



An International Journal of Ideas

Vol. 28 No. 333 NOVEMBER 2014 Rs. 20. 00

Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

Third Concept
LB - 39, Prakash Deep Building,
7, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110 001.
Phones : 23711092, 23712249
Fax No: 23711092.
E-mail : third.concept@rediffmail.com
Website: www.thirdconceptjournal.co.in

While the Editor accepts responsibility for the selection of materials to be published, individual authors are responsible for the facts, figures, and views in their articles. However, the Editor reserves the right to edit the articles for reasons of space and clarity.

<i>Editor</i> Babuddin Khan	<i>Consulting Editor</i> M. L. Sharma
<i>Managing Editor</i> R. Prudhvi Raju	<i>Art Director</i> Purba Roy
<i>Business Executive</i> R.S.Rawat	<i>Chief of Production</i> N. P. Agarwal

Designed by: Pt. Tejpal

INSIDE

Editorial	
Politics of Black Money	5
<i>B.K.</i>	
India-Vietnam Economic Relations	7
<i>Dr. Anilkumar B Halu</i>	
Reenergizing India-China Relations	10
<i>Dr. Sheel Bhadra Kumar</i>	
India-Brazil Relations	13
<i>Prof. C. Sivakkolundu</i>	
Panchayati Raj in India	18
<i>Neeru</i>	
Legislators' Perception of Election System in India	22
<i>Dr. Sunita Rani</i>	
Consumer Brand Preference among Women	27
<i>Dr.K.Selvaraj & S.Malarvizhi</i>	
Focus on the <i>Misings</i> of Assam	31
<i>Dr. Nabo Kumar Pegu</i>	
Women's Participation in Workforce	37
<i>S.Yasotha Margaret & Dr.P.S.J.Michael Raj</i>	
People's Participation in RDPs in Assam	40
<i>Dr. Dipen Saikia</i>	
PRIs and Education in Karnataka	48
<i>Anitha S Kattimani & Dr Rabhiyakhanam</i>	
Kaizen or Cycle of 'Continual' Improvement	51
<i>Dr. Ritu</i>	
Right to Information (RTI) and Political Parities	54
<i>R.N. Gairola and Vikram Singh</i>	

Politics of Black Money

Recent media blitzkrieg over black money in India has transformed an economic offence into a political game which is being tossed by political parties against each other to score points without knowing the ground realities. Supreme Court's insistence on submission of full list of names of those persons who have stashed money on foreign banks has compelled the Union Government to honour apex court's orders in order to avoid any kind of confrontational situation between judiciary and executive.

During the decade-long regime of the UPA, the opposition parties, especially the BJP, continuously raised the bogey of black money. The issue of black money remained the centerpiece of campaign in 2009 Lok Sabha elections and during 2011 and 2012 many social activists also made efforts to build up movement on this issue. This issue hogged limelight again during the electoral campaigns of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. In July 2011, the Supreme Court while acting on a writ petition filed by the senior advocate Ram Jethmalani had passed order to constitute a high-level Special Investigation Team (SIT) to help unearth black money stashed away abroad. The apex court had also specified the terms of reference for the SIT. The UPA regime had been dragging its feet on implementing court's order on various pretexts. The UPA government did not comply with the order for nearly three years and sought a direction to review/modify the order in early 2014.

While dismissing the review application, the apex court gave three weeks' time for the Centre to notify the SIT. In the wake of the change of government at the Centre in the aftermath of Lok Sabha elections, the apex court on 23 May 2014 extended the time limit by one more week. Accordingly, the new NDA government announced on 27 May 2014 the setting up of a high-level Special Investigation Team (SIT) to help unearth black money stashed away abroad. The SIT is a high-level committee named by the Supreme Court and is headed by Justice M.B. Shah, a former judge of the Court, with another former apex court judge, Arijit Pasayat, as vice-chairman. It is an inter-agency group that includes the Secretary, Department of Revenue; the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, and the heads of the Intelligence Bureau, the Research and Analysis Wing, the Enforcement Directorate, the CBI, the Central Board of Direct Taxes and a few other agencies. Its primary responsibilities include the investigation and prosecution of cases involving unaccounted money.

There are varied estimates of the quantum of money parked in overseas bank accounts of the Indians. There are no official estimates of India's black economy. According to one report, it is estimated that the size of black economy is about 30% of India's gross domestic product (GDP) or about Rs. 35 lakh crore. According to another report, between 1948 and 2008 about \$462 billion or about Rs. 28 lakh crore in current exchange rates had been salted away in overseas tax havens by the Indians. A BJP task force report said in 2011 that Indians had parked \$1.4 trillion (Rs. 84 lakh crore) in undisclosed overseas accounts. Broadly speaking, if hidden income of \$500 billion were to be disclosed and taxed at 30%, it would generate Rs. 9 lakh crore

It is interesting to know that the list containing names of those Indians who had stashed black money abroad was stolen from HSBC in 2008 and it reached India via France. In the meantime the so-called holders of black money might have closed their accounts now. So under the prevailing circumstances, chasing those names may end in a fiasco. According to one report, Swiss officials had told the Indian government that in 2006, Indians held about Rs 23,000 crore in banks there. In 2010, as India pushed Geneva to share information about Indians who held allegedly illicit bank accounts in Swiss banks, nearly Rs 14,000 crore were moved out of those bank accounts and the amount fell to Rs 9,000 crore. Undoubtedly, the Supreme Court has ordered urgent scrutiny of 627 Indians who hold accounts at HSBC in Geneva. Some reports indicate that the average balance in these accounts is about Rs 40-50 crore and then at best, the government can hope to recover about Rs 3,000 crore, including penalties.

— BK

India-Vietnam Economic Relations

Dr. Anilkumar B Halu*

[In the wake of recent exchange of high-profile exchange of visits of leaders between India and Vietnam and conclusion of many agreements, the pattern of relationship between the two countries is destined to take upward swing. Vietnam is an important strategic partner of India and there is a need for keeping up the momentum in their bilateral relationship. Ed]

Recent years have witnessed an upswing in Indo-Vietnamese relations which is marked by a flurry of high-profile visits and increasing interaction in economic, cultural and strategic-defence relations between the two countries.

The visit of the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party Nguyen Phu Trong to India in November 2013 resulted in a number of initiatives laying the foundation for taking bilateral relations to a new level, after the NDA government took office in India post the General Elections in May this year. The NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has maintained the momentum.

Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Vietnam in August this year making it one of her first foreign visits. The visit signalled India's intent to shift gears from the 'Look East' policy to an 'Act East' policy. Subsequently, President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, paid a state visit to Vietnam in mid September this year and during the last week of October this year Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visited India.

Background

Relations between India and Vietnam have been cordial and friendly since their foundations were laid by Prime Minister Nehru and President Ho Chi Minh more than five decades ago. The traditionally close and cordial relations have their historical roots

in the common struggle for liberation from foreign rule and the national struggle for independence.

India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the first visitors to Vietnam after its victory against the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. President Ho Chi Minh's visit to India in February 1958 was reciprocated by President Rajendra Prasad who visited Vietnam in 1959.

Recent years have witnessed strengthening of political contacts between two countries as reflected in several high-level visits by leaders from both sides. Trade and economic linkages continue to grow. India's thrust under the 'Look East' policy combined with Vietnam's growing engagement within the region and with India has paid rich dividends.

Vietnam is an important regional partner of India in South East Asia. India and Vietnam closely cooperate in various regional forums such as ASEAN, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) besides UN and WTO.

Economic Relations

India's relations with Vietnam are marked by growing economic and commercial engagement, especially in recent years. Bilateral trade continues to grow rapidly and touched US\$ 3.94 billion in 2012, registering an increase of 1.1% *vis-à-vis* 2011. India's exports to Vietnam increased by 9% to the tune of US\$ 2.15 billion, while Vietnam's exports to India increased by 14.69% to reach US\$ 1.78 billion. India is currently the 10th largest exporter to Vietnam. During the visit of President

* Assistant Professor & P.G. Co-Ordinator, Department of Political Science, Government College Gulbarga.

Sang to India in October 2011, the two sides agreed to set the target of bilateral trade at US\$ 7 billion by 2015.

The trade relationship between India and Vietnam is largely supported by India's export to Vietnam and places India in a position to enjoy a favorable trade balance. Illustratively, in 2010-11, India's exports to Vietnam at USD 1,936.6 million were more than two times of imports (USD 790.6 million). However, recent times have also seen a surge in imports from Vietnam to India with imports registering a 135 percent growth in 2008-09 and a 27 percent growth in 2009-2014.

Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has been growing steadily. In 2013-14, the total Indo-Vietnam bilateral trade was \$8 billion. Growth in trade volumes has witnessed a jump of 30 per cent from the previous year. India's tariff structure is equally liberal when compared to Vietnam for the manufacturing sector.

Within manufacturing, expansion of intra-industry trade in the textile sector could be a huge win-win for both countries. Vietnam could replace its imports of fabric and yarn from China, with imports from India while exporting its lower priced garments to the expanding Indian market. This would be a classic example of mutual benefits from intra-industry trade.

However, in the case of the agricultural sector, India still has high levels of protection relative to the levels of tariff imposed by Vietnam. India could consider lowering these tariffs to provide better market access to agro-exports from Vietnam which needs to diversify its export basket to India, to gain advantages of the expanding market.

Currently four product groups contribute to almost 80 per cent of Vietnam's exports to India. They are mineral products (45%), chemical products (12%), vegetable products (10%), machinery and mechanical appliances (10%).

The India-Vietnam Business Forum, established in April 2010, expected to provide a platform to

strengthen business exchanges from both sides, was also launched during his visit. Vietnam continues to be an attractive investment destination for Indian companies. As of December 2011, India had 62 investment projects with total registered capital of US\$ 234 million. If investments by Indian companies from third countries are included as well, India has 86 projects with total investment capital of US\$ 868 million.

Indian companies are investing in oil and gas exploration, mineral exploration and processing, sugar manufacturing, agro-chemicals, IT, and agricultural processing. Vietnam's investment in India is currently in one project of US\$ 0.15 million.

OVL, Essar Exploration and Production Ltd, Nagarjuna Ltd, Venkateswara Hatcheries, Philips Carbon and McLeod Russell are some of the major Indian investors. Tata Steel plans to invest more than USD 5 billion in a steel plant in Vietnam. In the field of IT training, NIIT, APTECH and Tata Infotech have so far opened more than 50 franchised centers spread all across Vietnam.

India has set up the Vietnam-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Hanoi and Vietnam-India Center for English Language Training in Danang as part of its support to the Initiative for ASEAN Integration providing technical assistance to the Government of Vietnam.

Assistance and Capacity Building

Since 1976, India has extended 14 Lines of Credit totaling Rs. 561 crores to Vietnam. This includes the LoC for US\$ 45 million extended for Nam Chien hydropower project which is being executed by BHEL. India has offered a fresh Line of Credit for USD 19.5 million to Vietnam for setting up hydropower projects. India has agreed to consider earmarking an amount of up to USD 100 million under the Buyer's Credit under the National Export Insurance Account (BC-NEIA) for use by Vietnam. India has offered to extend new LoCs to Vietnam for infrastructure projects. Project proposals are awaited from the Vietnamese side.

Over the years, Vietnam has been a large recipient of training programmes under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. It has fully utilized 80 slots allotted to the country annually. Since 2012, the number of ITEC slots has been increased from 80 to 150. By the end of March 2013, it is expected to utilize the entire 150 slots of the academic year 2012-2013. Vietnam also utilizes the graduate, postgraduate and Ph.D. courses under General Cultural Scholarship Scheme (GCSS).

Several hundred Vietnamese students, many of whom are now senior officers, have graduated from universities under this programme. Vietnam has now been utilizing 14 scholarships under Education Exchange Programme (EEP) and since 2006, 10 slots for undergraduate courses funded by Mekong Ganga Corporation (MGC) programme. The number of GCSS has been increased from 10 to 16 with effect from 2012.

Conclusion

While some of the concentrated efforts made by both governments in this direction have already manifested in an improving volume of foreign trade and foreign investment between both countries, the potential for bilateral exchange remains largely untapped. Despite a continuous increase in trade over the past few years with total bilateral trade

crossing the USD 2 billion mark in 2008-09, when compared with their trade with other countries such as China and USA, bilateral trade is still largely low.

Despite enforcing trade frameworks, there has been less than potential expansion in economic integration between these economies. During the October 2014 visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister to India, both the countries have agreed to boost bilateral ties to \$ 15 billion by 2020 from the \$ 8 billion at present. There lies vast potential of further augmentation of bilateral economic ties between the two countries.

References

1. Pranav Kumar, *India-Vietnam Economic Relations: Opportunities & Challenges*, IPCS, Special Report, No. 58, New Delhi: IPCS, July 2008.
2. Rahul Mishra, *India-Vietnam: New Waves of Strategic Engagement*, New Delhi: ICWA, January 2014.
3. Rajesh Mehta, *India-Vietnam Trade: Current Relations and Prospects*, RIS-DP # 105, New Delhi: RIS, December 2005.
4. Yogendra Singh, *India-Vietnam Relations: The Road Ahead*, IPCS Special Report No. 40, April 2007.



PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

**Edited by
Babuddin Khan**

A compilation of Select Articles from 25 Years of THIRD CONCEPT

**On Emancipation and Empowerment of Women across the world with special emphasis on
Indian Women**

Price: Rs 695

Special Discount of 25% for Third Concept subscribers

Reenergizing India-China Relations

Dr. Sheel Bhadra Kumar*

[Relationships in international politics especially with neighbours are highly complicated, sensitive and volatile. Nation states have to handle and settle their bilateral issues very delicately keeping in view of others' concerns, perceptions and aspirations. If bilateral issues and concerns are handled skillfully with neighbours, there can develop a cordial and stable relationship beneficial not only for them but also for others in the region. But if nations fail to develop a balanced and cordial relationship with their neighbours, pressure of strained and fractured relationship is felt not only by neighbours but by others situated in the region and distant places.]

When we talk of India–China relationship, we find elements of concerns, doubts, cooperation and competition in that relationship. The Indian electronic media and press and some politicians often accuse the government of the day for being ‘soft’ in dealing with China while the Chinese scholars label India’s border infrastructure programme as provocative.

Recently, three-day visit of Chinese president Xi Jinping to India began on a positive note with a traditional swing on the Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmadabad with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. By sharing a rare bonhomie, the two countries signed two agreements and one memorandum of understanding.

Reaching New Delhi, their talks commenced with a leap forward in ties. China pledged to invest \$ 20 billion in India in coming five years. Thirteen pacts like boost in trade and economic development plan, modernization of railways, use of outer space, drug and cultural exchange, audio-visual production, sustainable trade, 1250-acre industrial park in Pune, new pilgrimage route to Mansarovar, sister city pact etc were inked. China even made a pitch for a civil nuclear cooperation which India agreed to discuss.

In the midst of these ongoing developments in New Delhi, a hurly burly disturbance created by the Chinese army in Ladakh forced Indian side to raise the contentious issue. India raised concerns over

the ongoing standoff at LAC in Ladakh’s Chumar and Demchok sector between the Chinese and Indian army and repeated incidents along the border and refusal to vacate the area despite flag meetings to defuse the situation.

The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said the incident along the border had been effectively controlled and managed. President Xi hoped that the unresolved boundary resolution could be solved in near future. The Indian prime minister even raised trans-border river issue and dual-stapled visa issue but the visiting Chinese President kept mum on these issues.

Thus we find that there are issues where we are ready to cooperate but there are some vexed issues where we are not ready to cooperate and share which make our relationship highly complex and intractable. However, there is urgent need for these two Asian giants that they should develop a stable relationship bilaterally and with other neighbours as well for the peace, stability and prosperity of Asia.

India wants a stable relationship with China hoping that its ties with China will open up possibility that Beijing might use its leverage with Islamabad to shape Pakistan’s behavior that might benefit India. India wants to fight terrorism effectively. China can play a vital role in countering cross-border terrorism. India needs investment and high-technology. China can invest and provide needful technology to India.

On the other hand, China wants to limit India’s growing relationship with the U.S. and Japan as well

* Associate Prof. of Pol. Sc., Govt. P.G. College Mahasamund, Chhattisgarh.

as with other countries in what China considers its backyard sphere of influence. While China is preoccupied with eastern maritime disputes and the North Korean situation, stable relations on its southern and southwestern flank would also help China. Chinese ambitious plan of the Maritime Silk Road [MSR] and the Silk Road economic belt cannot be realized without India's approval and consent.

China and India want to establish stable ties for following reasons:

1. With the eclipse of unipolarism and rise of multipolarism, China and India realize the importance of bilateral cooperation.
2. After the U.S military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the need for stability in South Asia has increased many folds. Both these two Asian countries have great stake in Afghanistan's stability and South Asian power equilibrium.
3. They desire for a peaceful periphery in order to focus on domestic socio-economic, religious, ethnic and other issues.

Despite their desire to establish stable relationship, there are issues which do not permit them to go too close for the following reasons:

1. Long-standing boundary dispute reinforces mistrust about Chinese intentions. Though after the 1962 Chinese invasion, there has seldom been gunfire on border between China and India unlike Indo-Pakistan border; where violation of cease-fire takes place very often. Despite increased engagement between the two countries on border issue, it has potential to stall, if not reverse, progress towards more stable relationship.
2. Tibet remains a key source of tension between the two countries though the two countries have found a way to manage their differences on this issue. Though Indian prime minister did not raise Tibet issue, but this issue came to limelight due to protests by Tibetan people residing in India. Dalai Lama has often said that a peaceful and stable Tibet is in the interest of both China and India.

