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Nomads: The Marginalized Citizens*

Mandakini Pant

The present paper Nomads: The Marginalized Citizens seeks to present the issue of citizenship identities from the vantage point of marginalised nomads in Rajasthan, India, and their articulation for claims to rights and recognition. Generally legal, constitutional, and political considerations define citizenship as something to be bestowed by the State as a set of rights and responsibilities. But a citizen is not merely an abstract subject dependent on the state to receive rights and access to social resources. He needs specific social positioning for becoming a fruitful socioeconomic agent to actualize his citizenship.

Nomads variously find inclusion as one of the underprivileged groups such as SCs, STs, and OBCs; and, are therefore, also entitled to benefit from cited affirmative action and safeguards. But they have only de jure citizenship status, compounded by their spatial heterogeneity. This inhibits their access to the citizenship rights, and special constitutional privileges available to the socially underprivileged. They have little say, as citizens, in making of social policies and provisioning for them. Changing economic scenario is forcing many nomadic communities to opt for settling down for their livelihood. Their traditional means of livelihood, formerly supported by their nomadic nature, have become outdated. There has been much social resistance to this. Nomads have found it increasingly difficult to meet their basic requirements of shelter, security and livelihood and, most of all, of acceptance in the societies they have chosen to settle down with.

Citizenship as active citizen participation suggests that the marginalized and excluded citizens, by articulating their needs and priorities clearly, can influence the state policies and thereby achieve their most valued rights. Citizens' vocalizations of needs and concerns are indicative of their participation in making of social policies and provisioning for them. Nomads' articulations of rights in specific contexts such as land, shelter, livelihood etc. not written in the Constitution indicate the manner in which their citizenship is eroded. Their articulations, on the one hand, express protest against marginalisation at the hands of the government. While on the other hand, they assert the demand for inclusion in governance.

* The paper draws upon the findings of PRIA's study on Meanings and Expressions of Rights and Citizenship amongst Nomadic Communities in Rajasthan.
What Does Democracy Need?: Fine-tune? Overhaul? Or Scrap and Rebuild?

Colin Ball

In November 1999 Commonwealth Heads of Government stated, in their Fancourt Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development, that: "If the poor and the vulnerable are to be at the centre of development, the process must be participatory, in which they have a voice. Good governance and economic progress are directly linked. Good governance requires inclusive and participatory processes." This paper will set out ideas related to such conclusions and argue that their implications are more far-reaching than might at first be obvious. The conclusion that "Good governance requires inclusive and participatory processes" will be examined. In particular the question of whether such processes require merely making adjustments to current structures and processes of democracy or more fundamental change will be examined. The paper will also seek to distinguish between citizen participation in governance (and its implications insofar as the meaning of 'citizenship' is concerned) and civil society participation in governance.
Women in Grassroot Democracy

Manju Agrawal

A study was carried out to compare the role of Pradhans and governance of MS and Non-MS Panchayats. MS Panchayats are Panchayats of those villages where strong women groups called Sanghas initiated by Mahila Samakhya(MS) are functioning as civil societies or where the woman Pradhan of the Panchayat is member of the sangha. Non-MS Panchayats are the ones where such groups did not exist. MS and Non-MS Panchayats were studied with regard to management of Panchayat activities, analysis of factors responsible for differences in performance of women leaders of the two types of Panchayats and finding out spread effect of MS to other adjoining areas. This study covered the two districts of Varanasi and Nainital having different socio-cultural contexts. Significant differences were found in the functioning of MS and Non-MS Panchayats with MS Panchayats functioning more optimally taking a number of factors into consideration. Some of the notable differences include, greater frequency and participation in Gaon Sabha meetings, greater confidence, mobility and better communication of the women, better monitoring of social sector programmes and greater transparency of working in the MS Panchayats. Both, greater autonomy in working and in skills was observed amongst women who had held office of Panchayat. They could also reorient Panchayat functioning. For instance, MS Panchayats selected beneficiaries in open meetings, something which has not been done in Non-MS Panchayats.
Dalit Leadership in Local Governance: Constitutional Amendment Vs. Reality

