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LOCAL GOVERNANCE



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UNIT 13 DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE*

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of decentralisation;
- Discuss the importance of decentralisation;
- Analyse the dimensions of decentralisation;
- Explain the decentralisation pattern in India both rural and urban; and
- Appraise the functioning of rural and urban local bodies in India.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

There has been a wave of efforts globally to reform the State especially since late eighties and early nineties. The basic idea behind this was to bring the private players and the market forces in the governance process along with the State thereby lessening its burden as also making it more effective and accountable. Decentralisation is one such reform effort which was globally advocated. Accordingly, many countries decentralised State powers to the sub-national governments and shifted some of its powers to the periphery. India was no exception to this.

Decentralisation has become one of the most politically correct ideals for better governance in today's time. It is seen as the means by which the locus of power shifts

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from the inefficient, corrupt and rent-seeking central governments to more accountable, responsive and transparent local governments. It encourages greater political participation and increases the responsiveness of the government institutions ultimately improving the planning and implementation of the development schemes and programmes. In developing countries such as India, it is seen as a progressive strategy to promote development by identifying the needs and preferences of the people through their direct participation in governance especially at grassroots level.

Local governance through decentralised institutions is said to foster participation, transparency, effective implementation of plans and programmes at grass roots level, harnessing the available human resources besides empowering the marginalised sections of the society.

In this Unit, we shall discuss the concept of decentralisation, its importance and dimensions, pattern of panchayati raj and urban local bodies and appraise their functioning.

13.2 CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION

We must be very clear about the meaning of decentralisation if we have to grapple with its issues and concerns. Decentralisation has emerged as a prominent issue in the literature of public administration and is regarded as one of the most important politico-administrative innovations of this century. It has been and continues to be advocated as an important component of policy packages to improve governance in developing countries, especially in the context of disillusionment, which has set in on account of central planning. The centralist regimes find themselves overburdened with complex and widespread socio-economic problems for which they have no answers, as the governments have sought to create more socially equitable patterns of economic growth to meet the basic needs of the poor. In case of India, efforts in this direction have been made since independence. There have been strong voices in favour of decentralisation and to have a third tier of governance where local decisions will be taken by the people.

The term decentralisation is understood differently by different individuals or groups. It is essentially a mechanism through which power is transferred from the central government to the lower levels of government or field organisations. Decentralisation means dispersal of authority among a number of individuals or units. Decentralisation is not only a device for the delegation or dispersal of administrative authority, but it is also a democratic method of devolution of authority.

Decentralisation refers to the physical location of facilities and the extent of dispersal of authority throughout an organisation. Hence, it is an arrangement by which the ultimate authority to command and the ultimate responsibility for results is *localised in units* located in different parts of the country. It is argued that assigning of functions and responsibilities, for their efficient and effective performance, to the decentralised lower levels where they are allowed to decide many matters and a few cases involving major policies or interpretations are referred to the higher levels of the organisation is yielding results.

The concept of decentralisation, as it applies to India, presents a different approach to the decentralisation of political and administrative powers. It was apparently intended to conform to be the model of democratic decentralisation in which powers and funds are transferred from higher-level institutions to elected bodies at the local level (Jayal, 2007). Having its mixed goals of democracy, decentralisation and development, it implies devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities, decentralisation of political

institutions, development of local leadership and strengthening the efforts for economic modernisation. It is the process whereby the government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them on some other authority (Mishra, 1989).

To be precise, decentralisation is an ideological principle associated with objectives of self-reliance, democratic decision making, popular participation in government, and accountability of public officials to citizens. It is a prime mechanism through which democracy becomes truly representative and responsive (Arora and Goyal, 1995). Decentralisation is a political decision, and its implementation, a reflection of a country's political process. It is dispersal of authority among the lower levels of organisation and its field offices. It, thus, creates a sense of responsibility in local decision making agencies with more or less independent existence and powers. It is sharing the decision-making authority with lower levels in organisations, thereby improving their efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012).

13.3 IMPORTANCE OF DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation has been looked at as a singularly useful mode of administration to deliver the public services from convenient local centres close to the clients' locality and thus more responsive to local needs. The developing world has undergone some form of decentralised governance in line to meet peoples' demands (Islam, 2007). Bringing administration to the doorsteps of the citizens and establishing a direct relationship between the citizens and the administration has been the driving force behind decentralisation in most of the developing countries.

The urge for decentralisation has come from many sources. *Firstly*, it has been prompted by the need to deliver the basic public goods such as food, housing and water from local units of administration. *Secondly*, most people in the developing countries live in rural areas, which are away from the national capital located in distant urban areas. Administration has to penetrate the rural areas and link these up with the nation as a whole. *Thirdly*, in many countries sociological diversities manifest themselves in ethnic, linguistic and religious differences. Administration needs to be decentralised in response to regional diversities.

Fourthly, regional and local resources can be utilised for the area development purposes, only if administration would move out to the regions and localities. Decentralisation, therefore, facilitates local planning and development with the help of local responses leading to better development outcomes. *Fifthly*, decentralisation has its own value in political and administrative terms. Politically, local participation in development activities, with intensive response paves the way for meaningful articulation of local demands.

Planning thus becomes much more *realistic* and receives ready political support. From the administrative point of view, local capability to govern local areas increases through sustained *participation* in local decision making. Decentralisation is expected to release local energies and enlist *local support* for development activities. In the process, the local community can steadily attain political and administrative maturity. Finally, it is needed to *institutionalise* participation of citizens in development planning by creating alternative means of decision making.

In the words of Rajni Kothari (1988) "decentralisation is an alternative system of governance based on a people-centred approach to sorting out local level problems. In the entire process, people are located at the centre of power so that they become the basic engine of the development process and not, as hitherto, merely its beneficiaries"

13.4 DIMENSIONS OF DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Decentralisation, as we have seen, is an important component of policies to improve governance in the developing countries and is often regarded as a necessary precondition for socio-economic and political decentralisation. In this context, different dimensions of decentralisation can be identified, viz., administrative, political, functional and fiscal. These dimensions reflect, in general terms, increasing and often sequential stages of progress in achieving the objectives of decentralisation (*Jain, 2003*). Let us now study these dimensions of decentralisation.

● Political Decentralisation

Political decentralisation refers to transfer of political powers and functions from the central levels of government to the lower levels of governments which are elected by the local citizens and which have some degree of local autonomy. It means that the powers and functions, which are concentrated in the hands of the higher level political organs be decentralised to the lower level political organs that have been democratically elected by their constituencies (*Mishra and Sweta, 2006*). In other words, it means devolution of powers and functions to the local bodies i.e., panchayats and municipalities. In India, the process of political decentralisation which started in 1959, on the recommendations of *Balwant Rai Mehta Committee*, finally got implemented in 1993, by way of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. As a result, now there are governments at five levels viz., central, state, district, block and village, making the governance process more representative with locally elected representatives paving, the way for greater peoples' participation.

● Administrative Decentralisation

Administrative decentralisation refers to the transferring of authority, resources and responsibilities to the lower officials in the administrative hierarchy of organisations. It may also mean decentralising powers or functions to the subordinate units. It involves placing planning and implementation responsibilities to functionaries and elected members. It aims at providing better facilities and services to the people through the local authorities.

In India, though the development process started way back in 1950 after the setting up of erstwhile Planning Commission, yet we could not achieve the developmental goals. The main reason for this was that the welfare policies and programmes, which were meant for the people top-down and the local people could not get any benefits of these policies and programmes, as the local perspective was missing. Administrative decentralisation makes local governance bottom up and responsive.

● Functional Decentralisation

Functional decentralisation refers to transferring subject specific functions to local tiers in order to enable them to discharge their responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. It means that the sphere of activity of each tier should be clearly specified, and each tier should be allowed to function independently. Functional decentralisation is an essential condition to strengthen the units of participatory development and decentralised governance.