3. China's special relationship with Pakistan has been a major source of concerns in India. Its role in strengthening Pakistan's conventional; missile and nuclear capabilities and assistance to Pakistan in developing projects and infrastructure in disputed areas between India and Pakistan are of major concerns for India.
4. China's growing political, economic and military ties with India's neighbors are also a subject of concern. China is developing its ties with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Maldives and Sri Lanka which have military connotations. China's increased interest in opening of Indian Ocean which India considers as its backyard has also not gone unnoticed in India. China regards its activities as economic development and necessary to protect its ships and oil- interests. However, India is not convinced of the Chinese logic and is pursuing a policy of wait and watch.
5. Trans-border river issue has become a subject of tension between China and India. Chinese dam construction on the Brahmaputra River and diversion of its water to its north-west areas has become a matter of great tension. Due to Chinese unfriendly activities, flow of water in North-West regions of India has become deficient which is alarming. Information sharing agreements are being violated by China.
6. Lack of trust, unpredictable intentions and aggressive Chinese behavior are major hurdles between the two countries.
7. The legacy of history remains a problem. Every time there is a border incident, it reinforces the narrative that has prevailed in India since 1962 war. The problem aggravates due to lack of connectivity, communication and little knowledge of intentions of the other country. There is a lack of trust and transparency between the two countries.
8. Reluctance of China in endorsing India's demand for a permanent seat in the Security Council and its objections to give India membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group makes India doubtful of Chinese intentions.

9. Economic ties have also not escaped trouble. Trade imbalance between the two has increased. In 2010-11 trade deficit was 28 billion dollars which increased to 40.8 billion dollars in 2012-13. Prior to the Chinese President's recent visit, Chinese officials had claimed that Mr. Xi would commit to invest at least \$ 100 billion in India. But the agreement inked in New Delhi could reach hardly \$ 20 billion worth of Chinese investment in India.
10. Cyber espionage and restrictions on labor are also contentious issues between the two countries.
11. Visa liberalization agreement which was negotiated in 2013 could not be signed during the Chinese president's recent India visit. India has refused to conclude the agreement until China abandons its policy on stapled visas for Arunachal Pradesh residents.

What should India do?

China regards India as its competitor which can overpower or surpass it in its effort to balance it by creating axis with the U.S and Japan on one hand and create tensions for it by forging alliance with the South-East Asian countries with which China has not very good relationships. Therefore, its posture and behavior towards India remains to be aggressive, hostile, unfriendly and unpredictable.

India needs to adopt a multi-pronged strategy to tackle dragon's moves. India has to build trust and improve communications with China. It needs to

increase political, economic and even military cooperation with China on bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Instead of going down the rabbit-hole of LAC clarification, India and China should move boldly to settle the boundary dispute.

Simultaneously, India should have patience to be ready to compete with China because in international politics you have either to speak at equal level or from a position of strength to be heard. Therefore, India needs to increase its military preparedness and strength to ward off any adventure from Chinese' side.

It has to develop border infrastructure and border areas strategically. It needs to consolidate and expand development activities in the border regions. India will have to follow Look East Asia policy more vigorously. There is need for India to develop and strengthen its relations with East and South-east Asian countries.

Indian prime minister's Japan's visit and Indian president's Vietnam's visit are good moves taken in right direction. Indo-U.S relations give India leverage to work as an offshore balancer. Therefore, India should take sufficient measures to develop its relations with the U.S.

Relations between the two Asian giants depend on a number of internal, bilateral, regional and global factors. India has to manage its relations with China with prudence but with firmness. India has to play cool and remain vigilant to develop capabilities. China has adopted same tactics and strategy adroitly against its adversaries like Russia and the U.S.



To our Contributors.....

- & Original articles are welcome.**
- & Only Original copy of the manuscript, neatly typed in double-space should be sent. Please do not send carbon, cyclo-or photo-copies.**
- & Please check up grammatical & typographical mistakes before sending. Editor will not be responsible for these lapses.**
- & Editor reserves the right to reject/ modify / edit an article without assigning any reason.**

India-Brazil Relations

Prof. C. Sivakkolundu*

[India-Brazil cooperation is extensive and comprehensive covering every important segments of interaction. The bilateral relationship can be seen at the level of plurilateral in forums such as IBSA, BRICS, G-20 and in the larger multilateral arena such as the UN, WTO, WIPO, etc. Bilateral relations between India and Brazil have acquired the dimension of a strategic partnership in the last decade.]

Content to India-Brazil relations came to be added to the hitherto cordiality under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. His successor President Dilma Rousseff's first ever visit to India in March 2012 has provided greater commitment and content to this relationship. During the visit, she interacted with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and held detailed discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues including inter alia trade and commerce, science and technology, cultural exchange, UNSC reforms, terrorism, WTO and climate change.

The two leaders renewed their commitment to strengthen the India-Brazil Strategic Partnership. The Joint Statement issued during President Rousseff's visit on 30 March 2012 summarized concisely the wide spectrum of areas of cooperation of strategic partnership. President Dilma Rousseff also met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the BRICS Summit in Durban in March 2013, Rio+20 Sustainable Development Summit in June 2012, BRICS Summit in China in April 2011, IBSA

Summit in South Africa and during the G-20 Summit in Cannes in November 2011.

Historical Background

Deep-rooted historical ties between India and Brazil can possibly be traced back to the Asian migration to South America, which contributed to the evolution of the indigenous people of Americas. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Brazil and Goa, both outposts of the Portuguese imperialist outreach, had bilateral exchanges, which found reflection in the flora and fauna, food and dress as well as folk traditions of Brazil.

The interesting similarities between folk traditions of Boi Bumba in the north of Brazil and the Poikam Kudharai of South India, for instance, draw attention to the strong undercurrents of cultural and popular exchanges that have taken place in the centuries by-gone. The telecasting of tele-novella called 'Caminho das Indias' made a great impact in enhancing the consciousness of India in the Brazilian public mind.

Country comparison

	Brazil	India
Population	190,732,694	1,210,193,422
Area	8,514,877 km ² (3,287,597 sq. mi)	3,287,240 km ² (1,269,210 sq. mi)
Population Density	22/km ² (57/sq. mi)	364/km ² (943/sq. mi)
Capital	Brasilia	New Delhi

* Asst Prof., Dept of Economics, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu.

Largest City	Sao Paulo - 11,037,593 (19,889,559 Metro)	Mumbai - 13,922,125 (21,347,412 Metro)
Government	Federal presidential constitutional republic	Federal parliamentary constitutional republic
Official languages	Portuguese	Hindi, English and 20 other officially recognised languages
Main religions	74% Roman Catholicism, 15.4% Protestant, 7.4% non-Religious, 1.3% Kardecist spiritism, 1.7% Other religions, 0.3% Afro-Brazilian religions	80.5% Hinduism, 13.4% Islam, 2.3% Christianity, 1.9% Sikhism, 0.8% Buddhism, 0.4% Jainism, 1.2% other religions
GDP (nominal)	US\$2.425 trillion (\$12,200 per capita)	US\$1.946 trillion (\$1,542 per capita)
GDP (PPP)	US\$2.309 trillion (\$11,845 per capita)	US\$4.710 trillion (\$3,851 per capita)
Military expenditures	\$31.576 billion (FY 2012)	\$46.219 billion (FY 2012)

India's diplomatic mission on Brazil

India opened its diplomatic mission in Rio de Janeiro on May 3, 1948, which later moved to Brasilia on August 1, 1971. The Indian Consulate General in Sao Paulo, the industrial and commercial hub of Brazil, was opened in 1996. The Brazilian Embassy has been functional in India since 1949 and has Consulate General in Mumbai.

India- Brazil Contribution in farming

India's contribution to farming in Brazil is remarkable, though relatively a lesser known facet of our bilateral relationship. The bulk of Brazilian cattle livestock is of Indian origin. The 'Ongole' strain from Andhra Pradesh led to the production of the zebu variety known in Brazil as 'Nelore'. Brazil still imports fresh embryos from India to rejuvenate its cattle breed.

Important Bilateral Visits

Regular high level bilateral visits have provided a sustained impetus to the growing relationship. From the Indian side Vice President S. Radhakrishnan (1954), Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1968), Prime Minister Narasimha Rao (1992 - for Earth Summit), President K.R. Narayan (1998), Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh (2006, April 2010 and June

2012) and President Pratibha Patil (2008) have visited Brazil while President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1996), President Lula (2004, 2007 & 2008) and President Dilma Rousseff (March 2012) reciprocated from the Brazilian side.

India- Brazil Bilateral Trade and Investments

Brazil is the most important trading partner of India in the entire LAC (Latin America and Caribbean) region. India and Brazil bilateral trade has increased substantially in the last two decades. However, the most impressive change is taking place now as the trade is becoming more diversified both geographically as well as qualitatively. In 2011 about two third of our bilateral trade of US\$ 9.2 billion was oil products, whereas in 2012 this proportion has become less than half in our bilateral trade of US\$ 10.6 billion. This trend is likely to continue as the product range of our bilateral trade gets diversified and moves up the value chain. Some of the impediments in achieving the potential of our bilateral trade relationship, such as geographical distance between India and Brazil and the language barrier have been addressed by globalisation of world trade and technological innovations in the field of communication technology and transportation.

India-Brazil bilateral trade 2008-2013(US\$ million)

Years	India's Exports	India's Imports	Balance of Trade for India	Total trade	Growth %
2008	3,564	1,102	2,461	4,666	49.23
2009	2,191	3,415	-1,224	5,605	20.12
2010	4,242	3,492	2,461	7,734	37.97
2011	6,081	3,201	2,880	9,282	20
2012	5,043	5,577	-544	3,496	14.41
2013(Jan-April)	2,447	949	1,498	3,496	-

Brazilian exports to India

In 2012 Brazil exported about US\$ 5.6 billion to India, 62% of which was crude oil and related products. Sugar, iron ore and soya oil were the other three commodities which form about 23% of the export basket of Brazil to India. One can say that only 15% of Brazilian exports to India were non-commodity and higher value-added products. It needs to be understood, however, that in absolute terms, this amounts to US\$ 850 million which has doubled since 2007.

Brazil's strength in oil sector is further underscored by the discovery of pre-salt oil, Brazil's iron ore company value is one of the world leaders and Brazilian agricultural research agency EMBRAPA has developed state of art agricultural research centres all across the country in last 40 years. It is natural to assume that these areas will show strength in Brazilian exports globally and India too.

Brazilian engineering goods exports to India in 2012 stood at US\$ 335 million. More than half of this amount was by EMBRAER (Brazilian commercial aircrafts manufacturing company). Brazilian agricultural and automotive machinery and accessories are also exported to India in increasingly larger quantities.

Indian exports to Brazil

Indian exports to Brazil have increased from US\$ 2.2 billion in 2007 to US\$ 5 billion in 2012. Proportion of diesel oil and other value added petroleum products has decreased from 51% to 44% in these five years. There have been important increases both in

proportions as well as in quantities in areas like organic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, auto ancillaries and electric machinery & equipments. Apart from these, India is one of the leaders from Asia in the exports of cotton yarn and fabrics, carpets and apparels and textiles.

Exports of engineering goods

India's engineering goods exports have increased from US\$ 187 million in 2007 to US\$ 685 million in 2012. This increase has happened across the product categories within the sector as well as geographically among the different states of Brazil. While in 2007, most of these exports went to Southern Brazilian industrially advanced states of Sao Paulo, Rio Grande de Sul and Parana, in 2012 there is significant proportions of these high value added products destined to North Eastern State of Pernambuco and Ceara, mining hub state of Minas Gerais and even to the Western state of Amazonas. This clearly indicates the balanced economic development that is taking place in Brazil on the one hand and increasing business to business contacts between India and Brazil.

Investments between India and Brazil

There have been two-way investments between India and Brazil. While the Brazilian companies have invested in automobiles, IT, mining, energy, bio-fuels, footwear sectors in India, the Indian companies have invested in such sectors as IT, Pharmaceutical, Energy, agri-business, mining, engineering/auto sectors.

Indian companies such as TCS, Wipro, Infosys, Cadilla, Mahindra, L&T, Renuka Sugars, United Phosphorus, Polaris are present in Brazil. The Brazilian companies present in India include Marco Polo (automobiles), Vale (biggest mining company), Stefanini (IT), Gerdau (Steel). A separate note on investments and joint ventures is attached.

India and Brazil have formed a bilateral Trade Monitoring Mechanism (TMM) for periodic consultations. The last meeting of TMM at the level of Commerce Secretaries of two sides took place in March 2012 in New Delhi. Next meeting would take place in Brazil. Action is also in hand to convene the first meeting of re-launched India-Brazil CEO Forum, modalities for which are being worked out.

India-Mercosur

PTA which was signed in 2004 entered into force on 1st June 2009 under which 450 items from each side will have duty reductions of 10% to 100%. New tariff lines have also been proposed under the agreement. Efforts are underway to broaden and deepen the India-Mercosur PTA and to link it, under IBSA to SACU as well. India-Brazil Chambers of Commerce, based in Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte work in close cooperation with the Embassy/Consulate.

Cultural Exchanges

There is enormous Brazilian interest in India's culture, religion, performing arts and philosophy. The first forms of Indian Culture to reach Brazil were all somehow related to spirituality, philosophy and religion. Folkloric identities and celebrations from India could relate very much to the jolly and colorful nature of the festivities such as the typical dances and parades of north and northeast of Brazil.

The first classical art to come to Brazil was Bharatanatyam dance, with Odissi, Kathak and Kuchipudi to follow later. Not only for their distinct character but also due to the exoticism of costumes, ankle bells and, head dresses, impacting make-up and angular postures are immensely appealing to Brazilian eyes.

In classical music, Brazil has already a share of those who have learnt Sitar, Tabla and other instruments and they not only play some of the original ragas

and rhythms but go beyond to create fusion music in conjunction with Brazilian artistes. There are numerous organizations teaching Yoga, all over Brazil. Ramakrishna Mission, ISKCON, Satya Sai Baba, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Bhakti Vedanta Foundation and other spiritual gurus and organizations have chapters in Brazil.

Mahatma Gandhi is highly regarded in Brazil and NGOs are trying to circulate the philosophy of non-violence among students, youth and even police. Statues of Mahatma Gandhi have been installed in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Londrina.

In recent year the cultural exchanges have taken place at increased frequency supported by two governments. The Brazilian cultural troupe had given splendid performances in India in 2008 and a large group of Indian artists gave several popular performances in Brazilian cities in May-June 2011. Flute Maestro Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia gave three performances in July 2012 in Brasilia, Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo. Brazil-India Club (BrIC) created in 2012 has regular programmes at the Indian Cultural Centre in Sao Paulo around Indian and Brazilian festivals.

India cinema is also popular among Brazilian people. Indian Film-weeks organized by Embassy and Consulate have always received good responses. India organized Indian film weeks in second half of 2013 celebrating 'Hundred years of Indian Cinema' in many Brazilian cities. There have been some Indian movies released commercially in Brazil, like Road Side Romeo, an animation movie and Fanaa from Yash Raj Productions. Giselli Monteiro of Brazil got a break in Indian movie 'Love Aaj Kal' encouraging more and more Brazilian girls to try their talent in Bollywood.

ITEC Programme

A few Brazilians have gone to India under ITEC programme for training in communications, management, defence etc.

Indian Community in Brazil

The Indian community of PIOs/NRIs in Brazil is small, numbering about 2000 persons. A majority of them lives in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Manuas. The community mainly comprises of professionals and businessmen and some scientists/

researchers in agriculture, physics, etc. There is Indian Association in Sao Paulo.

Economic relations

- ³ In recent years, relations between Brazil and India have grown considerably and co-operation between the two countries has been extended to such diverse areas as science and technology, pharmaceuticals and space. The two-way trade in 2007 nearly tripled to US\$ 3.12 billion from US\$ 1.2 billion in 2004.
- ³ Global software giant, Wipro Technologies, also set up a business process outsourcing centre in Curitiba to provide shared services to AmBev, the largest brewery in Latin America. AmBev's zonal vice president, Renato Nahas Batista, said "We are honoured to be a part of Wipro's expansion plans in Brazil and Latin America." AmBev's portfolio includes leading brands like Brahma, Becks, Stella and Antarctica.

UNSC reform

Both countries want the participation of developing countries in the UNSC permanent membership since the underlying philosophy for both of them are: UNSC should be more democratic, legitimate and representative - the G4 is a novel grouping for this realisation.

Brazil-India and the IBSA initiative

- ³ The first ever IBSA Summit was held in Brasília in September 2006, followed by the Second IBSA Summit held in Pretoria in October 2007, with the third one held in New Delhi in October 2008. The fourth IBSA meet was again hosted in Brasília, just before the second BRIC summit. Four IBSA Trilateral Commission meetings were already held till 2007 since the first one was held in 2004 and had covered many areas such as science, technology, education, agriculture, energy, culture, health, social issues, public administration and revenue administration. The target of US\$10 billion in trade was already achieved by 2007.
- ³ Both countries view this as a tool of transformation diplomacy to bring economic growth, sustainable development, poverty

reduction and regional prosperity in the vast regions of Latin America, Africa and Asia. The IBSA Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger has already provided funds for capacity building in East Timor and for the fight against HIV/AIDS in Burundi and has won the South-South Partnership Award at the 2006 UN Day event held in New York City on 19 December 2006.

Visas/Air links/travel

Under a bilateral agreement, diplomatic and official passport holders are exempted from visa for a stay of maximum of 90 days. There are no direct flights between India and Brazil. Convenient connections are however available via Europe (London, Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam), the US (New York and Chicago) and via Dubai.

Conclusion

India's links with Brazil go back five centuries. Most of the cattle in Brazil are of Indian origin. While Brazil tried to explain to India that its position was to be understood in the context of a long tradition of friendship between Brazil and Portugal, this trend is likely to continue as the product range of our bilateral trade gets diversified and moves up the value chain. Some of the impediments in achieving the potential of our bilateral trade relationship comprise such as geographical distance between India and Brazil

References

1. Stuenkel, Oliver. "The Case for Stronger Brazil-India Relations", *The Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, July-September 2010.
2. Indian Embassy in Brazil: Bilateral Trade Statistics.
3. Von Freiesleben, Jonas."Member States Discuss Security Council Reform Again: A Never-Ending Process?" *Centre for UN Reform*, April 16, 2008, retrieved October 31, 2010.
4. Consulate of India: Brazil & India bilateral relations Bottom of Form.
5. National Congress of Brazil. Brazilian Federal Budget (2009) - Ministry of Defense (Ministério da Defesa).
6. Consulate of India: Brazil & India bilateral relations.



