

Acknowledgement

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MANAGEMENT OF RURAL SELF GOVERNANCE:
A STUDY OF INSTITUTION LEVEL MANAGEMENT OF GRAM PANCHAYATS
IN PHANSIDEWA BLOCK, WEST BENGAL

ABSTRACT

Gram Panchayat is the ideal institution of rural self-governance in India. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has mandated the state governments for strengthening this grass-root democratic institution for its greater role in rural development and poverty alleviation. At this juncture it needs to be mentioned that along with this decentralisation movement *management at operational level of these institutions* must be improved, otherwise policy goals cannot be accomplished at its desirable extent. From this standpoint 'doing a research work on Management of Gram Panchayats at operational level seems the most relevant area of study.

The focus of the work is on studying management practice of Gram Panchayats and checking the possibility of applying the proven principles of management for improvement of their efficiency. A case study of seven Gram Panchayats under Phansidewa block reveals that provisions made for planning and controlling are exceptionally elaborate. However, at the operational level these management functions are mostly executed half-heartedly or carelessly. On the other hand, almost no importance has been given on organising. An elaborate system of governance with numerous assignments is placed on a poorly manned organisation structure of four personnel, who are under dual command and control of the Panchayat and departmental seniors of the line departments. As the organisation is not suitable for the functions assigned to them, the study recommends thorough revamping and restructuring of the organisation. It is strongly recommended that the line departments like health, agriculture, education, etc. operating within the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat should be placed under the command and supervision of the conveners of sub-committees (upa-samities). Then line department and staff will come under a common umbrella of a Gram Panchayat. The Pradhan shall hold the topmost position and coordinate the activities of various sub-committees.

Community control as operated through the mechanism of social audit is praiseworthy; however, at operational level it is found very half-heartedly executed. Accounting control is almost aimless. It has no parity with its operational objectives. It is recommended that the Gram Panchayats should prepare accounts in the line of Normative Approach to Accounting of PRIs as advocated by Roy Dipen (2005).