Local Governance and Development Process: A Study of Alwar and Nagaur Districts of Rajasthan

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Abstract
Local Governance plays significant role in the development process at grassroots level. In India, it is a three tier system ‘of the people, by the people, for the people’. The paper is an attempt to explain the development process at third tier i.e. Village or Gram Panchayat through the participation and decision making process for the development of own choice. The present paper is a qualitative cum quantitative work based on primary data surveyed in Alwar and Nagaur districts of Rajasthan in 2011. A composite index has been made to show the levels of development under the local governance in selected Village Panchayats. Analysis of the study has revealed that participation in village council meetings and development process has greatly influenced by the socio-economic conditions of the elected representatives and participants of social groups. The social groups from which a village headman and participants belongs are the most influencing factor in decision making as well as in development process. The levels of the development and development process under the system of local governance have a caste bias and unequal distributional pattern. It has evidently proved that despite the Panchayati Raj System firstly introduced in Nagaur district in the country on 2nd October, 1959, could not achieved its goals.

Key words: Development Process, Village Panchayats, Gram Sabha, Local Governance.

Introduction
The Indian society which is based on hierarchal social order, the parameters of gender, caste, class and religion are crucial in determining the education along with over all socio-economic development (Deen, 2014). The agrarian economy is main feature of rural India. Rural economy in India needs to specific requirement for over all development. Gram Sabha is the basic unit of local governance to fulfill these specific needs for development. The Gram Sabha\(^1\) is governing body of elected and non-elected members of the village. It works on the basis of the ‘general meeting of adult residents within the area’ of Panchayat’. It is basic unit of local governance which is run by the direct participation of the general people of the village. Every Panchayat circle should have a Gram Sabha (referred to in Antyodaya circulars as Majma-e-Aam) consisting of all persons in the village registered in the electoral rolls. Customarily Indian society is run by hierarchical structure of caste system featuring the social exclusion and inequalities in its caste relations which is the backbone of the Indian society (Deen 2015). The caste is unbending in nature which plays an important role in the process of decision making for socio-economic development at village level. Caste factor affect the participation of the villagers in the village council taking decision and starting the process of development on a particular issue and area in the village. Thus, the present research paper is an attempt to analyze levels of development under the different government schemes implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions in the study area. The paper has been divided into three sections. First section provides a description of legal processes of functioning local governance at grassroot level along with brief description of social profile of the study area. Second section analyzes the levels of development under different government schemes in the selected village councils. Finally, the last section provides a logical discussion along with a detail qualitative interview to show the pattern of levels of development in the villages. The study indicates that the dominant castes affect the development process as well as levels of development which are responsible for inequality invoice- economic condition of social groups at different localities inhabited in the village.

Study Area

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\(^1\) “Gram Sabha” is the village council as a main body in local governance.
\(^2\) “Panchayat area” or “Panchayat Circle” means the territorial area of a Panchayat.
District Alwar and Nagaur have been selected for the purpose of the study having specific characteristics like physical features, socio-cultural as well as economic aspects from rest of the districts of Rajasthan. The purposive sampling has been applied to select the two Panchayat Samites (PS) from two districts; Rajgarh in Alwar and Kuchaman in Nagaur district. Criteria for inclusion of Panchayat Samitis are: a) relatively more accessible, b) closer to the district headquarters. The Village Panchayats namely, Thana Rajaji, Gola ka Bas, Mallanaand Talabhave been selected from Rajgarh Panchayat Samiti (Block) in Alwar district. Meenda, Mundagsoi, Lunwa and Indokha Village Panchayats have been selected from Kuchaman Panchayat Samiti (Block) in Nagaur district. Criteria for selection a Village Panchayat includes: a) gender equality of village headman and, b) representation of different social groups. Equal numbers of samples have been collected from each social group i.e. Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Non-Scheduled. Total 200 samples have been collected from the selected Village Panchayats for fulfilling the objective of the study.

