

INDIA : THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF DEPOPULATED RURAL AREAS

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INTRODUCTION

India as a typical example of developing countries shows some highly developed pockets with vast tracts of underdeveloped areas. Besides managing the normal governmental functions, such areas also need special attention in terms of development efforts to meet the rising aspirations of people and to counter the heavy out—migration trends. The developmental activities have to cover provision of various infrastructural facilities and running those at a satisfactory level as also

attract some employment generating activities as could be located there. The local government being closest to the people has to bear main brunt of the pressures and problematic situations. Though there is the regular state and district level machinery and also several special purpose organisations working for the cause of development, they hardly have a field machinery of their own and willingly or unwillingly they have to associate the local level machinery—the local government. There are various problems however which are related to the authority structure, the educational and cultural level and local traditions and specialities which come in the way of an effective and fruitful dialogue between the local government officials and staff vis—à—vis the officials and the staff of the other levels of government and of the other machinery specially created and which may have more of a business type working. Some of these and related issues that are discussed in this paper taking examples from two underdeveloped districts from Maharashtra state—a state in the western part of India. The State has the highly industrialised and developed metropolis of Bombay—which is also the financial capital of India. The state has several areas highly underdeveloped and even behind the national average in terms of development characteristics with aboriginal tracts and several very large rural tracts which are known for heavy out—migration flows of Population and lack of necessary basic infrastructure such as accessibility, adequate drinking water, educational and health facilities etc. The paper presents the structure and working of local government in those underdeveloped areas in this situational context.

RURAL LOCAL GOVT. IN INDIA AND IT'S EVOLUTION

A village Council termed as 'Village Panchayat' or 'Gram Panchayat' (GP) is the basic local government unit in rural India. The form of such local govt, institutions and their functioning was quite different prior to the advent of the British colonial rule. The village panchayat of the bygone days flourished in a self sufficient village. Villages in those days were isolated communities in absence of good communication facilities, they were also stratified into sectional groups and communities.

The initial efforts to revive the village panchayats of the olden type mostly failed in the 19th century. The introduction of some partial ministerial rule in the provinces in 1920—21 and the advent of provincial autonomy in 1936—37, also helped in initiating efforts in remodeling the village panchayat set—up. Village Panchayat Acts of 1920 and 1933 and subsequent significant amendments to the latter in 1939 are instances of these efforts.

In the modern sense of village level local govt., there was no institution prior to 1920 in the old province of Bombay (almost the entire western zone of India). The Bombay Village Health Act of 1889, provided for constitution of Sanitation Committees and Boards. Their area of action was thus very much limited (to look

after only the health and sanitation) and their resources were very much limited. The grants made available to them by the Government and the district boards were very much limited. The voluntary contributions of the people were also very much limited. The number of such village level committees was also small. On the whole nothing much could be achieved in the form of village development. Not many village councils were set up under the Act of 1920 in the old province of Bombay and those were constituted also became defunct for obvious reasons. In the first place the proposal to set up a village panchayat has to be moved by the district level officer—the Collector or the district board—who were rather reluctant because of the fear of losing their own powers and they also had to contribute some funds. The movement of reconstruction of villages had not taken much roots except perhaps in Punjab. Because of all these reasons the 1920 Act did not help much in promoting village level local government and a new Act was brought into force in 1933.

Though major portion of the provisions of the earlier Act of 1920 were incorporated in the new Act, many new provisions were incorporated in the new Act, some of which were as below:—

- (1) The proposal for establishment of a Village Panchayat could be initiated by the people of the villages themselves;
- (2) Besides house tax (which was known in the urban areas as a source of revenue for the local govt., could not be popular even in the urban areas was not so very likely to take roots so quickly in the villages) and some other local level taxes such as pilgrim tax, tax on sales of commodities, tax on marriages or similar other celebrations, octroi etc. were permitted to leviable by the village panchayats on their discretion;
- (3) The District Local Boards should pass on one—fifth of the revenue from the local fund cess collected from the jurisdiction of a village panchayat;
- (4) The District Local Boards can grant loans;
- (5) The village panchayats were authorised to hold, acquire, and dispose of properties;
- (6) To maintain and control the use of the land under certain specific forest areas;
- (7) to control the public festivals, markets, slaughter houses and parking areas for carts;

Besides the above, provisions were also made so that the village panchayats could also take up works within their areas or outside, with the permission of the District Local Boards, for taking care of the health and sanitation for the residents of the village as also education and other civic amenities as also for helping the socio-economic development etc. It was thus now possible to take up the work of construction of a road to link up the Panchayat area to a main road and maintain

the same. Thus the new provisions enabled the improvement of the village and could continue the programmes taken up by the people themselves for improving the living standards in the village. The new law also made it possible for the village panchayats in the villages approved by the government, to take decisions in respect of civil suits and criminal suits of minor nature. The court litigations used to cause financial burdens on the villagers and this simpler procedure was expected to give a solace to the villagers. Voting rights to women and opportunity to the Village head to take could now take interest in the developments of the village as so far they were confined only to the home and look after the family responsibilities only. The village head could feel obliged to do something to improve the village. After some years of working the experience gained was used and more improvements were made in the law in 1939. These improvements made following changes:—

- 1) It became obligatory to constitute a Gram Panchayat for every settlement having more than 2000 population and in respect of smaller settlements an enabling provision with the authority to the state government was made;
- 2) The members of the Panchayat had to be elected rather than appointed by designation or otherwise;
- 3) Constitution of a separate Nyaya Panchayat (a judicial village council) for every Gram Panchayat;
- 4) To levy a house tax in the village;
- 5) Permitting appeals to be preferred in the district court in respect of decisions made by the Nyaya Panchayat and re-examination of the matter.