Tapas Satpathy

This paper examines the functioning of dalit leadership in the Panchayats after the 73rd Constitutional amendment. While it is a step in the right direction in providing an opportunity for the marginalized groups to participate in governance, the various loopholes in the functioning negate all intended benefits. Wherever dalit leaders have asserted their role, either they have been thrown out of the panchayats or they are forced to be puppets in the hands of the upper caste representatives. In-depth study of Sabarkantha district have thrown up a number of cases where dalit leaders, despite enjoying the support of villagers at large and being effective leaders have been unjustly usurped from their positions. These cases prove that Constitutional amendment was not sufficient to legitimize the leadership of dalits. A lacuna in the Act prevented them from continuing as sarpanch despite the support of the entire village. According to the Gujarat Panchayat Act 1993, panchayat members can oust a sarpanch by two-third majority through no-confidence motions. Such authority should rest with the gram sabha members as they directly elect the sarpanch. The Social Justice Committee (SJC), mandatory at all tiers of panchayat, and existing for the last 28 years and whose purpose is to eradicate discrimination, remains ineffective in practice. A number of steps are suggested to promote effective leadership of the dalits in local self-government including, a review of the Gujarat Panchayat Act to remove existing loopholes, the formation of a federation of dalit sarpanchs, over-hauling the SJsCs and making them functional in all tiers, social audits, earmarking a certain sum from the panchayat budget for the welfare of the socially backward classes and the preparation of an annual report regarding atrocities against dalit sarpanchs to be placed before the legislative council.
Multi Party Accountability For Environmentally Sustainable Development: The Challenge of Active Citizenship

A.B.S.V. Ranga Rao & R.D. Sampath Kumar

The Simhadri Thermal Power Project (STPP), under the aegis of the National Thermal Power Corporation was commissioned in 2002 and acquired around 3000 acres of land for the purpose. This resulted in loss of approach roads and other common property resources causing much inconvenience and affecting the employment opportunities of the inhabitants of 2,841 households spread over 13 villages and hamlets. The present study was taken up to find out multi-party accountability of the stakeholders in order to maintain environmentally sustainable industrial and community development. Denial of any type of employment to locals by the private contractors and low rate of employment offered by the management of STPP had created innumerable problems to the land oustees. Further the functioning of the plant caused innumerable environmental problems which in turn caused livelihood problems including that of fishermen and farmers. A number of health problems were also reported. The NGO's and CBO's made attempts to organize the project affected people in the initial stages which bore fruit in the form of higher compensation. However in the later phases, the villagers' protests, and representations were confined only to the level of Gram Panchayat authorities. On the other hand, STPP contend that it had paid as high compensation as Rs.2.25 lakhs per acre and had also initiated a few community development programmes in the affected villages. This, the people perceived as falling short of the promises made by the project authorities at the time of acquisition of their land.
Institutional Interface and Participation in Local Forest Management*

Ranjita Mohanty

The paper talks about the interface between institutions created for forest management and how this interface impacts on people's participation in the management of their forest resources. These institutions operating in the field of forest management are of two types—the government institutions which are instrumental in shaping policies and programmes related to the forest management and actually implementing them; another set of institutions responsible for forest management comprise of local people and operate at the village level. These village institutions have a direct linkage with the higher order government institutions who form and supervise them. The paper by focussing on the interface, both supportive and problematic, between these institutions operating in the field of forest management in the Kumaon region of the newly created state of Uttarakhand in India, reveals the dynamics of participation at the local level.

The paper looks at the positive side of the institutions which create space for participation in many ways—formation of village based institutions responsible for planning and implementation of programmes of forest management, joint sharing of finance by the government department and village institutions, creations of a minimum and necessary condition for the inclusion of marginalized and weaker sections in decision making at the local level; the paper also focuses on the negative side of lack of co-ordination among various institutions, cutting out a larger role by the forest department for itself through the control mechanisms of planning and inflow of finances, involvement of large number of people as labourers in the forest conservation, incongruence between fixed project duration and time required to build sustainable village institutions, inadequate representation of weaker sections from the village in the decision making, lack of clarity regarding the accountability of these institutions to the people. Based on these the paper builds a more nuanced analytical understanding of participation.

*The paper is based on the findings of the study on “Linkages, Conflicts and Dynamics between Traditional, Developmental and Statutory Institutions”, which was pursued under the aegis of PRIA, New Delhi, India and Development Research Centre at the Institute of development, Sussex, UK.
Guardianship Rights of Women in Bangladesh

Rowshon Ara

Social and religious practice, as well as the existing laws of Bangladesh do not grant guardianship rights to women. In the absence of the father guardianship passes on to the nearest male relative, such as the paternal grandfather or uncle. As a result of which many women are forced to remain in violent/discordant marital situations for fear of losing their children. This unjust legal practice as well as the social/religious approval it enjoys prompted Naripokkho to undertake a research project to seek redressal. This kind of legal deprivation is a reflection of the general devaluation of women in society. It is also in conflict with both the Constitutional right granting equality to all citizens and with the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Section 16 of which calls for granting women guardianship and all rights over their children.

