

## **DECENTRALISATION AND PARTICIPATORY PLANNING BY PRIs IN TELANGANA: A STUDY OF GRAMA JYOTHI PROGRAMME**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Grama Jyothi programme by the Telangana government aims at inclusive development through a people's participatory planning at Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). This paper studies the status of decentralisation and budget allocations for PRIs and implementation of Grama Jyothi programme for participatory planning in Telangana State. The results are based on State budget documents and a field survey in four villages from two districts - Warangal and Adilabad. The study found that in Telangana, the PRIs, especially Gram Panchayats, are suffering from many problems such as lack of devolution of all the constitutional subjects to PRIs; no direct control over many village level functionaries; major allocation of State budget on the PRI's subject are spent through parallel bodies; low level of per capita revenue and expenditure and limited taxation powers for Gram Panchayats (GP); poor collection of local revenue; low spending on basic services. People lack faith and hope on functioning capacity of toothless GPs since they suffer from devolution of full functions and sufficient funds and functionaries. As a result, the people's participation in Grama Jyothi programme was disappointing and it has not been successful even in famously institutionally developed village –Gangadevipally in the State. Hence there is an urgent need for devolution of all constitutional powers and sufficient funds and functionaries to PRIs in Telangana State for the success of participatory bottom-up planning programme like Grama Jyothi. Otherwise Mahatma Gandhi's optimism about village republic will be unrealised and Ambedkar's pessimism will stay real.*

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### Introduction

The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom... Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work”

.....MK Gandhi

“What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism”

.....Dr.B R Ambedkar

Democratic, participative and inclusive institutions are stepping-stones for inclusive growth and development. Panchayat Raj Act 1993 under Seventy Third Constitutional Amendment was passed to realise this condition by providing the statutory framework for functional, financial and administrative autonomy at the village level where people run their own government and plan for their growth and development. Decentralisation is a process of empowering the local people through local governments by mobilising resources required for micro level planning and development. It suggests a system of multi-level planning, where the lowest unit is allowed to plan and implement everything that can be performed most effectively at that level and only the residual is left to the higher levels.

The initiative of Telangana State for people's participatory planning through “Mana Vooru Mana Pranalika”(Our Village Our Plan), later renamed as Grama Jyothi programme, aims at realising participatory planning and inclusive development in the newly formed State. Decentralised planning is an essential part of this

programme. The vision of Grama Jyothi is envisaged as strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for rural development by creating the sense of our village, our ideas, our resources, our problems, our solutions through our management among people. The mission of Grama Jyothi is to strengthen the PRIs for planning the natural resources, agriculture, drinking water, sanitation, employment, etc., required for integrated rural economic development, social justice and good governance. The objectives of the Grama Jyothi are a) Empowering the Gram Panchayats (GP) and Gram Sabha through awareness b) Democratic decision making and increasing the people's participation through accountability and transparency.

The mission, vision and objectives of the Grama Jyothi are noble and most relevant for the new State of Telangana to achieve bottom-up planning and people's participation in their own growth and development by empowering the PRIs. In this context, the following pertinent question related to PRIs in the State needs to be answered - Are the PRIs especially Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Telangana State sufficiently capable in terms of functions, functionaries and funds for the implementation of the programme like Grama Jyothi to ensure people's participatory planning ? With this background this paper attempts to study following objectives

1. To study the status of decentralisation and budget allocations to PRIs in Telangana State.

2. To evaluate the implementation of Grama Jyothi Programme for people's participatory planning in selected villages in the State and make suggestion for its improvement.

### **Methodology**

The paper is based on both secondary and primary sources. The secondary data were collected from – State budget documents and village plan documents made under Grama Jyothi programme. The information on State budget allocation on 26 PRI subjects since 2014-15 to 2017-18 was collected. The details on revenue and expenditures and their sub-components at GP were obtained from village level plan documents.

The primary information on Grama Jyothi was collected from the field survey in four revenue villages in two districts (Warangal and Adilabad) under the broad study - 'Review of the Grama Jyothi' conceptualised and executed by the Academic team of Council for Social Development (CSD), Hyderabad during September 2014 where both the authors were part of the field survey. The villages were selected based on purposive sampling method reflecting their level of development within the respective district as advised by the District Panchayat level officials. The villages of Gangadevipalli (Geesukonda Mandal) and Incharla (Mulug Mandal) were selected under the developed and backward village categories respectively from Warangal district. Similarly, the villages of Hajipur (Manchiryal Mandal) and Pangidi ( Sirpur (U) Mandal) were selected under the developed and

backward village categories respectively from Adilabad district. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through Focus Group Discussions and personal interviews with the stakeholders in GP –Sarpanch, ward members, officials and general public covering all social and gender groups in the village. Primary information on people's participation in Grama Jyothi programme, issues discussed at Gram Sabha and preparation of village plans, allocation of time and resources, people's perception about GP - was collected from a field survey. Analytical method along with basic statistics was used in interpreting the results.

### **Constitutional Provisions and Literature on PRIs in India**

Panchayati Raj Act 1993 under Seventy Third Constitutional Amendment provided the statutory framework for PRI with stipulated functions, finances and functionaries. Article 243(G) of the Constitution stipulates endowment by law and by the legislature of a State such powers, authority and functions as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. Under the new Act, PRIs are expected to perform all development functions as suggested in the 11th Schedule. For doing so, proper devolution of functions and powers from the regular line departments of the State government to the PRIs is a necessary prerequisite for healthy functioning of local bodies. However, the responsibility of implementing this act rests on State governments.