Methodology
A composite index has been made to show the levels of development in the selected Village Panchayats. Composite index has composed by a numbers of variables on the basis of igin value weightage (Mahmood, 1980). Besides, bar diagram has been used for showing the performance of the Village Panchayats. The implementation of different government schemes in the process of development and levels of development has been shown through the composite index in the selected Village Panchayats. Major variables used in the composite index are: Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra, Model Health Sub-Centre, Water Supply and Sanitation, Road, Water Harvesting, Light Connection, Renewable Energy, Tanka (Check dam), Cow Shed, Primary Health Centre (PHC), Widow Pension, Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), Indira AwasYojona (IAY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Social Profile
The socio-economic profile of the study area presents an asymmetrical pattern. Figure 1 shows that in the selected Village Panchayats the proportion of female population is lower than the male population. Non-Scheduled population is featuring dominant social group in all the Village Panchayats. Thus, the social profile of the selected Village Panchayat reveals that non-scheduled group is the most dominant in social hierarchy, while Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are marginal section of the society.

In the district of Alwar, female population is in equal proportion in all the selected Village Panchayats. The Thana Rajaji Village Panchayat constitutes total 47 percent female population, 17 percent Scheduled Castes and 27 percent Scheduled Tribes population along with 56 percent non-scheduled
As per proportion of their population in the Gram Sabha, to achieve the Tribes and four a year to discuss the activities of the Panchayat. A quorum of one tenth of all adult members has to be called at least three (4) prescribe that the business during the meetings and voicing their options forcefully directly or through the Vigilance Committee has to report the matter to the State Government for taking action for removal and suspension under section 38 of the Act. The incorporation of penal provisions, as above, legally make it possible to enforce more regular meetings of Gram Sabha, which is the main body of the village in terms of grassroot democracy and institutions of self-governance. However, the Act and Rules, while empowering the Gram Sabha to hold regular discussion on the activities of the Panchayat and the programmes being taken up for the welfare and development of the people, have not made it an institution with power of approval and rejection. The finding of Narain and Mathur’s case study of the statutory Gram Sabha in Jaipur (1967) that “the Gram Sabha is yet to emerge as a forum of constructive criticism of Panchayati Raj Institutions” still holds true after more than four decades (Narain and Mathur, 1967). Thus, in real term, the power of Gram Sabha will continue to depend on the active participation of the people; their taking a keen interest in the business during the meetings and voicing their options forcefully directly or through the Vigilance Committees, as provided under section 8 of the new Act (Hooja and Hooja, 2005). While Section 3 (3) and 3 (4) prescribe that the Gram Sabha shall discuss annual statement of accounts, annual administrative report, audit reports and compliance thereto, development programmes, budget, physical and financial activities with reference to the Gram Panchayat (Government of India, 2006).

In consonance with, the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act 1994 provides for a Gram Sabha and section 3 to 8 with its powers and functions. The meetings of Gram Sabha have to be called at least four a year to discuss the activities of the Panchayat. A quorum of one tenth of all adult members has been prescribed for its meetings. Provisions have also been made that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes must be represented in Gram Sabha meetings in the same proportion of their population in the Gram Sabha, to achieve the quorum (Government of India, 2008). As per Section 3 of the 1994 Act, at least four Gram Sabha meetings are to be held annually on national festivals. The 1/10th quorum would be necessary for the Gram Sabha meeting along with

The another district Nagaur was selected for the study purpose because Panchayati Raj System was introduced for the first time in India on 2nd October, 1959 in this district. Female population of Village Panchayats of Nagaur district is more or less equal (48 percent) in all the selected Village Panchayats. In the Village Panchayat Meenda, female shares 48 percent to the total population of the Panchayat. Scheduled Castes constitute 19 percent, Scheduled Tribes 3 percent and non-scheduled population shares 79 percent to the total population of the Panchayat. Village Panchayat Mundgsoi has 47 percent female population, 8 percent Scheduled Castes and 11 percent Scheduled Tribes population along with 82 percent non-scheduled to the total population of the Panchayat. This is the only Village Panchayat where Village Panchayat headman belongs to Scheduled Tribes communities in the whole Nagaur district. Village Panchayat Lunwara has 48 percent female population whereas Scheduled Castes shares 20 percent and Scheduled Tribes 3 percent to the total population in the Panchayat. Rest of the 77 percent population belongs to non-scheduled group in the Panchayat. The Village Panchayat Indokha constitutes 47 percent female, 32 percent Scheduled Castes and 0.1 percent Scheduled Tribes to the total population in the Panchayat. Non-scheduled population is featuring largest social group in this Panchayat.