In India, there was absence of clear cut functional jurisdiction so far as the local tiers were concerned. With the passing of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1993, the issue of functional decentralisation has been taken care of. However, still

there is no clarity with regard to the functional jurisdiction of each local tier. In many states, the functions are delegated through executive orders rather than transferred through a piece of legislation (Mishra, 2006, *op.cit.*).

- **Financial Decentralisation**

It involves devolving powers with regard to taxation, funds and expenditure upon local bodies in order to first improve the financial position and then giving them the financial autonomy for planning and implementation as per the local needs. Devolution of funds upon the local bodies by the State is important in order to augment financial capacity of the local bodies. In order to provide the local bodies' scope to prepare plans as per local needs, and then to incur expenditure, financial decentralisation becomes important. The local bodies in India could not function properly because of lack of funds. They had to depend on the devolutions and the grants-in-aid from the state governments. This problem has also been taken care of to some extent after the passing of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. The Acts empower the local bodies to levy and collect the taxes.

Thus, we see that the various dimensions of decentralisation got operationalised only after the passing of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, in order to improve local governance.

13.5 DECENTRALISATION PATTERN IN INDIA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Decentralisation and local governance has been a major concern in India since long. It goes back to Lord Mayo's Resolution of 1870, which advocated decentralisation and made arrangements for strengthening the municipal institutions and involving more and more Indians in these bodies. Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882 too strongly advocated the cause of decentralisation of administration through the establishment of local self-governing institutions. The British administration was not prepared to accept the Ripon thesis as they questioned the competence of Indians to manage local administration and feared a general weakening of field administration under a local self-government regime. The Resolution of 1882 was hailed as the *Magna Carta* of local government.

The Decentralisation Commission Report, 1909 and the Government of India Acts 1919 and 1935 also favoured local governance. The Government of India Act 1919 introduced 'Dyarchy' in the provinces and local self-government became a transferred subject under the charge of a popular minister of the provincial legislature. The Act increased the taxation powers of the local bodies, lowered the franchise, reduced the nominated element and extended the communal electorate to a large number of municipalities. After the Act of 1919, panchayats became legal entities, losing their traditional prerogative powers. The Act of 1935 for the first time introduced a federal form of government and conferred 'Provincial Autonomy' on the provinces and envisaged self-government for the country as a whole.

The *second* phase of the debate in post-Independence India was staged on the floor of the Constituent Assembly. Panchayati Raj was an important component of Mahatma Gandhi's vision of future India in which economic and political powers would be decentralised and each village would be self-reliant economically. It was in deference to the wishes of the Mahatma Gandhi that Article 40 of the Constitution of India was adopted, stipulating that "the State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-governments". The Article only talked about creation of

panchayats and was silent on the creation of urban bodies. The only reference to urban self-government was made in two entries viz., Entry 5 of List 11 of the *Seventh Schedule* and Entry 20 of the Concurrent List.

In India, after independence, the first attempt in the direction of rural local governance was the inauguration of Community Development Programme in 1952, followed by National Extension Scheme in 1953. Both these programmes could not deliver goods. As a result, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was constituted to enquire into the questions of economy and efficiency and suggest other measures for the re-organisation of Community Development Programme. The Committee came out with the suggestion of a *three tier system* of rural local government. This pattern was Zila Parishad at the district level, Panchayat Samiti at the Block/tehsil/taluka level and Gram Panchayat at the village level. Following the recommendations of the committee, the first Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) was formed in Nagaur district in Rajasthan on 2nd October, 1959. The movement gathered momentum all over the country. By the end of 1963, most of the states had enacted legislation to introduce Panchayati Raj within their jurisdiction. However, after initial enthusiasm and promising start, the Panchayati Raj institutions began to deteriorate rapidly and could not function as institutions of local governance.

In 1977, another Committee, popularly known as the *Asoka Mehta Committee* was appointed by the then Janata Government and was entrusted with inquiring into the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions and suggest measures to revitalise them. The Committee outlined the reasons for the decline of PRIs, such as haphazard programmes, non-performance, rise of vested interests (Sugar lobby being an example in Maharashtra), lack of adequate financial resources, etc. The concept of Panchayati Raj itself got lost in a haze of conflicting interpretations (Mishra, 1981). The Committee recommended a two-tier system of PRI with Zila Parishad at the district level and Mandal Panchayat at the base level. The Karnataka government took the recommendations of the Committee seriously and adopted a new system of Panchayati Raj in 1985. West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh followed suit.

After the publication of Asoka Mehta Committee Report and its experimentation in states of Karnataka, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, hectic activities at the central level started towards strengthening grass roots democratic organisations and achieving the goals of real democratic decentralisation. Some of the Committees set up by the Central Government are Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development (CAARD) 1985, L.M. Singhvi Committee for the Concept Paper on Panchayati Raj Institutions, 1986, Sarkaria Commission 1988, P.K. Thungon Committee 1988, etc.

The net result of the recommendations of these committees and commissions was that a proper environment was created in favour of giving new thrust to the concept of democratic decentralisation. All political parties by and large arrived at the conclusion that it was high time to give Constitutional status to PRI's and Municipalities. The result of such consensus was the introduction of 64th and 65th Constitutional Amendment Bills in July, 1989 in the Parliament. The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha. However, it failed in Rajya Sabha due to serious apprehensions regarding the timing and the intention of the Bill and could not become the part of the Constitution. After the defeat of the 64th and 65th Amendment Bills, the National Front Government introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4th September 1990 the 74th and 75th Constitutional Amendment Bills 1990. However, this Bill died an unnatural death, when the Janata Dal Government collapsed before passing the Bill.

In June 1991, the government introduced two new amendment bills in the Parliament

and on December 22, 1992, the Bills were passed by the Parliament and are now known as the Constitution (73rd and 74th Amendment) Acts 1992. By April 23, 1994, all the states had completed the process of enacting fresh legislation on strengthening the PRIs and municipalities.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Discuss the importance of decentralisation.

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2) Explain the various components of decentralisation.

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13.6 FEATURES OF 73rd AND 74th CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACTS, 1992

The Constitution of India defines Panchayats as institutions of local self-government in rural India. The 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, 1992 have Constitutionalised the Panchayats and Municipalities and is a step in the direction of speeding up the process of decentralisation and giving strength as well as stability to local institutions. They are historic in nature as they have got the potential to transform the existing character of our democracy (Palanithurai, 2009). Some of the features of the Acts are as follows:

- It has made mandatory for all the states to set up *three tier* (in smaller states having less than 20 lakh population – two tier) bodies both in the rural and the urban areas.
- Periodic elections to all the tiers at regular interval of five years and, if dissolved earlier, fresh elections to be held within six months.
- Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in all the panchayats and municipalities at all the levels in proportion to their population.
- One third reservation of seats for woman in panchayats and municipalities.
- All posts at all levels (with two exceptions) to be filled by direct elections.
- Indirect elections to the post of chairman at the intermediate and apex tiers.

- Creation of a State Election Commission to conduct elections to PRIs and municipal bodies.
- A State Finance Commission to be set up in each state every five years in order to review the financial position of the PRIs and municipal bodies.
- Devolution of powers to the panchayat bodies to perform 29 functions and to the municipal bodies to perform 18 functions as suggested in the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules respectively.
- Organisation of gram sabhas and ward committees.
- The 74th Constitutional Amendment provides for constitution of *District Planning Committee (DPC)* and Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) to prepare a development plan.

Article 243M of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment exempts application of this Act to certain areas in the country. These areas are Fifth Schedule Areas, Sixth Schedule Areas, 1996 (PESA) and other tribal areas.

