

Comparative Study of Panchayati Raj Leaders and Administrative Officials in Haryana



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Abstract

The village panchayat were given a place in the Indian Constitution under Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy .It states "The state shall take steps to organize village panchayat and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of local self-government" This provision does not make it mandatory on the part of the state to constitute village panchayat as it was there in the Directive Principles of state Policy. But Committee on Plan Projects (popularly known as Balwant Rai Mehta Committee) realized that without an agency at the village level which could represent the entire community, assume responsibility and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmers' real progress in rural development cannot be achieved. Therefore it recommended that "public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies." Thus organizing village panchayats in the villages was considered as necessity for undertaking the developmental programmers and by mid 1960 panchayat had reached to all parts of the country.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj, Administrative Officer, Panchayat Smiti, Gram Sabha, Jila Parishad

Introduction

The father of the Nation M.K. Gandhi desired that the system of governance should not only close to the people but also reach up to the last man of the society. In his opinion it can be made possible by involving the people in their own governance. The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) are not only an agent of governance but also act as the vehicle of development and socio-political transformation of the rural society. The state makes use of these PRIs for executing the rural development programmers almost of all kinds. The involvement of these PRIs at the grass roots level is mainly intended to ensure people's participation in the development process of the rural areas of the country.

The village panchayat were given a place in the Indian Constitution under Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy .It states "The state shall take steps to organize village panchayat and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of local self-government" This provision does not make it mandatory on the part of the state to constitute village panchayat as it was there in the Directive Principles of state Policy. But Committee on Plan Projects (popularly known as Balwant Rai Mehta Committee) realized that without an agency at the village level which could represent the entire community, assume responsibility and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmers' real progress in rural development cannot be achieved. Therefore it recommended that "public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies." Thus organizing village panchayats in the villages was considered as necessity for undertaking the developmental programmers and by mid 1960 panchayat had reached to all parts of the country.

Thereafter Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) .C.H. Hanumantha Rao Working Group on District Planning (1983) and G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985) were set up to revamp the PRIs and to review the existing administrative arrangements for rural development and poverty alleviation programmers. Another committee headed by L. M. Singhvi (1986) prepared the Concept Paper on Panchayat Raj and recommended for devolving

more financial resources to panchayats so as to make them more valuable. The committee viewed panchayats as the base for democratic and republican operations of the nation. Sixty- Fourth Constitutional Amendment Bill (1989) followed it but it could not be passed by Parliament. Therefore a similar Bill known as 73 Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1991 and it became an Act after the assent of President on April 20, 1993.

PRIs in Haryana

The PRIs in the state were in shamble before the enactment of 73rd constitutional Amendment Act 1992. The new PR modeled on the pattern of this Act and as per the provisions of Haryana Panchayat Raj Act 1994, is composed of Gram Sabha (GS), Gram Panchayat (GP), Panchayat Samiti (PS) and Zila Parishad (ZP). "Gram Sabha" is a body consisting of persons registered as voters in the electoral rolls of a village comprised within the area of the Panchayat at the village level. It shall consider the budget prepared by the GP. The future development programmes, progress report of GP works and can ask questions to the Sarpanch and Panches of the GP to clarify the particular activity. Income, expenditure, scheme and other matters and their function and powers assigned by the government. Thus it is a body. Which approves the development policy and controls GP. Whereas GP is an executive component of the GS. The Sarpanch acts as the chief executive of the GP whereas Gram Sachiv continues to be the secretary of the Panchayat of a village. The GP retains civic development and regulatory. Function and also the powers which were earlier vested in the GS. The village Development Council (Gram Vikas Samiti) is there to advise and most GP particularly in the development matters of the village concerned.

Concept of Administrative Culture

The administrative culture of any society is a product of converging as well as conflicting component. The culture of the social formation or classes from which administrators are largely recruited would be a major component more so if it is a single cohesive one. Secondly, the continuous internal interactions within the administrative apparatus contribute other elements and they become more important as they are continuous and intense and constitute the strong element of peer some other group pressure. Thirdly, the interactions of administrators with their public and political masters determine some other components of culture. These three components may reinforce, contradict or dilute each other. Administrative culture is the set of values and understanding, which influences the behavior of organizations and the members of organizations. Vijay Sathe classified culture into three broad categories viz assumption or the fundamental presuppositions about the relevant environment, values (conscious and proximate statements about the policy concerns of an organization), and artifacts i.e. operational codes and patterns for relating to world.