Naripokkho as a part of their findings, observed that while the general opinion was not against granting guardianship to women per se, the underlying issues of property rights and women's status as a whole were matters of contention. Guardianship entailing a divorced/widowed woman's access to her ex-husband's familial property was largely opposed. Further the age-old notion that women themselves were in need of protection and a guardian negated their right/ability to take on guardianship of their progeny. Naripokkho's presentation/paper highlights their work, as a women's group, in mobilizing public opinion towards equal guardianship rights for women.
A Democratic Deficit?
Citizenship and Governance

Niraja Gopal Jayal

The state is no longer the sole source of governance in society, as markets and civil societies have become increasingly important actors. Likewise, the process of governance has become multi-layered, taking place at many levels, from the local to the global. What does it mean to be a citizen of a village or town, and at the same time a citizen of the world? How do markets and civil societies encourage (or not) the practice of citizenship? This paper examines the implications of these institutional changes, in the structures and processes of governance, for the practice of democratic citizenship.
Double Dose of Discrimination? Constraints and Challenges for Dalit Women Leadership in Local Governance

Anjali Kanitkar

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution ensured the entry of more dalits and women in the decision-making process at local levels. The object of the study was to find out whether, this, together with the 'dalit consciousness' created by the Phule/Ambedkar ideology and later by the Dalit Movement has had or can have any significant impact on the understanding of the dalits regarding issues of governance. The objectives of this study were to, examine the meaning system of elected women and dalit leaders in terms of values, aspirations, norms and social practices, to study the nature and pattern of their leadership and to explore the recognition of women's authority in different socio-cultural and political environments. One of the most significant aspects of the changing face of the gram-panchayat is that a large number of young dalit men and women have been placed in decision-making positions. They have not had any background of participating in any struggle/movement and nor do they have strong allegiances to any particular party.
Assam's Ethnic Diversity and Need for Institutional Reforms

Ivy Dhar

Ethnic conflicts generally decompose the potentiality of a multi-ethnic society whereas ethnic differences can be composed into a viable project of multi-dimensional participation. The ethnic diversity of Assam has not been seen as a potential and has led to the development of a situation of conflict. Governance in Assam still faces challenges from unresolved territorial disputes, widespread poverty, population rise and teeming migration and a crippled economy. All these naturally lead to degeneration of social relations. Assam has an enriched civil society. The Assam Movement (1979-1985), Peasant Movements during the colonial times and citizens' intervention in public policies like the 'Official Language Bill' as early as the 40's, 50's and 60's are a clear illustration of this. However the Assam Movement was unsuccessful in its mission, further conflicts were generated in its aftermath and the various councils, like the NE Council, Bodo Autonomous Council set up under constitutional provisions have been almost defunct. Institutional reform is of utmost importance in order to seek people's participation and democratic governance. This paper seeks to emphasize that ethnic diversity harnessed in the right way could well be a boon and including the voices of the diverse ethnic groups could lead to stronger governance. The reformation of institutions of governance, unresolved citizen's conflicts and the manner in which these are handled by the State, and transparency of State institutions will be the focus of this paper.
Gender and Leadership in Institutions of Local Governance: Demystifying Certain Myths

Niranjan Sahoo

The 73rd Amendment has made the pattern of reservation uniform all over the country thereby encouraging a new class of leadership especially from women. In a way, this is one of the first important steps towards eliminating "institutionalized inequalities" through "institutionalized counter measures". However, since these experiments are at a nascent stage, experiences are more or less area-specific. The paper tries to demystify some of the established myths that 'dalit and backward women face the severest resistance and opposition to their leadership than relatively educated women from developed region'. It also tries to bring out facts and figures about how tribal society is relatively free from patriarchal considerations and about women leadership being more easily acceptable than their non-tribal counterparts. Apart from bringing out the role of patriarchy and other feudal considerations, the paper tries to bring out the emergence of new forms of institutionalization as a result of new women leadership and its impact on traditional political systems. It examines two contrasting experiences: one from a remote tribal place and another a near urban case looking into the veritable issues and dynamics influencing women leadership. Overall, it attempts to profile the interplay of different dynamics surrounding women leadership.
Citizenship as Practice: Meanings and Identities of Citizenship Amongst Santals in Jharkhand, India

Nandini Sen

Citizenship is a multidimensional experience - it is legal constitutional - political but it is also social and cultural. People thus perceive their citizenship in different ways and associate various identities with it.

