

## P R E F A C E

Democratic decentralisation as a political concept seeks to widen the area of people's participation. It has been considered as the most efficient method of formulation and execution of any development programme at the local level. Evidently, the scheme of democratic decentralisation entails co-operation between the official machinery of administration and non-official leadership and state - local relationship.

The present study seeks to outline the evolution of panchayati raj system in Sikkim. It is an attempt not merely to identify the shortcomings and bottlenecks of the system but also to examine it as a tool for democracy and development, and suggest measures for streamlining the panchayat bodies to enable them to meet these challenges.

The study starts with a map of Sikkim, locating the areas of study, to facilitate the acquaintance of the block panchayats visited.

In the introduction, significance of the present study and methodology have been discussed.

The first Chapter gives the general theoretical background, and is divided into three sections, (a) theory of Local Self-Government (b) evolution of Panchayati Raj in India and (c) an outline

of different approaches to Panchayati Raj in India.

Chapter 2 deals with the history of Sikkim and the evolution of local self-government in Sikkim. Divided into two sections, the first deals with the history of Sikkim in the perspective of its political, administrative and economic development; the second section deals with the tradition of institution of local self-government in Sikkim.

Chapter 3 presents the socio-economic profile of the respondents.

Chapter 4 deals with the powers, functions and working of block panchayat. Section I of this chapter gives the composition and working of the block sabha; section II is divided into three sub-groups : (a) functions of block panchayat, (b) working of block panchayat, (c) different schemes undertaken by panchayats.

Chapter 5 deals with the finances of block panchayat. Section I not only seeks to deal with the sources of finance of block panchayat but also highlights the respondents attitude towards the question of resource mobilisation; section II presents the financial administration which includes budget formulation and budget execution or auditing.

Chapter 6 presents the decision making process of

the block panchayats. In the process of analysing the decision making process of the block panchayat, it presents the process, nature of decisions taken, the dissensions of opinion, the method used for the resolution of such dissensions.

In Chapter 7 official non-official relationship has been highlighted. The official non-official relationship is sought to be understood, by analysing the mutual attitude of these two sets of functionaries. In the process, factors influencing the relationship have been analysed.

In Chapter 8 of the State - local relationship has been discussed. While examining the various methods of government supervision and control, the forms of control, administrative, institutional, financial and technical have been analysed.

In the conclusion, while recapitulating the whole study, efforts have been made to point out the shortcomings and bottlenecks of the panchayati raj institution, and recommend measures to streamline administration and elected bodies to suit the demands of two objectives of panchayati raj institutions.

A distinctive panchayat system, Zumsha is prevalent in two villages of Lachen and Lachung in North Sikkim. Its origin could be traced back to heavy past and the system was allowed to continue even after the enactment of the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1965. A detailed discussion of the system would have been significant. But

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since these villages are situated in the 'sensitive zone', government permission is required for the entry. Moreover they are kept outside the purview of research purpose. Hence the researcher could not procure permission to visit Lachen and Lachung for an intensive study. Nevertheless, attempt was made to collect informations regarding the system from various persons of Lachen and Lachung visiting Gangtok, officers who had assignments in these two villages and the Panchayat and Rural Works Department, Gangtok. A short discussion of this system has been included in Chapter II, sub-title, 'Bhotia system', though the researcher cannot claim to do justice to a system so interesting by devoting a few paragraphs.

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