Besides this the administrative culture is the total content of the administrative environment

produced by administratively inherited and institutionalized action patterns, internalized components of personalities of individual actors and administratively created mechanisms. But it cannot be confined to the clauses like "administratively inherited and institutionalized" and "administratively created" because it is an ambiguous system of tentative beliefs, expressive symbols, subjective patterns of values and a constellation of cognitions that issue in the administrative attitudes, bureaucratic behaviors and hierarchical relationship. In operational sense, 'the term represents an aggregate of traditions of an organization which embody the spirit of its institutions, the individual passions of the bureaucrats and the collective reasoning of the citizenry along with the life styles and the operating codes of the leader keeps on adding and subtracting to this intelligible web of meaningful relationship which constitute administrative whole.

Review of the literature

B. Guy Peters (1996) analysis that there are differences in the manner in which individuals in different setting consider management. There are also differences in people's minds about what the proper policy roles of administration are and what constitutes good public policy. These differences can be discovered empirically. If they are to be addressed empirically, then a good deal attention should be placed on the values held by administration. Who came into contact with citizens. This interfaces between the population and their governments an important one. Especially for democratic regime, and should be better understood in both nature and maturing democratic political systems.

K.S. Shukla (1996) made an attempt to synthesize the concept of administrative culture through the behavioral patterns prevalent in an administrative set-up at a given point of time and in a specific space. According to the author, the cultural values get manifested in a variety of ways of which the traits of a given set-up are broad indicators of the value system of that group. The author concludes that cultural traits of administration have both influence and impact on the people in general.

Ravindra Sharma and Rameshwar Lal (2000) in their empirical study of culture in recruitment practice in agriculture department came to the conclusions that there is role of nepotism, religion /caste. Top officer recommendations, intense political interventions and also major role of money in appointments. The authors states that atmosphere in India is generally vitiated by corruption, influence, patronage, abuse of power and widespread inefficiency. Corruption in the civil service is a complex phenomenon. It has sociological, economics, ethic- religious, juristic and even political roots. In recent years, Indian administration has deteriorated because of the moral decay that marks the conduct of political leaders.

P.D. Malviya (1996) illustrate that Indian administrative system is strongly power oriented and feudal in character. The author concludes that it is really in the national interest that the administrative

system should produce strong. Self - reliant and self-respecting workers particularly those who are employed at the public interface. Our need is to establish a new result oriented, and people oriented administrative culture to achieve the national goals of our country.

Bata K. Dey (1996) observed that the federal government in India has failed to recruit and promote the civil servants according to pretension requirements. He considers that the failure is attributed to him an element and it would not be fruitful till professional objectivity and humane consideration are added to the management of recruitment in government. Therefore he stressed the need to change the process which select the persons with standard formulations should be changed.

A.P. Barnabas (1998) in his article entitled "Good Governance at Local Level" focuses on role of PRIs in bringing about good governance at the cutting edge level in rural areas. The author identifies problems pertaining to perception of role of PRIs, inadequacy of resource support, problematic of Bihar structure etc. There is confusion regarding functions in PRIs, as there is no line of function between the three tiers. At the district and block level there is little autonomy for planning, as national and state plans have to be accommodated. The social structure and the administrative system are hierarchical. Hence there has been little scope for culture decentralization.

Hoshier Singh (2000) in his empirical study relating to "cultural attributes of women administrators" states that the study of administrative culture in public administration was intended to answer questions concerning the consequences of differences in attitudes opinions beliefs, values and sentiments which shape administrative decisions.

According to **Jayanta Kumar Ray (1996)** only a small number of functionaries in state and semi-state agencies are engaged in strenuous efforts to preserve administrative ethics, professional excellence and public interest. A smaller number are even ready to risk their career to this culture of preservation. The vast majority has reared up the culture of destruction of professional ethics/excellence as also of public interest. Actually, this culture of the majority has given to the cult of self-aggrandizement.

Neelima Deshmukh (2000) enumerated cultural traits of Indian administrators of today as – lack of integrity, i.e. rampant corruption, resistance to change with internal logic, reutilization of administrative processes hungering responsible, self generating and demanding administration, preventing emergence of culture of innovation and lack of adaptation to changing need of time. According to the author, administrative legacies heritage and administrative experiences as behavior pattern or interaction are the constituents of administration culture.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objective of the present research study.

1. To study the socio –economic back ground of the administrative officials of PRIs and their clientele i.e. the members of Gram Panchayats, Panchayats Samitis and Zila Parishads.
2. To observe the leadership traits in administration.
3. To examine the relationships among leaders and officials of PRIs.
4. To examine the culture of efficiency in administration.
5. To give suggestions to reform the administrative culture so that it may become suitable for the healthy development of PRIs.