Panchayati Raj in India

Neeru*

[Panchayati Raj in India has been the pulse beat of our democracy, the roots of the Republic since the ancient times. In the words of Sir Charles Metcalfe, "The Village Communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down revolution succeeds to revolution; but the village community remains the same."]¹

The term 'Rural Local-Self Government' is the synonymous of Panchayati Raj. Local government or local self-government, as known in India, has come into existence through a long process of evolution. In the Western countries this evolution has taken place only in recent centuries.

In some of these countries its origin was due to deliberate decentralisation of politico-administrative powers to representative local authorities or institutions set up within the governmental system. In other Western countries it has originated as the result of the decision of local communities to join together to form large representative local authorities or institutions within the governmental system to manage local affairs and community or civic services.

In India and several other Asian Countries the origin and evolution of local self-government have been comparatively a recent phenomenon within their respective governmental system.²

Local government is an integral part of the three tier-system of government in our country-the other two tiers being the Union (central) government and the state governments. Local government is at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions with the national government at the top and the immediate government i.e., the state government occupying the middle range.

Local government operates both in urban and rural areas and is therefore designed as Urban Local Government (ULG) and Rural Local Government (RLG) respectively. The former manifests itself in

ULG institutions such as municipal corporations, municipal committees etc. and the later in rural local institutions comprising zila parishads panchayat samities, gram panchayat and gram sabhas.³

Local government has been defined in numerous ways. It has been defined in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as "an authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside and smaller than the whole state. The variant local self government is important for its emphasis on the freedom to decide and act."⁴

In the words of William A. Robson, "Local government may be said to involve the conception of territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organisation to regulate its own affairs."⁵

Panchayati Raj is more than a concept. Its objectives extend far beyond the import of democratic decentralisation.⁶ Democratic decentralisation is a concept which associates people with local administration through popularly elected bodies. It recognises the right of the people to take initiative and to execute policy decisions in an autonomous way. It is, therefore, both an end and a mean. It is political ideal and local self-government is the applied form of this political ideal.⁷

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India refer to a statutory multi-tier administrative structure entrusted with the developmental duties and responsibilities by the State legislatures. This form of local self-government has its origin in Lord Ripon's famous Resolution of 1882 in which he recommended: "The smallest administrative unit, the

* Lecturer in Pol. Sc., Government College, Ropar, Punjab.

sub-division or taluka or tehsil – shall ordinarily be placed under a local board, which would further be controlled by the District boards.⁸

Article 40 of the Constitution of India directs states to make Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as responsible units of self-government.⁹

The Panchayats were established by most of the state governments in India after independence. In 1957, the Team for the study of Community Projects and National Extension services was appointed by Committee on Plan Projects in order to study and report on the Community Projects and National Extension services.¹⁰

A major step in this direction was taken on the basis of Balwantraji Mehta Committee's report in 1957 which recommended three-tier Panchayati Raj system in India-the village Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zila Parishad at the District level. The same three levels have been retained even now but with a new vigour.¹¹

In 1977, the Janata Party government came to power after the defeat of Congress (I). The Central Government set up the Ashok Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions (1978). The committee recommended a two-tier system with Mandal Panchayats at the base and Zila Parishad at the top. Seats for SCs and STs were to be reserved on the basis of their population. The committee wanted PR institutions to participate in development activities, in the areas of agriculture, cottage industries, welfare activities etc.

Subsequently, the G.V.K Rao Committee was set up to review the existing administrative arrangements for rural development and poverty alleviation programmes (1985). This Committee had recommended for strengthening of Zila Parishad so as to enable it to become the principal body for administration of development programmes.

In June 1987 the Government appointed an eight-member committee under the Chairmanship of L.M. Singhvi to review the functioning of PRIs in order to suggest measures for their revitalisation. The

foremost recommendation of the Singhvi committee was that the local government should be constitutionally recognised, protected and preserved by the inclusion of a new chapter in the Constitution.

Another committee came into existence under the chairmanship of P.K. Thungon to consider the 'type of political and administrative structure in the district planning.' Amongst the various recommendations made by this committee, one important recommendation was about a detailed list of subjects for Panchayati Raj to be incorporated in the constitution and the setting up of the state finance commission to lay down the criteria and guidelines for devolution of financial resources on the Panchayati Raj bodies.¹²

Parliament appeared on the scene when Rajiv Gandhi government approached the Parliament with the 64th constitutional amendment bill in 1989. The bill evoked countrywide protests and was subsequently withdrawn. The V.P. Singh government also tabled a bill on this issue. The bill was largely modified after carefully considering the points of contention raised by the opposition parties during the regime of Rajiv Gandhi.

Subsequently, the Union Government introduced in Parliament on 16 September 1991 a Bill to amend the Constitution. Ultimately, parliament approved the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution along with the Nagarpalika 74th Amendment Bill. So this Amendment Act is the culmination of various proposals made by the earlier committees on Panchayati Raj bodies, and thus giving Panchayati Raj institutions a viable shape. The Constitution (seventy-third) Amendment Act, 1992 came into force from April 24, 1993.¹³

Problems of Panchayati Raj

Almost a decade has passed since the adoption of the seventy-third Amendment to the Constitution and passing of the conformity legislation by the states. A number of factors are responsible for the poor performance of PRIs.

1. Gram Sabhas have not proved as effective as they were intended to be. In several villages Gram Sabha continues to be paralysed and as

such accountability of the panchayats and participation of the people in their own governance have suffered as a consequence.

2. Another problem is created by the social environment in rural India. Rural society is not only conservative but also caste-ridden. In many states there is lack of infrastructure and information and widespread illiteracy. There is inadequate awareness among the people about their rights and opportunities.
3. The state and panchayat raj representatives were largely responsible for the eclipse of PRIs. The state level leaders began to see their rivals in these institutions and out of fear, they started withdrawing important functions from these bodies making them only dumping grounds for discarded state cadre administrative officers.¹⁴
4. It has been observed that the MPs and MLAs have not been friendly to these institutions. Apart from being indifferent to local governments they have also been hostile to these bodies. They do not like to see another centre of power emerging as a challenge, nor do they like to see one's existing powers being diluted.¹⁵
5. The problems of PRIs have further been compounded by the penetration of state authority by the use of stringent control like dissolution and suppression of PR institutions. Even sarpanchs were suspended or removed by government on flimsy grounds.
6. Although panchayat has control of development fund, it is not a full-fledged planning or budgeting body. Planning is still an exercise coming from the state. Though plan is prepared by the district planning unit, state planning authority will return it with a number of modifications.
7. A more basic objection to the structure of the local bodies is that all panchayats will have to conform to a uniform three-tier structure. This could mean disruption of traditional local government structure of certain triable region.
8. Corruption is another virus which has adversely affected the health of PR institutions. Those who are elected to these institutions at different levels

do not reveal a high standard of conduct. Even the bureaucracy attached to them is not free from corruption.¹⁶

9. Another problem is the dominance of panchayats by the powerful and the rich. It has been observed that the posts of the village Pradhans/ Sarpanch have often been cornered by the wealthy and influential defeating the very purpose of representative institutions.
10. The problem of coordination has another dimension. The coordination between the PRIs and the district administration offices or government field offices tends to weak or fractional. This dilutes the local support system for active functioning of panchayats.

Suggestions

To make the PRIs more successful and effective, some suggestions are as follows:

1. Encouragement to the organisation of the rural poor so that they can assert to demand their rights.
2. Panchayati Raj bodies should be provided unified administrative set up, created exclusively for rural development. This cadre should be protected from unwanted political pressures with suitable transfer and promotion policy rules. Training of PR members about their roles is also essential for its success.
3. A constitutional amendment for ensuring elections to cooperatives is a must, because a vibrant cooperative system is important for successful panchayati raj.
4. National Finance Commission may strengthen the consolidated fund of the state keeping in view the devolution of state finances to panchayats.
5. The elected representatives of the panchayats should exercise superintendence and control over government officials, i.e., serving the panchayats instead of playing a subordinate role. Thus, there is an urgent need to educate local leadership about their legitimate role in the nation-building and the governance of the country.

6. There is need to promote social capital through networking of various associations and institutions for creating pressure on elected representatives and departmental officials for proper functioning of these bodies.¹⁷
7. An inter-zila panchayat parishad should be conducted in every state with the Chief Minister as its Chairman to thrash out legislative and financial matters of the panchayats.
8. The voluntary organisations especially women's organisations should be encouraged by Union Government to take up the cause of panchayats. The Union Government may provide incentive grants to such organisations.¹⁸
9. There should be commitment of the PR as a political value and the consequent political will to establish it.
10. Panchayati Raj Institutions should be treated as the single agency for development of the rural local levels.
11. It should not be forgotten that the effort to revitalise PR, in fact, is an attempt to reconstruct Indian polity by way of bringing so far deprived sections into the mainstream.

In the end, it can be said that most of the success of PRIs will depend upon the political will of the concerned state governments. So far the seventy-third Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 has only provided the general guidelines for the effective and efficient PRIs in India. It granted the PRIs a constitutional status, some sort of uniformity by making three-tier system a permanent feature. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is certainly an attempt in that direction and will revitalise PR for decentralisation and rural development.

References

1. Ambardar Som, *Public Administration in India*, Dominant Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, p.243.
2. Khanna B.S., *Panchayati Raj in India (Rural Local Self-Government)*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p. (xi).
3. Sachdeva Pradeep, *Urban Local Government and Administration in India*, Kitab Mahal Agencies, Allahabad, 3rd edition, 2000, p.1.
4. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, London, Vol.14, pp. 261-262.
5. *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. IX-X, p.584.
6. Chooramani, G.S., "Objectives and Problems of Panchayati Raj", in D.P. Singh (ed.), *Problems of Public Administration*, Asia Publishing House, Lucknow, 1967, p.103.
7. Arora R.K., *Perspectives of Public Administration*, Rajat Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p.48.
8. Maheshwari, S.R., *Local Government in India*, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 10th Edition, 2004, p.18.
9. Article 40.
10. Narain, Iqbal, "The Administrative Challenge to Panchayati Raj", in K.R. Bombwall and L.P. Choudhry (eds.), *Aspects of Democratic Government and Politics in India*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1968, p.411.
11. Mishra, S.N. and Mishra, Sweta, *Theory and Practice of Public Administration*, Jnanada Prakashan (P&D), New Delhi, 2001, pp. 422-423.
12. *Op. cit.* 8, p.164.
13. Biju, M.R., *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System (Reflections and Retrospections)*, Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, 1998, p.46.
14. Sharma, M.P. and Sadana, B.L., *Public Administration in Theory and Practice*, Kitab Mahal Agency, Allahabad, 39th Edition, 2003, pp.788-792.
15. *Op. cit.* 11, p.427.
16. *The Time of India*, New Delhi, 8 April 2001.
17. *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 28 May 2006, p.12.
18. Brar, Nirmal Singh, *Local Government in India*, Unistar Books Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh, 2006, pp.124-126.



Legislators' Perception of Election System in India

Dr. Sunita Rani*

[India is the biggest democracy of the world. Elections are democracy's ceremonial event, its feast and its great function. It is through popular elections that the authority of the government is clothed with legitimacy. Free and fair elections are the mainspring of a healthy democratic life and a barometer of its strength and vitality.]

A good electoral system is the bedrock of a genuine representative government.¹ The power of the democratic process can be gauged by the fact that in militancy-ridden Punjab during the Eighties, a free and peaceful poll was essential to repair the political system in the state which had been badly mauled, as well as to ensure the participation of all political parties in the elections. Only such a poll could legitimize the state political system and affirm that power could be gained in the state through constitutional means.

Therefore, the government was determined to ensure a peaceful poll, whereas the extremists were all out to scuttle it.² Democracy can survive only when people exercise their franchise without fear and coercion. Open competition and campaigning, equality of voters, freedom of choice and truthful counting of ballots are the main characteristics of free and fair elections.

In a democracy, it is the right, as well as the duty, of all citizens to cast their votes to choose the representatives who they feel will fulfill their aspirations and interests. Thus, elections are the best means to provide opportunities to the people for political participation.

Electoral politics leads to increasing political consciousness in which all citizens have the right to vote and participate equally in the political process. This is 'the central democratic procedure for selecting and controlling leaders' and provides the citizens with the golden opportunity to evaluate the performance and conduct of the ruling elite.³

* Asst. Prof in Pol. Sc., SGTB Khalsa College, Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.

The word 'election' has been derived from a Latin word 'election' which means 'to choose'. In fact, democracy is known by the elections it holds and the participation that it allows there in. If democracy entails a government chosen by the people, it is only through elections that the people choose their representatives who eventually constitute the government.⁴ According to *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, "Elections are essential to the functioning of large scale democracies in which some form of representation is necessary to allow all the individual citizens to participate in these societies decision making process."⁵

For the purpose of the present study, legislators were asked to give their opinion on the role of the election system. It can be concluded here that the majority of the legislators from all the parties felt there was something wrong with the system and this feeling causes distrust of the election machinery.

Interestingly, almost all the respondents said that the election system in India was right but they did not give any specific reason for their opinion. Most of them considered democracy to be indispensable for a country like India because no other system was better than this and democracy in their opinion is a simple and transparent system. All of those who said that the democratic system was flawed felt that it is a highly expensive system and there were good chances of misusing of governmental machinery in this system.

Some of the legislators expressed some views which gave an impression that the government machinery is misused in elections. A specific allegation was leveled by the opposition that due to the weakness

in this system unfair means were often used in elections. Another, reasons for their critical view of democracy was there was no proportionate relation between the votes polled by a party and seats in the legislature.

Moreover, many people generally did not cast their votes etc. It is generally complained that the misuse of official machinery takes different forms, such as issue of advertisements out of the discretionary funds at the disposal of the ministers, use of government vehicles for canvassing etc. This leads to the misuse of public funds for furthering the prospects of candidates of a particular party.⁶

The question posed to the legislators was whether they were satisfied with one member/ multi member election commission in country. Three options were

given to them viz. single member, multi-member and both types. It is pertinent to point out that 25.0 (34) percent legislators considered election commission to be one member and 33.0 (45) percent approached it as multi member election commission and 41.9 (57) percent legislators favored both type of election system.

It is clear from the above table that in all the four legislative assemblies 20.5 percent, 26.4 percent, 29.4 percent and 23.5 percent legislators favored single member election commission and 32.3 percent, 38.2 percent, 35.2 percent, and 26.4 percent respondents favored multi member election commission. While 47 percent, 35.2 percent, 35.2 percent and 50 percent respondents agreed with both types of election commission.

Table 1

Perception of Legislators about the Election Commission

Response	1997 (34)*	2002 (34)	2007 (34)	2012 (34)	Total (136)
Single Member	20.5 (7)	26.4 (9)	29.4 (10)	23.5 (8)	25 (34)
Multi -Member	32.3 (11)	38.2 (13)	35.2 (12)	26.4 (9)	33.0 (45)
Both	47.00 (16)	35.2 (12)	35.2 (12)	50.0 (17)	41.9 (57)

Source: Personal Interview.

* Figures in brackets indicates the real number of responses given by legislators.

Role of Election Commission

Legislators were asked to give their opinion on the role of Election Commission. There are four conditions for the successful working of an election system in a democratic country like India. These are: firstly, an independent, honest, competent and non-partisan election machinery to conduct elections; secondly; an independent judiciary to interpret election laws; third a developed system of political parties and a well organized network for implementing their policies and a team of candidates before the electors as alternatives between which to choose; fourth, a general acceptance of a certain rules of the game throughout the political community of the country.⁴

In a democratic state, political parties have played a pivotal role before elections, during elections and after elections in the formation of the government over the last sixty years of independence. However, leaders of political parties in independent India have not always emerged through a process of democratic elections and promotion from the lowers levels to the higher and the top. Thus leadership in most of the political parties in India may be democratic in appearance but highly oligarchic in reality.

A new tendency has been witnessed in politics in the form of non-serious candidates who are largely floated by serious candidates either to catch sizable portion of votes of rival candidates or to split the votes on caste lines or to have additional physical force at polling station and counting centers.⁵The question posed to the legislators was whether they were satisfied with the working (role) of election commission. Three options were given to them viz. strongly agreed, agreed, and not agreed. It is

pertinent to point out that 37.5 (51) percent legislators were strongly agreed and 30.1(41)

percent agreed and 16.1 percent were not agreed with election commission.

Table 2

Perception of Legislators about the Role of Election Commission

Response	1997 (34)*	2002 (34)	2007 (34)	2012 (34)	Total (136)
Single Member	20.5 (7)	26.4 (9)	29.4 (10)	23.5 (8)	25 (34)
Multi-Member	32.3 (11)	38.2 (13)	35.2 (12)	26.4 (9)	33.0 (45)
Both	47.00 (16)	35.2 (12)	35.2 (12)	50.0 (17)	41.9 (57)

Source: Personal Interview.

*Figures in brackets indicate the real number of responses given by legislators.

The above table clearly demonstrates that out of total 37.5 percent in all and 38.2 percent, 38.2 percent, 44.1 percent and 29.4 percent legislators were in the four respective assemblies strongly agreed with the role of election commission. 30.1 percent in all and 38.2 percent, 23.5 percent, 26.4 percent and 32.3 percent legislators in the four respective assemblies was agreed with the performance of election commission. Lastly, 16.1

percent in all and 11.7 percent, 20.5 percent, 14.7 percent and 17.6 percent MLAs in the four respective assemblies were those who did not show agreement with the working of the election commission.

Only 16.1 percent in all and 11.7 percent, 17.6 percent, 14.7 percent and 20.5 percent in the four respective assemblies was those who did not give any answer to the question. It is clear from the data that legislators have a consciousness of the relevance of the election commission. This is testimony to the fact that legislators have a positive outlook towards electoral reforms.