Based on the findings of PRIA's study on Meanings and Identities of Citizenship amongst Santals in Jharkhand, India, this paper seeks to present the understanding and experiences of citizenship amongst Santals in different contexts viz political, developmental and cultural. It attempts to unpack the interplay between various identities associated with the different meanings of citizenship on the one hand, and the particular context, on the other. Herein, focus is on the way this relationship between citizenship identities and the context defines the social and political participation of Santals in matters related to governance. The paper also examines the role of state and civil society institutions in mediating the meaning of citizenship, thereby enabling or disenabling Santals in exercising their citizenship rights in relation to governance.

The study is part of a broader research theme “Images, Meanings and Rights of Citizenship” identified by Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability.
Local Level Institutions And Participation in JFM

V.L.V.Kameswari

Peoples' participation in development initiatives has received a renewed thrust in the last decade of the 20th century. Among other things, this trend manifests itself in the form of the constitution of local level institutions (LLI) to manage various natural resources (including forests). An institutional arrangement of this nature was expected to facilitate smooth implementation of development initiatives and greater interaction and empathy. It was also expected to provide a level playing field to all the members of the community. Marginalized sections would get equal opportunities for participation in development initiatives, and would also be able to assert their choices.

This paper examines the Village Forest Committees/ Forest Protection committees in Madhya Pradesh to understand how far these local level institutions had been able to act as an interface between the government and the community. It was found that this institutional structure, when transferred to the field from the policy documents, provides very little scope for genuine participation. Reasons for this gap have been elaborated. The paper also looks at the structure of these local level institutions in terms of their ability to ensure the participation of marginalized sections of the community.
Mainstreaming Gender in Decentralization: The Kerala Experience

Mariamma George

Kerala initiated a decentralized system of planning in an effort to strengthen the decentralization process. The People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan was launched having a definite focus on gender and issues of marginalized sections. This paper looks into the methods and components of mainstreaming gender in the decentralization process, its achievements and shortcomings. A mandatory Women Component Plan was instituted and an organized effort was launched for capacity building and empowerment together with the formation of Neighbourhood groups and self-help groups (Kudumbasree). The training programmes have however not gone beyond the welfare approach or at the most, the WID (Women in Development) approach. This study has focused on the changes in the Panchayat samithies, in the Women Component Plan, in the villages, grama sabhas and in the kudumbasree Neighbourhood groups. While there are tangible improvements considering a number of factors, much remains to be done in the process of mainstreaming the gender concept in the process of decentralization.
Leadership in Gram Panchayats

Anupama Saxena

This paper presents a survey study on the impact of reservation rendered to Dalitas in Gram Panchayatas. Study reveals the positive and negative outcome caused due to the reservation. The positive results are as follow: i. Now as a result of mandatory reservation, all sub sections of the dalitas with their respective families, have been able to get opportunity to lead.ii. Although there has never been a custom of parda (veil) in Chhattisgarh region, yet before the reservation policy, dalitas women could not become Panchas or sarpanchas in Gram Panchayatas. The negative aspects are as follows. Because of the reservation policy, dalitas groups have become aware and alert towards their powers and rights. But at the same time, the feelings of the group possessing reputation and power have been hurt. With any sort of opportunity, these groups will try to unite to achieve political power to retain their dominance power in the village region. As it is believed that the political power leads to individual's financial benefits. What type of polarization will arise among various caste/groups, future can answer. One concerning and alarming side of reservation is that in the Panchayats, only those representatives of Dalitas group are dominating who are politically, financially and socially sound. In Chhattisgarh, dalit representatives have not been able to work upto the expectations of Dalitas. The reason behind it is their own unwillingness and corruption as the entire politics and bureaucracy in the state is Dalitas oriented.
Dalit Leadership in Panchayat:  
A Case Study of Bihar

