

ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPLEX DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that administrative decentralisation in India at present should be seen from two vantage points: a) in the broader context of the complexity of Indian democracy; and b) from the point of view of the shift in the paradigm of governance from development administration to public management. When seen from these two vantage points we see that the decentralisation process is caught up in both the vicissitudes of democratic politics and contingencies of public management reforms. While making such a case this article argues that much positive effort towards meaningful decentralisation can still be done, provided the regimes at the state level are willing and are interested; for despite the complexity of democratic politics and compulsions of public management reforms, state governments that are favorably disposed towards decentralisation can still make a difference.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, DEVELOPMENT
ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Public Administration as a subject developed in advanced European and North American countries and has been applied in developed countries. Max Weber, one of the founding fathers of Sociology, wrote, about three

types of authority: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational authority. Later writers such as Herbert Simon wrote about scientific ways of administering the public. These writers largely wrote on the subject in the context of developed countries. When it came to be applied in the context of developing countries two aspects mattered most. Firstly, the present developing countries, as post-colonial countries, inherited largely the administrative and legal systems of their colonial predecessors. Secondly, the new post-colonial states embarked upon an ambitious agenda of development of their societies, economies and polities. The states did not start afresh on the front of administration but had to give a new orientation to the old and inherited administrative system. This led to the emergence of the sub-discipline of development administration in the 1970s and 1980s. In this, the state apparatus had to be geared up to the tasks of development of the country and nation building.

The state, in the discourse of development administration, appeared like a cradle-to-grave state, which was to take care of all aspects of development of its subjects. However, the focus of public administration as development administration lasted only for a while. In the 1990s, the entire focus shifted. The Third World states, according to the international donors such as the World Bank and the IMF and some leaders in the developing countries, increasingly came to be seen as rent seeking, inefficient and unproductive leviathans that were not serving the professed aims of development. Markets rather than states appeared more efficient. With this sudden realization, the subject of development administration lost its charm and appeal. The focus then shifted to downsizing the state which was seen as rent seeking, inefficient and unproductive (Mathur: 1996). In this situation alternatives for the state were actively explored. One of these was the shift from public administration to public management. Public management stressed, inter alia, three aspects: more prominent role for markets; more active role for non-state, non-market actors such as NGOs; and collaborations between these three sectors. For example, collaborations between

government, corporate sectors in the economy, with more room given to the latter became important. Likewise, government-NGO partnerships with more room given to NGOs became significant. NGO-corporate sector partnerships too became important with the corporate sector being called to fulfil its corporate responsibility.

The fundamental shift that took place was that with the loss of faith in the centralized state, the focus on decentralisation became important. Added to this with ground breaking historical events like the collapse of the Berlin wall and the centralized states of the USSR and the Soviet Block, the faith in the capacity of centralized states to deliver development too decreased. Therefore, the shift came as much from historical experience as from developmental theory - that decentralisation, more of market and more of NGOs or civil society (both are not synonymous) are more important than centralized planning and decision-making. These shifts were not radical breaks with the past but were shifts in emphasis so far as the developing countries are concerned.

The historical shifts from more centralized states to more decentralized states, the shift from state commanded economy to market dominated economy, the realization of the importance of civil society organisations, all these shifts had not taken place as radical breaks from the past in developing countries. In the former Soviet Block and the socialist countries, these were radical breaks and resulted in shock therapies. But, in the context of developing countries these were shifts of policy emphasis. By this we mean that the old structures of centralized authority and a large state, and expectations on the state to deliver development, remained largely unchanged. The policies even when they were couched in 'reform' language largely maintained continuity with the older structures of delivering development. The policy shifts were more gradual, more limited and there is considerable continuity with the past emphases even though policy rhetoric may expound them as new and emerging paradigm. For example there may be unanimity of opinion within the polity on decentralisation of governance and development

but this unanimity of opinion expressed in legislations and policy documents need not translate this into reality; and the previous policies and practices of administration can continue despite the unanimity of the expression of opinion. That is to say the shift from development administration to public management, from top-down centralized administration to decentralized administration, need not necessarily happen just because of legislation or policy. Therefore, what took place were shifts of policy emphasis and these continue with considerable consistency with older policy practices. The same holds true with the case of decentralized administration despite what the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, expected from this polity. The present situation of administrative decentralisation has to be seen in the context sketched above.