The tribal communities are the marginalised sections who have been for long isolated from the main stream development process. At the same time their customs and traditions are to be protected and remain uninterrupted. Their indigenous traditional institutions which play an important role are to be maintained. In order to strengthen the grass roots democracy in tribal areas, the Part IX of the Constitution which deals with panchayats has been specially extended through an Act of Parliament called Panchayats Extension to Scheduled V, Areas Act (PESA) 1996. This provides for certain exclusive and wide ranging powers to gram sabhas and panchayats in these areas.

13.7 FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS: AN APPRAISAL

Mere legislative enactments do not ensure effectiveness and viability of the PRIs in the states. What is important is their operationalisation. Even after more than two decades of passage of the 73rd Amendment Act, their functioning reveals the fact that at the operational level, there are large variations among the states.

Gram Sabha is the basic unit of Indian democracy. According to Article 243A of the Indian Constitution “ A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may by law provide.” The elected representatives are made accountable to the electorate through the Gram Sabhas. Hence they have to be vigilant and sensitive to their own problems and only then the PRIs can be successful. At the same time, it has to meet periodically with maximum participation of the people. Initially, this was not happening and the benefits did not reach the needy. However, in some states the Gram Sabhas started meeting on a more regular basis and the benefits of the rural development programmes started reaching the common man (Sharma, 2007).

At the same time in some cases, increased participation of the local community is also being witnessed. In the state of Kerala, where the first Gram Sabha was organised way back in 1996, more than two million persons participated in it. In general, the gram sabhas were a huge success and generated public debate on development all over Kerala (*ibid.*) In Madhya Pradesh, the gram sabhas got a new status through a state law to ensure holistic development of villages. In West Bengal absolute power has been given to the Gram Sansad/Gram Sabha in respect of selection of beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation programmes (Mathew, 2007).

The Eleventh Schedule, which assigns 29 subjects to the PRIs have been added in the body of the Constitution. It was expected that, the State Legislature, by law, would endow such powers and authority to panchayats so that they could function as institutions of self-government. But the powers and functions were not actually transferred to the PRIs in the true sense of the term, as no detailed executive instructions regarding devolution were issued.

The sphere of activity of each tier under each item has not been defined and is left to the discretion of the concerned state governments. As a result there exists variation from state to state with regard to assigning of powers and functions to each tier of PRI. In the state of Karnataka, for example, the state government has retained many regulatory, controlling, and supervisory powers, which in fact takes away the autonomy of the PRIs (Aziz, 2007). The experience gained so far is that, at the district level, various departments/agencies implement programmes and function under the overall supervision and control of the District Collector. The PRIs, therefore, have to be content with backseat driving (Vittal, 1998).

Under governmental direction, each level is now conducting 'activity mapping'. The activity mapping now being undertaken by states is being done in the expectation that it will clearly identify the functions that are to be performed at each level of the panchayats. This will help in assessing the revenues required, and assigning its sources. In addition it will help in the devolution of functions to implement these activities (Mathur, 2013).

The functioning of the PRIs with regard to the mandatory provision for reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and one third reservation for women (including women from the SCs and the STs) reveals that in spite of the reservation for the above category, the problem has not been completely solved. In most states, democratic decentralisation has made politics more inclusive of women, SCs and STs, but has done far less to empower them (Jayal, 2006).

Initially by and large, only those individuals were elected from reserved constituencies, who had the patronage of the dominant sections of the society and who functioned like the mouth piece of the affluent sections in the formal meetings of the PRIs. Women members acted on behalf of the male members of their family. But slowly this scenario started changing and today the situation is much better. Today, the democratic base of women has been widened. Indeed, around 80 per cent of all women elected are from reserved seats. It has also motivated many women to contest elections and participate in the political process (Mathur, 2013). Women members have performed well in states like Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. They have taken up many serious issues, relating to the development of their areas. They have fought against odds and taken up issues, which cater to the vital needs like children's education, safe drinking water, primary health care facilities for women, nutrition, etc.

For example, a woman Sarpanch of Chandsamand Gram Panchayat in Karnal district of Haryana has developed a three pond system under MGNREGA with the purpose to treat the grey water and further use the same for gardening, kitchen gardening and irrigation purposes. Similarly, another Woman Gram Pradhan of Namkhana Gram Panchayat in West Bengal has ensured functional standing committees on women and children. She has emphasised on self-help group formation, joyful learning and nutritious food for the children (Sinha, 2018).

According to Pattanaik (2010), "it is clear that women's leadership in panchayats is transforming India. These elected women – now role models to the other women in their communities – are altering the development agenda to address issues critical to village life. The success stories number in millions. Women throughout India- from Orissa

to Assam to Uttar Pradesh to Bihar—are ensuring that roads are repaired, electricity is brought to their villages, schools are built, medical services are available, water resources are made safe, local savings groups are formed, and the list goes on and on”.

Another important issue in the functioning of panchayats is the *finance*. Though many provisions have been made in the Act with regard to improving the financial status of the panchayats, still the financial autonomy of the PRIs is restricted. Only in the state of Kerala there is large degree of autonomy as 40 per cent of funds under general sector were in untied form. States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra provide substantial funds to zila parishad, but even they do not give much scope to PRIs in terms of autonomy, as funds are invariably tied to a particular programme or scheme (Mishra, 2006, *op.cit.*).

PRIs do not have the incentives to raise revenues. The major proportion of the transfers is scheme-based. They have to depend on the devolutions and the grants-in-aid from the state governments. Besides, most of the states have not transferred funds for the subjects transferred to the PRIs. Decentralisation without strong resource base is therefore likely to have pitfalls if not accompanied by enhanced financial capabilities. Though the fiscal capabilities of the PRIs and *Nagar Palikas* are expected to improve in the wake of Finance Commission exercise, what is important is a strong fiscal base accruing from sources internal to them. Moreover, many taxation powers and other financial provisions like auctioning the gram panchayat financially beneficial properties like fisheries, ponds, pastures, and others will ultimately improve the financial position of PRIs (Mishra, 2005).

The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) recommended substantial increase in the quantum of resources allocated to the rural and urban local bodies. This is nearly more than three times the allocation provided to the panchayats by the Thirteenth Finance Commission.

The PRIs and municipal bodies should be encouraged to take steps for innovative resource mobilisation such as generation of income from entrepreneurial activities, productive loans, public contribution, tax sharing and tax assignments, matching grant incentives for tax collection instead of totally depending on the governmental grants. Besides, proper tax collection machinery at panchayat/municipal level is required. PRIs/urban local bodies should get a share of more elastic and productive taxes like sales tax. They may be assigned all or part of sales tax proceeds of the area within their purview.

Another important aspect observed in the functioning of the PRIs is the problem of coordination among the three levels of PRIs on the one hand; and bureaucracy and NGOs on the other. This is giving rise to:

- Ambiguities related to the distribution of powers and functions amongst the three tiers of PRIs mentioned in the Eleventh Schedule.
- Lack of clarity on the role of PRIs as planning and implementing agencies.
- Absence of understanding with regard to the relationship between the PRIs and local level bureaucracy.
- Problem of open competition between the PRIs and NGOs. These factors aggravate the complexities of coordination and raise doubts with regard to the usefulness of PRIs (Mishra, 2003).

There are measures being taken to improve the functioning of PRIs. These include:

- **Evolving a participatory culture and strengthening coordination between PRIs and other bodies functioning at grass roots level.**

To sort out the problem of coordination, what is required is to weave and develop a new and responsible participatory culture at the local level. Besides, there should be necessary amendment in the panchayati raj and municipal acts of various states, which is possible only if there is a strong political and administrative will. PRIs and urban local bodies need to be made responsible both, for planning and for implementation of development programmes for the local community, and their capabilities in this regard need to be enhanced.