Table 3

Perception of Legislators to Contest Next Elections

Responses	1997 (34)*	2002 (34)	2007 (34)	2012 (34)	Total (136)
No	-	-	-	-	-
Yes	85.3 (29)	79.4 (27)	76.4 (26)	79.4 (27)	80.1 (109)
Doubtfully	14.7 (5)	20.5 (7)	23.5 (8)	20.5 (7)	19.8 (27)

Source : Personal Interview.

* Figures in bracket shows the actual number of Legislators.

It is clear from the table that 80.1 percent legislators responded by saying that they were willing to contest the next elections and 19.8 percent said that they were doubtful. They said that the question of contesting will depend on whether the party gives them the ticket. No Single member said a categorical 'no' to the question of contesting the next elections.

In all the four assemblies respectively 85.3 percent, 79.4 percent, 76.4 percent and 79.4 percent respondents showed willingness to contest next elections while 14.7 percent, 20.5 percent, 23.5 percent and 20.5 percent respondents said that they were doubtful. It is universal desire to remain in power and in public domain amongst the legislators. Thus almost all expressed a desire to get reelected. It is universal desire to remain in power and in public domain among the legislators. Thus almost all the legislators expressed the desire to get reelected.

Legislators Perception About the Age Limit for Contesting Elections

It has been a widespread belief that aged people would always dominate in acquiring leadership role in a traditional society like ours. However, they were other studies like that of Iqbal Narian 1964, M.V. Mathur 1966, K. Rangarao 1968, which found that young people were also emerging as leaders in

changing the leadership pattern. Age has been an important factor in the Indian tradition of leadership.

It has symbolized experience, maturity and equanimity of mind.⁶ When we asked the respondents if there should be any upper age limit for contesting leadership positions for political institutions and if yes what should be that limit they gave the responses as are tabulated below.

Table 4

Age Limit for Contesting Elections

Response	1997 (34)*	2002 (34)	2007 (34)	2012 (34)	Total (136)
No Limit	52.9 (18)	61.7 (21)	26.4 (9)	20.5 (7)	40.4 (55)
Yes	47.0 (16)	38.2 (13)	73.5 (25)	79.4 (27)	59.5 (81)

If Yes the Limit (81 Respondents)

Up to 60	43.7 (7)	38.4 (5)	36.0 (9)	48.1 (13)	41.9 (34)
Up to 70	56.2 (9)	61.5 (8)	64.0 (16)	51.8 (14)	58.0 (47)

Source : Personal Interview.

* Figures in brackets show the actual number of legislators.

It is clear from the table that 40.4 percent legislators did not agree with having any upper age limit for contesting elections whereas 59.5 percent respondents favored having one. In the second part out of all 58.0 percent (47) MLAs said that the upper age limit should be 70 years while 41.9

percent (34) respondents said that it should be 60 years.

From the above analysis it is also clear that 59.5 percent (81) legislators favored having an upper age limit for contesting elections to the state legislative assembly. Indian polity has largely been a domain a septuagenarians and octogenarians. The situation seems to be changing. A large percentage is of the opinion that effective retirement is good for our political system.

Table 5

Do You Favor the Participation of Children of Legislators in Politics?

Response	1997 (34)	2002 (34)	2007 (34)	2012 (34)	Total (136)
Yes*	38.2 (13)	55.8 (19)	32.3 (11)	29.4 (10)	38.9 (53)
No**	50 (17)	29.4 (10)	47.0 (16)	55.8 (19)	45.5 (62)
Doubtfully	11.7 (4)	14.7 (5)	20.5 (7)	14.7 (5)	15.4 (21)

Source : Personal Interview.

Note : Figures in bracket indicates the real number of legislators

* 'Yes' includes the reasons of their saying like this.

** 'No' include the reasons of their saying like this.

Further, the legislators were asked whether they favored the participation of children of legislators in politics. Out of the total 15.4 percent respondents

did not give any answer to this factor. 38.9 percent in all and 38.2 percent, 55.8 percent, 32.3 percent and 29.4 percent respondents in the four respective assemblies said that they were willing to have their children participate in politics because they wanted them to serve the people.

On the other hand 45.5 percent in all and 50 percent, 24.9 percent, 47.0 percent, 55.8 percent legislators in the four respective assemblies were not willing to have their children be a part of politics. There is not an absolute agreement about the entry of children. This is understandable. As this is more a personal issue and involves individual preferences.

In brief, an attempt was made here to explore the role perception of legislative leadership. Their local orientation and also a tendency to attach great importance to functional roles was the main finding of the research. The concern for their locality and constituency and emphasis on functional roles not only makes them popular with the voters but also ensures their reelection. It is clear from the data that legislators have a consciousness of the relevance of the election commission. This is testimony to the fact that legislators have a positive outlook towards electoral reforms.

As for the perception of legislators to contest elections it is universal desire to remain in power and in public domain amongst the legislators. Thus almost all expressed a desire to get reelected. There is not an absolute agreement about the entry of children. This is understandable as this is more a personal issue and involves individual preferences.

References

1. Sunder Raman, *Indian Government and Politics*, Allied Publishing Company, Allahabad, 1989, p. 284.
2. David L. Sills, *International Encyclopedia of Social Science*, Macmillan & Free Press, London, Vol. 5., 1968, p. 3.
3. L.M. Singh, *Elections and Electoral Reforms in India*, Sterling Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971, p. 165.
4. R.B. Sundriya and Shard Dighe (eds.), *Electoral Reforms*, Shree Publishing House, 1997, p. 74.
5. *Ibid*, p. 128.
6. Arjun Rao and Y. Darshankar, *Leadership in Panchayati Raj : A Study of Beed District*, Panchsheel Parkashan, Jaipur, 1976, pp. 81-82.



THIRD CONCEPT *welcomes your valuable comments on articles published in each issue. Suggestion to further improve quality and get up of your favourite magazine, which has a record of uninterrupted publication since 1987 are also solicited.....*

Consumer Brand Preference among Women

Dr.K.Selvaraj* and S.Malarvizhi **

[Automobile industry occupies a vital position in the industrial scenario of a nation irrespective of the level of economic development of the nation concerned. The automobile is a unique technological achievement and improvement over other modes of surface transportation. Its development in the better part of the 19th century and its manufacturing later on a mass scale have been a powerful stimulation to the industrial growth in the economically developed nations of the West.]

In the India automobile industry many varieties and brands of two wheelers are entering the market. So there is sudden shift or change in the tastes and preferences of two wheelers by the customers. Owing to this it becomes necessary to make a detailed analysis of the various aspects that impel the women-users to choose a brand.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Salem Town and it was confined only to the women users of two wheelers. The modern woman is both an economic and social change agent due to female education, technological progress and employments etc. Owing to this their roles and status in society bring about many healthy and positive changes in them hence managing domestic duties and playing occupational roles prompted them to go in for speedy mobility. This study aims to analyze the brand preferences of two-wheelers by the fair sex. It will also help in finding out motivational factors, advantages, need and convenience of using two-wheelers.

Statement of the Problem

The present study entitled “ A Study on Brand Preference Among Women About Two- Wheelers (TVS) in Salem Town” is intended to enquire into the factors that influence their choice of brand on the basis of quality, price, style, advertisement and peer influence. The complications undergone by the present researcher to identify women’s reaction are

* Associate Prof. in Commerce, Mahendra Arts & Science College, Namakkal.

** Research Scholar in Commerce, Mahendra Arts & Science College, Namakkal.

many. The researcher’s interest to know the degree to which women’s preferences vary with age, education, occupation or other characteristics prompted the selection of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research study were as follows

- 3 To examine the brand preferences among the women for two-wheelers.
- 3 To ascertain the reasons for women’s choice of two-wheeler in the study area.
- 3 To know the factors motivating women to buy the two-wheeler in Salem Town.
- 3 To identify the level of satisfaction among women about two-wheelers in Salem Town.
- 3 To offer necessary information and suggestions to the users in regards to the various brands available in the market.

Hypothesis of the Study

- 3 There is no significant relationship between Age and Reason for choosing.
- 3 There is no significant relationship between Age and Source of awareness.
- 3 There is no significant relationship between Type of Two – Wheeler used and Amount spent to purchase.
- 3 There is no significant relationship between Reason for choosing and Warranty period.

Methodology

Collection of data

The nature of data collected was primary. The interview schedule method was adopted for primary data collection. It was conducted in a simple and easy manner. The interviews showed the personal characteristics of women users and their brand preferences of the two-wheelers in the study area.

Sampling Size

The sample units selected for the study were confined only to the women of Salem Town. The total size of the sample was one hundred selected from the three categories as mentioned above and convenient sampling was adopted here by collecting information. The data were collected from sample members belonging to all parts of the study area. Pilot study was conducted as a prelude to the research study. This was done to find out the feasibility of conducting the research study.

Sampling Tools

The following are the tools used for the study

1. Percentage Analysis
2. Chi – Square Test
3. ANOVA Test
4. F - Test

Area of the Study

Area of study was limited to Salem City of Salem District.

Period of the Study

The research work was carried on from February 2014 to April 2014 in Salem Town only.

Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of the study.

- ³ The population selected for the study was confined only to the women users of two-wheelers in Salem Town.
- ³ The researcher has studied the brand preferences of only four prominent vehicles manufactured

by the TVS (like Wego, Jupiter, Scooty streak, Scooty pep+).

- ³ The survey was limited to a sample size of 50 respondents in Salem Town.
- ³ The result will not be the same in the next period and uncertain predictions are expected.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis has been conducted by using statistical tools like Percentage method, Chi-square test, F-test and finally ANOVA method.

Table 4.1- AGE GROUP

S.No.	Age Group [in years]	No. of the Respondents	%
1	Below 20	22	22
2	20-30	48	48
3	30-40	14	14
4	Above 40	16	16
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

The above table reveals that 48 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 20 – 30 years followed by 22 percent of the respondents are below 20 years next 16 percent of the respondents are above 40 years finally 14 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-40 years.

Conclusion

It is concluded that 48 percent of the respondents which are in the age group of 20-30 years prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in the study area.

Findings Suggestions and Conclusion

Findings of the Study- Percentage Analysis

- ³ It is concluded that 48 % of the respondents are the age group of 20-30 years preferring women two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.

- 3 It is accomplished that 60% of the respondents are single and most of them prefer Women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is accomplished that 36% of the respondents are in the Private Jobs and they prefer Women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is observed that 44 % of the respondents are Post-Graduates and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is revealed that 54% of the respondents' Annual Income is in the range of Rs.1, 00,000 – 2, 00,000 and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is concluded that 50 % of the respondents are having family members 2 to 4 and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is discernible that 56 % of the respondents are having the driving experience of less than 5 and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is established that 34 % of the respondents having Two-Wheeler TVS Scooty Pep+ also prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is observed that 44% of the respondents' reason for choice is of 'Easy to handle and maintain' and they also prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is noticed that 48 % of the respondents are motivated by the image of brand and through advertisement and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is revealed that 52 % of the respondents are aware of other members of family's choice and they also prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It becomes discernible that 60 % of the respondents are among those who can afford to spend in the range of Rs. 30,000 – 40,000 and they also prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is observed that 32% of the respondents are having the resources to make cash payment and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is concluded that 48% of the respondents are having the convenience of riding women's two-wheelers (TVS) by wearing churidar in Salem town.
- 3 It is noticed that 46% of the respondents desiring the advantage of 'Easy and Comfortable' ride prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is concluded that 36% of the respondents having the brand preference of 'Style of Look' prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is revealed that 42% of the respondents wanting 'Warranty Period of 2 – 3 years, and they prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is evident that 28% of the respondents are having the 'Level of Satisfaction of Any other and Gearless' and they also prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.
- 3 It is concluded that 32% of the respondents are having 'Opinion or No Opinion of Any other' prefer women's two-wheelers (TVS) in Salem town.

Chi – Square Test

- 3 There is no significant relationship between Age and Reason for choosing.
- 3 There is no significant relationship between Age and Source of Awareness.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Type of Two-Wheelers and Amount Spent to Purchase.

- 3 There is no significant relationship between reason for choosing and warranty period.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Source of payment and Brand preference.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Annual income and advantages of women two – wheelers.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Motivation to buy and Source of payment.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Annual income and Amount spent to purchase.
- 3 There is significant relationship between Motivation to buy and Brand preference.
- 3 There is significant relationship between type of two–wheelers and advantages of women two–wheelers.

F – TEST

- 3 There is a significant difference between Level of satisfaction and Annual income.

Anova (Two Way)

Level of Satisfaction

- a. At Level of significance at 5% value column.
- 3 Since the calculated value is less than the table value. So, we have to accept the null hypothesis.
- b. At Level of significance at 5% value Row.
- 3 Since the calculated value is greater than the table value. So, we have to accept the Alternative hypothesis.

Suggestions

Presently, women prefer a particular brand of vehicle on the basis of quality, price, style etc. And there have been no efforts so far undertaken by the manufacturer to model vehicles especially to suit the convenience of women riders. One of the main reasons for buying the particular brand is creation of particular brand image through advertisement and advertisement for two – wheelers in regional language and local language will greatly enhance the brand preferences.

From the lubricant to the make along with aggressive marketing is the strategy of public relations and hence efforts by the manufacturers to build up their public relations better will secure a professional choice of brand by women users. Apart from advertising widely about a particular brand, efforts by the manufacturers to produce good quality vehicles will increase the demand for the particular brand by women users as it is a bit difficult for women during break-down on the road or take the vehicle to mechanics for repairs often.

Conclusion

Two-Wheelers have become a necessary accessory not only for men but also for women in their day- to-day life. They find it convenient and comfortable to ride two-wheelers. As a result the women users are conscious of special features of the vehicles. Therefore, any brand which has good features along with style entails the potential of attracting women users. At present TVS Scooty is well established “Trade Name”. Advertisement and slogans of the company are no doubt attractive.

The users’ preference for the vehicle because of convenience in ridding, low maintenance, fast and full efficiency, goes to TVS Women users. Preference for the brand on account of special features like easy start, quick go, easy to handle etc., should not in any way affect the further research and development of the vehicle and the company should continue its quality improvement mission.

Select Bibliography

- 3 Motor India, *Journal of Automobile Industry and Trade*, May --2008, vol. 52, and p. 79.
- 3 K. Narasimhan, (2003) “Quality from Customer Needs to Customer Satisfaction”, *The TQM Magazine*, Vol. 15 Issue: 6, pp.430 – 431.
- 3 Ainvderson (1973), “Do Different Consumers Operate under the Same Preference model”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 4(1); winter; pp.429-439.
- 3 Anuj Kumar Kanojia (2011), *Analyzing the state of competition in Indian two wheeler industry*. A report submitted to Competition Commission of India, New Delhi.

- ³ Hemant C R , A project report on customer satisfaction of two wheelers industry with special reference to Yamaha motors. 2011
- ³ Terrence V. O'Brien, "Tracking Consumer Decision-making", *Journal of Marketing*, January. Vol.35 (1); pp.34-40.2000.
- ³ Muralidhar," How and when do brand perceptions and first from? A cognitive development investigation", *Journal of consumer research*, vol.12 .pp. 382-393. 2004.



Focus on the *Misings* of Assam

Dr. Nabo Kumar Pegu*

The present habitation of the Misings of Assam is mostly seen on the bank of the river Brahmaputra, its tributaries and their estuaries. Some of the ancient Mising villages can also be seen on the bank of the river Jia Bharali, the second largest tributary of the river Brahmaputra.

These are all highly flood prone areas of Assam and are mostly inhabited by the Misings, Deories and several other smaller plains tribes of Assam. This is an indication of the capacity and adjustment of the Misings as to how they could maintain their settlements in the naturally endowed environment as well as natural disasters.

Some scholars, belonging to the first half of the 19th century, while taking note about the habitations of the 'Miris' stated that the 'Miris' occupied the strip of alluvial land along the north bank of the *Brahmaputra* from the large island *Majuli* up to the river *Dibang*, the northern branch of the *Brahmaputra* and bounded on north by hilly country of the *Abors* (M'Cosh 1975).

In fact, there is no written documents of the *Misings* of their own with regard to the origin and migration expect some rich oral chronicles in the form of legends, myths, folk-tales and songs which have been transmitted down from generation to generation. A legend in which generations are allowed to play freely, may; however, conceal a kernel of historical truth (Dutta Chowdhury 1994:30).

Elderly generations took them as actual happening at certain point of time in the unknown system rested on the gravity of stories. Usually, every tribe has a legend of its origin and migration and these are believed by the succeeding generations as true.

Similarly, the legends of the *Misings* have also preserved their age-old tradition, and thus can be built on truth.

These legends are part of their tradition, which bring to recapture some unforgettable events by knitting a tale around them and then reflecting on them. So, in absence of written documents these oral chronicles could be used as source material to trace out their origin and early migration.

Scholars believed that authentic information regarding the causes and pattern of migration of the *Misings* are not available. Yet on the basis of the folk-tales and folklores it can be realized that the *Misings* migrated from place to place because of political, natural and cultural reasons (Doley 1998: 105).

Very often it has been observed that scholars take resort to a tradition of taking the migration of a particular tribe from the stage of people's migration from place of origin. The *Mising* tribe appears to have close connection with the *Tani* group of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh like the *Adis*, the *Nyishis*, the *Hill Miris*, the *Apatanis*, the *Tagins* and others. The *Tani* group of people believe they are the

* Silapathar College, Silapathar (Assam).

descendants of the common father or *Abo Tani* (father *Tani*). The *Misings* also believed themselves as the descendants of *Abo Tani* and accordingly, they have their mythologies similar to the *Adis* which flourish till today.

The religious faith of the *Misings* is based on such mythology. Culturally and linguistically speaking, there is a close connection between the *Misings* with the *Minyongs* and the *Padam Adis* of Arunachal Pradesh from whom they seem to have separated themselves under the pressure of history (Nath 2009).