In the following, we broadly discuss the dilemmas of rural administrative decentralisation, in the context of the aftermath of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Section-2 deals with decentralisation and development administration in that context. Section-3 deals with public participation in decentralisation as a duty and accountability at different levels as a pressing need. Section-4 returns to the theme of administrative decentralisation and development and Section-5 concentrates on what policy measures can be envisaged and what can be done at the State level in some detail. We intend to reiterate that the focus of the following discussion is largely on rural decentralisation, though much of the discussion may be relevant to urban decentralisation. The problems of urban decentralisation are of a different order and therefore omitted here, excepting for a passing allusion in one instance.

DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

There are different aspects of administrative decentralisation vis-à-vis rural governance in the context of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which have significant bearing on the decentralisation process in the

country. These are: devolution of Functions, Functionaries, Funds and Freedom popularly known as the 'four Fs'. In the following we consider, devolution of functions, functionaries and funds first, and later deal with the question of freedom. The latter is crucially related to the former three, but has more political content to it.

When we are dealing with the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds we have to keep in mind two aspects: first, we have to consider the fact that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment which deals with the devolution process in the 11th Schedule is largely indicative and a normative ideal; second, Panchayati Raj is a State subject within the constitution and though it is binding upon the States, and the latter are obliged to adopt a conformity law, there is no compulsion for the States to either devolve or not to devolve all or some of the functions that are part of the list of 29 items in the 11th schedule of the Amendment. Since it is not binding on the part of the States to compulsorily devolve all or some, or any, of the functions listed in the original amendments, what matters is the political will of the States to determine the extent of devolution that they want to implement. The question, therefore, is largely a question of the State level regimes and their political, normative and political-cultural dispositions.

Consequently the story of the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds is a story of disappointment with the States reluctant to part with the powers that they have at their level and over all the three Fs. This happens in spite of the nature of the political party at the State level, providing space for the civil society to use the other organs of the State such as judiciary to intervene to see to it that even the rudimentary aspects of the Constitutional Amendments, such as the periodic conduct of Panchayat elections to be held every five years, are being complied with. A majority of the State level governments show reluctance and recalcitrance to devolve functions to Panchayats. Even if they uphold that they have devolved the powers over functions, that is only on paper and not in reality. The every day reality of devolution of functions shows that the line departments and their upward State level

hierarchies play a major role in diluting the content of the devolution process. The same holds true with the functionaries who come from the line departments and have a dual obligation to be loyal to the hierarchy of the line department with a head of the department and a minister at the State level, and with the less binding obligation to be loyal to the Panchayats. Often, the former prevails over the latter. The situation is a recurring story in all the major States. Therefore, the devolution of functions depends on the political dispensation of the regime at the State level. Administrative decentralisation in terms of decentralizing the functionaries is difficult owing to the overlapping loyalties to the line departments and Panchayats with the former being stronger than the latter. Administrative decentralisation has to devise ways of how the functionaries can become subservient to the elected representative of the Panchayats and how the top-down bureaucracy, with established hierarchy, can become meaningfully effective for bottom-up governance.

Another important factor in devolution vis-à-vis administration is the relationship between the elected representatives at the district level and the role of the District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner or Collector. The role of this institution is important at the district level and for all-India administration. Firstly, they come from an All-India Service governed by the Union government and they come from all over India. Secondly, they are the link between local administration and the State and Union levels of administration. Even though the institution of DC is dismissed as a colonial relic, transforming from the ICS to the IAS, it is interesting to note that this institution has survived many an administrative reform and we hardly have alternatives to the institution and the 'steel frame' it provides to the nation. Interestingly, the powers of the DC at the district level do come into collision with the powers of the elected Zilla Panchayat President or other members. Here, Karnataka as a progressive State in Panchayati Raj, has found an alternative by placing the CEO of the ZP as equivalent to the DC. In Karnataka, the CEO of the ZP is supposed to look after the development administration and the