Shaibal Gupta & Rakesh Chaubey

The purpose of this paper is to examine the evolution and nature of emerging dalit leadership through Panchayats in Bihar. Patna was selected as the area of study. The labour intensive nature of agriculture in South Bihar has historically resulted in the concentration of Harijan population in this region. Landlords have resorted to coercion and violence to maintain their stranglehold over the neighbouring population. Ironically this region of extreme exploitation has also been the area of some spectacular agricultural growth in the post-independence period. However commercialisation of agriculture also led to increasing differentiation in the peasantry and depeasantisation at the lowest level. The serious attempts of the state government for land reforms did not succeed. Agrarian tensions have taken several forms forward versus backward, backward versus Harijan or forward versus Harijan. Social oppression, economic deprivation as well as growing awareness of legitimate rights amongst the deprived led to the emergence of each one of the militant organizations, such as CPI(Liberation)/ IPF, CPI(ML) (Party Unity) both wings of MKSS, MCC, etc., along with reformist organizations, such as Chatra-Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, and enabled them to get a foothold among the masses of South Bihar. It is in this background that our two selected sites present an ideal opportunity for tracing the evolution of the dalit population in general and examining the nature of dalit leadership in particular.
Citizen Participation And Institutional Reform: A Case Study of People's Participation in Forest Governance and Management of Forest Resources

Abhishek Joshi

Control of forests and other natural resources come under the jurisdiction of the State, and this has over the ages relegated the forest/forest-fringe communities to the background granting them little or no rights over the forest/forest produce. A quarter of India is classified as forest land which is owned and managed by the government. The basic needs of fuel wood, fodder, timber for housing and agriculture implement and foods and medicine in the form of wild herbs, fruits, roots etc are met from the forest/forest produce. A study carried out in 26 villages of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat revealed that forests contribute between 37% and 76% of the total income of the forest-fringe communities. Due to different policies and human interventions, forest resources have deteriorated to a great extent. The Forest policy of 1988 was a radical change from the old timber-oriented policy to conservation-oriented policy. A new system of governance and management of forest emerged and it was called Joint Forest Management (JFM). Under JFM, the communities are provided certain rights on forest produce and income. In turn, the people own the responsibility of protecting and managing the forest. This case study focuses on JFM as an excellent example of achieving institutional change without any corresponding amendment in the laws. This reform came into existence basically due to the innovative officers of the Forest Department, collective pressure and demand of the local communities, NGO's, etc. JFM has been accepted as a means of assertion of public control over forest resources and management through alternate institutional mechanism and is considered one of the largest forest co-management programmes in the world.
This paper examines the cases of the three marginal communities of West Bengal. Two tribal communities and scheduled castes living in three villages of Birbhum and Purulia districts of West Bengal are examined. The paper argues that group membership rather than membership based on individual role has been a constraining factor in keeping the marginalized groups excluded from the public domain for a long time. In the context of the panchayati raj system, how the three groups interact with the majority community and how it in turn allowed them to participate in the political domain, and through this how their participation is occurring in the institutions of education, family planning and economy is examined. Social action through land distribution measures as also competitive political process by which constant interaction between the various social groups has been a dominant factor generating social and political association, has enabled people to emphasize the concept of public legality and more universal norms of membership. In the process the marginality that was evident in the three cases, the interaction between the various groups within the political domain, and social association is being redefined.
Women Empowerment in Local Bodies: An Assessment

Bhawna Gupta

The Rural and Urban Local Bodies in India were revitalised by the passing of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in December 1992. These amendments provided for the reservation of one-third seats of members and chairpersons for women in Rural and Urban Local Bodies in all categories. The present paper aims to examine and assess the impact of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments after ten years of their being passed. Illiteracy, lack of awareness, lack of political awakening and economic dependence are dominant constraints affecting women's participation in local bodies. In urban areas, while women are somewhat enlightened and articulate enough to put forth their problems their functioning is hampered by lack of experience and support from the male dominated system. Mere reservation will however not lead to effective participation unless the elected representatives acquire the required skills and are given appropriate orientation. Both the Department of Rural Development and the Department of Urban Development are running training programmes aiming at capacity building, awareness generation and enhancement of leadership skills of women representatives all over the country but these programmes again need to be regularly re-evaluated. In many states, Women Self Help Groups/ Neighbourhood Groups have been set up to ensure greater women participation at Gram Sabha and Panchayat level institutions. Statistics reveal that barring a few states, most of the states have not devolved adequate powers and financial autonomy upon Urban and Rural Local Bodies.
Status of Women Representatives on PRIs and ULBs in Rajasthan