Some amendments were made in this Act in 1940, 1945 and 1945 which were felt necessary from time to time retaining the same framework.

NEW LEGISLATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN 1947

India became independent in 1947 and a new Constitution was given to the country in 1950. Part IV of the Constitution contains Directive Principles of State Policy and article 37 directs that 'it shall be the duty of the State to apply these Principles in making Laws'. The article 40 provides that "the state shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government."

Then Bombay State contained parts from different states originally which had different laws and the new constitutional provision was also to be given effect to. A new law was therefore brought into force called 'The Bombay Village Panchayat Act of 1958. This act consolidated the laws relating to the Panchayat Administration and enabled the constitution of a Village Panchayat for every village and invested the necessary powers in them to enable them to function as units of Local Self Government and of development activities in the rural areas. The important

provisions were:—

- 1) Constitution of a village panchayat in any revenue village or any such administrative unit or part thereof;—
- 2) Reservation of two seats for women in every village panchayat;
- 3) Enabling a voter in any ward to contest election from the same ward or any other ward in the village;
- 4) Constitution of Gram Sabha of all residents in the village who are entitled to vote;
- 5) Establishment of a District Village Panchayat Mandal for every District;
- 6) The Secretary of the Village Panchayat to be a government servant and paid by government and arrangements made for his Training;
- 7) Entrusting the work of collection of land revenue and of maintenance of land revenue records to the Village Panchayat (later on this entrusted to a different government servant under the revenue administration) ;
- 8) Payment of Land Revenue Grant on the basis of collection of Land Revenue (25 to 30% of the Revenue) ;
- 9) Constitution of a group Nyaya Panchayat for five or more villages with judicial powers (this provision was later on changed) ;
- 10) Provision for auditing the accounts of the Village Panchayat by the government.

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION SCHEME

A new scheme of democratic decentralisation was brought into operation after a report on the subject commonly known as Balwantrai Mehta Team Report and the Naik Committee Report in Maharashtra. The bigger Bombay State was divided into two States Maharashtra and Gujrat. The Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis Act 1961 amended some of the provisions of the Bombay Panchayat Act of 1958. The village panchayat was of course retained as the basic unit in the new scheme creating an organic link with the higher level bodies viz. the Panchayat Samitis (for the sub—district level) and the Zilla Parishad (for the district level). These higher level bodies were vested with substantial powers of control over Village Panchayats. Some substantial amendments were made in the year 1965 but basically the Act of 1958 is still in force and controls the functioning of the Village Panchayats. One point must be noted that there are different models in practice in different states and some states the Panchayat system especially that at the District and sub—district level have not been fully practiced in all the states. Largely the Maharashtra Pattern with a stronger District level body—the Zilla Parishad has been recognised to be a good model for overall district rural administration and many other states are now adopting it though some reluctance is also seen in sharing power with other levels from the state level.

A committee appointed by Government of India under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta in 1977-78 had examined the question of Rural District Administration in greater details and the report has provided the basis for other states to initiate proposals for such a system in their areas.

One more development in Maharashtra has also to be noted. Since it was decided to decentralise the Planning & Development function, the State Government also constituted the District Planning and Development Councils (DPDC) to which 60% of the State allocation was allocated along with suitable guidelines so that the initiative in Planning and Development will be taken in a more decentralised manner. All the important officials and elected representatives from the district are associated with the DPDC. To this extent the influence of the Zilla Parishad gets reduced. The village panchayat though is supposed to be supervised or indirectly or directly controlled or influenced by the other levels of such bodies, largely the village panchayat remains the lowest level local tier of development administration.

THE DEPOPULATED RURAL AREAS IN INDIA

It is difficult to very clearly demarcate the depopulated rural areas in the Indian situation as the outmigration trends and development pattern as established in the historic past and especially since the last two centuries or so and more particularly in the last 4-5 decades (for some findings and references refer Kopardekar 1986, p 138-9) have set in some peculiar situation which is very complex. Nevertheless some trends are well known and can help in identifying the depopulated rural areas and the problems in administering those areas especially at the local government level.

Several studies of the migration trends in India have analysed the pattern. In the last 4-5 decades the population redistribution has been taking place at an unprecedented pace. The major movement has been from East to West and from South to North. Western India has shown greater gains of males, and most of the migration was to the urban areas. Presence of bigger size cities in a district accelerates the tempo of migration. Some studies have also indicated that there is a steady flow of migrants in the age groups of 15-25 and 26-40, to various cities. These findings clearly show a tendency of heavy out-migration from the rural areas to the major urban areas, such migration is also mainly of male population that too of working age group. It can therefore be said that the rural areas especially those in the interior locations and without much development are getting depopulated or are very much lagging behind.

A Statement indicating some highlights of the depopulated areas in various states of India is given as appendix.

It is proposed to discuss some details of two typical districts in Maharashtra state, one on the coast and one in the interiors. This presentation will focus

attention on the situation there and the problems before the local governments and bring out suggestions for future work.