Under PRI Act, GPs are supposed to perform the duty of providing basic services at village level under 29 subjects namely:

maintenance of roads, construction and maintenance of drains, cleaning streets, rural electricity, housing, drinking water, sanitation, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, minor irrigation, watershed management, land reform measures including consolidation of holdings and cooperative management of community lands, social forestry, minor forest products, non-conventional energy, primary health, education – primary and secondary, family welfare, welfare of women, child, weaker sections – SC & STs, etc. In order to perform the numerous functions enlisted in the act, the extent of devolution should be adequate. In Karnataka, all the 29 subjects/ departments have been transferred to Panchayats with funds, functions and functionaries. This is followed by Kerala, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Telangana and its parent State Andhra Pradesh need to go a long way in the direction of devolving powers to PRIs. Unlike other two PRIs at district and mandal levels, Gram Panchayats are vested with fund raising power through various local level taxes, fees and duties such as – impose tax on property, profession, lighting, drainage, water, etc; collect fee from building permission, certificate issue, license, cattle pond, seigniorage, etc; and impose duties on surcharge on stamp.

According to James Manor (1999), the four crucial conditions are required for democratic decentralisation to succeed (i) sufficient powers to exercise substantial influence within the political system and over significant development activities; (ii) sufficient financial resources to accomplish important tasks; (iii) adequate administrative capacity to accomplish those tasks and iv) reliable accountability

mechanisms to ensure both the accountability of elected politicians to citizens and the accountability of the bureaucracy to elected politicians.

Viewed from an economic perspective, the case for decentralised planning rests on three conditions. First, micro-level planning of the local level resources and spatially dispersed economic activities pursued on a small scale at household and village levels. Second, bringing the peripheral groups of poor and disadvantaged within the mainstream economic processes. Third, having participatory mechanisms to promote the people's motivation, habits of self-help, local-level leadership and active role in strategic and planning decisions (Rao VM, 1989).

In recent times, there is an increasing realisation that genuine decentralisation leads to development. It is also felt that decentralisation of power to the local units of government is one of the best ways of empowering people, promoting public participation and increasing efficiency. According to the Human Development Report (1993), decentralisation, wherever functioning, has often been fairly successful in encouraging local participation, increasing accountability of local officials, reducing the costs and increasing efficiency. The report argues that the States should have provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats at the appropriate level for preparation of plans and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice.

Devolution of power to local governments would lead to decentralised development (Kannan K P 1993). Decentralisation experience provides many examples of how local planning was used as an instrument of social mobilisation (Oommen, 2004; Isaac, & Franke, 2000). Participatory development programmes and local self-governing bodies are instrumental in targeting resources toward disadvantaged social groups (Besley et al, 2005). Strengthening the PRIs is also important for efficient management of traditional biodiversity (Gadgil Madhav, 2007).

In order to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), the 14th Finance Commission (FC) has awarded ₹200,292.2 crore to Panchayats for 2015-2020, which is more than three and half times the grant of the 13th Finance Commission (Government of India, 2014). While the 13th FC grant was for all three tiers of Panchayats (district, block or mandal and Gram Panchayat (GP), the 14th FC grant is made only for GPs. The fund availability at the GP level will now average ₹17 lakh per year (₹85 lakh for five years) per GP, and around of ₹2,404 per person over five years. The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has insisted on spending these grants on basic services such as sanitation, drinking water, maintenance of community assets, etc. It also emphasises that Panchayats will have to prepare local plans to ensure that these basic services reach everyone, including the most marginalised sections of society.

### **Status of Decentralisation in Telangana State**

The issue of decentralisation in Telangana State must be discussed by taking inputs from its parent State i.e. united Andhra Pradesh (AP) since the young State has not yet made any legislation regarding PRIs. All the legal provisions of PRIs in the united AP are applied to Telangana State. Decentralisation experience in AP shows that though the State is one of the old States in creating PRIs, the service delivery assigned to them is negligible. All the tiers of panchayats have been assigned large numbers of functions. But none of them has financial or administrative resources under their control to execute the functions. The Madhava Reddy Committee Report on Local Bodies as part of the exercise of Vision 2020 plan in united AP, had envisaged the empowerment of local bodies to manage services and create mechanisms for local communities to articulate their demands.

In Telangana, out of the 29 subjects of PRIs, only 17 subjects have been transferred to PRIs by the State government (see Table 1). Out of that, six subjects (agriculture, drinking water supply, minor irrigation tanks, social forestry, primary and secondary education and khadi and village industries) are provided funds and only two subjects (drinking water supply and minor irrigation tanks) have functionaries. Still, there are many subjects along with either functions (12) or funds (23) or functionaries (27) yet to be transferred to PRIs in the State. This situation of united AP in 2003 has not yet changed in Telangana State even after its formation in 2014.

**Table 1: Status of Devolution of PRI's Powers in Telangana**

Subjects Devolved	Subjects to be Devolved
1. Social forestry and farm forestry	1. Poverty alleviation programmes
2. Market and fairs	2. Cultural activities
3. Agriculture and extension	3. Libraries
4. Land improvement and soil conservation	4. Minor forest produce
5. Minor irrigation and watershed management	5. Small scale industries- food processing
6. Animal husbandry and dairying, poultry and fodder	6. Khadi, village and cotton industries
7. Fisheries	7. Rural housing
8. Drinking water	8. Fuel
9. Education - primary and secondary	9. Technical training and vocational education
10. Adult and non-formal education	10. Rural electrification including distribution
11. Roads, culverts, bridges and ferries	11. Public distribution system
12. Health and sanitation	12. Maintenance of community assets
13. Family welfare	
14. Social welfare - PHC and MR	
15. Welfare of weaker sections - SC and STs	
16. Women and child welfare	
17. Non-conventional energy	

Source: M Gopinath Reddy (2003).

So far, the functions and responsibilities to the PRIs pertaining to agriculture extension are restricted to the selection of beneficiaries to various agricultural implements at the block/mandal level; no such funds are devolved at the GP level (Sitaram 2000). On similar lines, a large number of subjects mentioned in schedule I and three subjects under schedule II of the Act have not been devolved to the PRIs so far except some residuary powers. If transfer of functions followed by devolution of finance, as listed in schedule II, takes place in the form of real decentralisation, the entire picture of local bodies will undergo drastic changes (AP SFC Report 1997). This process of devolution has not been initiated in Telangana State.

