the kind of legitimation and accountability adopted and the principles according to which the areas of a decentralized authority are determined.

Crook and Sverrisson (2001) hold the view that the notion that there is a predictable or general link between decentralisation of government and the development of more 'pro-poor' policies or poverty alleviating outcomes clearly lacks any convincing evidence. Those who advocate decentralisation on these grounds, a least, should be more cautious, which is not to say that there are not other important benefits, particularly in the field of participation and empowerment.

Henry Maddick (1963) in his classic study of decentralisation and development argued that economic growth and social modernization depend in part on ability of third-world governments to diffuse responsibility for development planning and administration, to expand participation in economic activities and to promote new centres of creativity within society. According to him, over-centralisation of administrative authority stifles development and leads to waste and corruption. Maddick (1970) in his other book said that, the panchayati raj institution is playing the very vital role in certain areas, particularly in promoting social change, economic development and efficient administration of representative government. He further expresses his opinion that all the rural government should be democratic and effective and to him, this is possible only if panchayati raj is organized and guided to serve its long-term objectives.

Neil Webster (1992) considers decentralization as political a phenomenon that is interpreted as a means to make the state more responsive and adaptable to the local needs then that it could be with concentration of administrative powers and responsibility of the states.

Dubhashi (1970) holds the view that decentralization is conducive to democracy but it is not invariable concomitant. Local government institutions are excellent instruments of community mobilization but are neither indispensable nor a condition precedent to community development. However, democracy, decentralization and community development are movements which, by virtue of their pursuit of a common objective, and by virtue of their adoption of similar methods, are mutually tied with each other and support and supplement each other.

Bhargava (1979) discusses the different issues and problems in regard to panchayati raj movement in the country in general and state of Karnataka in particular. He also discusses the major recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee with a view to highlighting issues and problems of great significance in reforming panchayati raj. He further suggests that there is the need for rural development to strengthen the rural infra-structure for development, faith in panchayati raj and timely elections to these bodies.

Sharma (1976) has made an attempt to study the reforms in panchayati raj institutions in the country since independence. In this regard, he has summed up analytically the major findings of the reports of the different committees, study teams etc. constituted by the Government of India from time to time, having a bearing on the problems of the democratic decentralization and panchayati raj institutions.

Mathur and Narain (1969) concentrate basically on two important issues - the panchayati raj and democracy and secondly, the politico-administrative aspects of panchayati raj. They are of the opinion that there is a conflict between panchayati raj and parliamentary democracy. The growth of political parties and their entry in rural politics has been considered both as inevitable and desirable. They also emphasize the need of training and education programme for the elected representatives for the success of Panchayati raj institutions in the Country.

According to Mathew (1994), Panchayati raj, which has become the third-tier of governance with the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, is of far-reaching significance for decentralized governance in India. He concludes that the demand for the decentralization of power and reviving of local government were the results of over-centralization, unprecedented destabilization in the states, all-round loss of faith in democratic institutions, deteriorating living conditions of rural people and growing parochialism in the country.

Nirmal Mukherji (1993) in his article 'Third Stratum' opines that the fundamental question before the panchayats everywhere in the country has for long been whether they are there for development functions only or for the purposes of self-government.

S. Sharma (1997) in her book "Grass Root Politics and Panchayati Raj" traces the genesis and growth of the village government from ancient time till today in terms of panchayats and panchayat leadership as also panchayat elections and voting behaviour. The interaction of caste, class and power in rural areas are also discussed in detailed manner. She also investigates and analyses various aspects of grass root democracy and politics in terms of performance of panchayats, pattern of rural power structure and links of leaders with higher political leadership.

Sweta Mishra (2003) traces the genesis and growth of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India. She discusses the developments in the area of decentralisation in India and underlines the constraints and problems hampering its effective implementation.

Prabhat Datta (1994) observes that democratic decentralization associates people with local administration and recognizes the rights of the people to initiate and execute decisions in an autonomous way. Datta (1998) in another writing, hold the view that the highly centralized structure of India's federal system has been a perennial threat to the grass roots democracy in India. A weak state government cannot give birth to a healthy local government even after the amendment to the constitution. He says that more and more decentralization and devolution of powers to the local bodies would help in the successful functioning of these bodies.

In the opinion of M.A.Muttalib and Khan (1982), the local government in a decentralized process is a body, representing a particular set of local views, conditions, needs and problems, depending on the characteristics of population and the economic element.

