

Renovation Cum Modification in Empowerment of Local Self Govt. in Peoples' Participation

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Abstract - Today the issues of local governance can be better addressed with the involvement and participation of people in day to day governance. The frame work of the paper deals with how the local government can be Renovation to ensure participation and involvement of the people at grass root level. This paper focuses on conceptual frame work for people's participation and empowerment. People's participation is essential for any programme of development to meet its objectives and achieving its goals. The concept of people's participation can be related with the rights of citizenship and democratic governance.

Key words: Renovation, empowerment, local-govt., people's participation, governance, democratic decentralization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The decentralization Community of solution exchange, and initiative of the United Nations in India, provides a platform for increasing our understanding local governance. Both rural and urban- though knowledge sharing and collaboration. Now we need to ask why the programmes of the union and state governments aimed at ameliorating rural and urban poverty have not been effective. The answer could possibly be due to the fact that the development models and the policies were dictated by our rulers from the top without taking the local needs and social realities fully into account. Does it mean that the people were left with no alternatives at all. No, we did have and still have the option to evolve alternative models of development and governance. The 73rd and 74th Amendment to the constitution tried to do that by the decentralizing the power in the hands of people to decide their own fate. Now we discuss about Renovation cum modification of local self govt. in people's participation.

The reinventing government movement, which started in the late 1980, is an effort to reorient the focus of government operations from inward looking approach to an outward- looking one by emphasizing the conceive and needs of end users. Under the model proposed by Citizens are regarded as "Customers" who become the central focus in designing government service delivery. This model also emphasizes the principle of "Community- ownership"[1]. Public officials are challenged to think about how to empower and involve citizen to take ownership of community problems. The approach urges officials to partner with citizen groups and non-profit organization to identity solutions and deliver public service effectively.

Empowering and involvement of the community are the necessary ingredients of Good governance practice in the age of globalization the initiative is essential, which brings the state more closer to the people, give voice to the people especially the marginalized and the poor broadens participation and develop power. There has to be enough scope for increasing incentives for participation in public affairs and reducing the gap between the citizens and the governance system. Empowering advocates that all strata of society should be provided adequate opportunities for all round development, particularly to those who cannot participate in power sharing, it is necessary to have the realignment of power equations in favour of the oppressed including rural poor by providing them sufficient opportunities to participate in political structures. This enables them to enhance their control over society's resources and this can be possible suitably at grass root level[2]. Thus a strong and dynamic local government functioning in a genuine participatory mode can associate the oppressive in power sharing. The governing institutions which are created at local level can be considered as the instruments to ensure people's participation and to generate process of empowerment.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment acts have ensured the meaningful People's participation at the local level. The provisions of these acts have the potential of establishing the procedural part of good governance. The decentralized system of governance has certain inherent advantages. It will bring efficiency as decision makers, who live locally are likely to know about local conditions and would be in a position to match resources and needs more precisely. It will also bring accountability in the sense that the decision makers live and work in close contact with the users, and as such are exposed to more effective scrutiny and greater pressure to deliver the goods.

Apart from these advantages there are also more opportunities for local people to participate in political and developmental processes at local level. Local governments also tend to give higher priority to issues, related to local development. The most striking features of 73rd and 74th Amendments is reservation for SCs and STs in proportion to their population and one third reservation for woman towards representation in local governance. Adequate representation of women and Dalits will certainly bring qualitative change in the functioning of local self govt's. However, this sort of people's participation may not remove all evils of misgovernance at the local level provided they are institutionally, financially and legally supported by the existing power structure.

1.1 People's participation at grass root level

People's participation is a tool which helps the people to realize that they can control their lives and livelihoods. Participation can be cultivated through community organizations. Based on certain principles which are as follows:

- Deal with problems which the community recognizes as its problems.
- Provide for community self determination.
- Engage the community in an active way in the solutions of the problems.
- Move at a pace that is comfortable for the community.
- Encourage growth in the community through solving the problems and
- Encourage community self understanding and integration.

Thus community organizations can involve members of communities in planning, implementing and monitoring of activities for their own development as the development is a multidimensional phenomenon which cannot be achieved unless the community itself is involved. Community participation can cultivate the people to acquire the capacity to appraise a situation, with the various possibilities and estimate their own contribution.

Governing institutions at the grass root level play a vital role in ascertaining the higher degree of people's participation^[3] by formulating certain objectives which will serve the following purposes:

1. Creating will and determination among the members of the community for improvement in their present and future life.
2. Identification and development of the local resources. These by generating self-reliance among the community.
3. Achieving integrated area co-ordination among various agencies interested in community welfare.
4. Mobilizing the available manpower for productive and useful activities.
5. Keeping the members of the community constantly informed about the development in the area.
6. Arranging functional literacy programmes which can help them in understanding new technology.
7. Organizing various clubs for youth, women to serve as centres of discussion and development.
8. Providing an open forum for the community to discuss its problems and find indigenous solutions, which may be efficient and economical.
9. To develop local leaders who can future educate and mobilize the people in the area.
10. Encouraging the people to adopt modern changes, which can accelerate their socio-economic development.
11. Arranging extracurricular activities to generate social awareness through well designed publicity and
12. Encouraging the people to develop themselves rather than depend upon the government for all activities and thus become self-reliance, which is the key to development.