Manish Tiwari

Women constitute nearly forty seven per cent of the population of India and contribute significantly to income generated, but continue to be an under-privileged lot. However with the enactment of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments it was envisaged that an era of women's political empowerment would begin in India. Women were given one-third reservation in all the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as also in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It was envisaged that such political empowerment would gradually elevate the social status of women and eventually converge into their economic empowerment also. Admittedly, in few Indian States, including Rajasthan, in PRI's (all levels) and all ULB's, women representatives are democratically elected and occupy their positions strictly in accordance with the legal provisions. Yet, due to their subservient status in the Indian society, the real power continues to be in the hands of male folks, who may not have any locus-standi, at least on the positions which women Ward Panchas, Sarpanchas or Pradhans occupy. The present paper is an account based on the study conducted by Social Policy Research Institute, Jaipur with a view of ascertaining the status of elected women representatives and assess the related gender issues in PRIs and ULBs in five districts of Rajasthan. The study is an attempt to empirically test the hypothesis that political empowerment of women will ipso-facto be accomplished once women are elected to these bodies.
Conflict Resolution and Justice in Local Governance: A Reformation

Uma Shankar

The concept of community living is not new in the Indian context. Peace and harmony are the two eyes of rural living. Development and justice are on the path to being achieved. All matters pertinent to rural life is based on and controlled at the local level itself. Administering justice was an integral part of rural local administration. Nyaya Panchayats served as the institutions for conflict resolution at the grass root level. Abiding by the code of conduct established by this institution was very natural. As the period of paradigmatic shift became quite common, these institutions began to vanish with a sparse presence here and there in the sub-continent. The enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment has opened a new page in grass roots administration and has completely changed the system of administration of justice leaving no scope for the older system. As conflicts have become very common in some parts, the twin concepts of social justice and economic development get affected. In order to have an understanding and evolve an alternate system, this paper attempts to analyze how local self-governing institutions can perform the function of rendering justice by resolving conflicts. The components analysed are conflicts and conflict resolution, nyaya panchayats, as well as the new panchayati raj system and conflict resolution.
The major purpose of the study was to understand, in a comparative perspective, the various dynamics involved in the functioning of dalit and women leaders in Panchayat Raj in the context of reservations provided to these categories under 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The study examined the role of reservation in promoting dalit/women leadership, the disabling and enabling factors for the entry and functioning of dalit/women leaders, the inter-relationships among the stakeholders of Panchayat system, the training needs of the panchayat leaders and the role of CSOs in this regard.

A purposive sample of nine gram panchayats in Padmanabham mandal (rural) in Visakhapatnam district were chosen for the study. The sample comprised of all the 3 dalit headed Panchayats in the mandal, 3 Gram Panchayats headed by women (2 B.C, and 1 O.C), and 3 headed by men (2 B.C and 1 O.C). Thus, 9 sarpanches, 48 ward members and 68 villagers from the villages of the 9 Gram Panchayats were interviewed. In addition, the Mandal Development Officer and 4 village secretaries in charge of the sample panchayats were interviewed. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews using a checklist of questions. Implications to policy were made and program content for training was developed.
Dalits in Local Self-Government

Surendra Singh

India is fully committed to a system of democratic governance by transferring power to the people who are governed. The Constitution provides for the transfer of power to units of self-government and provides for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Unfortunately, the representatives of Scheduled Castes in Village Panchayats even today considerably lag behind their counterparts from Other Backward Classes and General Castes. They are unable to freely participate on an equal plane in the meetings of Village Panchayats. It is against this backdrop that the present study has been conducted in 12 Village Panchayats and Gaon Sabhas of Shivegarh Block of Rae Bareli District of Uttar Pradesh. The focus was to find out whether the dalit leadership in Panchayat is able to function effectively, especially with regard to effectively representing members of their own communities, and if not, to discern the reasons for the failure as well as to find solutions to the problem. The study yielded data regarding the average statistics of dalit leaders. While they are not openly discriminated against, they did feel that government functionaries extend only limited cooperation to them. The image of dalit leaders has generally been 'neither good nor bad'.
Surinder K. Shukla

The skeletal relationship between the process of governance and the citizen has, since the inception of democracy, rested largely on voting and elections. But democracy itself suffers from the politics of inclusion and exclusion, thereby creating the imbalance by its centralising politics. In short, citizen was needed and wooed at election-time and after that governments focused on their centralising law-making, law-application and even law-adjudication. At the dawn of the new century, the relationship between citizen and governance has entered newer areas of cooperation. These include bringing about greater transparency in governance by using e-governance, dealing efficiently with day to day matters like environment, sanitation, transport, communication, roads, traffic, eradication of untouchability [especially in rural areas], and ensuring prompt redressal of grievances and quick disposal of justice. Whereas this ensures a greater cooperation between citizen and governance, the question is will government take into consideration the voice of citizens? Is identity of one citizen more important than that of another? Does he/she belong to the 'inclusion' or 'exclusion' category? Which group of citizens can get his voice heard better and faster? How far will the public policy be tampered by the citizen's demand, command or request? And finally will gender play a role in getting the voice of the citizen heard?
Strengthening Local Institutions for the Marginalized