**Functions of Gram Sabha**

Article 243-A of 73rd Amendment Act gives a Constitutional status to the Gram Sabha. The Rules provide for monitoring of Gram Sabha meetings by Panchayat Samiti; in case of failure on the part of Sarpanch or Up-Sarpanch to call a meeting, the Panchayat Samiti has to report the matter to the State Government for taking action for removal and suspension under section 38 of the Act. The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act 1994 provides for a Gram Sabha and section 3 to 8 with its powers and functions. The meetings of Gram Sabha have to be called at least four a year to discuss the activities of the Panchayat. A quorum of one tenth of all adult members has been prescribed for its meetings. Provisions have also been made that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes must be represented in Gram Sabha meetings in the same proportion of their population in the Gram Sabha, to achieve the quorum (Government of India, 2008). As per Section 3 of the 1994 Act, at least four Gram Sabha meetings are to be held annually on national festivals. The 1/10th quorum would be necessary for the Gram Sabha meeting along with
necessary 1/10th quorum for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (Dube and Pahadia, 2002).

**Infrastructure Development**

The table No.1 shows the composite index for infrastructure facilities that Sarpanches provided among 8 selected Village Panchayats from the study areas. Indokha, Gola ka Bas and Talab Panchayats fall under high performance category in infrastructure development. Mallana, Meenda, Lunwa and Thana Rajaji Panchayats come in moderate category of infrastructure development while Mundgsoi reports lowest at the level of development. Figure 2 shows Nagaur has a high level of inequality in infrastructure development among the selected Village Panchayats. The two Village Panchayats namely Indokha and Mundgsoi are on the two opposite ends in the index. Indokha Village Panchayat shows highest infrastructure development while the Mundgsoi Village Panchayat shows the lowest infrastructure development. On the other hand, the Alwar Village Panchayats show the high and average infrastructure development among Village Panchayats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VP Name</th>
<th>CI Value</th>
<th>Size Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indokha</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gola Ka Bas</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talab</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallana</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenda</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunwa</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thana Rajaji</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundgsoi</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Primary Field Survey during Doctoral Research, 2011

It shows that the infrastructure development among the Village Panchayats of Alwar is homogeneous or more equitable in manner while it is more unequal or heterogeneous in nature in case of Nagaur district. This difference in the infrastructure levels is due to the social group belongingness and educational level of the Village Panchayat headman. The headman of Indokha Village Panchayat is from General category while the headman of the Mundgsoi Village Panchayat is from Scheduled Tribes category. It is mentioned here that the ST category headman is illiterate and has a very poor economic status. The main economic activity is rearing and grazing the sheep’s in the field. In fact, he was elected as Sarpanch reluctantly. As the result of that, he performed all the Panchayat duties reluctantly. Due to lack of interest and lack of knowledge, he could not develop the infrastructure facilities in his Panchayat as much as General category headman developed in his Village Panchayat.

**Rural Development Schemes**

The objective of Swaranjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) is to provide sustainable income to the rural poor through micro-enterprises while Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) is primarily to help
construction of dwelling units by the members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Non-Scheduled Castes rural poor living below the poverty line (BPL). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India (Government of Rajasthan, 2011).

**Alwar District**

**Village Panchayat Thana Rajaji**

None of families have been benefitted under the scheme of SGSY in the Village Panchayat Thana Rajaji during 2010-11. The total number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 31 in the Panchayat during 2010-11. Around 88 percent beneficiaries were from Non-Scheduled or General category under the scheme. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 6 percent and 3 percent respectively. Similarly, the Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 3 percent only under IAY scheme. Total 532 persons have been benefitted under MGNREGS scheme in the Panchayat. The share of Non-Scheduled category & Other Backward Classes members in the total employment was 10 percent and 28 percent respectively under MGNREGS scheme. The share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members was 27 percent and 35 percent respectively. The most important fact is that around 60-70 percent beneficiaries were women to the total employment under MGNREGS in the Panchayat during 2010-11 (Table No. 2).