THE RATNAGIRI—SINDHUDURG REGION

These two districts (originally one) on the western coast of Maharashtra are a typical area being depopulated over the last two to three centuries. It is a coastal strip of about 280 km length and about 64 km width and 13326 sqkm area (4.3% of the state) and population of 2156001 (3.43%) and has three distinct north—south belts (the mountain slope, the middle strip and the coastal strip). There are also 13 rivers and 33 creeks cutting up the whole area into different isolated pockets with distinct socio—economic characteristics. It is famous for the very well known Mango and cashew nuts and coconuts as also some other fruits and some quality fish. Originally it was a very good agricultural region and also known for the trading ports all along the coast even in the interiors. The destruction of forest for ship building and for railway sleepers during the British Colonial Period considerably affected the soil and its productivity. The agriculture was also affected and the surplus manpower without enough job opportunities was found suitable for jobs like military, police, clerks, factory workers, some skilled jobs like painting etc.—all these were gradually being absorbed in Bombay established a trend of out—migration to Bombay. Some important details of the present situation are described below: —

<u>characteristics</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Maharashtra</u>	<u>% of Region with state</u>
Area (km sp.)	13326	307690	4.33
Population(1981)			
urban	170917	21993594	0.78
Rural	1985084	40790577	4.87
Total	2156001	62784171	3.43
Sex Ratio (1981)			
(Females/1000)	1239	937	
% Literacy (1981)	47.63	47.18	
% Urban Population	7.93	35.06	
No. of Urban Centres	13	276	4.71
Density of Pop.(1981)	162	204	
Overall Growth Rate			
1971-81	5.96	3.99	
1961-71	8.91	4.07	

It is also to be noted that there was no town as per 1981 census with population more than 50000 and most of the population was distributed in villages with population less than 2000 and to some extent in those with population more than 2000 and below 5000.

An analysis of available data has indicated that out of the total migrants in the city of Bombay 42% were from the districts of Maharashtra and rest from other states. Out of the migrants from the state itself, 45% were from the Ratnagiri Region alone. Of these about 11% were from urban areas and the major i.e. 89% were from rural areas. It has also been concluded after some studies that lack of job opportunities and higher level amenities like education have been responsible for the out-migration and thus the 'push' factor is predominant in the migration trend.

As per 1981 census out of a total of 2105 settlements 7 are municipal and 6 more are nonmunicipal urban areas. There are 15 head-quarters of Tehsils (sub-districts). These can be said to be key settlements after the district headquarter. Then there are about 90 places which weekly market places which thus are the central places with some amenities.

The population distribution as per 1981 census in the settlements of various sizes is as follows: —

<u>Population size</u>	<u>No. of villages</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total population '000'</u>	<u>%</u>
less than 500	570	27.25	184	9.27
500 to 1999	1378	65.87	1380	69.52
2000 to 4999	138	6.60	378	19.04
5000 to 9999	6	0.28	43	2.17
10000 & above	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total	2092	100.00	1985	100.00

The above statistics is indicative of the dominance small size of the rural settlements. The no. of rural settlements of 101 per town is considered as too high as normally it should be about 30 to 40 for the farmers and other population to maintain contact with higher level of services available in the towns.

One more striking point is the existence of a large no. of hamlets in most villages locally known as Wadis. In most villages the population is not located in one central settlement but in a large no. of wadis. A sample survey indicated the average no. to be 8 and the population per wadi being 171. This pattern creates more difficulties in the provision of amenities and development and is more

conducive to out-migration due to lack of even essential basic services. The sample survey of households indicated that about a third of them were below Rs. 1000 per year, about 53% were between the income bracket of Rs. 1000 to 10000 per year, remaining were above Rs. 10000 per year. It was also observed that about 66% were below the poverty line (Rs. 3500 and below per year). It was also observed that 35 to 46 % of the rural households and about 14% of the urban households received remittances from outside of about Rs. 100 to 500 per year and some from other countries particularly middle east.

In general the economy is based on subsistence agriculture and horticulture and is yet to catch up any momentum for development in spite of the fact that some good natural resources are available but the communications and level of services needed are very poor.

Beed District

Beed is another highly underdeveloped district in Maharashtra State. Some basic facts about the district are given below:—

Area sqkm.	109218	(3.63% of state area)
Total Population	1484424	(2.14% of state pop.)
Urban Population	222574	(15.0% of dist. pop.)
Rural Population	1261850	(85.0% of dist. pop.)
Total Pop. Growth		
Rate for 71-81	15.54	(state rate 24.54%)
Urban Pop. Growth		
Rate for 71-81	53.90	(state rate 39.99%)
Rural Pop. Growth		
Rate for 71-81	10.51	(state rate 17.55%)
% Literacy 1981	24.00	(state 39.20%)
% of agricultural workers	85.50	(state 66.60%)
Density of Pop.	133	(state 204)
Sex Ratio	965	(state 937)
No. of villages per town	173	(state 143)

The distribution of villages according to the population size is as follows:—

<u>Population</u>	<u>No. of villages</u>	<u>% of villages</u>
upto 200	44	3.50
200 - 499	328	26.12
500 - 1999	778	61.94
2000 - 4999	93	7.40
5000 - 9999	11	0.88
10000 & above	2	0.16

The above statement shows the domination of settlement size of 200 to 2000 in the village settlements. In respect of urban areas (which do indicate the level of development to some extent, it is observed that there was no town having more than 100000 population though the district headquarters has not only shown a high growth rate, it is also accommodating about 35% of the urban population of the district and rest of the towns are small. Except one thermal station and three sugar factories, there is no major industrial activity in the district.

Besides the above quoted data, most other development indicators also indicate that the district is much behind in terms of development and the lower rural growth rate also indicates that the rural area is getting depopulated while the major urban centre—the headquarters of the district and some other centres are growing faster, largely however the district is behind in terms of development. Traditionally, this district provides the sugarcane harvesters and agents of most of the sugar factories move into this district for recruiting the harvesters for a period of 6–8 months every year. This temporary migrational so leads to permanent migration in course of time.