S.R. Maheshwari (1971) has made an attempt to study the structure, personnel, finance and functioning of rural as well as urban local government in India. According to him, the inadequate financial resources, low pay scales, incompetent personnel, excessive interferences by the state government are the major causes of ineffectiveness of local government's development in our country.

Local Government, according to Bhatnagar (1978), is the government of a locality, as distinguished from the government of the country or region thereof. He observes that local government is generally created in two different ways; first is that of administrative deconcentration and second method is decentralization. Local government established under the first method does not possess any authority of its own and remains dependent upon the central government. The institution created by the latter method has its own entity and enjoys power and authority without depending upon the central government.

According to Rajni Kothari (1991), the only alternative to a decentralized and genuinely democratic political system in a country like India is a gradual dissipation, erosion and ultimate disintegration of the state as well as nation.

To Heller (2001) three important preconditions for the success of decentralisation are that strong central state is required so that 'decentralised despotism' and elite capture at the local level can be avoided. Second, a strong civil society and close connection between the state and the civil society required, especially in the form of social movements. Third, an ideologically cohesive political party that has significant ties to grassroots organisations is required.

Girish Kumar (2006) in his book Local Democracy in India has made an attempt to reconstruct the contemporary history of decentralization in India with a view to understanding its impact on democratization. The author assesses the contribution of local institutions in expanding the social base of democracy and in deepening the process of democratization at the local level.

According to Subramanyan (2002), the appalling experience gained during the previous decade indicates that there is a virtual lack of 'politico-administrative will' on the part of the states to strengthen their panchayats by endowing the latter with appropriate responsibilities, resources, requisite staff support and adequate freedom in decision-making. Though several state panchayat Acts provided for a list of responsibilities for their respective panchayats, state governments did not frame appropriate guidelines nor did they issue the necessary executive rules/orders as regards their actual transfer to the panchayats. The Second Generation Amendment to the Indian Constitution, according to the author, should therefore aim at removing some of the obstacles that stand in the way of empowerment of these institutions.

The World Bank (2000) in the study on rural decentralisation in India concludes that political decentralisation has made considerable headway and taken root while administrative, fiscal and accountability mechanisms remain well below the desired levels in the country.

Sabanna and Kallur (2003) hold the view that the 73rd Amendment Act, 1993 provides the decentralized administration through local self-governing panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) at the district, block and village levels. It provides for the platform for direct participation of the people themselves in the Gram Sabha. In other words, PRIs encourage participation of people in the formulation and implementation of various developmental programmes in order to bring a meaningful socio-economic change particularly in rural areas.

Shikha Jha (2000) addresses directly the question of fiscal decentralisation in rural India following the 73rd Constitution Amendment and the conformity Acts passed by the state legislatures. Based on the field studies and the state finance commission reports of seven states the author concluded that the progress made has been extremely uneven and halting.

George Mathew (2003) hold the view that the institutionalization of panchayati raj system since the 1990s has added greater momentum to the decentralization process and has deeper implications for the human rights situation in India. He further adds that the election to the local bodies without any kind of violence on the basis of caste, colour, religion etc. will create a culture of genuine democracy and political participation.

In 'The Civil Society and Panchayati Raj Institutions', Nambiar (2001) makes an attempt to capture the contours of relationship between the civil society and the institutions of local self-governance in India. According to the author, the good partnership between civil society and self-governance has brought to the surface the various roles that the civil society takes on in strengthening the institutions at the local level.

Srivastava (2002) holds the view that it is now an accepted principle that good governance is inseparable from democracy and human rights including human dignity, justice, equality and participation. He further says that 'people-centred governance' relying on community-based institutions and envisaging consultation with NGOs, voluntary bodies seeks to ensure participation of people at the grass root level in self-governing institutions.

Sten Widmalm (2008) provides fresh perspectives and insights on what may be the world's largest ongoing decentralisation reforms-the Panchayat Raj reforms in India-and presents unique empirical material from Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. Comparative perspectives and references to historical cases from around the world are used to show how decentralisation can be connected to social capital and corruption.

Richard Scott-Herridge (2002) critically examines whether decentralisation can help to achieve the goal of good governance and poverty alleviation through locally focused decision-making and service delivery. The author reviews the meaning and perceived benefits of decentralisation and then takes an in-depth look at experience in Uganda to see whether the reality matched up to the expectations.

Tiwari (2002) analyses several factors that are attributed to good governance. He maintains that a particular approach or a school of thought cannot ensure good governance, but it depends on the combined effects of several attributes. A holistic approach towards administration, highly moral and ethical executive, transparency and accountability on the part of administrators and a deep sense of involvement and commitment to social values on the part of citizens are the bare minimum conditions for good governance.