Habitation

At present the boundary of the *Mising* inhabited area is also the state boundary of the Assam with Arunachal Pradesh running along the foothills of *Subansiri* and *Siyang* districts. The *Mising* villages have spread and interspersed over the vast areas of *Lakhimpur*, *Sibsagar*, *Dibrugarh*, *Dhemaji*, *Golaghat*, *Jorhat*, *Sonitpur* and *Tinsukia* district and even inside Arunachal. It is rather difficult to draw a comprehensive borderline of the *Mising* habitation (Pegu 1981: 9-10).

In the upper part of Assam, their inhabited villages are numerous which cover not only the eight districts of Assam, but adjoining areas of Assam - Arunachal border and riverine areas.

Current literature and history of the *Misings* reveal that their habitation spread over numerous villages along the course of the river *Brahmaputra*, the *Simen*, the *Burisuit*, the *Tongani*, the *Jiadhol*, the *Subansiri*, the *Gunasuti*, the *Boginadi*, the *Ronganadi*, the *Dikrong*, the *Pichola*, the *Buroi* and the *Jiabharali* river including the great river island *Majuli*.

In the southern part of the *Brahmaputra* their habitation is mainly seen along the riverbank of *Dibru*, lower part of *Dihing*, the *Disang* and *Dikhow* of *Sibsagar* districts and *Dhansiri* River at *Golaghat* district. In recent times, the *Misings* have started their homesteads along the railway lines of *Jonai*, *Gohpur* and *Jamjing* areas (Pegu 1981: 14).

Social Organization

The *Mising* society is organized around a number of social groups, divisions within the groups, kingship structure, village organization, religious system, rules of inheritance, housing systems etc. It is said that the *Misings* after their migrations to the plains of Assam valley, had to adopt themselves to the new environment and changed social circumstances and thus, there grew up a new social order.

Over the last few years this new social order has become a subject of mass controversy with regard to its acceptance or rejection. This is particularly more evident from the fact that there have been occasional reports and discussion on conversion to Christianity as well as the impact of Hinduism.

Clan Organization

We can find various *khels* among the *Misings* such as - *Oyengia*, *Moyengia*, *Dambukial*, *Chayengia*, *Tamar gonya*, *Pagro*, *Bihiya*, *Lason gonya*, *Chamua*, *Samuguria* etc. Again, according to some other interpretations, the *Mising* society is divided into two broad divisions - *Barogam* and *Dohgam*, but these two divisions are not strictly followed by the *Misings* at the level of social interaction and social relationship.

Traditionally, they used to organize their villages around the clans i.e., each clan had their own village. This means that, for example, the families of *Chayengia Khel* are not found in the village inhabited by *Pagro* clan and vice-versa. Such strict tradition is also gradually losing its ground nowadays. (Mipun 1998: 123; 2003: 11-13).

N. Pegu states that the clan of the *Misings* can be categorized according to their sub-groups. For example – *Doley - Pegu* clans are normally included within *Ayengia* and *Chayengia* groups and, *Dang-Norah* may be included within *Samuguria* group. For instance, a man of *Doley* clan may prefer to marry a woman of *Pegu* clan as because both belong to *Pagro* sub-group. The prevailing practice is that clan exogamy and tribal exogamy is practiced by the *Misings*.

Recent addition of information reveals somewhat different types of social divisions among the *Misings*.

It is said that the *Misings* organize themselves broadly at two levels of social hierarchies i.e., *Pegu* and *Doley* and all the other smaller *Mising* groups try to align themselves with either of these two groups. There is no marriage between the same clan i.e., a *Mising* considering with *Pegu* surname does not marry a *Mising* women with *Pegu* surname. Similarly, a *Doley* will marry a *Pegu* and vice-versa.

The *Mising* scholars assert the fact that this has become possible after a noticeable change among them due to various dissimilar stages of migration, adjustment to new situation and assimilation with the non-tribal culture of the plains areas and changing occupational and educational scenario and frequent contact with urban culture.

Family Structure

A *Mising* family consists of parents, their children and grand children. Father is the head of the family unit or the eldest son in absence of his father heads the family. If the son is a minor, the mother takes the responsibility of the family as head until the son becomes adult. The father following the usual norms of patriarchy acts as guide of his children.

Usually, the sons after their marriage use to live with their parents. They live in the house of the parents till they beget several children. Then, they move to a new house constructed with the help of the parents and family members. For this reason, the *Misings* consider the family system as joint one and congenial to the growth of fellow feeling, mutual help and corporate life (Kuli 1998: 50).

The *Misings* follow a patriarchal system of family structure. So, long the father alive, he must be obeyed by every member of the family whether youth or aged. The father takes all sorts of decisions in the family affairs, and so, his authority is regarded as supreme in the household. The father looks after and maintains all expenditures with regard to family budget, children's education, health care etc. He is regarded as the sole authority of family property such as land and other movable and immovable properties.

One noticeable feature of *Mising* family is the acceptance of division of labour. Both the males

and the females accept the division of labour without any question. Women do not hesitate to take the task of carrying woods from the jungles, using boats for fishing and catching fishes from rivers, in collecting fire woods by using instruments which are generally used by the menfolk.

This suggests that the *Mising* women are traditionally hard workers and carry out most of the hazardous tasks in the family. From early childhood the boy knows his assigned tasks like domestication of animals, ploughing etc. Similarly, a girl derives her instructions not only from her mother and elder sisters, but from female relatives and thus builds up her behaviour and conduct on the pattern of her mother and sisters. From very younger age, thus the *Mising* girls use to develop the habit of weaving and become expert in those activities.

The chief duties of the wife and as the female head of the family are the preparation of meals for the family, to look after the domesticate animals, serving the guest with *apong* (a kind of rice beer), raise and look after children. The women and girls irrespective of age go to the paddy field and thus both males and the females contribute labour to the production process and income of the family. Even in such busy times, the women manage her looms and weave clothes for herself as well as for the other members of the family.

The Rules of Inheritance

Like the other communities, most of the tribal societies of Assam are patrilineal or patriarchal i.e., a line of descent always being traced from male progenitors. Obviously, the father becomes the head of the family. The possession of property, movable or immovable goes to the son and the son inherits the paternal property after the death of the father. The eldest brother then has to make division of the property among all his brothers.

If the sons are minor at the time of death of their father, the eldest son has to act as the custodian of properties that might belong to his minor younger brothers. The minor brothers get their share of property inherited from their father as soon as they come of age. Customarily, the daughter cannot

inherit their paternal properties, they may get some amount of their material properties, but they usually do not demand.

Although, the *Murong* house is a term used by some tribes to denote youth clubs of unmarried boys and girls (youth dormitory), yet it has much more important socio-cultural significance for the *Mising* people. In the *Mising* society *Murong* is a symbol of village unity, integrity and assimilation. But gradually, the *Murong* system has lost its past character with few exceptions.

In the past, the *Murong* not only played the role of socio-cultural unity and village integrity, its activities were oriented to protect the villages from any enemies or external threat. These sorts of activities are gradually abandoned. Only on some important festive occasions such as - celebration of *Po:rag*, holding *Dolung Kebang* etc., the existence and importance of *Murong Okum* is considered necessary. Thus, *Murong* is a public place for the youth and village people to chalk out programmes and decisions on many socio-cultural occasions.

Do: Lung Ke:Bang (Village council)

Among the *Misings* it is the supreme social body of a village. It is constituted by the elderly people of the village who assemble in the *Murong* under the village headman on specific occasions. The village body also takes all important social decisions of the village concerned and settles disputes of social importance. It delivers judgment and punishes the offenders. An important feature is that there is no system of hereditary chief in *Mising* villages. The headman of village is supreme in his own village only.

Membership to *Do:lung Ke'bang* is open to all people of the village. If the village people are not satisfied with the work of a particular member of the *Ke'bang*, he may be removed. There is specific assignment of function for each office bearer of the *Ke'bang*. No woman will join the *Ke'bang*. She can make her voice heard or if invited when her opinion is felt by the *Ke'bang*.

In some villages, the '*Namghar*' (assembly of Hindu's place of worship) is also the center of solving

disputes of the village. The *Ke'bang* takes all sorts of disputes of the village people and gives judgement or punishments after hearing the complaints, which range from imposition of fine in money or even excommunication (*Yodnam*). *Yodnam* is considered as the severest form of punishment and can be inflicted upon any villager for a serious crime.

In the words of *N. Pamegam* - 'there is no court of law, no jails, the only penalty is public disapproval. A man who rebels against the custom will be isolated and considered outcaste, this is a sort of social boycott'. The immoral acts and major offences are dealt with severity. In such case, fine is imposed and purification rites are imperative.

Mi: Mbir Yame (Youth Organisation)

Among the *Mising* society, this is an organization of the youths. The unmarried boys and girls are the members of this social organization. From functional point of view, this is the most important and powerful organisation in rendering social services to the village people.

Whenever a family wants any sort of manpower to construct a house, to transplant and harvest paddy or to conduct a feast in festive occasion like marriage, death ceremony etc. the headman of a family formally invites the *Mi: Mbir Yame*. This youth dormitory stands as organization cum—caretaker in whole circumference of the activities of the village particularly during '*Po:rag* festival', '*Ali-Aye - ligang*' *Bihu* etc. There are some office bearers in *Mi:mbir Yame* who organize a meeting for such an invitation when formally made by co -villager.

Cooperation and fellow feelings are some of the salient features of the *Misings* society. *Mi: Mbir Yame* service rendered to the village people is an example of such social cooperation and integration. Another very important aspect of this organisation is the sense of responsibility of their members towards '*Do: lung Kebang*' (supreme social body constituted by the village elders). Moreover, an important fact is that the first loyalty of the *Mising* youth is always towards the (*Mi: Mbir Yame*).

Many *Mising* villages have the system of *Namghar* now-a-days. This is basically a *Mising* tradition from *Murong* and some important religious festivals are celebrated there. Only the elders can take part in those rites. Some social crimes and disputes are settled in the premise of *Namghar*. In many villages the *Namghar* has replaced many of the social functions of *Murong*.

Abir Gi: nam is a means of rendering physical labour on invitation of the villager who can't otherwise get things done by his effort. A woman reaper can extend invitation to her colleagues in reaping her harvest. It is a means which brings mutual understanding of individual problems as well as paves way for fellow feeling. This system helps the people for developing social integration at the village level. The *Sagri* or *Sangur* of the *Bodo Kacharis* is comparable with 'Abir Gi:nam'.

Marriage System

The following are the recognized systems (types) of marriage prevalent among the *Misings*.

Da: ro Midang (formal marriage)

This form of marriage is settled by the parents or guardians according to the accepted rules of society among the *Misings*.

Dugla Lanam (Elopement)

This is a form of marriage by elopement at the consent of the bride.

Kumna Sola Lanam (Semi-formal marriage)

This is also a type of settled marriage, but the performance is not gorgeously done. It is performed only after receiving consent from both the parents and guardians of the bride and bridegroom.

Laws of Marriage

Marriage by negotiation is the prevailing practice although marriage by capture is also present. But such a marriage is to be recognized sooner or later. Child marriage is totally unknown to the *Misings*. From the viewpoint of marriage they follow

monogamy. But there is no bar to polygamy. Hence, it is not treated as a break of marriage rules, provided one can afford to maintain such a big family. According to their convenience the other wives can live in the same house or in a separate house or in the separate house. The following criteria are observed in marriage.

Unfavourable conditions

Marriage of any kind is strictly prohibited within the clans or families because they are thought to have originated from the same *Gumin So:ying* (forefathers). In the same way a boy of a particular clan tearing a title which indicates his lineage cannot marry a girl of the same clan. Similarly, the offspring of a mother with that of her own or closely related sisters are regarded as brothers sisters. Hence, marriage is contradicted. Marriage between tribe and caste is usually not advocated though not totally absent. But this marriage is subjected to purification ceremony and approval from the society.

Favourable conditions

Usually, a bride must attain at least 18 years of age and bridegroom must be at least 20 years in age. Marriageable girl from a *Mitur* family (other than no from favourable condition) can be offered to a marriageable boy. Widow re--marriage is advocated. She can marry with an unmarried youth, a married man or a widower.

Among the *Mising* society Polygamy is prevalent but polyandry is totally absent and it is opposed by the society. Father is regarded as the guardian of marriage. Once a girl is married, she belongs to her husband's family and the children born of their marriage, in all cases, bear the surname of their father.

Broadly speaking the *Misings* have two forms of marriage. One form of marriage is called *Midang* (formal) and the other is called *Duglalanam* (informal form of marriage). To their beliefs both the forms are equally binding. The first form of marriage is an arranged and it is usually expensive.

Divorce

It has been observed that divorce occurs seldom in *Mising* society. It occurs under some special circumstances. The initiation process may be unilateral from either side. Ultimately it requires approval from the *Do: lung Ke 'bang*. As mentioned earlier, the matter of divorce should be brought to the notice of *Do: lung Ke 'bang*. No written documents are needed for the divorce.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with a description of the *Mising* community of Assam who are the important constituent partners in launching *Donyi-Polo* religious movement over the last few decades. The *Misings* are one of the major scheduled tribes of Assam having their present settlements spreading over several districts of upper Assam. As already mentioned earlier, the *Mising* population inhabit in almost all districts of upper Assam viz. Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Sonitpur. The 2001 census estimated their population as 5.87 lakhs.

Originally, the *Misings* were the hill dwellers and lived along with the Adis in Arunachal Pradesh. Historical records state that they moved to the plains of Assam in about 13th century A.D. They were the only hill people who chose to come down to the plains and settled in the *Brahmaputra* valley of upper Assam.

From all available accounts, it transpires that the *Misings* came down from the northern hills taking the western bank of the *Dibang* river the northern branch of *Brahmaputra* and settled at the foothills from the *Dibang* on the east to *Sisi* on the west. Hence, they gradually spread over the northern bank of the *Brahmaputra* up to the river *Jia Bharali* on the west and *Majuli* Island.

Reference

1. Chatterjee, S.K. 1974, *Kirata-Jana-Kriti*, Calcutta
2. Delton, E.T. 1978, *Tribal History of Eastern India*, New Delhi.
3. Doley, D. 1998, "Pattern and Causes of Land Alienation of the *Mising* Tribe", in *the Misings: Their History and Cultures*, (ed.) J.J. Kuli.
4. Dutta Choudhury, S. 1994 *Gazetteer of India*, Arunachal Pradesh, East Siang and West Siang Districts, Itanagar.
5. Elwin, Verrier, 1958 Myths of North East Frontier of India, Shillong, 1958.
6. Grierson, G.A. 1927 *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, Calcutta.
7. Kuli, J.J., 1998: *The Misings Their History and Culture*, Ayir Publication, Guwahati.
8. M'Cosh, J. 1975 *Topography of Assam*, (reprint New Delhi).
9. Mipun, Jatin 1998 Modernization of Economy and Occupation in a *Mising* Village in Assam, in
10. *The Misings: Their History and Culture* op.cit., p. 123.
11. Mipun, Jatin 2003 *Mising Janajati Chamu Parichay* (in Assamese), in *KI.RUG*, Souvenir,
12. Dhemaji Town Committee TMPK, 15-16, Oct.
13. Nath, Jogendra 2009 *Cultural Aspects of the Misings of Assam* (Mimeograph), Research Project
14. Sponsored by M.A.K. Azad, Kolkata.
15. Pegu, N.C. 1981 *The Misings of the Brahmaputra Valley* (revised edn.), Dhemaji.
16. Pegu, N.C. 2005 *The Misings of the Brahmaputra Valley*, *ibid*.
17. Roy, Sachin 1970 *Aspects of Padum Minyoung Culture*, Shillong.
18. Waddel, L.A. 1900 *the Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley* Delhi.



Women's Participation in Workforce

S. Yasotha Margaret* and Dr.P.S.J.Michael Raj**

[The proportion of Indian women active in the labour force is falling. In just 10 years, the share has fallen from an already low 39 percent in 2000 to just 30 percent in 2010—a much steeper decline than the 3 percentage point fall observed in other developing economies. This under-representation of women in the workforce is a waste of the demographic dividend that India could reap from its young and rapidly growing population. The declining presence of women in the workforce accounts for half of the drop in India's overall labour participation rate from 62 percent in 2000 to only 57 percent in 2010.]

Today, women's participation in workforce in India is significantly below China's at 70 percent and even that of Sub-Saharan Africa at 67 percent. If India's participation rates were in line with those of other developing economies, the economy would have around 60 million to 100 million more workers in 2010 generating 10 percent to 20 percent additional income (assuming that productivity is constant).

In 2013, the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) released key results of its 68th round sample survey on employment and unemployment conducted between July 2011 and June 2012. The labour force and workforce both showed low growth rates between 2004-05 and 2009-10 as compared to previous rounds.

In this article, an attempt is made to analyze trends over the different NSSO rounds and also study as to what are the hindrances to affect the women for withdrawing from the work.

Trends over Various Rounds

Table-1

NSSO Round	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1993-94, 50th round	56.1	33.0	54.3	16.5
199-2000, 55th round	54.0	30.2	54.2	14.7
2004-05, 61st round	55.5	33.3	57.0	17.8
2009-10, 66th round	55.6	26.5	55.9	14.6
2011-12, 68th round	55.3	25.3	56.3	15.5

Source: NSSO Survey

The above table-1 shows the result of the NSSO 61st round (2004-05) and it surprised many observers as it showed a reversal of the declining trend of LFPR seen in the previous round. The next

period, i.e., between 2004-05 and 2009-10, showed a decline in the LFPR. The decline was sharper in the female LFPR as compared to the male LFPR. This declining trend in the LFPR was in line with the trend revealed by the small sample, annual surveys during this period. The increase in the workforce was not very significant.

* Asst Prof., in Economics, S.T.E.T Women's College, Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu.