THE INCOME EXPENDITURE PATTERN OF GRAM PANCHAYATS

In the context of the underdevelopment and an urgent need to do something to stabilize the population, some massive development programme will have to be undertaken. The question is whether the existing Local Govt. Machinery (the Gram Panchayat and the Zilla Parishad) can undertake the responsibility or something more needs to be done and a newer form or a strengthened existing Local Govt. can serve the purpose. Before trying to answer this question it will be worthwhile to examine the existing system of development and funding and the role played by the Local Govt. in this process. Some available data is examined below:—

Gram Panchayats in Beed district and their Budgets
(all data given below is for the year 1983-84)

		Per GP	Per Capita
Number of Gram Panchayats (GP)	:894		
Total rural population (1981)	:1256259		
Population covered by the GP's	:1074455		
Average population per GP	:	1201	
Balance as at the beginning	:Rg. 7906709/-	8844	7.36
of the year	: (US\$ 527114)		0.49
Revenue Receipts during the year	:Rg. 5284864/-	5911	4.92
	: (US\$ 352324)		0.33
(this consists of receipts			
from local taxes of Rg. 2292795	:	2564	2.13
the balance is from govt. grants)	:US\$ 152853		0.14
Total Expenditure during the year	:Rg. 5942513/-	6647	4.70
	: (US\$ 396168)		0.32
Balance at the end of the year	:Rg. 7249060/-	8108	5.77
	: (US\$ 483270)		0.38
<u>Major Expenditure Heads</u>			
Public Health, Conservancy	:Rg. 1355920/-	1516	1.26
	: (US\$ 90395	101	6.74
Public Works - Buildings, Roads, etc	:Rg. 2765462/-	3093	2.57
	: (US\$ 184364)	206	0.17
Cultural & Educational activities	:Rg. 267418/-	299	0.24
	: (US\$ 17828	20	1.32
Misc.	:Rg. 4938/-	6	0.005
	: (US\$ 329	0.4	
Administrative Expenses	:Rg. 1398230	1564	1.30
	: (US\$ 93215	104	0.08
Social Welfare	:Rg. 779228/-	87	0.07
Agriculture, Forest Protection, etc	:Rg. 51290/-	57	0.05
	: (US\$ 3419	4	0.003
Cottage Industries	:Rg. 4620/-	5	0.004
	: (US\$ 308	0.3	

The lists of activities covered under the programmes financed through the above mentioned budget cover cleaning of wells and of public latrines, removal of encroachments, road repairs, construction of roadside gutters, plant ation of trees, wayside public shelter etc. Their impact is smaller as those are very small as will

be apparent from the levels of expenditure indicated by the above facts and figures. The Gram Panchayat is however a part of the system of Rural Local Government. Much of the expenditure and investment in Rural Development is through the medium of the District Council. To complete the picture about investments through the medium of Local Government mostly under Government Schemes (as these bodies hardly have a source of income of their own), some data about the income and expenditure through own sources and through Govt. grants are indicated below:—

Income from own sources and expenditure of Beed Dist, Council
for the year 1983—84

	<u>Rupees</u>	<u>US\$</u>	<u>Per Capita</u> <u>(Considering total rural</u> <u>population of the dist)</u>	
			<u>Rg.</u>	<u>US\$</u>
Taxes and Fees	12879/-	829	0.01	
Local Cess	355536/-	23702	0.28	0.02
Local levy	173810/-	11587	0.14	0.01
General Receipts	5594569/-	372971	4.45	0.29
Contributions	2326406/-	155093	1.85	0.12
Misc. (auction of old material, rent etc.)	108242852/-	7216190	86.16	5.74
<hr/>				
Total	116706052/-	7780403	92.90	6.19

Expenditure of the receipts from own sources

	<u>Rupees</u>	<u>US\$</u>	<u>Rg.</u>	<u>US\$</u>
President's Exp	441531/-	29435	0.35	0.02
General Administration	341169/-	22745	0.27	0.02
Education	996588/-	66439	0.79	0.05
Buildings & Roads	1381516/-	92101	1.10	0.07
Irrigation	375905/-	25060	0.30	0.02
Medical	14945/-	996	0.01	
Public Health	334694/-	22312	0.27	0.02
Public Health Engg. (water supply, sanitation)	5493173/-	366211	4.37	0.29
Agriculture	595785/-	39719	0.47	0.03
Animal Husbandry	70704/-	4713	0.06	
Social Welfare	364471/-	24298	0.29	0.02
Community Development	82588/-	5505	0.07	
Pension	501688/-	33445	0.39	0.03
Misc.	148687/-	9912	0.12	
<hr/>				
Sub-total	10391634/-	692776	8.27	0.55
Loans	5445000/-	363000	4.33	0.29
Deposits	16658224/-	1110548	13.26	0.88
Total Capital				
Expenditure	22103224/-	1473548	17.59	1.17
Remittance to	86910000/-	5794000	69.18	4.61
Panchayat Samitis (sub-district Councils for similar expenses as above)				
<hr/>				
Grand Total	119404858/-	7960324	95.04	6.34

Expenditure under Government Schemes (by way of Grants)

Item	Rupees	US\$	Per Cadita (Considering total rural population of the dist)	
			Rs.	US\$
Administration	8403741	560249	6.69	0.46
Education	68050200	4536680	54.16	3.61
Health Admin.				
Establishment	6690000	446000	5.32	0.36
Social Welfare	1711000	114067	1.36	0.09
Agriculture	2572000	171467	2.05	0.14
Horticulture	44000	2933	0.03	
Minor Irrigation	11356000	757067	9.04	0.60
Animal Husbandry	2384000	158933	1.90	0.13
Community Development	295000	13000	0.16	0.01
Natural Calamities	993000	66200	0.79	0.05
Roads & Bridges	12093000	806200	9.26	0.64
Medical	550000	36667	0.44	0.03
Medical (Ayurved)				
(Indigenous treatment)	585000	39000	0.46	0.03
Water Supply & Sanitation	4151360	276757	3.30	0.22
Public Works (Buildings, staff, etc.)	2920000	194667	2.32	0.15
Publicity	44000	2933	0.03	
Total	119823801	7988253	95.38	6.36

The above expenditure statement broadly indicates the developmental efforts carried out by the District Council with the assistance of government. Govt. also spends on the salary of the officials appointed by the government for conducting the activities of the District Council.