In this way we may reach to a conclusion that people's participation is a pre-condition for success of any developmental programme and there must be an inbuilt mechanism to involve people in their conceptualization, planning, implementation, monitoring and management of resources. The significance of people's participation is highlighted by the world. Health organization in the following words^[4].

"People are the true measure of the success of policies and programmes. At the same time, people are the determinants of success. Experience teaches us that whether in the most sophisticated cities or in the most remote villages when people act with determination and understanding in pursive of goals they deem essential, they achieve success, previously insoluble problems are solved and resources are mobilized Miracles happen".

1.2 People's Empowerment

Empowering people means the giving of confidence, skills and power to the people to shape and influence what public bodies do for them. It is also the process where by public bodies can reach to the people to create empowerment opportunities. Empowerment is essential to make life better and for that it is necessary to work together. It involves more people to be associated in the process of governance so that they are able to influence decisions about themselves, not only that but people may take responsibility for tackling local problems rather than expecting others to do so. The government at local level can't solve everything by itself and nor can the people, and it is, therefore essential that they work together^[5]. Local government can function efficiently if enough scope is provided for empowering the people. There are three key ingredients to the people's empowerment.

1. Active citizen: People with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their issues and problems and they should be able to say what improvements are needed.
2. Strengthened communities: Community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions.
3. Partnership with public bodies: Public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people.

Empowerment should be the key concern for local government. Representatives of the people are elected to put local people first and they can do so that is by constantly seeking to enrich their mandate with a live contact with residents about how to improve quality of life. Empowerment of the people and participative democracy are essential complements to direct representative democracy. Democracy can work best at the local level if the governing process gives three key outcomes indicated as follows:

- a. Greater participation, collective action and engagement in democratic process.
- b. Change in attitude towards community empowerment.
- c. Improves performance of public services and quality of life.

These outcomes can significantly improve the lives of the people at local level and the local people can be assured of better and more responsive services. Such outcomes can also increase democratic legitimacy for institutions existing at local level.

In Short, the process of empowering the people at local level should enlist certain objectives for the government working at local level. These objectives are described as follows:

1. Widening and deepening empowerment opportunities locally providing information, consulting and involving local people.
2. Supporting and enabling people to take up empowerment opportunities.
3. Strengthening local representative democracy.

These objectives will help the local government institutions to ensure that:

- Public bodies recognize the value of empowerment both the process and in delivering more effective decisions.
- Public bodies have the skills, support and local knowledge to include empowerment in their everyday work.
- Local people are equipped with the tools and confidence to come together and find their own solutions to shared challenges.
- Local communities have opportunities to take more control over the services that make a difference to their lives.
- A framework is created to enable service providers and local people to work together to improve the lives of everyone.
- Active citizenship is fostered through greater rights for people to participate, matched by well understood responsibilities towards their community.

Over the last few years to serve the purpose of good governance, many of local governments have become better at engaging with communities. Through better information, consultation processes and user feedback on services. This is important but real empowerment needs to go beyond the process of engagement. It must make people feel differently about themselves and their power to influence.

The success of any institution, whether national, state or local, depends upon relationship between citizen and administration. Local institution should not function as machinery but in a human and purposeful way. The people in local body should have a sense of dedication, responsibility, be responsive and alert to the aspirations of the citizens. Citizens, on the other hand should also provide meaningful cooperation to local bodies. Under such atmosphere, it brings about social change and modernization in the social and economic aspect has to be attained through the participation on the part of the people. A similar view is evident in international thinking. The UNDP framework for Copenhagen Implementation[6] outlines the basic goal is sustainable human development, eradication of poverty, job creation and sustainable livelihood, advancement of women, and environment protection, it goes on to argue that empowerment of people is central to these commitments.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The grass root institutions will remain genuine institution of democracy if there is genuine scope for people's participation and empowerment otherwise these institutions will remain as institutions without roots. It can be said that the real strength of local governance lies in the awareness, involvement and participation of inhabitants of the area in all the activities concerning them. It is visualized that literacy, awareness, access to information and involvement the decision making accelerate the pace of people's participation in local governance. In sum, Strengthening of governing institutions at local level ensure the overall growth and development of the country. People's participation and empowerment enable growth with equity along with ensuring the development of democratic process.

If Panchayats are empowered as per the panchayat Raj Act, with funds, functions, and Functionaries to create their own economic activities according to their local needs, the rural poverty and distress migration can be arrested at the local level itself. It needs to be emphasized that it is vital at this juncture for the performing panchayats to relook at their current style of functioning and thinking beyond their traditional role to evolve a mechanism that would facilitate the local governance truly participatory, community oriented collective.

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