** Associate Prof. in Economics, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.

Table No-2

Labour Force, Workforce and Unemployed (UPSS)

(In millions)

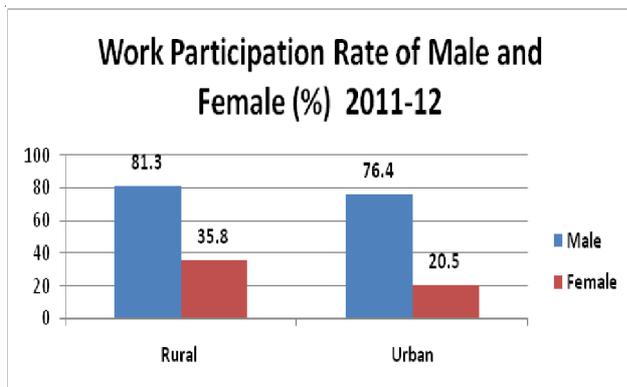
	1993-94	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12
Labour Force	381.94	406.85	468.73	472.32	483.75
Work Force	374.45	397.88	457.56	462.49	472.91
Number of Unemployed	7.49	8.97	11.17	9.84	10.84
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.2

Source: NSSO Survey

The above table shows that the labour force increased from 472.32 million in 2009.10 to 483.75 million in 2011-12. There was a net addition of 11.43 million people into the labour force during these two years. The workforce also increased substantially from 462.49 to 472.91 million in this same period and around 11 million additional jobs were created. Unemployment increased from 9.84 million to 10.84 million despite the creation of 11 million new jobs in these two years, which is nearly five times the number of jobs added in the previous quinquennium.

Marriage driving urban women out of Jobs

In a country with globally low levels of female work force participation, urban areas have still numbers. Micro studies confirm the ILO research recent finding that marriage mediates women’s workforce participation. While the birth of a child is usually associated with women dropping out of the workforce in the west, in India marriage is one of the most important factors.



Source: Figure compiled from National Sample Survey 2011-12 employment data

Women belonging to the middle or top income brackets were less likely to work than those in the poorest classes other characteristics that decreased the likelihood of workforce participation for urban women included the presence of a child in the household, the household being large in size and self employed. Such social norms-like those associated with marriage, child care and domestic responsibilities –have relegated women into slow growing areas of the economy like agriculture, teaching and crafts.

Why are women withdrawing from the world of work?

One explanation is increasing incomes. India’s female participation rate is highest (at 55 percent) among rural “deprived” households (earning less than Rs.90, 000 a year at 2000 prices). But as incomes rise above subsistence level, women stop working outside their homes, either reflecting a social structure that would prefer them to be engaged in household work or the lack of decent job opportunities for women other than unskilled manual labour. Indeed, the participation rate declines in every higher income bracket. However, this income driver is not the major issue. In rural areas, it has been estimated that only one-quarter of the decline in prime working age female participation is due to households moving into higher income segments.

Participation has been dropping within income segments, too, and this seems to reflect a shortage of job opportunities for those with low or medium levels of skills outside agriculture. India needs to create more low- and medium-skilled jobs to give women a route out of subsistence work. In rural areas, there is huge scope to create employment if basic products and services including financial services, retail, healthcare, and education, were to become more freely available.

The Planning Commission is setting out an ambitious plan for job creation as part of its Five-Year Plan running from 2013 to 2017. The proposal looks at sectors such as textiles and apparel manufacturing, leather products, food processing and travel and tourism—all of which could create jobs in the Indian countryside.

Withdrawal of Rural Females

The rural female LFPR hovered around 33 percent. But Surprisingly from 2004-05 to 2009-10 it came down significantly and reached 26 percent and came down further to 25 percent between 2009-10 and 2011-12. Urban India has also witnessed a decline in the female LFPR from 18 percent to 15 percent during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10, but showed a slight improvement in between 2009-10 and 2011-12 when it reached 16 percent.

Reasons for Decline

Literacy Connections

In recent years, women's participation in education has increased tremendously. The number of girls enrolled in secondary and senior secondary education increased from 18 million to 29 million between 2010-11 and 2012-13.

In the ILO study, urban women with a primary or secondary education were also less likely to be in the workforce than women at the two ends of the education spectrum—illiterate women and those with a tertiary education. In India, in 2010, just 18 percent of Indian women educated to the high school level entered the workforce in 2010, but 31 percent of those with a college education did.

Education not only equips women for the workplace but also breaks down conservative social attitudes. A doubling of secondary and tertiary education (for girls and boys) accounts for the other half of India's falling overall participation rate as more young people are in education rather than in work.

“Female employment in India could have growing an additional 20.7 million between 1994 and 2010 in the absence of occupational segregation, for exceeding the actual female employment growth of 8.7 million”.

Income Effect

The income effect is largely due to rising average rural incomes. If we take per capita household expenditure as an alternative for the income level, then the rural females engaged in casual work/ unpaid works in agriculture are, perhaps, withdrawing from the labour force and getting engaged in the domestic activities.

Lack of Skills

In the Indian context also, the rise in income prompts women to withdraw from the labour force. At the labour force, their skill level does not match the available work opportunities and social stigma forces them to remain confined to domestic work.

Economic Development

Economic development has been well documented in various developed countries as well. Researchers have observed that the relationship between economic development and women's labour force participation is U-shaped, i. e., female labour participation first declines and then increases as the country develops.

Conclusion

Female participation in labour force tends to follow an unshaped pattern, first declining and then increasing as development picks up. In the initial stages of development, with the increases in income, more and more women get educated. This leads to initial fall in women's participation in the labour force. But as they acquire skills and as more opportunities open up due to economic development, their participation in the labour force increases. If young people cannot have the opportunity to have a good quality education, and the education levels continue to rise slowly as they are, women's LFPR in India will remain low compared to other countries with similar income levels, until 2030.

Reference

1. *The Hindu*, August 11, 2014.
2. <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/dd8OFniJdurubBOoNJeohK/Indias-missing-women-workforce.html>
3. “Development in the workforce between 2009-10 and 2011-12”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 7 2014, Vol. XLIX No. 23, pp.117-121.



People's Participation in RDPs in Assam

Dr. Dipen Saikia*

[Almost three-fourth of the total population of the world is living in rural areas. Especially in developing countries like India, major parts of the total population are living in rural and backward areas. According to 2011 census, nearly 70 percent of the total population of India lives in rural areas. Under such a situation, rural development is an important developmental effort for any nation for the development of the country as a whole.]

Being a developing country, India has mass poverty, low levels of income and concentration of income in a few hands, low levels of productivity and backward technology, high levels of unemployment, poor nutrition, health, housing, literacy and welfare status, low levels of industrialization and lower status of women.

Accordingly, the Government of India introduced and implemented many plans and programmes for the development of rural masses. For the implementation of these programmes, the Government of India has set up a sound administrative system at the Centre, state, district and block levels.

Since rural development is a people's programme, it is essential that people should take active part in rural development activities. For the success of any development programmes, people's participation is most important. Without people's participation success of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) cannot be ensured.

Concept of People's Participation

The concept of people's participation has gained much significance in the RDPs. Different committees constituted for the purpose of rural development, organizations and different writers not only in India but also the world over have analysed people's participation in development process in different ways.

According to UNDP (1993), "participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, socio-cultural and political processes that affect their lives."¹ Participation in development is usually said to mean the full involvement of the people in development which affect their lives regardless of gender, race, age, class, sexual orientation or disability.

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), participation involved active collectively organized and continuous efforts by the people themselves in setting the goals, pooling the resources together and taking actions which aim at improving their living conditions. Rajani Kothari rightly observed that "participation is not same process of involving everyone and reducing all to a common denominator, rather it consists of evolving institution from which diverse individuals get a sense of dignity and self-respect as beings that are able to determine their own destiny."²

According to Johnston and Clark, "participation has a large cost for the poor and they will invest their participation when they believe it will secure them valuable benefits not otherwise available at comparable cost, time and risk."³

According to Karl Deutsch, participation denotes a technique for setting goals, choosing priorities and deciding what resources are to commit to goal attainment.⁴

Participation means doing things together, exchanging ideas and experiences, consulting and considering all views, sharing in decision-making,

* Associate Prof., Dept. of Pol. Sc., Moridhal College, Moridhal, Dist-Dhemaji, Assam.

co-implementing, cooperation, sharing and learning, empowerment, democratic risk sharing, collective ideas and efforts, getting involved, sharing ideas, opinions and experiences, doing things together in work, analysis and decision making and consulting together all views in survey or interview and other activities.

Examples of participation are workshops, farmers' group meeting or group training, on-the-job training, including on-farm training, networking with other institutions, and monitoring and evaluation such as self-evaluation. Participation also means sensitization of people to increase their reception and ability to respond. Participation is also fostering of a dialogue between the local people and project preparation implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to obtain information on the local context and on social impacts.⁵

Importance of People's Participation

Community participation, being one of the strong features of decentralized planning, is important to achieve socio-economic uplift for all sections of people because of the following reasons.

1. Active involvement of the community helps in preparation and execution of effective development action plan by making assessment of the felt needs and constraints of the people easier.
2. Participation of community members in the development planning process helps in mobilizing resources for effective plan implementation. Besides, it also minimizes the cost of implementation of the development programmes by reducing the cost of supervision and by eliminating irrelevant components in the action plan. Apart from these, people's participation steps up the speed of implementation of the programmes by mobilizing popular support and co-operation between groups having diversified objectives and interests.
3. Community participation in developmental activities makes the tasks of monitoring and supervision more effective. This ultimately reduces the amount of leakages of resources,

both material and human, in the delivery system and in this process minimizes the "distortion effect in the implementation of the plan."

4. Involvement of the people in the process of development planning also acts as a "pressure group" from below, thereby creating conducive environments for formulation of effective plans and its better implementation.
5. Finally, the most important agenda for community participation in the process of development, plan formulation and its implementations that it is primarily required to reduce unequal distribution of power and means of production between groups so as to "positively restructure" our existing society in favour of the so far deprived sections, since generation of poverty is a function of concentration of power in a few privileged class or groups in our society and poverty acts as a major obstacle to achieve the objectives of development effort.⁶

To achieve the goals of implementation of Rural Development Programmes, people's participation is inevitable. In this regard Y.V Reddy correctly said that popular participation facilitates strengthening of the planning process, ensuring targeted projects for the rural sector, rationalizing proposals by the agencies concerned and reducing unreasonable pressure of informal channels.⁷

The Balawant Rai Mehta committee observed that the rural development can be possible only with the people's participation.⁸

Karl Deutsch viewing participation as a psychological phenomenon, underscored its importance in the planning process in development. For Deutsch, participation denotes a technique for setting goals, choosing priorities and deciding what resources are to commit to goal attainment.⁹

UNDP has analysed that rural development programmes are the programmes of the people, by the people and for the people. So, without effective participation of the people it has not been possible to make rural development programmes as people's programme. Thus, for the success of different rural

development programmes, the active participation, involvement and cooperation of the people is absolutely essential.

People's participation in rural development is also important especially when the Government aims at providing the basic needs of the people. The basic needs are more important for the local people than anything else. As such, they show positive interest in the provision of basic needs. It is a fact that local people know well about their problem and hence they are the best judge in solution of their problems. The government is to create an environment that permits the local people to seek their best interest freely.

As a result of the people's participation, the beneficiaries can get the maximum benefit from the administrative agencies. Also as a result of people's participation, the rural people will be in a better position to assess their own rights and responsibilities. People's participation is also necessary to narrow the gulf between the local people and the administration.

The basic needs of the people are food, shelter and cloth and these are more important for the local people than anything else. As such, they show positive interest in the basic needs. It is fact that local people know well about their problems and hence they should participate in the process of solution of the problems. The government has the responsibility to create an environment where the people can participate in public related affairs. People's participation is also important, especially when the government aims at providing the basic needs to the people.

As a result of people's participation, the people can get maximum facilities, rural people can be able to know about their rights and responsibilities and it decrease the gap between general masses and the administration.

The rural people should participate in the decision-making, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation and sharing the benefits of development.

So, people must be at the centre of development. Development to rotate around the people, not people should dance surrounding development.

People's Participation in Rural Development

People's participation and involvement is an important factor for the successful implementation of any rural development activities, especially in decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and sharing the benefits of the development programmes.

For effective functioning of the Rural Development Programmes, people's participation and involvement is necessary. The implementing agencies of the Rural Development Programmes also very much depend on the effective participation and involvement of the masses in rural development activities. To command more participation from the rural masses, irrespective of rich and poor, it is necessary to develop the understanding and cooperation between the rural development officials and the people.

In this context, special attention should be paid to identify the resources of the people and to educate them to understand their needs and problems. If the people drawn up their own development plans and government officials motivate the people to take active part in the programmes for their own development, then the atmosphere of rural development will be created. Without people's effective participation and involvement, it would not be possible to implement the RDPs.

People's participation should be in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation process of Rural Development Programmes, through which these can be made people's programme.

The main objective of people's participation can be

1. Better planning and implementation of rural development programmes.
2. Mobilization of additional resources required for rural development programmes.
3. Empowering the people, particularly the poor to play an effective role in rural development.¹⁰

In rural development programmes, the people can participate directly or indirectly in several ways. Direct participation is possible through active membership in organization, taking up leadership positions and getting involved in projects. Indirect participation, on the other hand, is facilitated by helping the programmes of the organization and projects by making available the necessary resources and assisting the community development officials and leaders.

The Constitution of India had been absolutely silent with regard to people's participation in administration till 1993. But 73rd amendment of the Indian Constitution empowers the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to prepare plans and programmes for economic development and social justice, including 29 subjects listed in the 11th schedule, is a watershed in the history of democratic decentralization. This has given an opportunity to PRIs for involving all sections of rural people in decision making, implementation and evaluation, and sharing of benefits of socio-economic development schemes.

As the Rural Development Programme is for the people it should certainly be the programme of the people and by the people. Thus without effective people's participation it has not been possible to make rural development a people's programme. Therefore, the active participation, involvement and cooperation of the people is absolutely essential for the proper implementation of the programmes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- a) To study the actual picture of people's participation in rural development.
- b) To study the need of people's participation in rural development programmes especially in MGNREGA and IAY for the successful working of these programmes.
- c) To find out the obstacles for the people's participation in rural development programmes.
- d) To find out the measures to increase the people's participation in rural development activities.

Methodology

To complete the study, the investigator has applied descriptive method. For the purpose of study the investigator has selected two districts namely Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur district of Assam and two Rural Development Programmes namely Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY).

Data were collected from amongst the beneficiaries of MGNREGA and IAY programmes during the session 2006-07, which were selected randomly and analysed it by using simple statistical technique of frequency and percentage.

The researcher has selected 360 respondents from amongst the beneficiaries of MGNREGA and IAY programmes from three development blocks of Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur district, namely Dhemaji, Sissibor Gaon and Boginadi Community Development Blocks.

In the present study, the researcher has used a structured Interview Schedule for collecting data on people's participation in Rural Development Programmes.

People's Participation in Mgnrega and IAY Programmes

People's participation is also considered as a key factor for the successful implementation of MGNREGA and IAY programmes. Their involvement and participation are required in decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and in sharing the benefits of these development programmes.

To command for effective functioning, the block development officials depend very much on the effective participation of the people in these programmes. In this regard special attention should be paid to identify the resources of the people and to educate them to understand their needs and problems. It would be better if individuals and households drawn up for the development plans and officials motivate the people to take active part in their own development.

The successful implementation of MGNREGA and IAY programmes is not only dependent upon the effective functioning of the block development officials but also on the participation of the rural masses. Without effective people's participation, it would not be possible to make such Rural Development Programmes as people's programme.

To achieve the goals of the RDPs, the people's participation is inevitable. To study the people's

participation in different RDPs, especially in MGNREGA and IAY in the districts, a structured Interview Schedule was prepared and asked a few questions mentioned in the interview schedule to the respondents. For this study 360 respondents were selected from three community development blocks of Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur districts namely, Dhemaji, Sissiborgaon and Boginadi.

Table No-1 Comments of the Respondents

Questions	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think that you have the responsibility in solving the problems of your locality?	188	52.2%	172	47.8%
Are you cooperative with the authorities of Rural Development?	226	62.8%	134	37.2%
Are you interested to take active part in different Rural development Programmes?	230	63.9%	130	36.1%
Whether the Rural Development authorities encouraged you to take active part in Rural Development programmes?	112	31.1%	248	68.9%
Whether the implementing agencies organised any programme to increase the interest of the people in Rural Development programmes?	108	30%	248	70%
Whether the implementing agencies visited your area during the time of implementing Rural Development programmes?	104	28.9%	256	71.1%
Whether the implementing agencies of different Rural Development Programmes perform their duties properly?	86	23.9%	274	76.1%
Whether the Gaon Sabha meetings were organised properly?	116	32.2%	244	67.8%
Did you participate in the decision making process of Rural Development programmes?	140	38.9%	220	61.1%
Did you notice any political interference during the time of implementation of Rural Development Programmes?	267	74.17%	93	25.83%
According to you, whether People's participation makes Rural Development Programmes successful?	267	74.17%	93	25.83%

As regards responsibility in solving the local problems, data collected from common people of the rural areas were tabulated and analysed statistically in terms of frequency of responses and its corresponding percentage. Table-1 shows the results of responses of rural people towards participation in Rural Development Programmes in-toto.

The data analysed in Table-1 indicate that about more than half of the common people of the rural areas of the districts, i.e. 62.8% opined that they were cooperative with the authorities of Rural Development, whereas less than half of them (37.2%) were not cooperative. It may have an implication that about less than half of the common people of rural areas of the districts remained uncooperative.

Regarding the interest to take active part in rural development activities, 63.9% respondents revealed that they were interested to take active part in RDPs; whereas 36.1% of them did not have interest which should be a major concern for people's participation in rural development programmes especially in MGNREGA and IAY programme.

As regards the encouragement of Rural Development authorities, it is unfortunate to reveal that majority of common people (68.9%) reveal that the Rural Development authorities did not encourage them to take part in RDPs, while only 31.1% of the respondents opined that the Rural Development authorities encouraged them.

Regarding organisation of programmes to increase people's participation in RDPs, 70% said that the implementing agency didn't organise any programme to increase people's participation in rural development activities while 30% said yes, they organised.