Governance, according to Singh (2002), is a compulsory component of every state and good governance is the edifice for its all round development. He discusses at length a wide range of issues viz., various form of corruption, low web of bureaucracy, terrorism as a global phenomenon, erosion of administrative accountability, sexual exploitation etc. and also suggests some corrective measures like the use of IT, role of CVC, complicated rules need to be simplified, role of civil society etc. that need to be taken care of immediately.

Hye (2000) hold the view that good governance is not something to be desired by the 'government' delegating some of its powers and functions to the informal organs but as formal outcome of a new configuration of institutions resulting in a new social contract (as an ideology) and redefining the pluralistic state in the constitution.

Sam Agere (2000) in the book Promoting Good Governance focuses on good governance with the emphasis on public sector reforms. The author highlighted the role of public management in promoting productivity and increasing performance with relation to economic growth and sustainable development, accountability and transparency linked to administrative performance.

Sangita (2002) has critically examined the strength and weakness of the concept and frameworks developed by international development agencies for promoting good governance with a view to examining its relevance to Indian ethos and conditions. In doing so, the author raises the following issues: What is governance? What is good governance? What are the administrative models for promoting good governance? Which model is relevant to Indian ethos and conditions? What are the implications of good governance to developing countries, especially India?

The UN (2004) views that there are two distinct streams of discourse on good governance: one is rooted in academic research and the other is donor-driven. Academic discourse has dealt mainly with the way in which power and authority relations are structured in different contexts whereas the donor-driven discourse has

focused more on state structures designed to ensure accountability, due processes of law and related safeguards.

Mukhopadhyay (1999) in his article analytically examines the real meaning of good governance and the objective intents behind it in the present context of social, political and economic needs of governance with a developmental perspective. He further says that the challenge of good governance would require government to be reinvented, bureaucracy to be re-positioned, non-government business sectors to be re-invigorated with a social motive.

Mishra (2003), while highlighting the concept of governance and good governance discusses the different perspectives of good governance and also emphasizes on the need to understand the broad definition of good governance that talks of bringing into its purview the government, the citizens, the voluntary agencies and the private organisations.

Dwivedi and Mishra (2005) in their article discuss the process and strategies of governance with special reference to India. The authors examine the cardinal values essential for good governance and within this context the exhortations and directions originating from classical times, a number of impediments responsible for poor governance, widespread corruption including its symptoms and possible remedies.

According to John Harris (1982), rural development has emerged as a distinctive field of policy and practice and of research, in the last decade, and particularly over the eight or nine years since the inception of the 'new strategy' for development planning by the World Bank and UN agencies. This strategy came to be formulated as result of the general disenchantment with previous approaches to development planning at national and sectoral levels, and it is defined by its concern with equity objectives of various kinds-especially the reduction of inequalities in income and employment, and in access to public goods and service and the alleviation of poverty.

Rural development, to Singh (1995), is a multi-dimensional process which includes the development of socio-economic conditions of the people living in the rural areas, and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living conditions. The author also highlights the basic concepts and approaches to rural development and reviews the various development programmes started by the Government of India for development of rural areas in general and removal of poverty in particular.

Sharma and Rajagopal (1995) provide the chronological development of rural administration in the country right from the grass roots level. They also emphasize the development analysis, policy review and management approaches for promotion of rural administration. Authors conclude that one of the potent reasons for delay in implementing the rural development programmes is the lack of appropriate inter-institutional coordination in providing effective administration.

Rural Development, according to Muley (1987), is the pivot of administration at both the central as well as state and district level in India. The introduction of Panchayati raj institutions was a revolutionary step towards rural upliftment in this country. The author, therefore, in his study analyses the role and functioning of PRIs in rural

development and planning and also suggests some remedy to overcome the administrative difficulties.

Sud (1992) opines that the main objective of rural development schemes is poverty alleviation and since the rural society has remained backward for a time immemorial, it is essential to initiate such measures that can eradicate poverty in the country. The various measures taken by the governments -both central and state -however, have failed to yield good results because of the various administrative problems which are being faced by the rural development programmes. According to the author, the rural development schemes mainly face two types of problems; one at the policy and planning level and other at the implementation stage.

