

## Perceptions of Elected Representatives about the Panchayat Capacity Building Programmes: A Study of Block Achabal of Jammu & Kashmir

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### Abstract

The present study Perceptions of elected representatives about the Panchayat Capacity Building Programmes: a study of Block Achabal was carried out in ten panchayat Halqus of Block Achabal District Anantnag Jammu and Kashmir. For the study a total sample of 98 respondents was selected through convenience sampling technique and the data was collected from them by the interview method. It was depicted from the study that the three days training course was not enough especially the person who is coming first in the local Governance. It was also found that despite this training course the representatives cannot success in delivering their role and responsibility at the ground level. The study too revealed that the training was just a lecture exercises which was tough for an illiterate to understand. On the other hand the study reports that the training course raised the confidence level among the females who first time come from the four walls of house.

**Key words: - Empowerment, Panchayat of Jammu and Kashmir, women, Training course.**

### Introduction:-

In our country the local Governance is operated by the Municipal bodies in urban areas and panchayati institutions in the rural

areas. *“Local self-govt denotes the right and the duty of local authorities to regulate and manage public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interest of the local population, the right shall be exercised by the individuals and representatives of these bodies freely elected on a periodic basis by the universal suffrage and their chief secretaries shall be elected or appointed with the participation of the elected bodies”* (International union of local authorities declaration 1993). It is apparent from the declaration of 1993 that the local representatives play a prime role in transformation the local area towards the development. Strengthens the local Government strengthens the entire nation by ensuring more effective and democratic public policies (world wide declaration of local-self government 1988). In his context the various governments of India took number of incentives for empowering the local self – Government in this regard the 73<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment which provides constitutional status to these local bodies was the landmark in the history of local self govt. of India. After that many more steps were taken by the Govt of India to empower the local bodies and among these steps the Capacity building programmes for the Panchayats was one of the move to make local

Governance strong and fruitful for the people at grass root level.

### **Why panchayat capacity building programmes were introduced in the country?**

Capacity building is a energetic process of developing strengthen and institutionalising the rules of the game, norms, standard operating, procedures skills, abilities and resources that organisation, communities and individuals, need to survive adapt and thrive in the fast changing world of policy implementation( Ann Philbin 1996).

According to the Guidelines of Capacity building programmes Govt of India. The programmes were started because of below mentioning reasons:-

(a) Boosting of information and skills and attitude of Panchayat elected representatives to play a centre role in performing their responsibilities at grass roots level smoothly

- Their understanding of Local Self Governance, as well as – local planning and carrying out of local need-based action plans rightfully, particularly cutting across the inequalities of caste and gender.
- Productive thinking for solving local problems through participatory choice making across PRI-set up.
- Insight for regular prioritisation of action points for responsive

handling of public grievances and development needs.

- Provide them with the effective skills necessary for day-to-day routine of executive duties of the Panchayats.

### **Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir:-**

In the context of Jammu and Kashmir which is considered as a heaven on the earth due to its natural beauty. The state has a special status in the Indian constitution under article 370 so the 73<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment is not applicable to the state. The state has enacted its own Panchayati Raj act in 1988 which is called Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati raj act 1988. The act could not be implemented immediately because of the eruption of militancy in the valley which paralysed all the democratic and other govt institutions. The valley became the battle ground which consumed lot of human beings and destroyed immense property. It was the year 2001 when the Government of Jammu and Kashmir conducted the Halqa panchayat elections but these elections could not conducted smoothly in the valley even various constituencies' remains vacant. After it was the year of 2011 when Government of the state shows gravity in conducting the panchayat election. The election was conducted in 16 phases started from April 13 and ending on June 18 2011. The Panchayat elections of 2011 and the Panchayat elections of 2001 were conducted under the management of chief electoral officer due to the lack of separate election commission for Panchayats as it was

not mentioned in the original panchayat act of 1989 so it was the April, year 2011 when the state Government made an amendment in the original panchayat act of 1989 to set up a separate election commission for the election

of Panchayat. The 2011 panchayat elections had lot of significance as huge number of people and youth participated in this election despite the boycott call given by the separatists.

**COMPARATIVE FIGURES OF SARPANCH AND PANCH CONSTITUENCIES**

**2001 AND 2011**

Province	No. of Sarpanch constituencies		No of Panch constituencies	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Kashmir	1472	2164	10469	15959
Jammu	1230	1966	10090	13760
<b>Total</b>	<b>2702</b>	<b>4130</b>	<b>20559</b>	<b>29719</b>

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, J&K.

So it is evident from the above table that the number of sarpanch as well as Panch

constituencies had increased in 2011 panchayat elections.

**NUMBER OF ELECTORS COMPARATIVE FIGURES 2001 AND 2011**

Province	2001	2011
Kashmir	1859311	2519024
Jammu	1942991	2549951
<b>Total</b>	<b>3802302</b>	<b>5068975</b>

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, J&K.

From the above table it is clear that the number of electors had increased in the Panchayat election of 2011 from 3802302 to 5068975.

**Capacity building and Panchayat Functionaries of Jammu and Kashmir:-**

The significant responses of 2011, Panchayat election by the people in which 33847 sarpanches and panches has been elected across the state. The election was conducted after a long time so most of the functionaries were elected first times including the women. For the Kashmiri women it was the new field as they come in public life in first time. A significant proportion among these functionaries came from the non-political background. So it was expected that

the elected functionaries may face challenges in the execution their role and responsibility at the grass root level. Therefore it was essential to impart the skills through these capacities building to elected functionaries. To make this possible the Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir took the meeting of the core group on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2011 to accelerate the pace of capacity building process in the State. To fallow the decisions taken in the meeting, the following methods were utilized.