Hypothesis

1. It has been assumed that there is a lack of mutual trust and cordial relations among the leaders and officials of PRIs.
2. It has been assumed that there is a lack of execution-efficiency, management-efficiency, performance-efficiency, morale-efficiency and service-efficiency.
3. It has been assumed that there prevails corruption, delay, lack of commitment and intense political intervention in the administrative process engaged with PRIs.

Research Methodology

The primary data was collected from (i) the Panchayat Raj officials (government officials) working at village level and interacting with the Gram Panchayats and Panchayats Raj officials of Panchayats Samitis and Zila Parishads which include District Development Panchayat Officer (DDPO), XEN (PR), Programmer Officer –ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme), Mukhya Sevika, Secretary (Panchayats) and Gram Sevikas and (ii) the Panchayats Raj leaders i.e. elected of the Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads.

The primary data was collected with the help of separately prepared interview schedules for each category of respondents. The secondary data was collected from various books, reports, research studies and other relevant. The appropriate statistical tools of data analysis were applied to analyze the information collected during the empirical investigation of the study.

Analysis of study

The various characteristics of execution efficiency specifically related to the administrative process of PRIs are; recognition of democratic value by PR leaders and officials; satisfaction from the implementation of development programmes; perception of PR leaders and officials on too much dependence of rules and regulations in PRIs working; adequacy and availability of resources in the District; and perceptions of respondents regarding the percolation of benefits to the targeted groups/beneficiaries. To find out the level of recognition of democratic values by PR leaders and officials, they were asked the question "do the officers and employees of PRIs give priority to discussion, persuasions, argument with people or their elected representatives over and above their regular official work." Their response determine the level of this recognition as is evident from the data in the table 1.1

Table 1.1
Recognition of Democratic Values by Pr Leaders and Officials

Responses	Panchayat Raj Leaders			Panchayat Raj Officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	39	37	76 (38.58)	23	22	45(91.84)
No	41	24	65 (33.00)	-	-	-
Sometimes	12	34	46 (23.35)	1	2	3(6.12)
Uncertain	5	5	10 (5.08)	1	-	1(2.04)
Total	97	100	197 (100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 1.1 reveals that nearly two-fifth of the PR leaders (38.58 percent) agreed whereas one-third of them (33.00 percent) disagree to the statement. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents (23.35 percent) opined that the officials of PR sometimes give such priority and a negligible number of them (5.08 percent) are uncertain. However, an overwhelming majority of officials of PR (91.84 percent) responded that they give priority to such discussions and only a small number of them (6.12 percent) responded that they do not always extend such priority rather profess this sometimes only. Thus, although the officials state that they recognize the

democratic values in their working but many PR leaders do not agree with them. It means the priority to discussion, persuasion and argument with the people and PR leaders by administrative officials of PR is not of expected level. Hence, much needs to be done to adopt democratic value in PR functioning.

Another factor to determine execution efficiency is the satisfaction from the implementation of development programmes. Therefore, PR leaders were asked to answer the question "could the executive officer of PRIs implement the development policies upto the satisfaction of PR leaders;

Table 1.2

Responses	Panchayat Raj Leaders			Panchayat Raj Officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	46	69	115(58.38)	25	24	49(100.00(.84)
No	46	26	72(36.55)	-	-	-
Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	-	-	-
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 1.2 indicates that majority of PR leaders (58.38 percent) responded, "yes" whereas more than one-third of them (36.55 percent) responded "No". On the other side, all the officials of PR (100.0 percent) responded that they implement the development policies upto the satisfaction of PR leaders. These kinds of responses are expected but negative response of a large section of leaders clearly indicate the evidences of leakages and incompetence

on the part of officials to execute development programmes. Therefore, in terms of satisfaction, execution efficiency is not of desirable level.

Dependence of the bureaucracy on the rules is generally accepted in the bureaucratic performance. Therefore, the responses both the leaders and officials on this were collected and tabulated in table 1.2

Responses	Panchayat Raj Leaders			Panchayat Raj Officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
hampering the process of development	20	33	53(26.90)	8	8	16(32.65)
Not hampering the process of development	70	61	131(66.50)	17	16	33(67.35)
Hampering but only to some extent	1	2	3(1.52)	-	-	-
Uncertain	6	4	10(5.0.08)	-	-	-
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 1.2 reveals that the majority of the respondents (66.50 percent) of PR leaders and 67.35 percent of officials PR) are of the opinion that too much dependence on rules and regulations in PRIs working are not hampering the process of development. More than one-fourth of PR leaders- (26.90 percent) and nearly one-third of officials of Pr (32.65 percent) agree that it hampers the process of development. A small and negligible segment (5.08 percent) did not express their views. Thus, dependence on rules and regulations has been

accepted by the majority of leaders and officials and they do not consider it an obstruction in rural development activities.