- **Innovative measures to improve the functioning of PRIS.**

Many states are experimenting with innovative measures towards improving PRIs. To maintain transparency in the implementation of rural development schemes in the state, the Assam government has ordered the constitution of vigilance and monitoring committees in each block (*ibid.*). Democratic decentralisation, could truly give voice to the people, but it requires enhancing participation, especially by the people who are often marginalised, and increasing the accountability of public officials at local levels (Panchayati Raj Update, August 2002). The need is to appreciate the importance of making people aware and of educating them through well-organised educational programmes. In a way, people's participation needs to be internalised by the PRIs. On the whole, the functioning of PRIs in various states during the last two decades presents a mixed picture. It has provided an element of continuity and enlarged the participatory process at the grassroots level. The periodic shuffling and reshuffling of leadership by way of regular elections, and increase in the level of politicisation of local community will certainly ensure the success of the PRIs in the foreseeable future.

- **Strengthening the Financial Base of PRIs**

The devolution of financial resources is another area that is getting attention. As discussed earlier in this Unit, the FFC has provided for a substantial increase in the quantum of resources to PRIs. Also funds are directly been given to gram panchayats to deliver the basic services. The FFC has recommended giving two types of grants to PRIs. These are basic and performance grants.

- **Capacity Building**

The capacity building of elected representatives is being done through several programmes. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) through various schemes such as Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY), Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA) and so on are attempting to bring in mechanisms to build their capacities and empower them. The State Institutes of Rural Development in many states are entrusted with the task of conducting suitable training programmes to enhance their leadership skills. In addition NGOs are also providing extensive training to PRI functionaries.

- **Coordination between PRIs and other Institutions at Grassroots Level**

There are efforts being made for networking between PRIs and other NGOs, self-help groups, voluntary organisations for effective local governance. For example in Kerala, self-help groups promoted by *Kudumbashree* are working with the elected representatives. In states like Maharashtra, Assam, Rajasthan this convergence between PRIs, self-help groups and community based organisations is taking place, facilitating the monitoring of schemes and programmes of gram panchayat.

13.8 ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE URBAN LOCAL BODIES

So far as the functioning of urban local bodies is concerned, it presents a similar picture as that of the rural local bodies. There is lack of uniformity with regard to the functioning of the urban local bodies (ULBs). No doubt, the 74th Amendment Act has revived them, but the actual situation is that they still face a number of problems.

With regard to functional devolution, we see that there is absence of clear-cut functional jurisdiction. The 18 subjects, as mentioned in the twelfth schedule, on which the urban local bodies are to make laws have not been devolved uniformly. States like Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh on an average have devolved sixteen functions to ULBs out of 18 listed in the Twelfth Schedule, but some key functions such as roads, regulation of slaughterhouses, water supply and sewerage and urban planning including town planning are yet to be devolved to ULBs.

It is also worth noting that though the sixteen functions are devolved to ULBs but little of this is actually in the hands of municipalities, as the core decision making power rests with the state government or district administration. At the same time, overlapping of functions between various departments is also a reality (Occasional Paper Series.No.4, 2008).

In many states, the functions are delegated through executive orders rather than transferred through a piece of legislation so that, it is apprehended, they can be withdrawn easily. Some of the states have transferred their schemes of local nature along with funds and functionaries. They have adopted a pragmatic approach of giving supervisory and controlling power to local bodies while retaining the power of appointment/dismissal and promotion/demotion with them. Kerala has shared its plan budget with its local bodies to the extent of 40 per cent (Chaubey, 2004).

The devolution of funds upon municipalities by the state is important in order to augment the financial capacity of the municipalities. The functioning of ULBs reveals a different picture. The ULBs still have to depend on grants from state and central governments. The municipalities on their own are not able to raise sufficient resources to be able to cover their costs, and are therefore increasingly dependent on state transfers for financial sustenance. The octroi or in lieu /octroi compensation are the major untied grants which all municipalities get from the state government. However, it is also not completely untied. A portion of the grant is tied – to be used by ULBs only for meeting establishment / administration expenditure, while the remaining amount can be used for other purposes. The bad financial situation in turn affects adversely the expenditure priorities of the municipality (Occasional Paper Series, *op.cit.*).

The financial position of the ULBs has been very well presented in the *Twelfth Finance Commission* report. It has summed up the financial problems of the ULBs in the various states as follows:

- Poor revenue realisation by municipalities – negligible tax and non-tax revenue.
- Excess dependence on state transfers, even for day to day expenses.
- Excess expenditure on establishment.
- Irregular disbursements of octroi compensation grant which also adversely affects the day-to-day functioning of municipalities.
- Poor accounting practices leading to lack of clarity on financial situation.
- Mounting arrears of payments like pension and provident funds (*ibid*).

If one has an overview of the working of the ULB's, attention is automatically attracted towards the non-functional character of the DPC. It was for the first time the DPCs under Article 243Z (d) have got Constitutional status by way of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act. But unfortunately the DPCs have been made ineffective. Though most states have taken the steps to constitute the District Planning Committees (DPCs), there are variations in the composition and functioning of the DPCs. For example, the MLAs and MPs are either the members or special invitees of DPC in all the states except Kerala (Mishra, 2006, *op.cit.*).

In states like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, they have been given voting rights. In still some other states like West Bengal, MLAs and MPs can become the members of the DPC and have voting rights by the special government order. Yet, another variation is visible in Tamil Nadu where one-fifth of total block chairpersons in the district are the members of DPC by rotation. In no other state, the Chairpersons of Gram Panchayats and Block Panchayats are members of the DPC (*ibid.*). In Haryana and Tamil Nadu, bureaucrats had been made chairs of these committees, and in Madhya Pradesh, ministers had been put in charge of them – in violation of the amendment's spirit (Datta, 2003).

A study conducted by Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) on urban governance highlights the fact that DPC in Himachal Pradesh is a weak link in the planning process in the state. It is due to: (a) lack of an organic linkage between panchayat, panchayat samiti, zila panchayats and ULBs regarding plan preparation and implementation, (b) paucity of funds, and foremost the lack of strong political and administrative will to make them work. In Chhattisgarh, the DPC is unfortunately not yet functional though it has been constituted in all the districts. The state government, in contravention of its own rules, constituted DPCs in 2005 in all districts by nominating all members instead of holding elections. The DPC is chaired by state ministers, which is another major problem. This ensures that the DPC works only as an arm of the state government with no capacity for independent functioning (Occasional Paper Series, *op.cit.*).

The need of the hour is that the DPCs should be made effective and the district plan prepared by the PRIs and Municipalities should be approved by the state government without any change. It is also desirable that the DPC may issue guidelines to the lower level units in regard to their annual action plan and consolidated five year plan. The situation is much less encouraging as far as the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) is concerned.

Another problem area of ULB's is the participation of SCs/STs, OBCs and women in these bodies. The very presence of large numbers of poor people in local councils, mainly on account of seat reservations, is a very significant development in the local political landscape of most parts of India where they were previously excluded from public life and political participation (Robinson, 2005). They are participating in protests and rallies against low wages, faulty implementation of schemes, etc. Thus, things are not as bleak as some of the problems we have discussed here depict. Many positives have happened and the scenario is changing.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Enumerate the features of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts.

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- 2) Analyse the lacunae in the functioning of PRIs.

- 3) Discuss the problems faced by urban local bodies.

13.9 CONCLUSION

Decentralisation has firmly been established both in rural as well as urban areas. Local democracy has deepened, political participation broadened and representation diversified as a result of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. Decentralisation has provided an institutionalised arena where the local population could participate in local government decision making. The decentralisation process has now given rural and urban local bodies an opportunity to assume greater responsibility for rural and urban governance. The new system of decentralised governance has provided an element of continuity and enlarged the participatory process at the grassroots level. The states have taken certain measures to transfer functions and devolve funds upon the local bodies.