DC is supposed to look after the law and order administration. This solution appears to be working well in Karnataka albeit with changes in nuances with changing governments. Moreover in no other part of the country the ZP has an equivalent or more senior IAS officer as the CEO of the ZP and in a balancing position to the DC/ DM/Collector. In most other States, the office of the Collector is far more powerful than the office of the ZP. This makes the devolution process and administrative decentralisation difficult and also highlights the achievement in Karnataka of making the District level administration stronger; thereby the bargaining power of the District level ZPs is likely to be more in Karnataka than in other States. This is to be taken note of by other States intending to bring about administrative decentralisation.

While administrative decentralisation from the State level to the District level can be achieved in substantial degree as it is exemplified in Karnataka, it is more difficult to bring about administrative decentralisation further down the hierarchy. That is, how can administrative power be devolved to Taluk and Gram Panchayat levels from the District level? This is a major question and is surely not an easy question. But, at the same time, the Taluk/ Block/ Mandal levels play an extremely crucial role in the decentralisation and development process. Strengthening the Taluk level has been suggested as a counter measure to the concentration of administrative power at the district level. This is an important suggestion and is worth serious consideration. The Taluk, Mandal or Block level political as well as administrative machineries now operate largely with upward accountability to the District level administration. Two aspects are to be considered here. One, they do not have sufficient powers to take decisions to determine the developmental processes; second, they are only upwardly accountable to the district level administration and not to the lower level Gram Panchayat functionaries. Considering the fact that most of the local bureaucratic functionaries operate from this base, and at the Taluk level, we need both to strengthen this level and make it more downwardly accountable. Both the autonomy and downward accountability of

Taluk/Block/Mandal levels are needed for effective developmental administration. This aspect needs further attention.

The above-mentioned aspect crucially raises the question of administrative decentralisation within the three-tier PRI (Panchayati Raj Institution) system. Are ZPs decentralizing the 'three Fs' to the TPs (Taluk Parishads)? Are TPs decentralizing the administrative powers to Gram Panchayats, and finally, are Gram Panchayats accountable to the Grama Sabha? These are admittedly difficult questions but need to be posed. One answer is the process of activity mapping of the three tiers and allocating the three Fs to the three tiers according to the mapping. Again only Karnataka, and probably Kerala, seem to have done this mapping and no other State. Therefore, for the majority of Indian States the question is open. If activity mapping is to be done who should conduct the activity mapping? How participatory should it be? For example, who should decide what a ZP should be doing, what a TP should be doing and what a Gram Panchayat should be doing? There are two issues at stake in this question: one, the principle of participation and self governance; and two, the principle of subsidiarity. Both are important for activity mapping. Activity mapping for administrative decentralisation should respect the principle of self-governance, which Mahatma Gandhi elaborated in his Hind Swaraj; and secondly, activity mapping should respect the principle of subsidiarity. Finally, all these, of course, depend on the willingness of the State level regimes to listen to lower tiers of governance. But as we have discussed above, the TP should be strengthened and made accountable and so should the Gram Panchayat made both stronger and more accountable.

Finally, the question of the 'fourth F': that is, the freedom of the PRI system. It is difficult to define the term freedom. The civil society organisations, which are arguing for more freedom, perhaps, mean more freedom in terms of using the funds meant for Gram Panchayats. Often, the Gram Panchayat funds are tied grants and require target fulfillment and with little consideration for local specifications. Therefore, the insistence on freedom in that sense has certain meaning. Otherwise, it is

difficult to understand what other freedoms, barring the ones, which we have already discussed above, that the Panchayats require. The PRI system after all operates within the Indian nation-state and is subject to all the limitations imposed by the nation-state and its laws. It is difficult to imagine what 'freedom' to PRIs means beyond these limits. In the following section, in fact, we argue in the opposite direction: that the PRIs, including the Gram Panchayats and the Grama Sabhas, are actually not using the freedom meant for them and that blaming the higher authorities and/or higher tiers for all the ills may not be enough.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AS A DUTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AS A NEED