District Planning and Development Agency

Besides the above, there is another additional programme which was introduced in early eighties which is known as Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) along with which National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Anti-Poverty Programme (APP) and Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) were also introduced. It was also decided that these programmes needed special attention and efficient administration. A new agency called District Rural Development Agency was set up which was a small nominated body separated from the political processes but an advisory role was kept for the ZP and the DPDC.

The DRDA could also coordinate and utilise Bank finance along with Govt. subsidies for promoting development and especially programmes for employment generation, skill development and marketing etc. Specific targets for various programmes especially for those listed in the Households below poverty line meaning getting inadequate income even to have adequate nutritious food, were prescribed for very year and the programme was monitored from top levels of administration. Slowly of course the initial enthusiasm and the strict supervisory control seem to loosened up. Some malpractices have been noticed and the programme is moving rather slowly. The representatives of the public also do not like being kept away and remote involvement.

Basic issues in the development of depopulated areas and the role of Local Government and the need for strengthening it

If viewed from the overall perspective and the situation of underdevelopment and the need for people's involvement in their own upliftment, it will be found that the present framework can still be utilised and made to function with some modifications or efforts to make the system work. The Gram Panchayat as also the Taluka Panchayat and Zilla Parishad are representative local gov. bodies which are closest to people and can plan and implement development programmes. It is however necessary first to upgrade the understanding and the skills of the decision makers in these bodies. Today a sort of helplessness and dependency is being spread and people are not given the idea that they must pay for the services they use, the socio-political forces have to indicate to them that they should be responsible and responsive to the changing situation and should participate actively in socio-economic development. Whatever loans they receive should be repaid back to help other people in need. If the taxes are not recovered and arrears are written off or higher level govts subsidise the services for too long and recoveries of user charges are not made and debts for agricultural and similar rural development programmes are written off for political reasons very often, a responsible local government system can't continue to work for long and may become bankrupt or local governments for names sake and entire work will have to be carried out by governmental machinery from higher level with over domination of bureaucratic systems. This would make the local governments ineffective and people's interests will not be properly taken care of. In a situation of low literacy and poverty as also slower tempo of development there is always a tendency to migrate to big cities where opportunities for better living or at least a hope for it is possible. On the other hand if there are opportunities for local level development and better living conditions in local habitat or nearby, it is possible to influence the out-migration tendency. Socio-Economic development is a sort of an engine of growth which can continue to move further if the fuel supply is continued and the parts are kept

in working condition by proper maintenance. It is thus imperative that the Local Government, as the grass root level of democratic decentralisation and as the basis of socio-economic progress, will have to be strengthened and utilized for progress and development of the society.

On the background of the data and analysis presented above, it would be appropriate at this stage to proceed to examine the following important issues.

1. What changes are needed in the present framework?

Which also means that the Local Govt. setup, the system of preparation of Plans and Programmes and funding as also approvals will have to be considered.

2. What should be the inputs of the Plans and what concessions and/or incentives are necessary?
3. How should the Programmes be funded and what resources are available and to what extent higher levels of Governments can play a role.

These questions can be taken one by one and some suggestions put forward in the context of the present situation and the experience so far.

The framework, needed changes if any, the planning and programming systems etc.

The Local Government at the grass root level, the Gram Panchayats, the Taluka level Panchayat Systems and the Zilla Parishads will have to be strengthened and more responsible and responsive elected representatives in those bodies as also staff and officials highly motivated for their jobs will be necessary for any success in the efforts. It will be necessary to take up some electoral reforms and changes in the administrative setup to ensure a better representation in the bodies through more enlightened persons, keeping out the political considerations when civic interests are concerned. It will be necessary to train the field machinery and motivate the staff and officials with incentives for good performance and disincentives for poor performance in the form of punishments etc.

Special Training Programmes for Human Resources Development for equipping the field machinery with skills—both of technical and especially the managerial type are very essential. The available funds must be so utilised that maximum impact of the programmes are made. The accountability of the field machinery must be enhanced for which purpose their level and status may have to be increased and a very good technical and financial auditing will have to be introduced.

It would also be necessary to encourage the development of viable size settlement (in Indian conditions, it can be accepted as a minimum population of 2000 or there about. People in very small size settlements may to be given incentives to stay in such viable size settlements where all services essential for day

to day living (from a tube well and floor mill to bus stop, etc.) can be made available and links to higher order settlements are better. The communication systems, the data collection and flow of information and other processes will have to be considerably improved. The supervisory controls of the higher levels of Government which are also local governments but who must treat the lower levels as partners and not potential juvenile delinquents, if the functioning is to be effective and efficient and responsible. More advisory and fund releasing role and stronger technical and financial auditing can be very useful in creating a climate for positive development with initiative and enthusiasm instead of everything coming from the top and lower levels treated with encouragement for good work and punished for lack of performance or bad performance. The constraints of working at lower levels for the field staff and the local level socio—political forces and caste—kinship as also rich—poor struggles and raised aspirations of the people and their expectations for better living as also helplessness because of the influence of strong traditions in the local households do prohibit the progress at faster speed and trends of modernisation but these have to be countered only by development for better and effective local government is the key. It is important that persons with vision and enthusiasm for development are brought in into the decision making processes even at the local government of the rural areas which are suffering from lack of development and depopulation tendencies.