Another indicator of execution efficiency is availability of resources in the District i.e. the administrative level where development programmes are translated into real actions. Therefore, to seek the respondent's opinion they were asked to answer the question "do you think the district suffers from lack of resources". Responses to this question are tabulated in table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Responses	Panchayat Raj Leaders			Panchayat raj officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	37	63	100(50.76)	17	8	25(51.02)
No	55	32	87(44.16)	8	16	24(48.98)
Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	-	-	-
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

It is clearly evident from the data given in table 1.3 that half of the PR leaders (50.76 percent) affirmed the adequacy of resources but another large segment of PR leaders (44.16 percent) responded that adequate resources are not available to execute the programmes. This is confirmed by the officials as 48.98 percent of them responded that the district suffers from lack of resources whereas nearly the same number of officials (51.02 percent) denied the lack of resources.

It was expected that the benefits of development delivery system would percolate to the rural poor. Also, if it happened only than the administration is said to be having execution efficiency. Therefore, the respondents were asked the question; "do you think the benefit of the development programmes are reaching to the targeted groups?" the answer are tabulated in table 1.4

Table 1.4

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Percolation of Benefits To the Targeted Groups/Beneficiaries

Responses	Panchayat raj leaders			Panchayat raj officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	45	72	117(59.39)	24	23	47(95.92)
To some extent	3	-	3(1.52)	1	-	1(2.04)
No	43	21	64(32.49)	-	1	1(2.04)
Uncertain	6	7	13(6.60)	-	-	-
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

It is clearly evident from table 1.4 that the majority of PR leaders (59.30 percent) responded in affirmation but nearly one third of them (32.49 percent) denied that the benefits have percolated to the targeted groups. Only a very few of them (1.52 percent) opined that the benefits of programmes are reaching to the targeted groups only upto some extent. On the other hand, almost all of the officials of PR (95.92 percent) responded positively and only a very few of them (2.04 percent) responded negatively and the same number of them opined that the benefits are reaching to the targeted groups only upto some extent. Thus, majority of leaders and almost all of the officials are of the view that the benefits of development programmes have been reaching to the targeted people.

Suggestions

Keeping in view the findings of the research study, it is suggested:

1. The Gram Panchayat in particular, if composed of fairly educated sarpanch and panchs should be provided with some incentive in the form of some special development of the village and recognition in a social function with adequate publicity. Besides it, similar kind of incentives may be given to those Gram Panchayats, which elect their woman and scheduled caste representatives who fairly educate one. Also, if possible, leaving those who already contested the panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad elections, minimum educational qualification may be prescribed for contesting the election. All these will improve the educational level of the PR

leaders and contribute positively in improving the administrative culture.

2. Many of the PR representatives do not possess the required level of wisdom necessary for bringing social development in the society. Therefore, it is suggested that these leaders may be exposed to those conditions, which can educate them in the area. Second, eligibility conditions to contest elections particularly of Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad may be prescribed so that only the people with some vision with some social development get elected in these bodies.
3. There should be regular short term, innovative, specially designed, need based and interactive training programmes of the PR leaders and officials. Not only this, there should be some training programmes which might be attended by both the leaders and officials collectively. This will improve the social, economic and cultural gaps between the leaders and the officials. These programmes are essentially required to improve execution efficiency, building up team spirit, which is essential for improving performance efficiency. This kind of interactions will develop cordial relations between the two groups of PRIs and bring them close to each other, naturally, it will help to improve the overall administrative culture of PRIs.
4. Both formal and informal administrative strategies must be prepared so that the maladies like corruption, partiality etc. may be whisked away from the PR working. New administrative

approaches like citizens' character, privatizations, contracting out, transparency etc. must be encouraged to make its working sensitive and responsive one. It will bring improvement in the morale efficiency, which is fundamental component of administrative culture.

Conclusion

Administrative culture is one of the new approaches used in the analysis of administrative system. It provides a ground for creating conditions necessary for continued survival and existence of the administrative systems. Knowledge of administrative act can be properly understood or evaluated only if the human and social feeling behind it, is taken into consideration. The studies of this kind throw light on the behavioral aspect of administration and emphasis how the nature and style of administrative personnel are as important as the neatly created administrative structure and apparatus for the successful performance of an administrative task. The present study is intended to study the administrative culture of all the three organs of PRIs. Hence, an analysis of administrative culture likely to help us not only to understand and analyze and administrative system but also important for generating a full understanding of the process how public administration performs its tasks. In other words, one can have the perceptions about the "operational aspects" of the administrative system and exposure of the attributes related to the weakness of strength, vitality, durability and stability as well as cracks or fissures present in a specific administrative system.

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