The challenge of public participation in the Panchayat system is a daunting one. While considerable attention is paid to the issues of lack of devolution, of finances and of control over functionaries, little attention has been paid to lack of participation in the Panchayat system. This has two dimensions. First is the vexed problem of proxy management of Gram Panchayats in the case of reserved seats for marginalised sections and women; second, public participation in the Grama Sabha. The first problem of proxy management of Panchayats is vexed one because the evidence on this issue is mixed and for every Dalit or woman member that may not be functioning, there is also another case of active and efficient functioning. In fact, the evidence is more on the side of positive impact of affirmative and protective discrimination in Panchayats; and the problem of proxy representation cannot be overstated. The problem is somewhat acute with Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and women representatives but after fourteen years of consistent exposure to the representative politics of PRIs even these sections are sufficiently politicized to take up the challenges that the positions offer to them. In the case of backward class representatives, the question is all the more easier to answer. They are emphatically asserting the formal representative positions offered to them. Therefore, too much stress

cannot be laid on this problem. It is fourteen years since the 73rd Amendment was enunciated and now we have to highlight the positive aspects of affirmative action and see what best practices affirmative action has brought about; and the positive lessons these best practices have to offer in order to be emulated. As stated earlier, there is much hope on this and, for sure, time and consistent practice of the PRI system are likely to solve the problems that exist with positive discrimination in the PRI system.

The second more difficult problem is participation in Grama Sabha and Grama Panchayat. Often the problem is inadequate attendance in GS and Grama Panchayat meetings. The attendance figures of citizen participation in Grama Sabhas and Grama Panchayats are pathetic. This is a major problem and people and citizenry have to take the responsibility for this. Howsoever top down institutional engineering may be attempted, it cannot substitute for the genuine participation of citizens in the institutions from below. The problem has much to do with apathy and indifference towards local self-government institutions by the local citizenry. This problem needs to be faced while considering administrative decentralisation and good governance, for without genuine, critical and widespread participation, accountability in governance cannot be ensured. That is to say, how development functions are carried out by the Gram Panchayat has to be monitored in the Grama Sabha and how the TP is allocating funds and how the TP level development extension workers are working have to be monitored by GPs and how the ZP is allocating all the three 'F' s is to be monitored by the TPs. Unless these processes, which are inextricably political processes, happen the PRI system cannot become a meaningful tool to deliver development and deepen democracy. Administrative decentralisation implies all this.

The above question of participation as already mentioned is also crucially linked to accountability and this is both upward and downward. Administrative decentralisation requires that both these processes operate in a consistent and genuine manner. This is a difficult

process and the fulcrum around which the idea of deepening democracy and delivering development depends. This is also crucial for ensuring what the 73rd Amendment speaks in terms of 'economic development and social justice'. Without the upward and downward accountability mechanisms operating efficiently, even the most generous and magnanimous fund allocations do not ensure 'economic development and social justice'. Administrative decentralisation in that sense depends on upward and downward accountability systems for both the administrative staff as well as the political functionaries of the PRI system. In the absence of the above, rent seeking, mis-use, dis-use or non-usage of even the existing financial allocations are likely to happen.

In this section we have tried to argue two points: one is that there is a participation-deficit in the present PRI system. This is acute at all levels. And how this deficit is to be filled in is an open question. NGOs or civil society public action is one option. Broad public education on the importance of participation is a second option to be carried out by the State at higher levels. The second option is unlikely to happen. But, in order to deepen democracy, we need public participation beyond voting in the elections. Citizens have to be actively involved at all levels of the system. The second question that we have addressed is that of accountability. Both participation and accountability are interlinked. More participation, which is genuine and critical, is likely to ensure downward accountability. This will have spin offs for upward accountability. But we intend to stop here on an optimistic note: that the exposure to the institutional system over a longer period and consistent practice of the institutional system, are likely to help solve the problems. As is the truism, the cure for the ills of democracy, is more democracy, and not less.

ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The problems with the present practice of the decentralisation system are manifold. These are: lack of devolution of functions and functionaries; limitations on funds such as tied funds; lack of fiscal freedom to Panchayats and the major problem of lack of participation in the institutions. Performance of Panchayats is crucially affected by lack of participation as well and therefore, the duties of citizens to participate are important. Administrative decentralisation hinges on all these and as discussed in the beginning, the shift of orientation of the state from development administration to public management has crucial positive and negative implications. We understand positive implications in the sense that more space for civil society organisations and NGOs and advocacy groups may become available in the decentralisation field, which may help enhance the functioning of the system. Negative implications are that the state may withdraw even from the development of social infrastructure such as creating more schools, hospitals, drinking water facilities and social security measures - and is likely to leave people high and dry. This is particularly the case if the state overemphasizes its facilitator role. Till today the number of poor living in rural areas outweighs that of the number of poor in urban areas and the state cannot abdicate its role in development functions. Therefore, development administration retains its role for quite some time to come. Public-private partnerships or public- NGO partnerships sound interesting but are more workable in urban contexts than in rural contexts. The workability of these partnerships in urban locales is with many qualifications and in certain sectors such as drinking water, the evidence from across the developing and developed world shows that partnerships have failed even in urban contexts. Therefore, what is that one aspect which matters for more effective and efficient development administration as well as administrative decentralisation?

The one single most significant aspect that matters for both

decentralisation process and administrative decentralisation is the nature and policy of the regime at the State level. In the Indian federal system, local self-government is a State subject and the will and the interest of the regime at the State level alone matters, given the normative scaffolding provided by the central government. That is the reason why despite the uniform structure of the State panchayat laws, prescribed by the central government, there is much difference in the practice of decentralisation in different States. An interesting fact is that the State level regimes that ask for more resources and more governmental flexibility at their level from the Union government, may be least interested in parting with the same to lower echelons of government. Federalism stops at the State level and the recognition of local self-government system as a genuine third-tier of governance, on par with the Union and State level governments, is more on paper than in reality.

Particularly with regard to administrative decentralisation the problem is that there is an administrative cadre and system that is governed by the Union government and then there is the cadre of administrative staff governed by the State level government and its line departments. And then we have elected representatives at the State and Central levels who control these cadres and often, meddle considerably in the administrative decisions of both these cadres. This renders the situation complex, and decentralized institutions, particularly the marginalised sections operating within them are powerless before the above. But, despite this complexity, which is inescapable, there is much that a State government that is favorably disposed to the Panchayats can do. The administrative staff, both of the Central cadre, and that of the State cadre operate under the State level regimes and therefore, the nature, the political disposition, political composition and political culture of the State level regime - all of which go into the making of public policy--matter enormously for administrative decentralisation. Kuldeep Mathur puts this quite clearly when he says, 'Public Administration in India is embedded in the wider context of society, state and public policy.'

In the context of public policy towards decentralisation, the State level regimes, given the legal and institutional structure of local-self government, can devolve the three 'Fs' that we discussed; they can foster an administrative culture that respects the local level governments and they can follow the subsidiarity principle if they respect it. Therefore, all is now possible at the State level as far as decentralisation of the administrative system goes. But, for some time the tensions within the administration will continue to remain even in best of circumstances. For example, the tension between loyalty to the line department hierarchy and the local self government is likely to remain. Likewise, loyalty to the cadre that a bureaucrat belongs to and the pressures of the State level and district level administration are likely to remain as questions. The tension particularly at the district level between a bureaucrat heading development administration and another equally ranking bureaucrat heading law and order administration is also likely to remain. But, in spite of all this, the regimes and governments at the State level could do much to foster the culture and practice of decentralized administration.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Given the above discussion, we briefly indicate what can be done in the present situation:

? The State level governments should strictly follow the subsidiarity principle and whatever can be done at the lower rung of administration should be done at that level. The State level governments can devolve administrative functions to different tiers according to the capacity to deliver the function by each tier. In the beginning, this may be baffling as different vertical tiers at different levels and horizontally at different places may have differing capabilities. But this problem can be mitigated through a process of participatory activity mapping, that is to say, the different elected representatives and officials can be brought

together in an open and consultative and participatory activity mapping where senior authorities and experts in the subject take a back seat and allow the concerned representatives and officials to themselves divide responsibilities among different tiers and regions. This is possible only if entrenched values of hierarchy and vested interests in withholding power are dealt with-- and this is workable. If activity mapping is workable then participatory activity mapping should be workable as well. 'Let the different tiers decide what they can do and what they cannot do' should be the motto; without assigning an activity map to lower rungs prepared by the subject experts and senior authorities. That will probably be in consonance with the capacities of the lower rungs and in accordance with their willingness.