Jain, Krishnamurthy and Tripathi (1985) made a comprehensive and critical review of the various rural development schemes initiated by the Government of India. The authors argue that despite the plethora of schemes and the vast amounts of public money that have been spent on them, India's efforts at rural development have failed to generate a development process. The only solution, the authors suggest for the proper implementation of rural development programmes is democratic decentralization which provides opportunity to the people to involve both in the design and the actual operation of rural development schemes.

Singh (1998) examined the role of PRIs in rural development in India. He felt that PRIs play an important role in the rural development and reconstruction, but it is required to increase the efficiency of the panchayats. He suggested that corruption should be controlled at various levels and participation of villagers should be increased in the PR system.

Johnston and Clark (1982) discuss some strategic perspective looking into the various key programme areas like (i) production-oriented interventions; related to rural employment opportunities and agricultural development, (ii) consumption-oriented interventions dealing with health, nutrition and family planning; and (iii) organization-oriented interventions dealing with institutions structures and managerial procedures. The authors here critically analyse the historical performance of policies in these programme areas and suggest some feasible and effective strategies for rural development.

The rural development programmes, according to Uphoff, Esman and Krishna (1998), have been most successful which contribute, in different ways and to differing degrees, to three aspects that rural people seek most; productivity, well-being and empowerment. The authors identify four criteria in particular that assist the widespread achievement of these outcomes: (a) Resource mobilization, with the aim of self-reliance and self-sufficiency; (b) Scaling up and expansion, so that a large number of people can benefit from technical and organizational innovations; (c) Diversification, so that organization capabilities are applied to solving problems in rural areas; and (d) Continual innovation- utilizing learning processes and problems-solving strategies with maturing institutional relationship. The authors here conclude that the successful rural development programmes, although require funds, depend more on ideas, leadership and appropriate strategies than on money.

Aziz (1978) analyses the main elements of a strategy of rural development based on the Chinese approach. He discusses the basic objectives of rural development, the

constraints on or linkages between various objectives and some of the main policy implications. The author in his analysis does not verify and test all the quantitative data concerning the Chinese economy, nor does he present a comprehensive view of China's agricultural and rural development. But he concentrates and emphasizes on those aspects of rural development in China that would help to determine the relevance of China's experience for other developing countries.

Robert Chambers (1983) in his book discusses the rural poverty and rural development in the Third World. According to him there is an appalling urban poverty in the Third World and rural poverty in the richer worlds.

According to Anwer (1999), the people's active participation and cooperation is the key to the success of any social and economic development programme which is aimed at bringing a change in the life of the people. To ensure people's participation to the maximum it is imperative that they are involved in the programme right from its inception and effective organizations start functioning at the level of the rural community.

Srivastava (2006) examines the interface of panchayats and bureaucracy in the context of poverty alleviation programmes in the state of Uttar Pradesh. He argues that devolution has increased contestation over the use of funds for local development, and there is, therefore, more at stake than was the case before in the elections to panchayats. Singh and Pandey (1998) examine the factors responsible for success or failure of PRIs and identified factors which caused lack of participation of the weaker sections such as women, scheduled caste and tribes. They felt that the PR system was not only meant for decentralisation of power and peoples participation but it was also for supporting rural development and strengthening the planning process at the micro level.

A.K. Dubey on Relevance of Rural Development in the Context of Urbanisation (2003) examines the major aspects and contents of rural development in both the sector i.e., rural and urban.

Since 1991 Indian economy has been exposed to economic liberalization and globalisation in line with structural adjustment and stabilization policies initiated by IMF and World Bank. These different policies has brought a shift in the Indian economic policy from state oriented development strategy to market oriented development leaving the decisions of production and distribution to the market signals. Sengupta, Miah and Yasin (2004) while examining the effects of globalisation on rural development said that the entire process of development and for that matter, rural development has been sought to be made dependent not on the state or state-sponsored agencies but on the 'market' and its forces.

Rao (1990) opines that the existence of panchayati raj institutions not only helps people's participation in decision-making process but it also promotes involvement of people in development and socio-economic reconstruction of rural India.

Singh (2003) in his book presents a complete picture of the meaning, historical background and working of rural development programmes in India. He also examines the various bottlenecks in the existing organizational set-up for rural development programmes at district level, and also suggests the alternative strategy for more viable

and dynamic structural arrangement to work as model for any planning and implementation of rural development programme.

Beside these general studies, there are some studies on decentralization and development in Sikkim. Bhowmick and Dhamala (1974), Dhamala (1985, 1994) examines the development of decentralization in Sikkim. The studies, however, cover the growth of decentralised governance till 1982.