Despite this, the local bodies at the grassroots level are faced with insurmountable task of addressing the problem of governance. The experience brings to the fore the need of addressing the challenges faced by the local bodies to meet the desired standards of governance. And in this process State has a vital role to play, so that the right kind of system of governance is established at the grassroots level. In operationalising the panchayat and municipal acts, the State has a vital role to play in providing support for building of local institutions, legal framework and in creating an enabling environment for people to participate and take the advantage of opportunities. The need of the hour is positive intervention by the State through policies for human resource development and institutional development which are critical as these would strengthen the process of decentralisation. Besides, in the era of globalisation, the central as well as the state governments will have to provide critical support to local institutions in terms of infrastructure and institution building, as globalisation has impacted the village life. Transparency, accountability, effective planning and efficient delivery of goods and services can go a long way in improving decentralisation pattern in India.

13.10 GLOSSARY

Finance Commission : It is the Commission set up every five years by the President of India under Article 280 of the Constitution. Its function is to recommend sharing of taxes levied by the union government on the states. Till now fifteen Finance Commissions have been set up to recommend devolution of taxes and other fiscal matters.

Kudumbashree : It is the community organisation of self-help groups of women. The name Kudumbashree in Malayalam language means prosperity of the family. It is community network that covers the entire State of Kerala. It consists of a three tier structure with neighbourhood groups as primary level units, area development societies at the ward level, and community development societies at the local government level. These work on range of issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture besides income generation activities.

Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA) : It is the scheme that attempts to empower the male and female elected representatives through several measures.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) : It is the programme to revitalise the Panchayati Raj institutions through strengthening gram sabha, the capacities of panchayats and promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to panchayats.

Self Help Group : It is a small voluntary association of people, generally from the same socio-economic background. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The self-help group promotes small savings among its members and it is kept with a bank.

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13.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Decentralisation is considered as a useful mode of administration to deliver public services.
 - Facilitates utilisation of regional and local resources for development purposes.
 - Fosters local planning and development.
 - Ensures sustained participation in local decision making.
 - Institutionalises participation of citizens in development planning.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Political decentralisation that refers to transfer of political power and functions from the central to lower levels of government.
 - Administrative decentralisation which implies transfer of authority, resources and responsibilities to lower levels of administrative hierarchy.
 - Functional decentralisation which involves transfer of subject specific functions to local tiers for their effective and efficient implementation.
 - Financial decentralisation that involves devolving powers pertaining to taxation, funds and expenditure to local bodies.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - See Section 13.6
- 2) Your answer should include the following points.
 - Large variations among the states in the operation of PRIs.
 - Absence of detailed executive instructions regarding devolution of powers to PRIs under the Eleventh Schedule.
 - Despite reservation of seats for women, SCs and STs, lack of effective measures to empower them.
 - Restricted financial autonomy and lack of incentives to raise resources.
 - Problem of coordination among the three levels of PRIs and between bureaucracy and NGOs.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Absence of clear cut functional jurisdiction.
 - Overlapping of functions between various departments.
 - Delegation of functions through executive orders rather than transfer through legislation.
 - Ineffective revenue realisation.
 - Poor accounting practices.

UNIT 14 INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE*

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Context of Citizen Participation in India
- 14.3 Inclusive Governance
 - 14.3.1 Constitutional Framework for Inclusive Society
 - 14.3.2 Institutional Framework for Inclusive Society
- 14.4 Participative Governance
 - 14.4.1 Participative Structures in India
 - 14.4.2 Participatory Tools
- 14.5 Inclusive and Participative Governance: Key Issues and Challenges
- 14.6 Conclusion
- 14.7 Glossary
- 14.8 References
- 14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the context of citizen participation in India;
- Explain the relevance of inclusive governance;
- Describe the significance of participative governance; and
- Identify the key issues and challenges of inclusive and participative governance.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, there has been a rising concern in advancing ‘*sustainability*’ for development. Central to this concern is the increasing global agenda towards re-examining the capacity of State and non-state actors to foster ‘*development outcomes*’ with people irrespective of caste, creed, race, religion, gender, disability, and income levels. In 2011, the former President of India Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam in his lecture delivered at Harvard University, envisioned for a “*clean environment without pollution, prosperity without poverty, peace without fear of war and a happy place to live for all citizens of the world. What is needed is the participation of multiple nations, multiple institutions and people from across the globe towards common objectives*” (Economic Times, 2011). In a developing country context, there has been a considerable shift in widening the scope for people’s participation through governance structures that are transparent and accountable. Specifically, these shifts

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intended to accelerate changes in the fundamental structure and functioning of State from a 'closed', 'centralised', 'rigid', and 'static' system to an 'open', 'decentralised', 'flexible', and 'dynamic' system.

With multiple centres of power and layers involved in decision making, different ways have been explored to strengthen democracy in both developed and developing countries. In this Unit, we shall discuss the functioning of democracy through inclusive and participative governance and the key issues and challenges in implementing such innovative practices.

14.2 CONTEXT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

Let us begin this section with the case of Bhopal Gas Tragedy. In December 1984, a highly toxic leak of methyl isocyanate gas from the pesticide plant UCIL (Union Carbide India Ltd) in Bhopal claimed the lives of over 5000 and injuries to 5 lakh individuals (The Hindu, 2019). Such industrial disaster is a wake-up call for ongoing and upcoming corporate projects to comply with the environment standards. A Report of Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow, on the Bhopal Gas tragedy indicates that within the radius of 3.5 km from the factory and beyond, the soil and groundwater have been contaminated with cancer and birth defect-causing chemicals (The Hindustan Times, 2015). Such worst industrial disasters, raises questions on several issues pertaining to governance vis-à-vis social and environmental justice, safety of human lives, flora and fauna, rehabilitation for victims, restoring normal life etc. Even after 35 years of the tragedy, people of Bhopal continue to suffer because of the effects of harmful substances. In this tragedy, people were completely unaware of the hidden disaster and we may only speculate that a structured citizens' involvement could have averted it. The need for citizen participation has been seriously felt only in the wake of such injustice.

There have been several instances where efforts to foster environment friendly practices were neglected by industries and this made the government to bring in 'people' as development actors. In 1994, people's involvement becomes mandatory with the promulgation of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification. It states that environmental clearance is possible only after public consultation in projects related to mining, thermal power plants, river valley, infrastructure (road, highway, ports, harbours and airports) and industries (Government of India, 2006). Although, EIA is a decision making tool available for people to review the potential social and environment impact, the success of EIA depends on the people's ability to define the problems that are likely to affect them. In essence, more joined-up dialogues and partnerships between State, citizens, and non-state actors are likely to increase coordination and innovation. Above all, it has the potential to prevent disasters.

Several state governments, with the aim to be accountable, transparent and responsive towards delivery of public services, have embraced the rights-based approach for a citizen friendly experience. Under this approach, states, such as, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and several others enacted legislation for Right to Public Services (RTPS). In fact, Madhya Pradesh became the first state to implement the law. This Act clearly delineates front office and back office operations for catering to the needs of citizens and to ensure time bound service delivery, citizen service centres have been established. However, the challenge in implementing this legislation includes building capacities of field level officers at two levels: (a) need for time bound citizen services and (b) potential implications of delaying or denying of the services. We shall be discussing this further in Unit 15 of this Course.

On the one hand, we have several initiatives and programmes meant for prompt citizen service delivery. On the other, citizen participation has been seen as an important development dimension by the State. In fact, the nature of citizen participation has evolved in India through '*inclusive*' and '*participative*' contexts; firstly, '*inclusive*' context includes empowerment of marginalised sections, restoration of human dignity, and sustainable livelihood etc.; secondly, '*participative*' context includes citizens' ability to develop alternatives, time and cost effectiveness, and stakeholder responsiveness etc.