? We have elaborately dwelt above that there should be devolution of functions. Almost every writing on PRI system mentions this as the first principle. If the above point of following the subsidiarity principle is followed then it becomes obvious that a number of functions listed in the 11th Schedule of the 73rd Amendment are better served by devolving them to local tiers. For example, in an extensively rural agrarian economy and society there is immense sense in devolving perform the functions and functionaries such as: agricultural extension; animal husbandry; fisheries; school education; primary health care and immunization; drinking water; sanitation; marketing of agricultural products; cooperatives; handlooms and crafts etc. (the list is indicative). In an agrarian economy and society and in a large country where districts are as big as Nordic states, elementary reason is enough to convince that animal husbandry or drinking water or agricultural extension should be devolved to local tiers. How can these officials, the veterinary doctors, the agricultural extension workers, the medical personnel better serve their respective purposes than by being closer to the communities where the problems related to these aspects arise? With a permitted digression one can well drive a point home that the agrarian crisis that we are witnessing in a number of Indian States such as Maharashtra, Andhra

Pradesh and Karnataka can very well be prevented if the concerned extension workers, veterinarians, medical personnel etc. are available in the immediate reach of the farmers, sheep or cattle grazers and pregnant mothers. The case is all too compelling. Administrative decentralisation makes enormous sense in such matters. To take an example, in parts of Rajasthan, the distance between a village ('dhani' or cluster of 'dhani's) and the administrative headquarter is often fifty to hundred kilometers. What will the officials mentioned above be doing in the headquarter in such case?

? Like HDI and GDP an index of devolution can be worked for each state and for all Indian states so far as administrative decentralisation goes. This follows clearly from the discussion of devolution in the preceding sections. This is more a scholarly task, of course. The twenty-eight States of India can be clubbed on an index that clearly places each State on a particular place in a hierarchy of the extent of devolution carried out in each State. This will help the Union government to see exactly how much of devolution is carried out in each State. This list can also be handed over to the external donors such as the World Bank and the IMF and the DFID so that they also know which State is ahead in decentralization and which State is not. Since there is a bee-line of States before the donors for funding, this will hopefully enable both the governments and donors to see to it that the funds provided reach the bottom of the institutional hierarchy and the 'end users,' without being pilfered at the State or District levels. This index can also be a reminder to different States as to how much they need to improve on decentralisation.

? The state level regimes need to enhance public education using various media such as TV, radio, folk art forms etc. on the importance of public participation and the need for local people to demand accountability from local self-governments and to educate them in their duty to participate in the decision making process of local self

governments. There is a strong justification in political theory for local government and participation in local government as a training ground or as a crucible for developing democratic ethos and culture. The local government is supposed to provide training in democracy; particularly, in the functioning and process of peaceful deliberation, negotiation and pursuit of the ends of the communities and their developmental needs. Therefore, the State level governments should actively promote participation in local self-government. This is arguably difficult in societies with steep and multiple inequalities where the fabric of democracy is always tenuous. There are at present more than one technological means available for the state to do this and given the spread of different forms of media, this task should not be that difficult. Local government and participation are the schools of democracy according to democratic political theory.

? The State level regimes stop bypassing Panchayats or local self governments through different parallel bodies. In the context of economic reforms and donor pressure, often Government owned, NGOs and institutions are created to bypass the local democratic institutions. This is well documented in the case of Andhra Pradesh during the previous TDP government. Often, local democracy is seen as a hurdle to implement the schemes prompting governments to float parallel bodies to Panchayats at the local level. A detailed study of this 'potentially damaging second wave of decentralisation' as Professor James Manor called it is available now. There should be all possible efforts from experts of decentralisation, civil society and media to discourage this practice by the governments at the State levels. The World Bank, the IMF and the DFID are aware of this problem and they are already taking measures not to bypass local democratic institutions anymore. Hopefully this tendency will subside in the future.