- District Panchayat officers as Nodal training was listed by the Rural Development Department of the state for organising the training at district level.

- 335 departmental resource persons were identified in Seventeen RGSY districts in the State.
- The identified departmental resource persons were trained by the J&K IMPARD both in Srinagar and Jammu. Latter on these resource persons impart the training to the panchayat functionaries at block headquarter and sub block levels.

**Details of the training on Basic foundation courses organised during 2011-12 in the valley in RGSY**

S.No	District	No. of Panchayats	No. of ERs	No. of training batches conducted	No. of ERs trained
1	Srinagar	10	89	2	89
2	Ganderbal	103	847	21	847
3	Budgam	283	2438	61	2438
4	Anantnag	297	2351	56	2233
5	Kulgam	159	1219	31	1213
6	Bandipora	114	983	24	982
7	Baramullah	365	3271	82	3592
8	Pulwama	186	1536	37	1481
9	Shopian	103	866	22	848

Source: state action plan for CB&T Activities in J&K 2012-13.

The Jammu and Kashmir Government shows a deep concern regarding the empowerment of panchayats through these capacity building programmes as the state is among the top ten states as per the incremental

index (Devolution across states empirical assessment 2012-13).the Incremental index is based on the recent initiatives the states under taken since April 2011.

**INCREMENTAL INDEX REPORT 2012-13**

S.NO	STATE	INDEX VALUE	RANK
1	KARNATKA	50.83	1
2	RAJASTHAN	29.16	2
3	MAHARASHTRA	25.00	3
4	ODISHA	23.33	4
5	MADHYA PRADESH	16.67	5
6	CHHATTISGARH	11.67	6
7	HARYANA	8.33	7
8	BIHAR	7.50	8
9	KERALA	6.67	9
10	JAMMU & KASHMIR	3.33	10

Source: - strengthening of panchayats in India: comparing devolution across states empirical assessment 2012-13

Ministry of Panchayati raj Govt.of India.

**Responses of Elected functionaries of Block Achabal**

consists of 24 Panchayat Halquas and 159 panchayat wards

Block Achabal is located 11KM away in the South of District Anantnag. The Block

<b>.Total Population of Block.</b>	<b>74259/ Male 40604/ Female 33655.</b>
<b>Total number of Households in the Block.</b>	<b>12430.</b>
<b>Total number of Job cards.</b>	<b>5584.</b>
<b>Total area of the Block.</b>	<b>13502 Hect.</b>
<b>Total number of Panchayat Halqus.</b>	<b>24.</b>
<b>Total number of Panchayat wards.</b>	<b>159.</b>

Source: - collected information by Author on 20 April 2016 from the Block.

The responses of elected representatives were collected of 10 Panchayat Halqus of block Achabal of Anantnag district through survey method. These Halqus are Akingam, Hardpora, Brinty, Damhall , Shelipora, Thajwara, Immo, Mohripora, Isoo and Gopalpora. The representatives from these Panchayat Halqus who have attended the training programme at the Block Achabal in which different resource persons impart them knowledge regarding the functions of Panchayats and different central sponsored schemes for the development of village. The

most functionaries were illiterate so it was big challenge for the resource persons (Block official Views).At last a certificate and special books in both languages English as well as Urdu were issued among these functionaries.

**Research Methodology:-**

A sample of 98 representatives from above mentioned Panchayat Halqus (both male and female) were selected through convenience sampling technique. The responses were collected from these respondents through interview method.

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
<b>Graduation and above</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Secondary level</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Middle level</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Primary level</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>45</b>
	<b>98</b>

**Findings of the study:-**

- It was depicted from the study most the respondents( elected

representatives) were appreciated the Govt, for starting these capacity building for them at the same time

they also critique it because of short duration. One of the respondents told *'that in three days it is impossible for an illiterate who has never gone to school to learn about the programmes of local governance'*.

- It was found from the study that the most of the respondents told that training was poor in quality as it was just the exercise of lectures which was very tough for the Man who are coming first time in the local politics.
- The present study reports that despite the capacity building programmes the representatives have failed to deliver their role and responsibilities at the Grassroots level.
- Most of the female respondents told that whenever we went for the Training or other panchayat meetings, we never disclose this to the people because then they see us in the eye of disrespect. So we often told them we are going to the hospital or mother's house.
- The study found that because of these capacity building programmes, The confidence level rose among those respondents who have never sit in the govt. office especially females who were coming first time from the homes.
- It was also found from the study after training the govt did not show further interest to empower the elected representatives.

- The study further observes that the representatives were motivated by their party MLA<sup>S</sup> for contesting the panchayat election of 2011.

#### Conclusion:-

From above study it is clear that the panchayat capacity building programmes which was initiated in the valley was significant step towards the empowerment of panchayats. But the way it was designed was not enough to empower the panchayat representatives. The time duration of three or five days was very short as the representatives were coming first time in the local Governance many of them even did not heard the name of panchayat. The method of imparting the skills regarding the local Governance to these elected representatives was indigent as it was lecture exercise upshot of which many representatives was not in position to understand. After the training the govt did not show gravity towards the empowerment of elected representatives. These representatives claim that we are powerless and we are unable to meet the expectations of the people who have given us vote for the purpose of development.

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