**Village Panchayat Gola ka Bas**

There are four Scheduled Castes families have been benefited under the SGSY scheme during 2010-11. Rs 29,000 have been provided as loan to the each family to purchase 2 Buffalos. The benefitted families got milk from the buffalos and they generate income by selling milk in the market. In such a way, they deposit their monthly installment. Under this scheme, 10 percent subsidy is given for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families while 7.5 percent subsidy for Other Backward Classes families. The total number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 14 families in the Village Panchayat. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 43 percent and 50 percent respectively while Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 7 percent. Under this Scheme, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries got Rs. 50,000 but in case of Other Backward Classes and Non-Scheduled or General category; beneficiaries got Rs. 45,000. Around 450 persons have been benefitted under MGNREGS scheme in the Panchayat during 2010-11. The percentage share of General category & Other Backward Classes members in the beneficiaries was 5 percent and 55 percent respectively whereas the share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members was 36 percent and 4 percent respectively.

Table No. 2: Beneficiaries under SGSY, IAY &MGNREGS in Alwar Village Panchayats during 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of panchayat</th>
<th>Non-Scheduled</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Other Backward Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SGS Y</td>
<td>IA Y</td>
<td>NREG S</td>
<td>SGS Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thana Rajaji</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gola Ka Bas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talab</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary field survey, 2011

**Village Panchayat Mallana**

No families have been selected under the scheme of SGSY in Mallana Village Panchayat. The total number of beneficiaries under IAY was 38 in Mallana Village Panchayat during 2010-11. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 40 percent and 40 percent respectively while
Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 20 percent under IAY scheme. Under MGNREGS, there 259 persons have been benefited in the Panchayat. The percentage share of General & Other Backward Classes category members was 16 percent and 19 percent respectively in the Panchayat. The percentage share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members was 44 percent and 21 percent respectively. The Task rate for every employee is 55 feet earth digging per day under MGNREGS works.

### Village Panchayat Talab

The total number of benefited families was 20 under SGSY scheme in the Panchayat. Out of the total number, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families have been benefited 30 percent and 30 percent respectively whereas Other Backward Classes & General category families have been benefited 15 percent and 25 percent respectively. The total Number of beneficiaries under IAY was 19 in the Panchayat. Around 31 percent members have been selected from General category. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 53 percent and 11 percent respectively. The Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 5 percent only under IAY scheme. In the Village Panchayat, 600 persons have been benefited under MGNREGS. The General category members were benefitted 28 percent under the scheme. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members were benefitted 24 percent and 36 percent respectively whereas the Other Backward Classes members were benefitted around 12 percent in the Panchayat. The important fact is that around 60 percent employments have been given to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes members in MGNREGS scheme in the Panchayat during 2010-11.

### Nagaur District

#### Village Panchayat Meenda

There were total 2 families have been benefitted under SGSY scheme during 2010-11. These beneficiaries belong to Scheduled Castes. Under this scheme, the beneficiary got Rs. 22,000 to purchase two Buffalos. Rs. 10,000 has been subsidized from the total amount. The total Number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 10 in the Village Panchayat during 2010-11. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 80 percent and 20 percent respectively under IAY scheme. Around 1,360 persons have been benefited under MGNREGS in the Panchayat. The General category & Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 53 percent and 19 percent respectively. The share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members was 27 percent and 1 percent respectively under MGNREGS scheme.