The inadequate and unsound financial base has impaired the working of the local bodies. Any talk of the effectiveness of the local bodies in the absence of a strong financial base is of no use. Currently in Telangana, PRIs receive three kinds of revenues: (i) assigned revenues, (ii) grants-in aid, (iii) revenue sharing. GPs in the State have been assigned many local taxes, duties and fees and important of them are house tax, vehicles tax, land cess, surcharge on stamp duty, surcharge on seigniorage fees (fees on materials other than minerals and minor minerals quarried in the village). However, despite their larger tax base, GPs depend overwhelmingly on government grants - development and general grants from the State and union (Finance

Commissions and Backward Regional Grant Fund (BRGF)). Grants constitute more than half of the total income of the GPs in the State. The phenomenon of diversion of funds from Panchayats to other development organisations undermines the autonomy of the local bodies in the State (Gopinath Reddy, 2003). It was observed in the field survey that the present system of providing per capita grant is not of much help to the GPs with small population to take up any big multi-benefit infrastructure projects like a bridge, road, tank, etc., which may involve higher cost much above their per capita allocation.

In Telangana, unlike Mandal and Zilla Panchayats, Gram Panchayats (GPs) are under the control of the District Panchayat officer (DPO). The executive officer of the GP works under the extension officer (EO), Divisional Panchayat Officer and District Panchayat Officer, who are all answerable to the District Collector. Parallel bodies in the form of a number of community based organisations (CBOs) for managing various subjects like natural resource management (water users' associations, watershed committees, Vana Samrakshana Samities) and social sectors (school education committees, mothers' committees), etc., are hindering the functioning of GPs. There are two schools of thought prevalent today for and against panchayats and parallel bodies. Those, who are on the side of Panchayats, argue that benefits from user committees managed natural resource projects, such as forest, watershed management, are not sustainable in the long run. After the funds from the projects are extracted, committees are abandoned and the

livelihoods base of the poor remains more or less the same. Those who argue for management by CBOs, feel that multiplicity of committees are helpful for getting more benefits from the government. The villagers see this as an opportunity to ensure the development of their villages through involvement of a large number of government departments. The bureaucracy too favours these committees as it is able to have a greater say in the implementation of the programmes through these committees. The convergence of CBOs and PRIs needs to be given a serious thought. The various development departments need to be brought under the control of PRIs for enabling them to discharge functions enshrined in the 11th Schedule (29 items) as well as to become institutions of self-government. The ground reality existing in the Telangana State is that a majority of line departments in villages do not function under the control of GP but they run parallel with community participation undermining the constitutionally vested powers of GPs. A separate 'Panchayati Raj Cadre' has not been created. Further, the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), which commands sizeable resources, functions independently of PR bodies. Similarly, there are a few other State level development corporations like Scheduled Caste Corporation, Backward Caste Corporation, Women Development Corporation which work independently of PR bodies. Unless these bodies/agencies and their finances are brought under the GP's purview, it is difficult to call Gram Panchayat as an institution of self-government.

### Budget Allocation to Subjects of PRIs in Telangana

Table 2 provides information on budget allocation to subjects of PRIs in Telangana from 2014-15 to 2017-16. The information is available for 26 subjects which may broadly cover all the PRI subjects. It shall be mentioned that the rural-urban classification of the expenditure is not given in budget documents; however, we can consider these expenditures as more or less under rural since most of these items belong to rural areas. The data show that 49.6 per cent of total budget was allotted to PRI subjects in 2014-15 which has slightly increased to 52.5 per cent in 2016-17, later it declined to 48 per cent in 2017-18. The items of welfare of SC, ST & BCs, general education, rural development programmes, social security and welfare, agricultural development programmes, and medical and public health are the major expenditure heads.

The results show that in Telangana, though a major portion of budget expenditure (around 50 per cent) is made under the subjects of PRIs, they do not have any real say in spending the funds as most of the expenditure is rooted through line departments. The PRIs remain as spectators with no powers to spend the funds. Officially it was claimed that Grama Jyothi programme was carried out to involve people in budget preparation and to prioritise the budget allocation as per people's expectation and allocate the budget as per their demand. But the allocations under budgets since 2015-16 have not reflected any changes after introducing Grama Jyothi. The total allocations under the PRI subjects in the State budget always remain around 50 per cent of total expenditure in all the years. But the per capita budget allocation on these subjects has been significantly increasing from ₹ 20148 in 2015-16 to ₹ 28943 in 2017-18.

**Table 2: Budget Allocation for PRI Subjects in Telangana State (Rs Crore)**

S. No.	PRI Subject	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
1	General education	6602.7	(22.5)	9945.5	(21.9)	9538.1	(16.8)	11837.8	(17.7)
2	Medical & public health	1893.6	(6.5)	3184.1	(7.0)	4662.3	(8.2)	4247.9	(6.3)
3	Family welfare	665.4	(2.3)	574.7	(1.3)	1082.5	(1.9)	1921.3	(2.9)
4	Water supply and sanitation	955.4	(3.3)	2347.0	(5.2)	1817.4	(3.2)	1225.6	(1.8)
5	Housing	377.3	(1.3)	658.6	(1.5)	842.0	(1.5)	2790.6	(4.2)
6	Welfare of SC, ST & BCs	3365.1	(11.5)	4899.0	(10.8)	10489.0	(18.4)	13696.1	(20.5)
7	Social security and welfare	2576.6	(8.8)	5615.0	(12.4)	6024.7	(10.6)	6651.1	(9.9)

(Contd.....)