Proper supervision is very much necessary for the successful working of the programme. Responding to another question relating to supervision of the implementing agencies, 28.9% opined that the implementing agencies supervised the programmes whereas 71.1% answered in negative.

In responding to the another question relating to performance of implementing agencies only 23.9% reported that the implementing agencies performed their duties properly, while 76.1% said no.

Regarding organisation of Gaon Sabha meeting, 67.8% of total respondent said that the Gaon Sabha meeting was not organised as per rule, whereas 32.2% said answered in affirmative.

Responding to the question relating to participation in decision-making process, 38.9% of total respondent said that they participated in the decision making process, whereas, 61.1% said no.

Regarding political interference in implementation of Rural Development programmes, another question was put to the respondents "Did you notice any political interference during the time of implementation of RDPs?" In their response to the question 74.17% said there was political interference in implementation of the programme while 25.83% denied it.

Responding to the question, "Whether people's participation makes the Rural Development Programmes successful, out of total respondents 74.17% reported that the people's participation makes the Rural Development Programmes successful, whereas 25.83% disagreed and said no.

Findings

After thorough discussion of the people's participation in the rural development programmes, the following findings have emerged.

1. Majority of the respondents felt that they had the responsibility in solving the problems of their locality. They also want to cooperate with the authorities of rural development.
2. The implementing agencies did not encourage the people to take active part in rural development programmes.
3. The implementing agencies did not organized any programme to arouse the interest of the people to take active part in rural development programmes.

4. Majority of the beneficiaries did not receive the benefits properly.
5. The implementing agencies did not visit the areas where different rural development programmes were being implemented.
6. The implementing agencies did not perform their duties properly.
7. All the people were not satisfied with the rural development programmes.
8. The gaon sabha meetings were not organized in proper way.
9. Majority of the respondents did not participate in the audits and accounts and decision making process of the rural development programmes.
10. Most of the respondents agreed with that the people's participation makes the RDPs more successful

Conclusion

From the entire discussion it emerges that though the rural development activities are done for the development of rural people, but the people's participation in rural development programmes in the district was not satisfactory. The authorities almost failed in solving the problems of the people of rural areas and increasing people's participation in the district. Though the district administration implemented many RDPs for a long time and spent crores of Rupees especially in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme and Indira Awaas Yojana, nevertheless, due to lack of people's participation, these programmes failed to some extent to develop the rural people as it was expected.

After thorough investigation through interview schedule and observations, it is seen that due to some reasons the people's participation in rural development programmes are not up to the expected level in the district. The reasons can be discussed as follows.

People's motivation

Due to lack of people's motivation, the people of the district didn't participate in the Rural

Development activities, on account of which programmes did not succeed. The authority has failed to motivate the people regarding the need of their participation in rural development programmes.

Corruption

Due to corruption in implementation of the RDPs, the people of the district were not interested to participate in rural development activities.

Political interference

Unnecessary political interference stands as another obstacle in proper implementation of RDPs. Due to the political interference in implementation of different RDPs in the district, misleading the programmes during the time of selection of beneficiaries, in implementation and in evaluation process, the people of the district were not interested to participate in the rural development programmes.

Communication gap

Owing to the communication gap between the implementing agencies of different rural development programmes and the people, the atmosphere for participation of the people was not created.

Awareness of the people

The people of the rural areas were not aware about their problems and the provisions and facilities of the different RDPs. The implementing agency also did not take any initiative to make the people aware as to for whom the RDPs were being implemented in the districts, and due to this the people of the district did not participate in rural development programmes.

Wrong identification of beneficiaries

The people of the district were not interested to take part in rural development programmes because there was favoritism, political interference and corruption in selection of beneficiaries. Selection of beneficiaries was not based on priority.

Accountability of the implementing agency

Owing to lack of accountability of the implementing agency, the people of the district were not interested to take part in rural development programmes.

Preparation of plans and programmes

The plans and programmes of the RDPs were not prepared with the help of the people for which the people of the district were not interested to take part in the rural development programmes.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the entire study, following suggestions can be made for enhancing people's participation in rural development programmes.

1. Political interference should be minimized in implementation of RDPs.
2. Implementing agency should take necessary steps to motivate the people on provisions and facilities of different RDPs and the need of people's participation for the success of the RDPs.
3. Corruption should be removed from the RDPs.
4. Communication gap between the implementing agency and the people should be removed.
5. Selection of beneficiaries under different schemes should be transparent.
6. The NGOs should be encouraged to participate in the implementation of different RDPs.
7. Monitoring authorities should supervise the programmes regularly.
8. Overlapping of works should be minimized.
9. RDPs should be implemented in priority basis.
10. Awareness of the people should be increased.
11. Plans and programmes of the different RDPs should be prepared in proper way. Effective people's participation in different RDPs should be ensured.

References

1. Dr. Mahendra Singh, *Rural development in India*, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.

2. Satya Sundaram, I "*Rural development*" Himalayan publishing House, Bombay. 1999.
3. Dr. Mahendra Singh, *Rural development in India*, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.
4. Datta, Probhat Kumar, *People's participation in local governance, (the Gram sabha experience in India)* "Decentralised planning and participatory rural development." Edited by Purnendu Sekhar Das, Concept publishing company, New Delhi-110059. Ist Edition-2005.
5. Vasudeva Rao, B.S *Rural development Strategies and role of institutions(Issues, innovation and initiatives)* Edited by- B.S Vasudeva Rao, The Associate Publishers, 2963/ 2 , Kacha Bazar, Ambala Cantt.(India) Ist edition-2008
6. Hazra, Amit and choudhuri, *Participatory micro-planning a "Decentralised planning and participatory rural development."* Edited by Purnendu Sekhar Das, Concept publishing company, New Delhi-110059. Ist Edition-2005.
7. Reddy, Y.V, *Multiple planning in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi-1979.
8. *Report of team for study of community project and national extension service*, vol-I, govt of India, New Delhi-1957.
9. Datta, Probhat Kumar, *People's participation in local governance, (the Gram sabha experience in India)* "Decentralised planning and participatory rural development." Edited by Purnendu Sekhar Das, Concept publishing company, New Delhi-110059. Ist Edition-2005.
10. Dhilon P.S and Hansra, B.S, *People's participation in rural development programmes*, Kurukshetra, Jan-1995.



PRIs and Education in Karnataka

Anitha S Kattimani* and Dr Rabhiyakhanam**

[Education is an important sector where the development aspects necessitate importing of programmes and planning in this direction. The Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution Part 41 lay down¹ that the state must provide free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 to all children. Although this was not a Fundamental Right, it was hoped that within ten years of the commencement of the Constitution in 1950, illiteracy would be a thing of the past.]

In India, about half of India's population is illiterate; among women, the rate is much higher. In Karnataka, just over half the population was literate in 1991.² This is a problem that has to be tackled seriously and urgently. And a great deal of effort has indeed been made in the last ten years, at least in Karnataka.

Education was a subject in the State List of the Constitution in India. In the 1970s, it was transferred to the concurrent list. Thus there is a role for both the Union and State governments in the field of education. The task of promoting education and improving the skill and competence levels of the population then falls on both levels of government, and both have been active.

The Constitution was amended in 1993 to bring in a third or local tier of government, and primary education is a subject that is also in the list of subjects that states may place in the purview of these bodies. It is up to the state legislatures to decide the details of what is passed on. In many states, implementation of primary education programmes is being seen as a responsibility of local governments.³

Thus, education has to be seen in this complex context of multiple levels of government functioning. In Karnataka, which has been a pioneer in panchayati raj experiments⁴, this is especially true.

Political decentralisation, in the sense of elected bodies being put in place, has taken place.

But when it comes to other dimensions of decentralization or democratisation—fiscal and administrative—there has been less change. It is perhaps natural that basic changes of this sort take time to percolate through such a large system as a state government⁵. This changing institutional context makes a study of local budget allocations for education much more important.

The Karnataka experiment with local governments began in 1983 and the first such government took office in 1987, the first year for which we have data that is examined in this paper. Primary education was one of the subjects entrusted to them.⁶ These governments served a term of five years—and then problems began, with elections being postponed. Civil administrators took over the reins of power for about two years.⁷

After the 73rd amendment of 1993, a new set of local governments, under a different law, took office and served for a term before problems began again. The data we have, from 1994-95 to 1997-98, represents this second round of the functioning of local governments. Thus the data set we have covers three different local government regimes—the first round of Karnataka specific decentralisation an era of administrators and the post-73rd amendment decentralisation.

Preparation of Budget System

It is important to understand the educational planning process in India. Each year, in February or March—

* Research Scholar, Dept. of Education, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.

** Prof., Dept. of Education, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.

this is flexible at the state level-the finance minister of the state presents a budget to the state assembly, under Article 202 of the Constitution. This lists the revenues available with the state, and the manner in which they are to be spent. This is in an essential sense, the major policy statement of the government, concretely listing its priorities. This budget must be approved before the start of the next financial year-April 1.

The budget shows in detail what the government plans to do over the coming financial year. It also presents revised estimates of what has been accomplished in the current year and actual figures for the year past. An analysis of the budget then represents what the government has actually done, as opposed to what it claims in other forums.

Apart from the well known revenue and capital accounts, Government accounts in India are divided into two categories, 'plan' and 'non-plan'. Plan figures represent new initiatives, while non-plan figures are in the nature of expenditures on past commitments. At the end of a plan period-five years-plan programmes are to be transferred to the non-plan category. Where education is concerned, non-plan expenditures are predominantly salary payments to those who work in the educational system. New schools etc, come under plan expenditures.

It is not surprising that the largest part of expenditure in this sector is of the non-plan variety, for education is heavily dependent on the services of teachers. Sometimes it is not possible to transfer a plan scheme of one plan to the non-plan account of the succeeding plan, for a number of reasons-usually a shortage of funds in the non-plan account.

These schemes are carried on under the plan head. This means that salary and other routine payments are paid from plan funds meant to finance new schemes. This has two implications: funds for new and innovative ideas get squeezed, and salary and

other routine expenditures make their appearance in the plan account, thus blurring the original difference in meaning between the two.

Thus, for recent years and plans, it cannot be assumed that plan expenditures represent new schemes or investments. In fact, as a plan progresses, the salary component of the plan account increases, so that it often only in the first or second year of a five year plan that investment can take place. The usefulness of the 'plan' and 'non-plan' categorisation has been questioned for such reasons. But these categories continue to be used in the accounting process.

In areas like education, there are several schemes, called central or centrally-sponsored schemes that are encouraged by the Union government from its funds. These are supposed to be in areas of national importance in which it is desirable to augment the efforts of a state. Adult literacy is one example.

Some details about such schemes in Karnataka's districts are presented in section 3. Central schemes (CS) are fully financed by the Government of India [GOI] and the schemes are implemented locally through the institution of the district collector or the District Rural Development Agency-the DRDA. These were designed in the late 1970s and 1980s and still continue. Although the Constitution has been amended to bring in three tier panchayati raj system, these schemes continue as before.

Whereas in Karnataka, the DRDA has been merged with the zilla panchayat, they continue under its successor, the Chief Executive Officer of the zilla panchayat, with no change in procedures. They do not come under the elected body. The panchayat is not, in fact, a level of government yet these schemes come under the CEO and the line departments. Thus, local expenditures may be incurred in the districts that do not come under the ambit of the ZP. This anomaly continues in Karnataka.

Centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) are different in that the expenditures on these schemes are to be shared by the state government to some extent—varying from 20% to 50%. States are anxious to get hold of this money. This means that a certain amount of their own resources are pre-empted or blocked in order to receive the Union share of the CSS. A state's priorities can get distorted in this process. Although this is well known, we know of no study that has estimated the extent of such distortion quantitatively.

District allocations show the CS and CSS—but the local bodies have no discretion in this matter. They have no say in the design of the scheme, in the mode of implementation, not in relaxing any of the conditions attached to the scheme from above. If all such schemes are taken together, a typical district may have to implement something like 400 schemes. Many district officials will find it difficult to name and give details of all the schemes in their district. Often, only a dozen or so are important. Locally elected officials know even less about all these schemes—and often nothing about allocations.

The local bodies cannot make changes in the design of the scheme—and these are usually specified in very great detail. The local body, though an elected “self-government” institution in the words of the constitutional amendment, cannot make changes in allocations across heads. Because local adjustments cannot be made, it may be difficult to implement these schemes within the specified guidelines. The money remains unspent, or there are audit objections about misuse.

Conclusion

Preparation of budget is an important task in a country like India, where the social sector needs to perform its responsibilities. As we all know that even today, the good number of population is uneducated. Thus, there is a need of involvement of these categories in the process of development; otherwise

the country's development will not take place. In the process of decentralization, the PRIs have been assigned major developmental roles; therefore, Zilla panchayats are performing the implementation of educational programmes with an intention to achieve welfare of the people.

References

1. F. Harbison, *Educational Planning and Human Resource Development*, Unesco: International Institute for Educational Planning, Fundamentals of educational planning. P.3.
2. P. H. Coombs, *What is Educational Planning*, p. 7.
3. For example, the Education Guarantee Scheme of Madhya Pradesh. See *The Human Development Report*, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal, 1998.
4. See the chapter on “Karnataka”, by T.R. Satish Chandran in George Mathew (ed.) *Status of Panchavati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*, Concept Pub Co, New Delhi, 2000 for a scholarly review by a person who was involved in the process at the beginning.
5. For an overview of these issues, with field observations, see D Fbjasekhar, Sashikala Sitaram and Vinod Vyasulu, “Decentralisation in Karnataka”, paper prepared for the World Bank, June 2000.
6. Discussed in Anand Inbanathan, “Panchayati Raj Under the Administrators”, Institute of Social Studies, Bangalore 1995.
7. These are the problems of transition—from a government with two levels—union and state—to one with three levels—union, state and panchayat.



Kaizen or Cycle of ‘Continual’ Improvement

Dr. Ritu*

[Kaizen ideology can be traced back to the 1980s and Kaizen was first adopted in the West with the influx of Japanese car manufacturers who brought a wave of new thinking. It uses the Japanese logic of bringing improvement internally from within the workplace.]

Kaizen or “continuous Improvement” is a policy of constantly introducing small incremental change in a business in order to improve quality or efficiency. This approach assumes that employees are the best people to identify room for improvement since they see the procession in action all the time. A firm that uses this approach therefore has to have a culture that encourages to rewards employees for their contribution to the process.

The Japanese concept of Kaizen has gained currency the world over. Kaizen means improvement – ongoing improvement involving everybody in the organization from the managers down to the workers. The philosophy of Kaizen assumes that our way of life be it our working life, our social life or our home life – deserves to be made continuously better through improvement.

It is the strategy, which has changed the complexion of the entire industrial scenario & led to the emergence of Japan as on undisputable lace to reckon with. It is the key to Japanese competitive success in the government, newspapers, Television and business, it is on often repeated usage.

In business particularly the concept of Kaizen is so deeply ingrained in the minds of both managers and workers that they practice its elements in all activities. Instead of focusing on large scale improvements, which involve capital intensive, Kaizen focuses on creative investments that continually solve large numbers of small problems.

The Kaizen strategy is based on the process of gradual change bringing improvement to all area of management and production. It is a people based system with standardization being an essential feature. Kaizen workshop held in U.K. by the Kaizen Institute of Europe with comments from the participants concludes with a brief history of the K I.E.U.

In India there is a general misconception that Japanese management techniques cannot be applied with success in Indian companies due to the major cultural differences. It is assumed that it is the national culture and characters that drive the entire business and management in Japan. In fact, there is no truth in this argument. The same Japanese culture existed 35 years back when Japanese goods were regarded as very poor in quality and dumped as junk.

A complete transformation has been effected on the industrial front during last three decade while the national culture has remains the same. The only thing that has differed is the management style. It is the culture within the organization that matters and not the national culture. In fact, the Japanese management style, practices and techniques are as exportable as their products.

Some Indian organizations have adopted alien management strategies and have shown that the management techniques can be applied in the Indian situation, even if they are borrowed from Japan or America or anywhere else. It is advisable to anticipate change and meet the challenges while they are still manageable rather than ignoring inefficient practices, which will result in crises. KAIZEN strategy is unique in that sense – it averts disasters

* Ph.D (Management), MBA (HR)

by removing the root cause behind unhealthy management styles and inculcates work discipline and efficiency

KAIZEN strategy is available for use by any company and could work to competitive advantages in a global or domestic market it is unfortunate that Indian companies have been slow to take advantage of Kaizen tools and techniques. Kaizen is the overriding concept behind good management.

It is the unifying thread running through the philosophy, the systems and the problem solving tools developed in Japan over the last 30 years. Its message is one of improvement and trying to do better. The essence of most Japanese management practices – be it Quality circles, Quality control, lifelong employment, total quality control or productivity improvement- can be reduced to one word Kaizen.

Benefits of Kaizen

1. Team work
 - 3 Everyone is able to participate.
 - 3 No one individual, but a team, make the improvements.
2. Communication
 - 3 Improved relations between association & management.
3. Education
 - 3 Improved problem solving
 - 3 The more you teach someone to fish the more than can feed themselves.
4. Awareness
 - 3 Understanding of broad issues & objectives of the organization as a whole.
 - 3 Better understanding of continuous improvement & the challenges involved with change.
5. Confidence

3 Stronger feelings of self-worth.

6. Empowerment

3 Increased control over the job the work environment which fosters ownership & commitment to the change process.

Key Features of Kaizen

Improvements are based on many, small changes rather than the radical changes. Slow to take advantage of KAIZEN tool and techniques. “KAIZEN is the overriding concept behind good management. It is the unifying thread running through the philosophy, the systems, and the problem solving tools developed in Japan over the last 30 years. Its message is of improvement and trying to do better” (Masaaki Imai, 1991.)

KAIZEN promotes process-oriented way of thinking leading to the development of strategies that ensure continuous improvement involving people at all levels of the organization. Not a day should go without some improvement being made somewhere in basis of all quality and productivity enhancements. It also encompasses all aspects of human behavior.