The preparation of Plans and Programmes will have to be a two way process with proposals for development coming from the bottom—the lowest levels and then interaction takes place with higher levels of decision makers who bring in policy and resource inputs within the overall framework and available funds as also the experience of what has been happening elsewhere. The process will be as below:—

THE TWO WAY PLANNING PROCESS FOR BETTER PLANNING AND EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

POLICIES, INDICATION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES,
TECHNICAL GUIDANCE AND NORMS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
PROGRAMMES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND POTENTIAL LOCAL INPUTS
WITH LOCAL NEEDS, CONSTRAINTS AND RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

It should be an iterative process with good rapport and positive interaction in the higher and lower levels of local governments and the state govt. before the plans and programmes are finalised rather than proposals for implementation coming

from the higher level for financial year and the five year plans. It would also be necessary to make available technical and managerial assistance of quality and higher level understanding in the form of staff and officials who are prepared to understand local situation and constraints and at the same time do not yield to vested interests but look to the overall development in the interest of the community. Such system does exist in a very general way even today but it needs to be much more stronger.

The Input of the Plans and Incentives, Concessions etc., Role of Higher level Governments and Funding

The main requirements of the local population will have to be thoroughly understood and priorities will have to be decided considering the needs and the resources. Drinking water for the population and the cattle, water for irrigating the farms (wells or canal link), proper roads, roadside drains and approach road and communications (e.g. telephones to maintain a contact with ambulance station, animal husbandry centre and contact with marketing centre etc), power supply for domestic use and for streetlights as also for irrigation pumps, flourmill etc.), educational and health facilities of high standard in terms of local needs, as also other important inputs for development of local resources such as horticulture, forest, cattle, mining, fishery etc. according to the local situation with a view to encourage the processing at local level rather than only exporting outside thus encouraging development and employment generation rather than tendency to out-migrate.

This would in fact require a Regional Approach to planning and development (to some extent it is being attempted) in the form of a hierarchy of settlements as per the enclosed diagram. The basic amenities will have to be provided in the lowest order settlements while in the increasingly higher order settlements more and better facilities such as for banking, repairing machinery and equipment, medical and health facilities, animal husbandry Centres, advice on agrohorticultural problems and potential, education and training relevant to local situation and to attract development and promoting entrepreneurship etc. It would be necessary to offer sizable concessions to Business and Industry Houses who are willing to invest and help development of depopulating areas. Direct import licenses for equipments, loans at concessional terms and assured power supply and better communications and bringing in appropriate technology will be very important for the development of the areas of this type and which do have potential to develop and contribute to the National Development. Some infrastructural development in form of developed estates or sheds for very small entrepreneurs and 'One Window approach' for clearances and permissions, consultancy cells for preparation of project reports and helping in all clearances and offering guidance in difficulties to such small

entrepreneurs is also very important in this situation. The local govts. at the bottom level will not be able to provide these facilities and the higher level governments and voluntary agencies interested in development and who could bring in higher managerial skills if their costs can be met somehow, will be a very significant contribution for stepping up development efforts for such areas.

Some funds have to come from the private sector as government alone can't take up the whole responsibility. Besides governments better concentrate on the infrastructure development. The private sector which thrives on the basis of infrastructure developed by government should also be conscious that too many concessions and too cheap or no cost infrastructure or too low user charges or nonpayment of those will make the systems inefficient and unworkable and will lead to overall deterioration and depopulation of the area. It is necessary to devise some means for participation of the private sector and ultimate beneficiaries in the development, operation, maintenance, and renewal of the infrastructure especially roads, transportation, telecommunication, power supply, water supply, environmental protection etc.

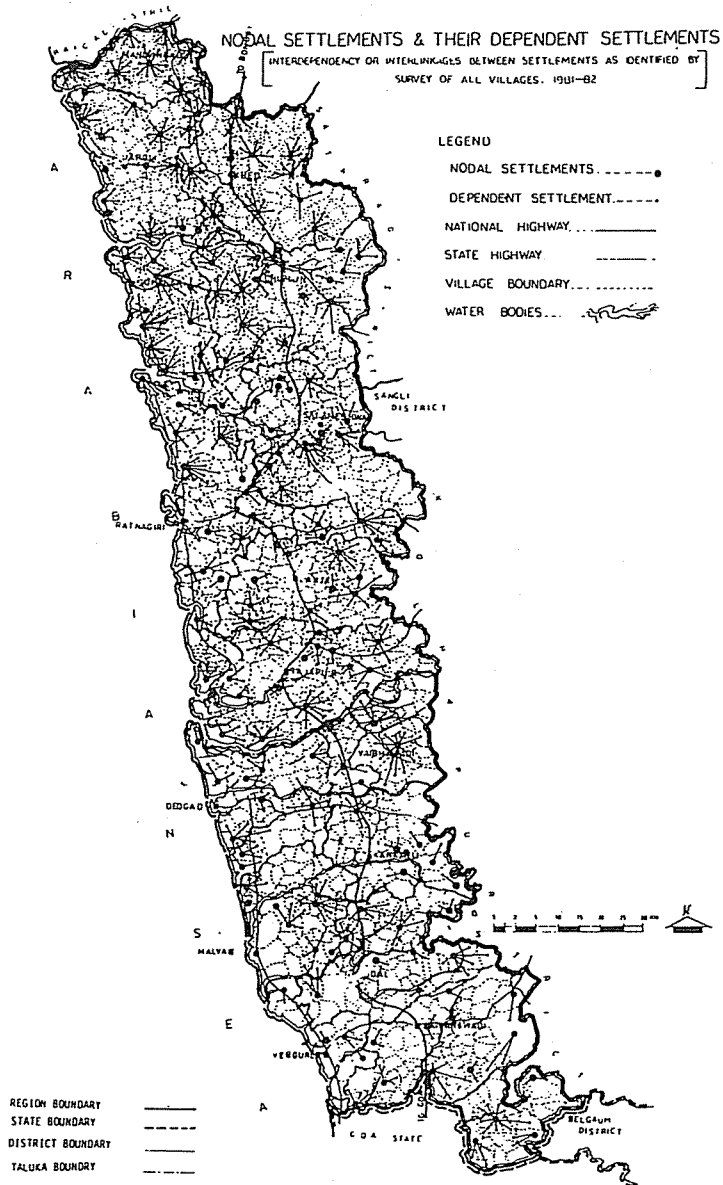
Concluding Remarks

This paper has attempted to present the background of rural local government in India, its evolution and form and present development trends and situation in terms of resources being invested in development of such areas and needed changes in the Planning and Development Framework and strengthening the local government and a two way approach as also funding of programmes etc.