V.H. Coelho (1970) in the book 'Sikkim and Bhutan' provides a general idea on political development of Sikkim and also mentions the role of village local panchayat in the development of the state.

Bhandari and Upadhyaya (2000) focus their attention on the development of local bodies in Sikkim after the year 1965. They, however, did not mention the existence of different local bodies with different names even before 1965. Jayakumar (1997) has examined the different provisions of the structure and function of panchayat under different Acts including the act of 1993. Chhetri (2006) also examine the structure and functions of PRIs in Sikkim after the enactment of new Panchayat Act 1993.

Significance of the Study

From the review of the existing literature, it appears that most of the studies deal with the democratic decentralization of the country as a whole. There are however very few literature on decentralization in Sikkim. Thus, the present study seeks to make an in-depth study of democratic decentralisation and rural development in Sikkim and thereby seeks to fill the research gap that is there on the relationship between decentralized governance and rural development in Sikkim.

Research Questions

Given the broad objective as outlined above, the present study seeks to address the following specified research questions.

1. What was the state of decentralized governance in Sikkim before its merger to India?
2. What is the present state of decentralized governance in Sikkim?
3. Whether the present state of decentralized governance in Sikkim fulfills the criteria of good governance.
4. What is the state of rural development in Sikkim?
5. To what extent has the decentralized governance led to rural development in Sikkim.

Methodology

The methodology that is followed in the present study is the combination of observation and survey. The present research proceeds along a combination of exploratory, descriptive and diagnostic research designs. First, available literature on decentralization, good governance and rural development in general and with reference to Sikkim in particular has been surveyed to gain insight into the state of decentralized governance in Sikkim in both historical and analytical perspective. Then, the observation method has been adopted to comprehend the structural, operational and behavioural aspects of decentralised governance in Sikkim and its role in the process of rural development in Sikkim. Finally, a sample survey has been conducted in the four district of Sikkim to find out precisely the present status of decentralised governance and its role in achieving the goals of good governance and development in Sikkim.

Here sample of common people living in rural areas, politicians from the village level up to the state level and the officials from village level to state level has been interviewed on the basis of a prepared schedule. The information that were collected under the exploratory design were processed manually and were supplemented by the insights of the researcher that was gathered throughout the investigation. As for the information collected through the survey method, data were analysed through computer using the software of the Statistical Package for Social Science to measure the relationship and diagnose the reasons for positive/negative role of decentralized governing institutions in the process of achieving the goals of good governance and development in Sikkim.

Universe of the Study

The universe of the present research comprised all the different categories of respondents of all the districts of Sikkim.

The Sample

As per the descriptive and the diagnostic research design, the survey was conducted on the sample respondents of four Gram Panchayat Units of four districts of Sikkim. These were Tinik Chisopani in South District, Maneybong Sophaka in West District, Tathangchen Syari in East Sikkim and Rongong Tumlong in North District. The main features of the panchayats selected for this study are summarized in Table 1.1. The sample respondents comprised of different categories like politicians, officials, panchayat representatives, member of NGOs and civil society, beneficiaries of different programmes/schemes and common citizens. The respondents represent the cross-section of the sampled GP. The idea was to have a fair representation of people representing different categories like illiterate, landless, labourer, unemployed in one hand and highly educated, land owners, officials and professionals on the other.

Table .1.1: Summary Profile of Sample Study Area

Sample GPU	District	L.A. Constituency	Area (in hec)	Population		No. of Wards	Party Dominating
				Male	Female		
Tinik Chisopani	South	Jorethang Nayabazar	390	869	328	05	SDF
Maneybong Sophaka	West	Dentam	1326	1886	1770	07	SDF
Tathangchen Syari	East	Assam Lingzey	842	5565	4872	06	SDF
Tumlong Rongong	North	Kabi Tingda	1212	903	719	06	SDF

Plan of the Study

The present study is organised into eight chapters. Chapter I comprises the introduction, objective of the study, theoretical framework, review of literature, significance of the study, research questions, and methodology. Chapter II deals with Democratic Decentralisation, Good Governance and Rural Development-The Indian Experience. Chapter III traces the evolution of Democratic Decentralisation in Sikkim. Chapter- IV is devoted to Decentralised Governance in Sikkim: The Present State. Chapter V contains Good Governance and Democratic Decentralization in Sikkim. Chapter VI deals with Rural Development in Sikkim. Chapter VII deals with Democratic Decentralization, Good Governance and Rural Development in Sikkim-The Experience from Field. Chapter- VIII is devoted to summary and conclusions.

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