Kaizen Redefined

KAIZEN means improvement. Moreover it means continuing improvement in personal life, home life, social life and working life. When applied to the workplace. KAIZEN means continuing improvement involving everyone – managers and workers alike. Yet this emphasis on KAIZEN, does not mean that innovation can or should be forgotten. Both innovation and KAIZEN are needed if a company is to survive and grow.

Kaizen vs. Innovation

There are two contrasting approaches to improving quality and productivity.

3 The gradualist approach – KAIZEN

3 The great-leap approach – INNOVATION

Japanese companies generally favor the former and Western companies the latter.

Innovation is dramatic, a real attention-getter, KAIZEN, on the other hand is often unromantic and subtle, and its results are seldom immediately visible.

While KAIZEN is a continuous process, innovation is generally a one-shop phenomenon.

Features of Kaizen and Innovation

	KAIZEN	INNOVATION
1. Effect	Long-term and long lasting But	Short-term but dramatic unromantic
2. Pace	Small steps	Big steps
3. Time frame	Continuous and incremental	Intermittent and non-incremental
4. Change	Gradual and constant	Abrupt and volatile
5. Involvement	Everybody	Select few “Champion”
6. Approach	Collectivism, group efforts,	Rugged individualism, individual systems approach ideas and efforts.
7. Mode	Maintenance and improvement	Scrap and rebuild
8. Spark	Conventional know-how and state of the art	Technological break-through, new inventions, new theories
9. Practical requirement	Require little investment but great	Requires large investment but effort to maintain it little effort to maintain it
10. Effort Orientation	People	Technology
11. Evaluation Criteria	Process and efforts for better results	Results for profits
12. Advantage	Works well in slow-growth economy	Better suited to fast growth economy

Main Subjects for Kaizen Suggestions

KAIZEN suggestion systems are currently in operation in most of the large manufacturing companies and about half of the small and medium size companies in Japan.

According to the Japan Human Relations Association, the main subjects for suggestions in Japanese companies’ suggestion systems are (in order):

- ³ Improvement in one’s own work
- ³ Saving sin energy, material and other resources
- ³ Improvements in the working environment
- ³ Improvements in machines and processes
- ³ Improvements in jigs and tools
- ³ Improvements in office work

- ³ Improvements in product quality
 - ³ Ideas for new products
 - ³ Customer services and customer relations
 - ³ Others
1. Matsushita topped the list all Japanese companies in number of suggestions with over 6 million suggestion in 1985.
 2. The highest number of suggestion made at one company in one year by an individual was 16,821.
 3. In Toyota about 53 suggestions per employee were implemented in one single year (1987).

Japan Human Relation Association conducted a Survey on KAIZEN Suggestion System in 1987. The survey involved 620 companies and more than 2 million persons.

Highlights of Findings

- 3 Average number of suggestions submitted per person per year-24
- 3 Participation ratio – 67%
- 3 Suggestions and implemented – 80%
- 3 Average amount of award per person per year – yen 8,000
- 3 Average amount of award per accepted suggested – Yen 423
- 3 Cost savings per person per year – Yen 360.000
- 3 Cost savings per suggestion accepted – Yen 18.000

How to Start Kaizen

- 3 Start with small improvement. Kaizen is basically small improvements carried out by the person who is doing the job in his day-to-day work. Small improvements contributed by each employee will result into large-scale

improvements and much higher targets can be easily achieved.

- 3 Start with easy areas. It is well known fact that the easiest question should be answered first. If an examine starts with difficult question, he may not be able to answer even a single question or he will become nervous and be adequately solve even the easy one.

Eliminate all unnecessary movements. To reduce unnecessary movements bring the storage area closer. To further reduce movements instead of carrying only one component at a time carry two or more at a time. After eliminating and reducing all the movements', one can look for the areas where the work place is not neat and tidy.

These continual small improvements add up to major benefits. They result in improved productivity, improved quality, better safety, faster delivery, lower costs and greater customer satisfaction.

Employees working in Kaizen – based companies generally find work to be easier and more enjoyable resulting in higher employee morale and job satisfaction and lower tune over.



Right to Information (RTI) and Political Parities

R.N. Gairola** and Vikram Singh*

Political parties enjoy a premier position in establishing rapport between the people and the government in indirect democratic countries like India. The elected representatives of different political parties jointly articulate and represent the aims and aspirations of citizen in the parliament, legislative assemblies and panchayats. This speaks of the accountability of political parties to the common man.

Since Independence to the present period, the countrymen have always expected people-oriented accountability of the political parties, and the latter's full allegiance to the country's constitution. People in India have always longed for the work culture of good-governance, rooted in transparency and accountability. Only these democratic values ensure people's full faith in people at the helm of affairs.

For a long period our governments and administrations enjoyed the saving shield of Official Secrets Act 1923, which restrains the people to know about public and private information related to government and administrations. Ideally, men who have been handed over the job of government and administration are not 'rulers' or masters but public servants, because all public institutions are formed for the good of the people.

** Prof., Dept of Pol. Sc., HNB Garhwal University, Uttarakhand.

* Research Scholar, Dept of Pol. Sc., HNB Garhwal University, Uttarakhand.

Indeed, the fundamental mantra of democracy is '...government of the people, by the people and for the people'. Thus an ideal democratic set-up can be

there in existence only when all constitutional institutions are working as per the spirit of law and are fully accountable and transparent to the people.

In India, after a great social struggle by civil societies and activists, the Right to Information Act saw the light of the day on October 12, 2005. Barring Jammu and Kashmir, the act was made effective in the whole of India. When citizens started using RTI as an effective medium of information then, gradually accountability was fixed for public authority departments, institutions and organization, formed according to the provisions of the constitution.

By fixing accountability of political parties within the ambit of RTI, the Central Information Commission delivered a historic verdict on June 3, 2013- establishing thereby that political parties are 'public authorities' as per the rule of public authorization. They certainly come under the RTI act and are accountable to the law.

The Meaning of Public Authority

Defining 'public authority' under the Right to Information Act, it is said that 'Formed under the provisions of the Constitution or by its subservient the parliament's law or framed by any state legislative assembly, or established after due notification/order of the government, the authority or body, barring autonomous bodies, is totally under the government's possession, in its full control and directly or indirectly well under the ambit of its jurisdiction'.¹

Any department, organization or institution formed under the aforesaid way, is a 'public authority' under the public authorization aspect of the Right to Information Act and, hence, is fully responsible to people for its activities and performance of duties.

Political Parties as Public Authority

In India, the political parties are neither accorded the constitutional status by the founding fathers of Indian Constitution nor the word 'political parties' has been mentioned in any article of the Constitution. But as India is a democratic country with a glorious tradition of representative democracy, the masses in the country ensure their participation in power by the elected representatives of the political parties. Also, these members of various political parties form and conduct the parliament under article 79 & under articles 170 state legislative Assemblies.

They also enjoy absolute executive powers of forming rules and regulations for the state and the country. In view of keeping a cap on members' conduct, 'the Parliament added section 102(2) in the constitution under the Constitution Amendment Act 1985 which states that the membership of any member of parliament could be terminated on the bases mentioned in the 10th schedule of the Constitution'.² This issue is related to the constitutional legitimacy of the political parties.

Political parties receive financial aid from the government and get immunity from paying income tax. The Election Commission allots them their electoral emblem and checks and monitors their total expenditure during elections. Political parties have to present financial aid details before the Election Commission and political parties are granted free telecasting time on All India Radio and Doordarshan, both government-controlled agencies, during elections.

Putting these different facts, figures, conditions and privileges in mind, political parties could be ranked with other recognized constitutional institutions. Understandably, referring to all the above facts and conditions, Central Information Commission in its historic decision of June 3, 2013 stated that political parties enjoy constitutionally recognized status and they are 'public authority' under the provision of public authorization. Thus the political parties fall within the ambit of the Right to Information Act.

Delivering its verdict on 'Right to Information Act Vs Political parties', the efficient bench of information commissioners, formed by the Central Information Commission, has given a milestone judgement, thereby adding a new saga of transparency and accountability in the eventful history of Indian democracy. Their decision clearly states that political parties fall within the Article 2(H) of the RTI. This article will fix their responsibility and liability.³

Seeking information about the status of political parties as public authority under Article 2(H) and Article 18, two separate complaints were put before the Central Information Commission. The first complaint was put by Mr. Subhash Chandra Agarwal and second by Mr. Anil Berwal. These activists jointly asked the Commission whether the political parties

are public authority under the public authorization system.

If the parties fall within the ambit of the Act, why are they unwilling of providing information. Before complaining to the Commission, the activists had sought information from political parties under article 6(1) of the Right to Information Act in their separate applications. They quizzed the parties for a), what are the major source of subscriptions of political parties, b) what is their method of accepting the subscriptions-cheques or by cash, c) has the political party given suggestion to the government about electoral reforms d) Is the party aware of the financial misconduct and corruption of its member of parliament, of legislative assembly or of local bodies, e) Is it mandatory for MP's, MLA's and members of local bodies to contribute to the party fund.

But the parties denied information on the pretext that they do not enjoy the status of political authority under article 2(J) of the RTI Act, and are not therefore accountable and answerable to release information under the Act.

The activists duo presented the whole matter before the Central Information Commission and asked in their complaint whether the six political parties of the country viz., Indian National Congress, Bhartiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Nationalist Congress Party fall within the ambit of public authority under the public authorization system. They asked the commission to make it clear that if the political parties in question enjoy the status of 'public authority', why they shirk from appointing Public Information officers in their respective offices and, why are they reluctant in providing information about issues of public interests.

Taking cognizance of the RTI activists' complaints under its jurisdiction, the Commission admitted, in the light of facts and figures, that political parties are on par with government and governmental institutions and key-players in the observance of democratic traditions, values and operations.

The Commission thus stated that political parties are 'public authority' under the public authorization system and subject to enquiry and interrogation under the RTI Act 2005. In its 64-page decision, the

Commission added that "the role, functioning and character of political parties brings them under RTI act in our democratic system of government and, they are public institutions in all legal and constitutional provisions".

In its milestone verdict the commission fully admitted that political parties are answerable to the people and the country under the RTI act. It's because, "...political parties directly or indirectly greatly influence the life of people and, since these parties are constantly observing public duties, it is necessary to make them accountable to the public".

The Commission also directed all political parties to appoint Public Premises Officer, Public information officer and First Appellate Officer in their respective offices within the period of four weeks. The Commission directed the parties that if any citizen of the country asks for public or private information related to the parties, they are bound to provide the information and their officers must have all records and documents pertaining to the workings of the party.⁴ But the political parties unequivocally opposed the commission's verdict and objected that they are being forced to become liable to the Central Information Commission.

The Reactions of Political Parties

All political parties in question opposed the Commission's verdict in one voice and objected that the commission is forcibly making them answerable to the RTI act. They also complained that the move is an unwanted and unnecessary intervention of the CIC in their functioning and that it will adversely affect the workings of their parties, and decimate their power. A brief recordation of the political parties' reactions to the Commission's verdict is as follows:

1. Political parties are neither governmental organization nor they are run on government fund. A political party is a group of like-minded people who willingly organize themselves to form a party.
2. If the political party falls within the ambit of RTI act, individual decision of the party will become weapon for opponents. Decisions are taken after due consultation within the party, with the necessity of strict privacy. When some information is publicly sought regarding the consultation done, the process of decision-making,

such attempt will deeply infringe the internal democratic system of the party and in the long run, such attempts shall decimate the party. RTI could be used by opponents of a party against it as an effective weapon and medium of infiltration into its internal democratic structure.

3. As far as transparency and accountability in maintaining the financial management of a party is concerned, the party is bound to provide every year all details of expenditure before the Election Commission and Income Tax department, under the existing law. The Election Commission provides such details through RTI act. As per the existing law, it is mandatory for the political parties to record the source of subscriptions on amount worth 20,000 or more. Given this picture, it will not be good to assume that political parties are against transparency and accountability⁵.
4. As far as the question of the interpretation of Parliament-backed RTI act 2005 is concerned, the Central Information Commission is not entitled to it. This right is reserved with the Supreme Court and the High Courts of the country. The Information Commission is formed for the effective implementation of RTI act and even the Commission's officials are not out of the ambit of the court. And the officials who themselves are under the court's jurisdiction; do not hold the right of interpreting the law as does the Supreme Court or the High Court.
5. By setting up new definition and ruling for political parties, the Central Information Commission has encroached on its jurisdiction. When the RTI act saw the light of the day in 2005, the Parliament was not willing to bring political parties as 'public authority' under the ambit of the Act. Now it is necessary for the government and the Parliament to consult this issue with all parties and, after due discussion, add new amendments and clarifications in the RTI Act 2005.
6. Adding that the Commission's verdict is no less than a blow on parliamentary democracy all political parties expressed their concerns that, under the pretext of this law, their opponents shall seek details of their workings and such attempts will deeply undermine the privacy and liberty of the party. The parties also felt uneasy while stating the ground of candidate's selection, which

was one of the demands in the applications of the activists. The parties' plea on this issue is that selection of candidate is their internal matter and no other entity should be worried about it.⁶

7. The declaration that political parties are 'public authorities', will gravely decimate the internal functioning of the parties, as there is possibility of misuse of the Act in the hands of party's opponents.⁷

All political parties have reacted unanimously on the verdict of the Central Information Commission. They have equal and similar reservations against the verdict. It seems that their haughty attitude only underscores the truth that they believe they have no regard and responsibility for constitutional institutions.

The most important objection of political parties against the Central Information Commission's verdict is that, by this law, they are forcibly being made accountable to the Information Commission. But in truth the political parties are being made accountable to the Right to Information Act and not to the Commission. And if the political parties feel that the Commission's decision is an infringement of their jurisdiction, then the best available option before the parties was the doorstep of the Supreme Court. But instead of seeking the Apex Court's judgement and guidance on the issue, the parties brought ordinance on the floor of the Parliament.

To keep the political parties off the ambit of RTI act and to make the Commission's verdict ineffectual, the Central Cabinet, on August 1, 2013, took the decision to amend the RTI act and, subsequently, on August 12, 2013 the Cabinet presented the 'Right to Information Amendments Bill 2013' on the floor of the Parliament. The bill has provision of amendment in Article 2 of RTI act and, the amendment will ensure that group of people or organization which are registered and recognized as political parties under Public Representation Act 1951, shall not be considered as public authority.

As the Central Information Commission had ranked six political parties in the category of public authority on June 3, the 'reformed' act is supposed effective from the same date, i.e. June 3, 2013, and it is clearly stated in the amendment that the status enjoyed by political parties under Public-Representation Act shall not be subject to change by any decision or law of any court or commission.

This move of the government has invited the fury of civil societies, social organizations and the Information Commission itself. Their pressure has fructified and any positive development on the bill is effectively stalled by the public pressure. At present the verdict of Information Commission is in its previous state—neither effectively in action nor defunct. But it must be stated that any other decision or amendment related to the fate and future of the RTI act, shall only reveal the collision of political parties and their inherent selfish attitude shall be on the surface.

The whole issue has created avid discussions on ‘Right to Information Act vs. Political Parties’ in the country. Keeping the parties’ political behaviour in mind, it can be safely assumed that political parties bridge all ideological differences to protect their inherent interests and, make all decision in their favour—without much care for the country or the constitution.

Understandably, any major decision pertaining to amendments in RTI act, shall be decided by the interest of political parties and, after full observance of their inherent interests, only then the Parliament will venture to amend the RTI act.

Conclusion

There is no denying the role of political parties in the formation of the RTI Act 2005. But they are not willing to be under the purview of this landmark law which is being regarded as revolutionary step in the alleviation of corruption in India. It’s a matter of great surprise that the parties are brushing aside their responsibility for the law.

The bitter debate that ensued after the Commission’s verdict is testimony of the irresponsibility of our premier political parties and their negligence of national interests. The verdict was welcomed by the people as a landmark step in fixing accountability of political parties towards the masses. It was believed that such reformatory steps will surely strengthen the democratic character of the country, for which the political parties act. The parties themselves talk much about new and dynamic policies for a well-established mechanism. In such conditions, it is indeed a matter of deep concern and contemplation that why the verdict of Information Commission is not inviting applause and acceptance of our political parties.

This is perhaps the greatest irony of Indian democracy that the Information Commission is teaching lessons of transparency and accountability to our political parties. The political parties in India have never taken any initiative in regard of electoral and other reforms. This is unfortunate and ominous for the future of any democracy based on the values of higher thought and free spirit of a democratic system.

Political parties play a pivotal role of intermediary between the masses and the corridors of power. They must feel the burden of peoples’ aspirations and expectations. Instead of first their own interest should come out at last. In the coming days, if political parties try and succeed in adding the proposed amendments in the RTI act, which will certainly lessen the peoples’ faith in the parties, their functioning and their elected representatives. This certainly is not good for the deep democratic roots of our country, tried and tested over years.

In sum, to ensure the peoples’ faith and unflinching support, the political parties in India should regard the verdict of Central Information Commission and view it as a major political reform. Their support and rapport with the Commission shall ensure the sound work culture in our democracy, based on the ethics of accountability, transparency and good governance.

References

1. Right to Information Act 2005. Article 2(J)
2. Vinay Kumar Ojha, *Bharat Ka Samvidhan avam Rajvayavastha*, Manthan Prakashan, Allahabad, 2009.
3. Singh, Vikram, “Rajnitik Dalon ko Nahi Swekar Soochna Ka Adhikar”. (pp.2-3) *Uttarakhand Ajj*, Dehradun, August 7, 2013.
4. Vikram Singh, “Kyon Dar Rahe Hain Rajneta” (pp.39-40), *Parvatanchal*, Suren Rawat (ed.), Dehradun, September, 2013.
5. Prakash Karat, “Sarvajanik Pradhikar Nahi Rajnetik Partiyon”, Hastakshep supplement of *Rashtriya Sahara*, Dehradun, 2013.
6. *Pratiyogita Darpan* (Monthly) October, 2013.
7. Shailesh Gandhi, “Soochna Ka Adhikar mein Rajnetik Adanga” *Dainik Jagran*, Dehradun, March 28, 2014.