It is observed that super Metropolitan Regions like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and 30 other growing metropolitan cities above or nearabout a million population are growing very rapidly in India. These are the centres where population from underdeveloped areas is migrating thus causing problems at both the ends. Rapid development and special attention with strengthened Rural Local Government in those areas can be a step forward in influencing the migration and location of economic activities and thus towards a balanced pattern of development.

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RATNAGIRI-SINDHUDURG RESOURCE REGION



STATEMENT INDICATING LOWER DENSITY DISTRICTS
IN STATES OF INDIA.

STATES	NO.	DISTRICTS WITH DENSITY OF RURAL POPULATION LESS THAN STATE AVERAGE DENSITY				DISTRICTS WITH DENSITY OF RURAL POPULATION LESS THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE DENSITY			
		RURAL AREA	% AREA	RURAL POPULATION	% TO STATE RURAL POPULATION	RURAL AREA	% AREA	RURAL POPULATION	% TO STATE RURAL POPULATION
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	1	1,841.00	22.35%	30,475	21.89%	8,234.90	100.00%	139,107	0%
ANDHRA PRADESH	10	172,851.30	63.73%	20,521,533	49.98%	188,891.70	2.80%	22,785,641	55.49%
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	6	0.00	0.00%	477,287	41.75%	24,195.00	0.00%	590,405	100.00%
BIHAR	8	104,013.60	60.94%	28,109,774	45.93%	43,744.40	25.62%	6,181,544	10.10%
GOA, DAMAN & DIU	1	3,524.70	97.34%	684,964	93.20%	3,621.10	0.00%	734,922	0.00%
GUJARAT	8	114,130.00	59.67%	7,564,361	32.21%	138,894.00	72.62%	10,978,740	46.75%
HARYANA	3	15,540.70	35.77%	2,543,142	25.19%	9,299.20	21.40%	1,335,255	13.23%
HIMACHAL PRADESH	4	32,236.50	58.12%	603,310	15.25%	51,693.50	93.20%	3,142,232	79.00%
JAMMU & KASHMIR	2	96,689.70	43.62%	122,127	2.58%	128,744.30	58.08%	2,793,944	59.11%
KARNATAKA	9	98,748.20	52.49%	10,397,887	39.38%	139,477.40	74.14%	16,713,294	63.29%
KERALA	5	20,768.30	55.77%	7,909,971	38.24%	0.00	0.00%	0	0.00%
MADHYA PRADESH	22	246,744.40	56.26%	18,538,267	44.57%	414,786.60	94.58%	38,380,290	71.09%
MAHARASHTRA	13	154,367.20	51.14%	17,134,318	42.01%	238,569.90	79.05%	28,997,503	42.02%
MANIPUR	5	20,054.10	90.43%	439,304	42.02%	20,054.10	90.43%	439,304	100.00%
MEGHALAYA	2	9,046.00	40.48%	301,175	27.52%	22,344.20	100.00%	1,094,486	100.00%
MIZORAM	2	8,355.00	40.24%	301,175	34.60%	20,762.00	100.00%	371,943	92.28%
NAGALAND	3	7,841.80	47.61%	260,153	39.74%	16,470.20	100.00%	654,696	100.00%
ORISSA	9	114,094.90	74.36%	12,261,856	52.72%	114,094.90	74.36%	12,261,856	52.72%
PONDICHERY	2	141.00	35.97%	76,602	26.56%	0.00	0.00%	0	0.00%
PUNJAB	6	27,961.20	56.87%	5,686,164	46.83%	0.00	0.00%	0	0.00%
RAJASTHAN	8	181,470.30	53.73%	7,500,779	27.73%	306,990.50	90.90%	21,689,592	80.18%
SIKKIM									
TAMILNADU	9	64,275.00	0.00%	14,161,447	43.63%	0.00	51.75%	0	0.00%
TRIPURA	2	7,422.20	71.15%	1,000,526	54.75%	7,422.20	71.15%	100,526	54.75%
UTTAR PRADESH	21	126,449.80	60.08%	17,995,221	19.78%	87,071.80	43.63%	8,395,706	92.30%
WEST BENGAL	8	45,737.00	53.11%	16,754,929	41.75%	0.00	0.00%	0	0.00%