? Capacity building of local self-government functionaries should be conducted along with the local administrative staff. That is, there

should be combined training and capacity building for elected representatives as well as local bureaucrats. This proposition follows the discussion on the differences between the loyalties of the officials. Government officials often tend to be loyal to their line department and not to the Panchayats. Their career prospects are better served by being more conscious of the hierarchy of their line department and this potentially brings them into conflict with the local self-governments. This can, to some or perhaps to a limited extent, be solved by conducting combined training and capacity building programmes for officials as well as elected representatives. This may reduce the distance between them and can possibly develop rapport and mutual understanding about their respective constraints and opportunities in working together to solve development problems.

? The State level regimes should send a positive message to the political functionaries of local self-governments as well as to all its own bureaucrats that the partnership between the State government bureaucrats and local self governments can result in achieving developmental outcomes in the favour of weaker sections, much more than the other partnerships that are advocated by public management discipline in the current form that we have mentioned in the beginning.

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Notes

1. Mathur, Kuldeep (1996), 'Introduction: The Emerging Concerns in Public Administration', in Kuldeep Mathur (ed.), *Development Policy and Administration*, pp.16-17, Sage, New Delhi.
2. Mathur for examples says, 'The withdrawal of the state makes way for the voluntary sector. Indeed, The Eighth [Five Year] plan makes a plea for a greater role of the

- voluntary sector as well as market forces. In this new dispensation, then, the buzzwords are bureaucratic- accountability, decentralisation, participation and community based organisations or NGOs; Mathur, Kuldeep op.cit. pp.18-19.
3. A detailed discussion of economic reforms since 1991 and their political interpretations in India is provided by Jos Mooij (2001) in, 'Economic Reform and Political Interpretations: A Review of the Literature of the Politics of the Reform Process in India', CESS Working Paper: 41, Hyderabad: Centre for Economic and Social Studies. The exact nature of the reforms still continues to be highly debated subject and is controversial.
 4. The exact texts of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, 74th Constitutional Amendment and The PESA(1996) Act are available in: Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (ed.) (1999), *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage, New Delhi.
 5. Vaddiraju Anil Kumar and Shagun Mehrotra (2004), 'Making Panchayats Accountable' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(37): 4139-4141. op.cit. pp18-19.
 7. This observation is based on author's intensive primary fieldwork experience in rural western Rajasthan for a study on in a project namely, "Evaluation of Indira Awaas Yojana and Million Wells Scheme" from November 1998 to February 1999. The work done in this project involved intensive field work in three districts of rural, western Rajasthan in Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer districts lasting for three months from November 1998 to January 1999. This study was done under Dr. Sujatha Singh of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.
 8. Pateman illustrates this point very instructively when she says, 'It is by participating at the local level that the individual "learns democracy". "We do not learn to read or write, to ride or to swim, by merely being told to do it, but by doing it, so it is only by practicing popular government on a limited scale, that the people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger scale", Pateman, Carol (1970), *Participation and Democratic Theory*, pp.30-31, Cambridge: CUP.
 9. Vaddiraju, Anil (2001), "Panchayati Raj Institutions and Janmabhoomi in Andhra Pradesh", *Participation & Governance*, 7(21), pp. 6-9, and another example of parallel bodies is discussed in Vaddiraju, Anil, Cheruku Venkatesham and Kodali Savitha "Primary Formal Education and Panchayats - Experience of Andhra Pradesh", *Participation & Governance*, 8(25) , pp.28-30.
 10. Manor, James (2005) "User Committees: A Potentially Damaging Second Wave of Decentralization" (mimeo) Sussex: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
 11. Discussion with World Bank officials (during their visit at the Institute for Social and Economic Change) shows that the Bank officials are aware of this problem.

References

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