Table No. 3: Beneficiaries under SGSY, IAY &MGNREGS in Nagaur Panchayats during 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Panchayats</th>
<th>Non-Scheduled</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Other Backward Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SGS Y</td>
<td>IA Y</td>
<td>NREG S</td>
<td>SGS Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenda</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunwa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundgsoi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indokha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary field survey, 2011

#### Village Panchayat Mundgsoi

The total Number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 12 in the Village Panchayat during 2010-11. The general category & Other Backward Classes beneficiaries were 17 percent and 17 percent respectively. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 17 percent and 49 percent respectively under IAY scheme. Total 656 persons have been benefited under MGNREGS in the Panchayat. Around 33% share was from General category members while 28% and 12% share was from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members respectively. The Other Backward Classes members shared the 27 percent in the total employment under MGNREGS scheme in the Panchayat.

### Village Panchayat Lunwa
The total Number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 22 in the Panchayat during 2010-11. The Scheduled Castes beneficiaries were 45 percent while the Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries were 55 percent under IAY scheme. There total 453 persons have been benefited under MGNREGS in the Panchayat. The share of General category members was 16 percent in the total employment in MGNREGS works. The share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category members was 22 percent and 6 percent while the Other Backward Classes members share was 56 percent under MGNREGS scheme.

**Village Panchayat Indokha**
The total Number of beneficiaries under IAY scheme was 18 in the Panchayat during 2010-11. Around 22 percent and 17 percent members have been selected from General and Other Backward Classes category under IAY scheme. The Scheduled Castes beneficiaries were 61 percent under the IAY scheme. Under MGNREGS, total 252 persons have been benefited in the Panchayat during 201-11. Around 4 percent and 27 percent beneficiaries have been from General and Other Backward Classes category whereas 69 percent beneficiaries from Scheduled Castes communities (Table No. 3).

**Discussion**
Usually, socio-economically dominant castes people controls the whole process of decision making and developmental activities. They provide work to only those lower castes people who accept their hegemony in the decision making process. The development process under different government scheme, usually supervision works have been captured by upper castes by hook and crook at local level. So, they practice caste bias in wage payment also and payless wages than the actual wage rate to the lower castes workers. The development process like electrification, drain construction, road construction etc. in the residential area inhabited by lower castes in the village has been done in the last due the caste bias. Eventually, area inhabited by lower castes remains underdeveloped. In these, underdeveloped areas of the village, dominant caste people creates hurdles and stop the development work done by lower caste village headman arguing that the work should be done in higher caste area and ritually pure area, temple area first in the name of preference to the Godly created superior caste. They further argue if the money will be remain after work is done in these area then it will spend on development work of rest area. This is caste prejudice and intentionally creating hurdles forcefully to stop the work, which eventually defame the lower caste Village headman also.

In case of SC & ST elected village headman, upper caste people do not cooperate with village headman even they do not participate in the Gram Sabha meetings. So village headman could not work efficiently and even development for every section of the society. This is ironical that caste prejudice which promotes upper caste to create hurdles in development process under the supervision of lower caste village headman. In case of SC/ST, former leader/economically dominate caste propose name of a poor, inefficient, uneducated and suffering from different problems in the election and support he/she very enthusiastically by economic help when he elected as village headman, usually they make his own pet arguing that we have elected you, we have provided economic help for election and for also you must accept our decision and act on behalf me. In this way, the elected village headman act as tutelary of upper caste people and easily accept all the decisions accordingly the upper caste people say. And not make decision independently for the development and welfare of the rural people as well for his own community.

**Conclusion**
The analysis of the paper reveals that the infrastructure development in the Alwar Village Panchayats have better performance in comparison to Nagaur Village Panchayats. In Alwar Village Panchayats, the infrastructure development has homogeneous in nature whereas in Nagaur Village Panchayats, it is heterogeneous. The implementations of various developmental schemes under SGSY & IAY beneficiaries are higher in numbers in Alwar Village Panchayats rather than Nagaur. But beneficiaries under MGNREGS are higher in Nagaur district due to more water crisis is Nagaur. Thus, under the MGNREGS, water conservation works have done sufficiently in Nagaur district. The Gram Sabha members participate actively in the development process; then local self-governance will become a reality and the Panchayati Raj will become a system of the people, by the people and for the people.
The levels of development at grassroots level are the result of the liaison, cooperation, attitude, interest and knowledge of the Panchayat representatives and the socio-economic status and rate of participation of the people of the Panchayat as well.

References