**Table 2 (Contd.....)**

8	Nutrition	1213.2	(4.1)	1682.1	(3.7)	3358.4	(5.9)	3920.0	(5.9)
9	Relief of natural calamities	480.7	(1.6)	748.1	(1.6)	289.8	(0.5)	359.7	(0.5)
10	Crop husbandry	788.9	(2.7)	1044.7	(2.3)	1761.6	(3.1)	1940.8	(2.9)
11	Soil and water conservation	124.7	(0.4)	54.6	(0.1)	81.6	(0.1)	289.3	(0.4)
12	Animal husbandry	251.7	(0.9)	407.4	(0.9)	472.8	(0.8)	447.8	(0.7)
13	Dairy development	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)
14	Fisheries	35.5	(0.1)	79.3	(0.2)	116.2	(0.2)	107.9	(0.2)
15	Forestry and wildlife	219.0	(0.7)	394.2	(0.9)	282.6	(0.5)	345.6	(0.5)
16	Other agricultural development Programmes	4162.8	(14.2)	4162.3	(9.2)	4458.8	(7.8)	4417.4	(6.6)
17	Programmes for rural development	3579.3	(12.2)	5085.0	(11.2)	6189.0	(10.9)	6892.0	(10.3)
18	Rural employment	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)
19	Land reforms	8.0	(0.0)	13.6	(0.0)	12.6	(0.0)	13.4	(0.0)
20	Minor irrigation	600.6	(2.0)	1366.3	(3.0)	1944.5	(3.4)	2318.7	(3.5)
21	Command area development	6.5	(0.0)	13.3	(0.0)	30.1	(0.1)	220.9	(0.3)
22	Flood control and drainage	20.0	(0.1)	65.8	(0.1)	249.0	(0.4)	103.6	(0.2)
23	Village and small industries	342.4	(1.2)	156.3	(0.3)	249.3	(0.4)	301.5	(0.5)
24	Roads and bridges	810.6	(2.8)	2665.4	(5.9)	2653.4	(4.7)	2645.0	(4.0)
25	Civil Supplies	119.4	(0.4)	89.2	(0.2)	102.3	(0.2)	170.6	(0.3)
26	Compensation and assignment to LBs and PRIs	111.6	(0.4)	139.6	(0.3)	164.4	(0.3)	45.4	(0.1)
27	Total Expenditure on PRI Subjects	29311.0	(100.0)	45391.1	(100.0)	56873.0	(100.0)	66909.9	(100.0)
28	Share of Expenditure on PRI Subjects in Total Budget Expenditure (%)	49.6		50.7		52.5		48.0	
28	Per Capita Budget allocation on PRI Subjects (₹)	<b>13380</b>		<b>20418</b>		<b>24921</b>		<b>28943</b>	

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage share in Total Expenditure on PRI Subjects. Figures are estimated for 2017-18, revised for 2016-17, and final for 2014-15 and 2015-16 financial years. The budget for 2014-15 financial year is for ten months (June to March). Per capita budget is calculated for rural population only.

Source: Various Annual Budget Documents, Government of Telangana.

### **Decentralised Planning under Grama Jyothi Programme in Telangana: Results Based on Field Survey**

Observations based on field survey are presented to get the ground level experience of functioning of PRIs especially GPs in the Telangana State in the context of Grama Jyothi programme that is aiming at people's involvement in the village planning.

**Basic Details of Field Survey Villages:** The basic information about population, elected representatives and entitlements help us understand the functioning of GP in the villages. This information for four survey villages is presented in the appendix tables A1 to A3. Gangadevipalli from Geesukonda Mandal of Warangal district, comprises a total population of 1084 with a majority (95.2 per cent) belonging to backward caste (BC) and rest to SCs, general and minorities. The female ratio is higher than the male (50.8 per cent). The Panchayat has relatively young but less educated elected representatives, with an average age of 41.8 years and average education of 5.4 years of schooling. Voters comprise 85 per cent of total population. There are 10 elected representatives in the gram panchayat with 80 per cent of female ratio; the president is a SC woman. Since the village got separate GP status in 1994, it started taking a different appreciable shape in its development. It is now fully green with the planted trees and clean with well maintained drainages. But it has its own underlying internal caste politics which are the result of single caste domination (Munnur Kapu) in majority positions in Gram Panchayat. The GP building is in good condition with two rooms.

Gangadevipalli is the award winning village at district, State and national levels including Nirmal Gram Puraskar (2007) and Bharat Ratna Rajeev Gandhi Award (2007) and Shubham Award by A.P State government (2008). The magnanimous achievements of the village include prohibition of liquor, full Mahila Gram Panchayat in administration, construction and proper use of toilets, purified drinking water for all and full literacy between 5 – 55 age group, etc. These achievements were possible through a simple concept of participatory and collective decision making and implementation of those decisions. The village committees have been formed on each subject such as drinking water management, mother and child welfare, loans recovery, education, health, prohibition of liquor, control of use of plastic, green and clean, women specific problems and welfare, youth, street lights, internal audit and co-ordination among all committees, etc. This kind of institutional development with effective people's participation in the village, helped in highest revenue collection rate (100 per cent) and relatively better participation in Grama Jyothi programme which can be observed in forthcoming discussion.

Incharla in Mulugu Mandal of Warangal district is a relatively under-developed village with a population of 2626 with a majority (76.3 per cent) BCs and rest SCs (15.2 per cent) and others (5.4 per cent). The female population ratio is 52 per cent. About 73 per cent of total population are voters. It has 12 elected representatives in the village Panchayat with a 58 per cent female ratio. The village president is BC female but the

de facto power lies with her husband. The elected representatives are relatively young (average 37 years age) and educated (average 8 years of schooling).

Hajipur from Manchiryal Mandal of Adilabad district is a relatively developed village in the district with a population of 4606 of which majority belong to SCs (45 per cent) followed by BCs (40 per cent), STs (9.5 per cent) and others (5 per cent). The female population ratio stands at 50 per cent. Around 72 per cent of the people are voters. There are 14 elected representatives who are young (average age of 34 years) and educated (average 6.5 years of schooling).