The ensuing section discusses deeply about citizen engagement and participation through meaningful networks vis-à-vis inclusive and participative governance.

14.3 INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

To begin with, let us understand about inclusive governance in India with reference to gender responsiveness. In 2013, the Ministry of Women and Child Development formally guided the state governments to adopt gender-responsive budgeting in all departments and local bodies. To expedite the process, the Ministry informed the states to establish a Task Force on Gender Budgeting. The concept of gender responsive budgeting was adopted to tackle gender inequality in policy making at all levels of government. Gender budgeting includes Part A which deals with women-specific schemes (100% resource allocation) and Part B which deals with pro-women schemes (30% resource allocation). For instance, Budget 2019 proposed to increase the gender budget allocation to Rs 131,700 crore for the year 2019-20. In fact, the budget makes a comprehensive financial outlay for women's safety, employment, nutrition, social upliftment, education, health and maternal benefit (Ashraf, 2019).

Ever since 'inclusive governance' has gained prominence in social science literature, several approaches have been adapted according to the nature of the social science discipline vis-à-vis Basic Needs, Alternative Models of Production, Sustainable Livelihood, Rights-based etc. However, the present unit confines the discussion to State interventions for inclusive governance at three broad levels:

- Constitutional Framework – It provides basic structure for inclusive societies;
- Institutional Framework – It promotes and enforces laws and policies; and
- Proactive Approach – To counter specific forms of exclusion.

14.3.1 Constitutional Framework for Inclusive Society

In the information age, scholars and practitioners have not surprisingly been keen to ask the question, '*how to engage citizens for a meaningful interaction between state and society?*' Logically, democratic institutions were built with the objective to educate citizen in shaping the production and consumption of available resources. In order to facilitate fair and equitable distribution of resources for the marginalised groups, Constitution made a commitment to ensure political, social, economic, and cultural rights for all its citizens. It is the nature of these constitutional commitments which elevated the position of people from a mute '*subject*' to an '*empowering citizen*' who could shape the way resources are produced and consumed. To illustrate, the fundamental rights from Article 14-16 of the Indian Constitution indicate that every person who lives within the country are equal before law and no one will be discriminated to realise their rights, based on religion, race, caste, gender, and place of birth (Basu, 2007). In case of violation of the fundamental rights by the State or any public authority, the citizen is empowered to approach the court for '*judicial remedy*'. Let us understand this perspective through the following example.

Case Example: India's First Transgender Police

In 2017, Prithika Yashini from Tamil Nadu became India's first transgender Sub-Inspector of police. Despite possessing eligibility conditions for the post, the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board (TNUSRB) disqualified her candidature based on gender. However, she filed her grievance in Madras High Court and subsequently the Board had to notify transgender as the third category (Madhav, 2017). Currently, Prithika along with 21 transgenders is part of the police cadre. Prithika's campaign for transgender employment in public services was lauded by the Court and wider society. This incident can be cited as a classic example of the Fundamental Right-Article 16 which indicates that no citizen shall be discriminated or considered ineligible by the State based on religion, race, caste, gender, descent, and place of birth or any of them.

14.3.2 Institutional Framework for Inclusive Society

Can inclusive society be achieved without socially responsible business? The answer to the question needs to be examined under the lens of 'Triple Bottom Line' (TBL) approach.

Dimensions of Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

According to Slaper and Hall (2011), TBL was developed by Elkington and opines that it has changed the landscape of state and non-state actors to measure their performance in sustainability context vis-à-vis environmental, social, and economic dimensions. These dimensions will be discussed below:

Environmental Dimension

The environmental dimension includes the impact of industries on local natural resources. Besides, it includes profiling the quality of air and water in terms of harmful substances, quantity of water consumption, electricity and fuel energy, safe disposal of hazardous waste and waste management, usage of land, public transport facility.

Social Dimension

The social dimension includes the rate of unemployment, participation of women labour force, rate of crime ratio, health and well-being, access to education and government schemes, community and recreation activities.

Economic Dimension

The economic dimension includes the flow of money and capital and its subsequent impact on personal income, per capita, individual household income, and job creation.

According to Slaper and Hall (op. cit), the development dimensions of TBL include 3Ps: People, Planet, and Profit. Based on above mentioned dimensions, every company is liable towards society and environment and based on these lines. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) gained significance especially in the post globalisation era. These dimensions are inclusive and as already mentioned it caters to the needs of 3Ps and enables the concerned corporate to appropriately apply to their requirements depending on the project and community.

The idea of CSR is intrinsically linked to the development discourse which enables industries to contribute positively for uplifting the socially excluded. By adapting to the TBL dimension to development, CSR seeks to integrate their core business strategy towards social and environmental impacts. In a way, CSR intends to build sustainable communities by exploring new ideas and new modes of livelihoods by partnering with government and other stakeholders.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR in Indian context have been in vogue in the form of philanthropic endeavor since pre-independent times. With widening inequalities vis-à-vis gender, income, health, digital, and education, the need to bridge these inequalities was constantly pondered over by national and international agencies. As a result, Government of India came up with the National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs) for Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business and the CSR section within the Companies Act, 2013.

CRISIL Foundation Report on CSR expenditure, points out that during the period 2015-2018, the Indian companies had spent over Rs 50,000 crore (The Economic Times, 2019). The report highlights that the highest social expenditure during the financial year 2018 was in education and skill development sector, followed by health and sanitation, and rural development projects. From this data, it can be understood that CSR could be a viable instrument for the development of disadvantaged, vulnerable, and marginalised communities. In the long run, it is estimated to renew sustainability in collaboration with state and other non-state actors. Let us discuss further through the following example.

Case Example

In compliance to the Companies Act, 2013 and Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) Guidelines, 2014, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has evolved its own policy on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable development. Let us look into one of its successful project in Kashmir. On February 21st, 2019, ONGC was honored with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) CSR award for its community project in Baramulla and Uri (Jammu and Kashmir). In collaboration with the Indian Army and NGO, Research and Extension Association for Conservation Horticulture and Agro-forestry (REACHA), ONGC undertook CSR projects in skill development, education, and rehabilitation work. Notably, the public sector company has been positively impacting the lives of the youth in Kashmir since 2016 (ONGC, 2019). The skill development courses have been certified by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). ONGC reported that around 150 girls have been trained in Fashion Designing, Stitching and Tailoring and hundreds of youth have been trained in Hospitality and Retail Sales. Further, about 60-70% youth have been trained for a sustainable livelihood by setting up their own entrepreneurship ventures (REACHA, 2019).

Proactive Approach to Counter Exclusion

Despite efforts to foster political, social and economic inclusion, there have been instances of exclusion especially in the context of differently abled population, transgender, marginalised, and vulnerable. In order to bridge these inequalities, governments look for development alternatives so as to create equal opportunities for all. One of the development alternatives that we are going to discuss here is the social enterprise framework. Development advocates believe that in order to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the social enterprise framework could be considered as an alternative as it enables economies to reinvest surpluses back into social and environmental purposes.

Social Enterprise Framework

A social enterprise is the collective commitment of a community of people who seek to build sustainable local economy. It intends to reduce inequalities and social stigma attached with exclusion. British Council's Report on 'Social Enterprise: An Overview

of Policy Framework in India' (2015), points out that the ecosystem for social enterprises in India have been active since 2005. Significantly, there have been social investments to create potential value by pooling resources through grants and capital investments. The government schemes, such as, Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes provided financial access to the economically backward sections. In 2014, with the objective to make entrepreneurial response to social issues, India Inclusive Innovation Fund was started (British Council, 2015). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made access to easier credit for small and medium enterprises, marginal farmers etc. As a result, the ecosystem is favourable for multiple actors, such as, incubators, academicians, national and international donors, workshops, training etc., to create 'social value'. In this section, let us understand how does social enterprise framework impacts the lives of the vulnerable with special reference to differently abled.