STATEMENT INDICATING LOWER IN STATES OF INDIA

NAME OF STATES	DISTRICTS BELOW NATIONAL RURAL POPULATION AVERAGE GROWTH RATE				DISTRICTS BELOW STATE RURAL POPULATION AVERAGE GROWTH RATE			
	NO. OF DISTRICTS	TOTAL RURAL POPULATION	% OF STATE POPULATION	TOTAL RURAL AREA	NO. OF DISTRICTS	% OF STATE RURAL AREA	TOTAL RURAL POPULATION	% OF STATE RURAL AREA
ANDHRA PRADESH	16	31642575	77.06	193012	13	71.22	25980079	63.27
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0.00	0	5	0.00	306212	51.86
WEST BENGAL	6	13351967	33.27	28328	8	32.90	21825574	54.38
BIHAR	6	13049056	21.32	54992	12	32.22	24291565	39.69
GOA	1	684964	93.20	3525	1	97.35	694964	93.20
GUJARAT	4	5142497	21.90	29797	10	15.58	11105171	47.29
HARYANA	4	3171461	31.42	11192	5	25.76	3851870	38.16
HIMACHAL PRADESH	3	626931	15.85	16448	6	20.66	1339043	33.86
JAMMU & KASHMIR	0	0	0.00	0	14	0.00	136357	61.52
KARNATAKA	8	12208865	46.24	87534	8	46.53	12208865	46.24
KERALA	6	11563338	55.91	17917	6	48.33	11563338	55.91
MAHARASHTRA	16	26069009	63.91	183105	11	60.67	18860926	46.24
MANIPUR	2	715806	68.47	6676	1	30.10	666189	57.08
MECHALAYA	1	330437	30.19	5537	1	24.78	330437	30.19
MIZORAM	0	0	0.00	0	2	0.00	312541	84.03
MADHYA PRADESH	20	21293389	51.20	222840	20	50.81	21293389	51.20
NAGALAND	2	125523	19.17	3029	5	18.39	401191	61.28
ORISSA	12	21193139	91.11	147252	6	95.08	8033169	34.54
RAJASTHAN	1	823960	3.05	8039	15	2.88	17697207	65.42
SIKKIM	0	0	0.00	0	3	0.00	239626	90.32
TAMIL NADU	12	28736253	86.54	105810	7	85.03	16598747	51.14
TRIPURA	0	0	0.00	0	1	0.00	826964	45.25
UTTAR PRADESH	22	35365497	38.88	108475	26	37.42	41129791	45.22
PUNJAB	7	7270902	59.89	27974	5	56.90	5089634	41.92
							157724	58.20
							NA	NA
							NA	NA
							78933	55.65
							3525	46.25
							61.13	97.35
							116915	61.13
							13851	31.88
							33436	60.29
							140942	63.42
							87534	46.53
							17917	48.33
							130020	43.08
							2121	9.58
							5537	24.78
							16858	81.20
							222840	50.81
							10445	63.42
							62288	40.60
							149469	44.26
							NA	NA
							64581	52.00
							3009	28.84
							132570	45.74
							17291	35.17

POPULATION & AREA OF STATES IN INDIA

STATES	NO. OF DISTRICTS	TOTAL AREA	RURAL AREA	% OF RURAL AREA	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL RURAL POPULATION	% POPULATION
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	2	8, 249.00	8, 234.90	99.83%	188, 741	139, 107	-73.70%
ANDHRA PRADESH	23	275, 068.00	271, 022.10	98.53%	53, 549, 673	41, 062, 097	76.68%
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	9	83, 743.00	83, 743.00	100.00%	631, 839	590, 405	93.44%
BIHAR	31	173, 877.00	170, 678.00	98.16%	69, 914, 734	61, 195, 744	87.53%
GOA, DAMAN & DIU	3	3, 814.00	3, 621.10	94.94%	1, 086, 730	734, 922	67.63%
GUJRAT	19	196, 024.00	191, 259.40	97.57%	34, 085, 799	23, 484, 146	68.90%
HARYANA	12	44, 212.00	43, 448.20	98.27%	12, 922, 618	10, 095, 231	78.12%
HIMACHAL PRADESH	12	55, 673.00	55, 460.60	99.62%	4, 280, 818	3, 954, 847	92.39%
JAMMU & KASHMIR	14	222, 236.00	221, 648.80	99.74%	5, 987, 389	4, 726, 986	78.95%
KARNATAKA	19	191, 791.00	188, 108.20	98.08%	37, 135, 714	26, 406, 108	71.11%
KERALA	12	38, 863.00	37, 075.00	95.40%	25, 453, 680	20, 682, 405	81.26%
MADHYA PRADESH	45	443, 446.00	438, 567.70	98.90%	52, 178, 844	41, 592, 385	79.71%
MAHARASHTRA	26	307, 690.00	301, 802.20	98.09%	62, 784, 171	40, 790, 577	64.97%
MANIPUR	6	22, 327.00	22, 175.50	99.32%	1, 420, 953	1, 045, 493	73.58%
MEGHALAYA	5	22, 429.00	22, 344.20	99.62%	1, 335, 819	1, 094, 486	81.93%
MIZORAM	5	21, 081.00	20, 762.00	98.49%	493, 757	371, 943	75.33%
NAGALAND	7	16, 579.00	16, 470.20	99.34%	774, 930	654, 696	84.48%
ORISSA	13	155, 707.00	153, 418.90	98.53%	26, 370, 271	23, 259, 984	88.21%
PONDICHERY	4	492.00	392.00	79.67%	604, 471	288, 424	47.72%
PUNJAB	12	50, 362.00	49, 162.60	97.62%	16, 788, 915	12, 141, 158	72.32%
RAJASTHAN	26	342, 239.00	337, 741.70	98.69%	34, 261, 862	27, 051, 354	78.95%
SIKKIM	4	7, 096.00	7, 096.00	100.00%	316, 385	265, 301	83.85%
TAMILNADU	16	130, 058.00	124, 197.30	95.49%	48, 408, 077	32, 456, 202	67.05%
TRIPURA	3	10, 486.00	10, 431.60	99.48%	2, 053, 058	1, 827, 490	89.01%
UTTAR PRADESH	56	294, 411.00	294, 411.00	100.00%	110, 862, 013	90, 962, 898	82.05%
WEST BENGAL	16	88, 752.00	86, 106.00	97.02%	54, 600, 647	40, 133, 926	73.50%