Pangidi from Sirpur (U) Mandal of Adilabad district is Tribal under-developed village with population of 4448 who are all Scheduled Tribes (STs) (99 per cent) with one per cent BCs. The female population ratio stands at 49 per cent. It has relatively smaller share of total population of voters at 59 per cent. There are 14 elected representatives who are relatively old (average age of 41.21 years) and less educated (average education of 4.14 years of schooling).

A majority of eligible households are Below Poverty Line (BPL) or white ration cardholders in all the villages. But majority of the households who are eligible for Annapurna or Antyodaya cards have not got it, except in Gangadevipalli where the situation is relatively better because of people's awareness. A majority of the households have not completed 100 days of work under MNREGP in all the villages except in tribal village –Pangidi. A significant proportion

of eligible persons have not got pensions like old age, widows and disabled in all the villages, though the condition is relatively better in Hajipur village than in the others. The percentage of houses not having toilets is found to be very high in Pangadi (97 per cent) which is a tribal backward village. The conditions are not better in Hajipur but slightly better in Incharla. The situation is found to be most comfortable in Gangadevipalli, the Nirmal Bharat Awarded village. Some people still live in huts in three villages barring Gangadevipalli and significant proportion of households do not have houses of their own.

**Functions and Functionaries at Gram Panchayat:**

Availability of functions/institutions and their functionaries/employees of various public services is important in a village. The village plan documents (Table 3) provide information on this matter. It can be inferred from the data that no single surveyed village has all kinds of functions with adequate functionaries. Compared to others, Incharla village has no important functions like Indira Kranthi Patham (Self-Help Groups), veterinary centre, library, water & sanitation committee. Compared to other three villages, Pangidi, despite having many functions, does not have functionaries to work. The issue of concern here is that although a majority of the important functions and functionaries are operating in the villages, they do not function in coordination with GP which is an elected local self-government body. The elected representatives - president and ward members, expressed their concern about the independent operation of many functions in the village that rarely work in the people's

interest. They demand coordination between all the functions & functionaries operating in the village and the elected body of GP for the effective delivery of services to the people. This would form a strong base for the devolution of functions & functionaries to PRIs in the new State.

**Table 3: Details of Functions and Functionaries at Gram Panchayat Level**

S.No.		Warangal		Adilabad	
		Gangadevipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi
Number of Functions/Institutions Operating at the GP Level					
1	Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) Centre	1	0	4	5
4	Veterinary Centre	1	0	2	1
5	Anganwadi (ICDS) Centre	1	3	8	1
6	High School	1	0	2	1
7	Primary School	1	2	6	18
8	Primary Health Centre	0	0	2	1
9	Health -Sub Centre	0	1	2	1
10	ASHA Aarogya Karta	0	0	5	9
10	Post Office	0	1	2	1
11	Bank	0	1	2	0
12	Library	1	0	0	0
13	NGO	1	0	0	0
14	Primary Cooperative Society	0	0	0	1
15	Water & Sanitation Committee	1	0	2	1
Number of Functionaries Operating at the GP Level					
1	Adarsha Rytu	1	2	0	1
2	Anganwadi Ayas	1	2	4	1
3	Anganwadi Teacher	1	3	4	1
4	ANM (Nurse)	1	1	2	0
5	ASHA Worker	1	3	4	1
6	MNREGS Field Assistant	1	2	1	1
7	Gopal Mitra	1	1	0	0
8	Electricity Helper	1	1	1	0
9	Linemen	2	1	1	0
10	Ration Dealer	1	1	2	0
11	Sakshara Bharat Coordinator	2	2	2	0
12	Village Revenue Assistant (VRA)	1	1	5	1
13	Village Revenue Officer (VRO)	0	1	1	1
14	School Teachers	10	4		0
15	Sarvashiksha Abhiyan Coordinator	0	0	1	0
16	Kamata	0	0	3	1
17	Karobar	0	0	1	1
18	Pump Operator	0	0	3	1

Source: Village plan document under Grama Jyothi, 2014.

**Revenue and Expenditure of Gram Panchayats:**

Sufficient revenue is important for the GP to meet its expenditure under various subjects. Tables 4&5 provide information on revenue at GP level. The per capita revenue in terms of both potential/demand and actually collected varies across the villages. It is positively related with the level of development where it is highest in institutionally developed village (Gangadevipalli) and lowest in most backward village (Pangidi). The revenue collection rate also exhibits the trend of development where it is hundred per cent in institutionally developed village (Gangadevipalli) and very low in backward village (Pangidi -53.8 per cent). Poor revenue collection rates are reported only in case of collection of local taxes or fees or duties but not in case of grants-in-aid from union or State governments except in case of backward tribal village – Pangidi - where it is opposite because very less proportion of the Backward Regional Grant Fund (BRGF) has been collected. Among non-grant revenue, the property tax with high per capita base (₹ 105) is the major source in Gangadevipalli. But professional tax and water tap fee are the relatively major sources with very low per capita base in Incharla. In Hajipur, the property tax with lower per capita base and license fee are the major sources. It is only the signiorage fee on lime stone, the single revenue collection in the backward tribal village - Pangidi. The above analysis indicates that the inter- village disparities in per capita revenue in the surveyed villages could be attributed to the level of institutional development, effective leadership and active people's participation that in turn affect the

revenue collection rate both from grant and non-grant sources.