Having understood the significance of inclusive governance in Indian context, let us discuss from the perspective of participative governance in the ensuing section.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What do you understand by the term 'Triple Bottom Line'?

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2) Describe the context of Corporate Social Responsibility in India.

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3) Explain briefly the role of social enterprises in tackling exclusion.

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14.4 PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE

With the Constitutional commitment to provide equality and equity to all, India has time and again taken steps to ensure citizen participation in governance, such as, Public

Interest Litigation (PIL), Citizen's Charter, Right to Information (RTI), social audit mechanism etc. These governance mechanisms have already been discussed in Unit 3- Governance Framework in India. In this section, let us discuss the participatory institutions and citizen tools for participation.

14.4.1 Participatory Structures in India

Participatory institutions have been formed with the intention to move forward the political, social, and economic development agenda of the Constitution. To illustrate, Oommen (The Hindu Business Line, 2015) cites a successful practice in grassroots democracy. During the eleventh Five Year Plan, under the initiative of District Planning Committee (DPC) of Kollam district, Kerala, the Integrated District Development Plan was evolved successfully with the participation of multiple stakeholders. One of the notable achievements of this plan was it could integrate the rural-urban plan within a period of four years. In the ensuing sub-section, let us understand about the participative context of governance at local level.

Rural Governance

Rural development has always been at the centre stage of development since independence. However, in the wake of globalisation era, the challenges were multitude especially in terms of protecting the rights of villagers. With the view to devolving 3Fs – funds, functions, and functionaries, the central government enacted the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in 1992. The framework provides adequate representation of marginalised communities and women, instituting State Finance Commission for smooth flow of funds, establishment of Village Development Plan and District Planning Committee etc. It provides a fillip to represent community as a whole as it has provisions for reservation of women and marginalised in contesting elections.

Gram Panchayat

Gram Sabha is seen as an empowerment platform for discussing and passing resolutions to encounter social problems like lack of community health, education etc. In this regard, women's participation has been crucial towards community health development. Firstly, on the occasion of International Women's Day in 2017, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) honored around 6000 women panchayat leaders in achieving the Open Defecation Free (ODF) Village (Government of India, April-June 2017). This is one of the sustainable endeavours of rural governance with special reference to women's political empowerment.

Secondly, to create responsive local governance, the Fourteenth Finance Commission has allocated Rs. 2,00,292 crores for panchayats. In order to utilise the funds, the MoPR has issued guidelines and manuals to evolve Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). By including local priorities and needs in a fair and transparent manner, the funds could be integrated with sustainable initiatives.

Thirdly, to encourage village panchayats for optimal utilisation of child development funds, the Ministry has instituted an award for Child Friendly Gram Panchayat in March 2019. Keeping in view of inclusive child development, the award intends to incentivise the villages that are proactive towards immunisation, nutrition, sanitation, school enrollment and dropout rate, playground, drinking water facilities, mid-day meal scheme, girl child hygiene etc. (MoPR, 2019).

In the subsequent paragraph, let us understand participative governance in urban context.

Urban Governance

With the intention to addressing the challenges of urbanisation, the central government enacted the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in 1992. It configured a structural framework for electing governments at the local level and for their effective functioning. The Act mandates compulsory reconstitution of municipal bodies within a stipulated time frame and explicitly acknowledges a central role for the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) within the Constitutional framework and provides for devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries to them. The constitution of Ward Committees in municipalities, Metropolitan Planning Committees, and District Planning Committees for preparation and consolidation of plans of spatial, economic, and social development marks a paradigm shift from a traditional top down approach to bottom up approach. In essence, the Act envisages identifying potential stakeholders at the local level for collaborative partnerships.

In the recent years, there have been several initiatives by non-state actors in addressing critical issues confronting cities, such as, financing municipal infrastructure, benchmarking civic services, instituting citizen friendly initiatives etc. Let us further our understanding through the following example.

Case Example: Innovation in Metropolitan Governance: Citizens' Budget

The participatory budgeting campaign in Bangalore is a partnership between the citizens and Greater Bangalore Municipal Corporation (GBMC). The initiative was launched in December 2016 by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a Bangalore based think tank which believes in collaborative partnership between the citizens, ward councilors, civic officials, and other stakeholders. With the aim to collecting scientific data at the ward level and to promote the concept of neighbourhood level budgets, the initiative intends to build sustainable communities. For instance, at the neighbourhood level, open and structured dialogues take place between the ward councilor, civic officials, and community on budgets and civic projects. The participatory budgeting had been given due publicity through a mobile web application and an online campaign titled “*I Change My City*”. Besides, citizenship festival was conducted to collect the inputs from school, college, and community groups. The GBMC ascertained to implement 12, 468 citizen inputs in the 2017-18 budget. By prioritising citizens' inputs in the budget, the Mayor and Municipal Commissioner of the city, stay committed to the principle of ‘citizens as development actors’ in letter and spirit (Janaagraha, 2018-19).

14.4.2 Participatory Tools

With the objective to empowering communities, various participatory tools have been used by the concerned stakeholders. For instance, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a powerful tool to map village level resources, such as, water bodies, sanitation, schools, primary health centres etc., which facilitates planning and evaluation of rural projects. Indeed, it has also been called as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) because of its ability to develop a deeper understanding of social realities.

Social Mapping

Social mapping is one of the most popular methods in PRA that focuses on mapping habitation patterns, individual households, social infrastructure like roads, drainage systems, presence of libraries, playgrounds, drinking water facilities, etc. According to National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, one of the defining features of social map is, it is designed by local people and not by experts. The idea is to enable policies and plan as relevant to local people so as to build ownership among the

community for any government schemes. Interestingly, social map serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool for conceiving projects in terms of physical and social context of the villages.

Participatory tools are flexible and innovative and they have been applied in disaster prone areas to mitigate disasters, preparing evacuation maps at the time of disaster, mapping unsafe places for women and girls etc.

The Case of Community Score Card (CSC)

In 2005, the Government of India launched the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) with the mission to reduce Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR). One of the social accountable strategies of NRHM is to mobilise the rural communities in developing village health plans by working closely with the Village Health and Sanitation Committee (VHNSC) and other stakeholders. Similarly, World Vision (WV), an NGO functioning in India to mobilise community knowledge on quality healthcare through its Project - Maternal and Neonatal Health through Birth Spacing and Advocacy (MOMENT) aims to develop Social and Behaviour Change Communication among rural women. Let us discuss the joint efforts of NRHM and MOMENT in one of the districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP).

One of the World Vision's (WV) social accountability approaches is the Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) which aims to improve citizens' interface with the concerned stakeholders by making them answerable to the services delivered. It is to be understood that the nature of 'Community Score Card' (CSC) is not just dissemination of scorecard, rather, the objective is to foster community dialogue with the service providers so as to create sustainable framework for delivering results. 'Community Score Card' is a social accountability tool which is used to assess the quality of health services in terms of *'improvement in availability and quality of essential drugs, increase in facility-based delivery, reduced clinic and hospital waiting times, increased immunization coverage, new incentive systems for doctors to visit remote areas, better sanitation, new infrastructure, such as, maternity wards, improved relations between staff and patients'*.

To gain community support, WV members conducted discussions with the panchayat heads, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Auxiliary Nurse-Mid Wives (ANMs), Community Development Officer (CDO), family members of daughter-in-laws, such as, mothers-in-law, husbands, and other relevant stakeholders. Primarily, gram panchayats were educated about their access to Government Untied Funds which are allocated by the Government to improve social and health services (Otchere, 2017). Initially, people of Hardoi village assessed the accessibility and quality of health services. Based on the performance measures of the services delivered, nearly 40 VHSNCs were revived and since then coordination improved among the panchayat heads, ANMs, CDO, and the community. To illustrate, nine out of seventeen village heads received the government untied funds of Rs. 35,000 to revive the ANM sub-centres and eventually women utilised this centre for immunisations and ante-natal care. Based on the concerted efforts of the community, local and state bureaucracy, NGOs, and other stakeholders, the accountability mechanisms in health sector has been strengthened in the districts.