O.P. Shukla

A democratic system of government is the pre-requisite to development plans and its implementation. Adoption of a decentralized policy is a milestone of any democratic and good government for the participation and involvement of the local people in the development process. Local authorities under this system are viewed as instruments of political decentralization, than of social and economic development. The Panchayati Raj has recently been strengthened through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. The development process involves the identification of problems and prioritizing them by involving local people. Keeping in mind these views and the problems faced by the marginalized, the present paper attempts to examine the special issues/problems in Uttar Pradesh in India. The paper first examines the growth/development of local Institutions, the governance aspect and the efforts being made to empower the marginalized and the problems being faced etc.
Dalit Leadership In The Panchayats Of Udupi District In The State Of Karnataka

Krishna Kothai

Udupi district has got 3 taluks namely, Udupi, Kundapur and Karkala with 61, 56 and 29 gram panchayats in the taluks respectively. Amongst various castes that exist in these panchayats, there are dalits in good number in almost all the taluks. According to the 73rd Constitution Amendment, dalits have been given seats in the panchayats. As per the rotation system, these dalits have been made the presidents and vice-presidents in few panchayats. A research study was undertaken to assist the leadership qualities of the dalits in the selected panchayats of the 3 taluks by collecting data from the field. Various 'enabling' and 'disabling' issues in the context of dalit leadership were studied at length. Some of these issues included level of education, family size, occupational pattern, family income, role of self help groups, status of dalit members, untouchability, support by other communities. Co-operation within the panchayat, no confidence motion, role of dalit organizations, changed status in the society, membership in the village institutions, level of awareness, responsibilities, decision making, activities taken up by the members, etc. The above issues were analysed apart from presenting various cases. The study has given a list of recommendations which would enable the dalits to perform as better leaders in the years to come.
Dalit Leadership in Panchayats: A Situational analysis of Maharashtra

Santosh Kumar

Traditionally leadership in rural India has been closely linked with the control of the economy and maintaining a balance in the village has been in the hands of these so-called community leaders. At one end are the landless agricultural labourers, majority of who belonged to the Dalit community. Articles 14, 15, 16, 29 (2) and 46 of the constitution of India sought to protect the weaker section of the society from discrimination. However the ideological model did not quite succeed. On the other hand, particularly in the context of Maharashtra, it has been found that movements like the Dalit Movement are mainly political in nature and address only macro level issues related to Dalits. The complexities resulting at grass roots have rarely come into focus. The present paper, in the context of Maharashtra, analyzes and addresses these issues. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act passed on 24th of April 1993 provided an opportunity for involving Dalits in mainstream political, social and economic decision-making process. As per the provisions of the Act, the present position in Maharashtra exhibits that the quantitative requirements have been met with and a significant proportion of Dalits have entered the Panchayat system. However, as this paper argues, the quantitative representation has not necessarily led to the qualitatively enhanced presence of the socially marginalised in the institutions of governance and decision making process. An attempt has been made to understand, whether the Constitutional and legal opportunities are getting translated into reality and also seeks to find out if the reservation policy is a means to give social justice to the oppressed sections of the society. Secondly, an attempt has been made to understand the various dynamics involved in the exercise/ functioning of Dalit leadership in Panchayats. Against this background, expectations from civil society and the role-played by these bodies for better functioning of Dalit leadership in Panchayats is also being fathomed.
Civil Society and Citizen's Action:
Influence on Public Policy

Satya Prakash Dash

Citizenship and Governance, in a way, supplement and mutually reinforce each other. In a democracy, citizens are responsible for the type of governance and governance is accountable to the citizens. Democracy ensures 'governance' and citizens expect 'good governance' from the governors/government. It is the government that frames and implements public policy for the better administration and deliverance of 'good' governance. Citizens do have an important role to play in public policy formulation and evaluation. In the present era much reliance is placed on civil society. Civil society is active wherever there is higher incidence of social capital. Social capital includes trusts, networks, norms of civic engagement, reciprocity, associationisms etc and it harnesses human capital giving him a voice. Voluntary associations also play the same role. With the involvement of civil society individual influence can be exerted in public policy. The paper deals with aspects of civil society/social capital and public policy vis-à-vis citizen.
Determinants of People's Participation in Decentralized Planning and Development