Table 6 provides information on expenditure on various sub-heads in the study villages. The per capita expenditure is reported relatively high in Gangadevipalli (₹ 416) but very low in other three villages – Incharla (₹ 77), Hajipur (₹ 114) and Pangidi (₹ 107). It is interesting to see from the results of expenditure-revenue ratio that the final expenditure is more than the revenue collected in most institutional developed (Gangadevipalli – 152.2 per cent) which was due to financial support from NGOs whose presence and support is for quite a long period. The expenditure in lower base is slightly higher than the collected revenue in backward village (Pangidi –109.2 per cent). The other two villages failed to spend even the total revenue collected. There are wide inter-village differences in the sub-heads of expenditure. In Gangadevipalli, the highest expenditure is made on electricity charges on water supply, street lighting and GP office but this is very low in remaining three villages indicating their lack of resources for spending on basic civic needs. Relatively major expenditures in other villages are - sanitation and building maintenance in Incharla; sanitation, establishment and drainage maintenance in Hajipur; and interestingly electricity charge on street lights and sanitation in Pangidi – the backward tribal village. This expenditure pattern reflects the development nature of villages, where institutionally advanced village like Gangadevipalli, spends on advanced services like electricity charges on water, street lights, etc., with

decent spending on other basic needs like maintenance of buildings, establishments, drainage, sanitation where the backward villages struggle to spend on these items. The inter-village differences in per capita expenditure and also in sub-items of expenditure are due to multiple factors such as level of development, local institutional development led by people's participation, leadership, tax collection rates, etc.

The very low levels of per capita revenue and expenditures in GPs undermine their functioning. Discussion with elected representatives of the GP in the field survey revealed that many of the expenditures, especially on land distribution & development, agriculture, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, self and wage employment promotion, health, education, housing, infrastructure development like roads, electricity, etc., are routed through other parallel institutions, not through the GPs.

**Table 4: Details of Revenue (Potential and Actual) in Gram Panchayats (₹ ,000s)**

S. No. Revenue Item	Total Revenue Potential/Demand						Actual Revenue Collected							
	Warangal			Adilabad			Warangal			Adilabad				
	Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi	Hajipur	Pangidi	Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi	Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi
1	Property tax	113.5	91.5	285.0	0.0	0.0	113.5	26.5	138.4	0.0				
2	Building permission fees	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.4	0.0				
3	Certificates issue fees	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0				
4	Lighting Tax	22.7	28.6	1.0	4.3	0.0	22.7	6.1	0.3	0.6				
5	Professional Tax	0.0	38.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.7	0.0	0.0				
6	Drainage Tax	11.3	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.3	2.7	0.0	0.0				
7	Library cess	9.1	11.4	3.3	8.0	0.0	9.1	2.9	3.2	3.2				
8	Water tap Fee	0.0	131.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.3	0.0	0.0				
9	Auctions	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0				
10	Cattle Pond Fee	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0				
11	Water Tax	0.0	28.6	38.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	6.1	20.9	0.6				
12	License Fee	1.6	0.0	11.3	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	11.3	0.0				
13	Surcharge on stamp duty	0.0	0.0	130.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	128.3	0.0				
14	Seigniorage fee	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0				
I	Total Revenue from Tax, Fees and Duties or Own Revenue (Sum of S.No. 1 to 14)	160.9	345.2	528.5	216.6	0.0	160.9	120.8	329.8	204.4				
15	SFC Funds	18.9	46.0	26.4	0.0	0.0	18.9	46.0	26.4	0.0				
							(100.0)	(35.0)	(62.4)	(94.4)				

(Contd.....)

Table 4 (Contd.....)

16	13th Finance Funds	83.2	80.1	235.6	200.0	83.2	80.1	235.6	200.0
17	BRGF	28.0	138.7	173.3	394.9	28.0	138.7	173.3	32.0
18	Per capita Grants	0.0	9.1	37.9	0.0	0.0	9.1	30.0	0.0
II	Revenue from Grant in aid (Sum of S.No. 15 to 18)	130.1	273.8	473.2	594.9	130.1 (100.0)	273.8 (100.0)	465.3 (98.3)	232.0 (39.0)
III	Total Revenue (I+II)	290.9	619.1	1001.7	811.5	290.9 (100.0)	394.6 (63.7)	795.0 (79.4)	436.4 (53.8)
20	Per Capita Revenue (₹)	268	234	218	182	268	149	172	98

Note: Figures in parentheses are revenue collection rate (ratio of actual revenue to potential revenue).  
Source: Calculated from Village plan documents under Grama Jyothi, 2014.



**Table 5: Details of Per Capita Revenue Collection in Gram Panchayats**

S. No.	Revenue Item	Warangal		Adilabad	
		Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi
1	Property tax	105	10	30	0
2	Building permission fees	0	0	3	0
3	Certificates issue fees	3	0	0	0
4	Lighting Tax	21	2	0	0
5	Professional Tax	0	15	0	0
6	Drainage Tax	10	1	0	0
7	Library cess	8	1	1	1
8	Water tap Fee	0	14	0	0
9	Auctions	0	0	3	0
10	Cattle Pond Fee	0	0	0	0
11	Water Tax	0	2	5	0
12	License Fee	1	0	2	0
13	Surcharge on stamp duty	0	0	28	0
14	Seigniorage fee	0	0	0	45
I	Total Revenue from Tax, Fees and Duties or Own Revenue (Sum of S.No. 1 to 14)	148 (55.3)*	46 (30.6)	72 (41.5)	46 (46.8)
15	SFC Funds	17	17	6	0
16	13th Finance Funds	77	30	51	45
17	BRGF	26	52	38	7
18	Per capita Grants	0	3	7	0
II	Revenue from Grant in aid (Sum of S.No. 15 to 18)	120 (44.7)**	103 (69.4)	101 (58.5)	52 (53.2)
III	Total Revenue (I+II)	268	149	173	98

Note: \* Ratio of per capita own revenue to per capita total revenue and \*\* Ratio of per capita grant-in-aid to per capita total revenue.

Source : Calculated from Village plan documents under Grama Jyothi, 2014.