Citizen Led Environmental Impact Assessment Toolkit (CLEIA)

It is an innovative toolkit that encourages community-based dialogue with the stakeholders at key stages of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). According to Public Affairs Centre (PAC), CLEIA enables citizens' to have structured data about the grievance with which they could take collective action with the project proponents

or clearance authorities (Lakshmisha, 2016). To illustrate, PAC had conducted an impact assessment study of the *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)* in collaboration with the National Rural Road Development Agency and the World Bank as part of the project on ‘Citizen Monitoring of PMGSY Roads’ across Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand. Primarily, this exercise was done to assess the benefits of road construction and its effect on vegetation, land, water, livelihood, drinking water, other resources, and ecology of the villages. The volunteers of the study were trained by PAC team on the toolkit.

Based on the socio-economic front, the citizen survey concluded that the construction led to improved road connectivity, access to markets, schools, hospitals, and job creation. However, the project did impact the local environment and ecology, especially, in terms of felling of trees, agriculture, livelihoods, contamination of drinking water sources and water bodies. Further, it was documented that in all the states the construction caused soil erosion and reportedly affected the agricultural practices. It was thus inferred through the study that although the project proponents have had significant effect on planting of trees, the need to mitigate the negative environment impacts on the local ecology was underscored.

Social Media and Disaster Response

Recently, the significance of social media has become highly relevant especially during disasters. Social media technologies include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Youtube, and such allied technology applications that are capable of connecting the users with the global community even when there is a collapse of communication network. In this sub-section, let us discuss the social media usage and its impact on disaster response.

Case Example: The Kashmir Floods (2014)

During the Kashmir floods of 2014, people were stranded in remote areas due to huge destruction of roads, collapse of power supply and communication networks. The rescue teams were looking for alternative action. However, the Indian army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were able to undertake swift rescue operations through social media updates of citizens through Facebook page, Twitter, and WhatsApp group. The social media posts were verified by a team of officials for its authenticity. Later, the Army had reported that it was able to rescue around 12,000 people (Najar, 2014) from the flood affected areas. Through this example, we could understand the way citizens innovatively partnered with government using social media technologies. In fact, it not only saved time and cost of the government but also the life of affected people.

In the ensuing section, let us discuss briefly the key issues and challenges of inclusive and participative governance.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Describe the role of participative institutions in urban context.

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.....
.....

2) What is the purpose of social mapping?

3) Explain the significance of Community Score Card.

14.5 INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE: KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

With the state and non-state actors around the world reinforcing on the agenda ‘inclusive and participative governance for development’, contemporary governments have thus, renewed their commitment towards sustainability. Nevertheless, the challenges are many in terms of caste, class, gender, capacity building of elected representatives and other stakeholders. Despite Constitutional amendments in governance, the local governments are not yet able to meet the resource needs owing to the challenges as mentioned above. The ‘inclusive and participative context’ is more relevant in local scenario as it has the capacity to directly engage the citizens. Let us understand the issues and challenges given below:

Gender Imbalance

With 50% reservation in local bodies, yet, women are not able to realise their political empowerment. The constitutional arrangement enables all women irrespective of caste, class, education, and income to participate, however, the patriarchal attitude, lack of political and administrative understanding restrict them from performing development functions.

Lack of Citizen Awareness

There have been a whole lot of participative and inclusive structures in the country for women and marginalised sections, however, lack of awareness on government schemes inhibits their economic and social participation. To illustrate, majority of untied funds meant for village development go under utilised at the end of the financial year. Another aspect is in relation to access to loans and subsidies, the government has initiated various schemes and programmes exclusively for small, and medium enterprises including the

establishment of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), nevertheless, people are still unaware about their financial prospects. In 2016, with the objective to create financial awareness in a village in Tamil Nadu, NABARD conducted Financial Literacy Awareness (FLA) programme for the self-help groups and marginal farmers. This was primarily organised to enable the poor and vulnerable sections to make use of social security schemes of the government (The Hindu, 2016).

Lack of Adequate Capacity Building Training

People at the local level are still inadequate in terms of capacity building. For example, to develop an integrated plan for the district, a joined up dialogue and involvement are yet to scale up in several districts of India. Training programmes on micro planning, disaster resilience, gender sensitisation and budgeting, girl child safety, mental health status etc. are yet to get reflected in the plan process.

Other Issues and Challenges

Some of the other challenges are:

- Geo-spatial mapping of resources at village level;
- Scientific collection of citizen feedback on public services at a large scale;
- Involvement of multiple stakeholders with the community;
- Documentation of governance innovations by local people; and
- Security and privacy of sharing of ward level data.

Besides, the above mentioned issues and concerns, there may be context specific challenges in the concerned department or district or village. These could be holistically addressed only with the unfolding of grassroots democracy. According to Goldbard (2010), “*Citizens can be reached and engaged if they are offered ways to take part that are interesting and satisfying in themselves, that combine learning and doing, that engage not only their participation, but their creativity*”. As pointed out, creative ways of involving citizens is the need of the hour.

14.6 CONCLUSION

In the process of advancing people’s participation, there has been a rising global concern to re-examine the capacity of state and non-state actors. With ‘sustainability’ being the mission of state and non-state actors, adequate development indicators were instituted to examine the social well-being and environment protection. Unlike the neo-liberal doctrine that focuses on expansion of capital markets over social investments, the CSR initiatives of companies have been working towards building sustainable communities by integrating their business strategies and social value. To develop alternatives in financial inclusion, social enterprise sector seem to be a viable option. Several participatory tools have been evolved to provide citizen feedback on public service delivery with the aim to improving the standards and to benchmark best practices. However, the success is determined by the quality of citizen participation and their attitude towards nation building. From the case examples discussed in this Unit, it can be understood that democracy can become feeble and futile without the presence of formal and informal linkages for citizen participation.

14.7 GLOSSARY

Development Outcomes: Development outcomes indicate the impact of public policies in reducing poverty and inequality in all forms. In developing country context, it is the capability of the excluded groups to access, participate, and thrive in education, employment, and business endeavours.

Infant Mortality Rate: It is the number of deaths per 1000 live births of children under one year of age.

Maternal Mortality Rate: It is the number of registered maternal deaths due to birth or pregnancy related complications per 1,00,000 registered live births.

Neo-liberal: It refers to freedom of market and minimum interference from the government.

Social Value: It refers to a company's mission towards positively contributing to the lives of poor and marginalised.

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14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) Triple Bottom Line (TBL) was developed by Elkington.
 - ii) It has three dimensions, namely, environment, social, and economic.
 - iii) It has changed the landscape of the way businesses are run.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) CSR operates based on TBL approach.
 - ii) It intends to build sustainable communities.
 - iii) It partners with the state and other non-state actors.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) Exclusion refers to keeping away the differently-abled, vulnerable and marginalised communities from mainstream development.
 - ii) It could be linked with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
 - iii) It aims to bridge social inequalities.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) It provides structural framework for constituting municipal bodies.
 - ii) It delineates the powers to urban local bodies in terms of 3Fs (funds, functions, and functionaries).
 - iii) It envisages identifying potential stakeholders for collaborative partnerships.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) It is one of the popular methods in PRA to map social resources.
 - ii) It is unique as it is designed by people.
 - iii) It is flexible and innovative.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
 - i) It is used to assess the quality of public services.
 - ii) It is used as a decision making tool.
 - iii) It fosters community dialogue in fixing responsibilities.