Sitakanta Sethy

In India, people's participation in the development process was considered inevitable during the early fifties. Since then it has become apparent that participation of the rural poor and especially that of women has been a difficult goal to achieve. Therefore it becomes essential to discuss why the rural poor are unable to participate and how they could participate actively in the local development decision-making process. The paper analyses the determining factors of people's participation in decentralized planning and development. The various initiatives of different players including developmental agencies and the government are enumerated. Suggestions are also made for ways to include these marginalized groups in the process of development.
Women's Empowerment and Panchayati Raj: Case Study of a Village Panchayat in Orissa

Sachidananda Satpathy

The broad-based political participation of women has been severely limited due to various traditional factors such as castes, religion, feudal attitude and family status. Women have therefore been left on the periphery of political life. The 73rd Amendment Act was then passed to rectify this situation, giving women the opportunity to take active part in the decision-making process at the local level. This study aimed to find out how women members and also women sarpanchs are elected/chosen by an electorate, and, to investigate the socio-economic profile of elected women members of the panchayat. As such, the results of this study depart from those of similar studies conducted elsewhere. Education and occupation are found to have no significant bearing on women's participation. The paper also discusses the outcome in terms of development whether women panchayat leaders are successful and satisfied with their role in decision-making. Specific rural policies like JRY and DWCRA were selected to examine whether women leadership has made any difference to their implementation and devaluation.
Plurality and Solidarity as Factors of Civil Society

Anil Vaddiraju

The strength of civil society lies in its plurality and diversity. This can be harnessed to address the issues of citizens in a collective and coherent manner. The solidarity that a single issue or context brings among diverse actors is both an opportunity for civil society organizations to work together. At the same time it also poses a challenge for all the actors to work with a number of others who might be having a different and diverse perspective on the issue. In this paper we attempt to illustrate the experience of PRIA's work in Andhra Pradesh especially during Pre-Election Voter Awareness Campaign (PEVAC) when a plurality of organizations forge a solidarity to address a common issue: voter (citizen) awareness in local self governance. This solidarity, which was forged while respecting differences and plurality provide opportunities and challenges to the civil Society organizations.
Emerging Management Bodies and the Elected PRI's: An Institutional Issue

Vageesh Harathi

Democratic governance is founded on the principle of the participation of citizens in the decision-making process. Panchayati raj institutions are historical participatory institutions which took into consideration stratified inequalities, which are important sources of marginalization as also is the gender based marginalisation. The Amendment Act took cognizance of this serious problem and as a remedy provided for reservation for the SC's, ST's and women. The confirmatory act was passed in Andhra Pradesh (A.P.P.R.I Act 1994), providing reservation to the the SC's, ST's and women. The regime shift in Andhra Pradesh during this period was in tandem with the current dominant discourses of liberalization, privatization and the concurrent minimalisation of the state. In the changed context of the 'restructuring programme' of the state government, "participation" got a different connotation. Instead of strengthening the existing Panchayats (which were filled for the first time by a number of first generation leaders from the lower echelons of society), the government started promoting new participatory bodies. Formation and functioning of these bodies along with the existing Panchayati raj institutions led to the emergence of two points of view. One, that the new formations are more participatory in nature and the other that these bodies cut into the limited resources and decision-making domain of the P.R.Is. The participation of the marginalized in these newly promoted bodies vis-à-vis Panchayats also became an issue of debate. This paper will focus on these contending points and also throws light on the concepts of 'convergence' of these bodies with the P.R.Is as well as the interface between the marginalized and these new participatory bodies, based on field realities.
Academia and Public: Interface and Intransigence

Tapan Mohanty

Broadly the paper will discuss the role of academia in ensuring and sustaining viable civil social institutions in the context of modern India as well as the responsibility of academics and its perceived inertia. The challenge before the academics is huge and it needs all the good will and resources to face the challenges and respond to it accordingly. It has to look beyond the citadel of ivory towers and must come out of its elitist attitude and aptitude to play a dynamic and decisive role in social transformation. The paper discusses the growth of Sociology as a discipline and discusses the interface between research, teaching and activism. In this era of rapid social transformation and democratization of societies it becomes imperative to create a bridge between research and practice.
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