**Table 6: Expenditure Details of Gram Panchayats**

S.No.	Revenue Item	Warangal			Adilabad			Per Capita Expenditure (₹)		
		Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi	Ganga-devipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi	Adilabad
1	Electricity for street lighting	59.5	41.5	16.3	300.2	55	16	4	67	
2	Electricity for water supply	130.2	14.9	74.7	10.0	120	6	16	2	
5	Electricity for GP office	59.5	0.0	0.0	5.2	55	0	0	1	
6	Maintenance of street lighting	44.6	0.0	0.0	20.0	41	0	0	4	
3	Sanitation	23.9	59.9	42.3	100.2	22	23	9	23	
4	Establishment	54.1	80.0	224.1	29.9	50	30	49	7	
7	Maintenance of buildings	63.5	0.0	48.4	0.0	59	0	11	0	
8	Maintenance of drainage	0.0	0.0	103.1	0.0	0	0	22	0	
9	Other expenditure	15.8	7.5	17.4	10.0	15	3	4	2	
10	Total Expenditure	450.6	203.6 (155.2)***	526.1 (51.7)	475.0 (66.3)	416 (109.2)	77	114	107	

Note: \*\*\* Ratio of total expenditure to total revenue at villages.  
Source : Calculated from Village plan documents under Grama Jyothi, 2014.

### **Implementation of Grama Jyothi in Surveyed Villages**

The Grama Jyothi programme was aimed at preparation of village plans by the GP through Gram Sabha with people's participation. All the PRIs at three levels –Village, Mandal and District Panchayats - are mandated to prepare plans with the people's participation in a month time prior to presentation of State level budget. The State level budget allocations will be made according to the plans prepared by the PRIs. The village level plans are to be made through Gram Sabha according to the local resources and needs with people's participation across all the sections. The success of implementation of Grama Jyothi programme was evaluated through the field survey based on the parameters like people's participation rate, quality of plans –the issues of prioritisation in plans, resources, people's perception about PRIs especially GP, etc.

The observations from field survey revealed that the people's participation rates in the Gram Sabha to prepare the village plans are dismal in all the four villages even in the institutionally developed village – Gangadevipalli (20 per cent). It is even less than quorum (10 per cent) in backward villages – Incharla and Pangidi. Women's participation is low in all the villages except in Gangadevipalli where it stood at 55 per cent (Table 7). Despite huge awareness campaign at the State levels, there was no such effort at community, personal and door to door campaign at the GP level.

Inputs from Focus Group Discussions and personal interviews from general public revealed

that though a majority of the people know about the Gram Sabha being organised, they are not fully aware about the Grama Jyothi programme and its importance. The people who do know about the programme have not shown any interest to participate because of internal political rivalry, like the people from opposition party (who lost the Panchayat's President Election) did not show interest to participate, caste politics in a way that the other caste people who are not in power did not show interest. Many farmers and agricultural labour could not participate as this programme was organised in peak agricultural season (August-September). People from habitat villages could not turn out to this programme as the Gram Sabha venue is away from their hamlet. Women did not show interest because of the feeling of suppression of their voice in the official meetings. Many individuals in the surveyed villages opined that there is no use of attending these meetings as they are all routine official programmes and their voice will not be heard by the leaders and officials. On top of all these reasons, the most important one for the low participation is lack of faith and hope in functioning capacity of Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat in solving their livelihood related problems since GP is toothless in terms of function, funds and functionaries.

Officially the Grama Jyothi programme schedule is designed to prepare the village plan on the subjects such as natural resources, agricultural land, basic infrastructure, welfare development, health, education and *Harithaharam* (green cover). It was noticed in the field survey that the only issues relating to

**Table 7: Percentage of People's Participation in Grama Jyothi Programme**

Village	Total Population	Women (share from total people participated)
Gangadevipalli	20	55
Incharla	8	15
Hajipur	15	15
Pangidi	7	10

Source: Field survey.

physical infrastructure like CC roads, drainage, building repair were figured in Grama Jyothi village plans. Other important issues like employment & livelihood, health, education and welfare were totally neglected. The plans were made only for issues like irrigation, tank repair, CC and BT roads in Gangadevipalli; CC roads, mineral water plant, underground and side drainages in Incharla; CC roads, side drainage, repair of buildings at school, Gram Panchayat and ICDS and veterinary hospital, and burial ground in Hajipur; and CC roads, bore well, overhead tank and pipeline for drinking water, drainage and community hall in Pangidi village.

Implementation of the Grama Jyothi programme has serious drawbacks in terms of sufficient time, resources –human, financial and logistics. Only one month time is given for all the three-tier PRIs (Village, Mandal and District) in the State to finalise the plans and it is only about ten days for the village plans. It was revealed in the personal interview with the officials that the time was too short for them especially for Mandal level officials who are supposed to attend the Gram Sabha of each village in Mandal. The financial resources were meagre and delayed in payment

to organise the Gram Sabha to make the plans. The logistics like tent, chairs, tables, vehicles to transport people from habitat villages to attend Gram Sabha were absent in backward villages.

It is understood from the above discussion that the low level of people's participation and weak planning under Grama Jyothi is emanated from the view that people do not have any faith and hope on functioning capacity of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats. This view is true because in Telangana, the PRIs especially Gram Panchayat are suffering from many problems such as lack of devolution of all the constitutional subjects to PRIs; no direct control over many village level functionaries like village revenue officials (VRO & VRA), ration dealer, school teachers, medical doctor, veterinary doctor, agriculture extension staff, Adarsa Rytu, Gopala Mitra, ASHA worker, Anganwadi, MGNREG field assistant, electricity helper, etc; limited taxation sources and powers for GPs, resultantly they have to depend (wait long) on State and Central governments for funds; no autonomy to GPs in spending the grants from BRGF and Finance Commissions (State and Union). Because of all these problems, PRIs cannot really enjoy autonomy in their functioning and

hence people still do not have any great faith and hope on them especially Gram Panchayats in carrying out the bottom-up and people's participatory programmes like Grama Jyothi.

### **Conclusion and Policy Suggestions**

Democratic, participative and inclusive institutions are stepping-stones for inclusive growth and development of a society. Panchayati Raj Act 1993 was aimed at realising this condition. The initiative of Telangana State for people's participatory planning through Grama Jyothi programme, aims at realising participatory and inclusive development. This paper studied the status of decentralisation and budget allocations for PRIs and evaluated the implementation of Grama Jyothi programme for people's participatory planning in selected villages in Telangana State.

The study found that in Telangana, the PRI, especially Gram Panchayats, are suffering from many problems such as lack of devolution of the constitutional subjects (29) to PRIs; So far, only 17 subjects have been transferred – out of which six are with funds and two are with functionaries. Despite major State budget allocation (around 50 of total expenditure and per capita budget is around ₹ 25000) made on 26 PRI subjects, most of its spending is made through other departments or parallel bodies but not through the elected GPs. Introduction of Grama Jyothi has not made any improvement in budget allocation on PRI's subjects either in share of total allocations or in proportional shares of each subject.

It was also found through village level plans made under Grama Jyothi programme that both the per capita revenue and expenditures remain at lower base at the surveyed GPs in the State and they are positively related with the level of development of the village –relatively high in institutionally developed villages and less in backward villages. Unlike in revenue from grant-in-aid, wide inter-village variations are found in case of own revenue – taxes, fees and duties at village, mainly because of differences in revenue collection rates where it is high in institutionally developed village but very low in backward village. The inter-village disparities in per capita revenue and expenditure and also in their sub-components in the surveyed villages could be attributed to the level of institutional development, effective leadership and active people's participation. Limited taxation powers for GPs creating dependence on funds from the State and Central governments and there is no autonomy to GPs in spending the grants from BRGF and Finance Commissions (State and Centre).

People's participation in Grama Jyothi programme in the surveyed villages was not encouraging even in institutionally developed villages because of multiple reasons like lack of awareness, agricultural works, political rivalry, caste politics, reluctance of officials and leaders in listening to the people's problems, lack of faith and hope on functioning capacity of Gram Panchayat in solving the livelihood related problem since they are toothless in terms of funds, functions and functionaries. Gram Panchayat in

the State has no direct control over many village level functionaries like revenue officials (VRO & VRA), ration dealer, school teachers, medical doctor, veterinary doctor, agriculture extension staff, Adarsa Rytu, Gopala Mitra, ASHA worker, Anganwadi, MGNREG field assistant, electricity helper, etc. The planning under the Grama Jyothi in all the villages was made mostly on physical infrastructure projects like CC roads, drainage, building repair, etc., but not on other important issues like employment & livelihood, health, education and welfare, etc. Because of these problems, the implementation of bottom-up and people's participatory programmes like Grama Jyothi was not quite successful in the surveyed villages in Telangana even in famously institutionally developed village like Gangadevipalli.

Therefore, based on the above results it can be concluded that as long as there are no de-facto deliverable institutions at village level with devolution of all functions and sufficient funds and functionaries, Mahatma Gandhi's optimism about village republic will be unrealised and Ambedkar's pessimism will stay real. If inclusive growth through decentralised planning is to be realised, the State government shall first have to devolve all the constitutionally recognised functions with sufficient funds and functionaries to PRIs and bring all the functionaries at the village level under the Gram Panchayat. This would create greater faith & hope and participation by the people in local governments and make a success of initiatives like Grama Jyothi for people's participatory planning and inclusive development in the State.

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**Appendix**

**Table A1: Population Composition in Study Villages**

S.No.	Population	Warangal		Adilabad	
		Gangadevipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi
1	Total HH	413	688	1222	1002
2	Total Population	1084	2646	4606	4448
3	SC (%)	3.7	15.2	44.90	0.00
4	ST (%)	0.0	1.6	9.49	100.00
5	BC (%)	95.2	76.3	40.03	0.00
6	Minority (%)	0.4	1.6	1.13	0.00
7	Others (%)	0.7	5.4	4.45	0.00
8	Female (%)	50.8	52.0	49.96	48.79
9	Voters (%)	85.0	72.4	72.25	58.86

Source: Village plan document under Grama Jyothi, 2014.

**Table A2: Social Composition of Elected Representation at Gram Panchayat Level**

Social groups	Gangadevipalli			Incharla			Hajipur			Pangidi		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
SC	0	1	1	0	2	2	4	2	6	0	0	0
ST	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	6	7	13
BC	2	6	8	4	5	9	2	4	6	0	1	1
Others	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	8	10	5	7	12	6	8	14	6	8	14
Female Ratio	0.8			0.58			0.57			0.57		
Average age (years)	41.8			37.7			34.1			41.2		
Average education (years)	5.4			7.8			6.6			4.1		

Source: Same as in Table A1.



**Table A3: Details of Entitlement of Basic Needs**

S.No.		Gangadevipalli	Incharla	Hajipur	Pangidi
Ration Cards					
1	% of Eligible HHs not having White cards	9.0	15	4	9
2	% of Eligible HHs not having Pink cards	0.0	0.0	32.0	0.00
3	% of Eligible HHs not having Annapurna cards	0.0	83.0	93.0	95.0
4	% of Eligible HHs not having Antyodaya cards	77.0	76.0	51.0	13.0
MNREGS					
1	% of HH with MNREGS card	76.3	100	74.2	100
2	% of HH completed 100 days work	0.6	3.6	1.0	100
Percentage of eligible people not getting Pensions					
1	Old Age Pension (above 65 years)	32.9	25.6	10.8	31.1
2	Widows	49.4	22.8	20.9	41.7
3	Disabled	20	42.8	23.3	41.7
4	Weavers	73	45.9	N.A	N.A
Toilet					
1	% of Hhs not having toilets	0	10.7	39.48	97.0
Housing					
1	No. of HHs living in Huts	0.0	7.4	3.3	5.0

Source: Same as in Table A1.