

**Working Paper 243**

**Globalisation, Democratic  
Decentralisation and  
Social Security in India**

*S N Sangita  
T K Jyothi*

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# GLOBALISATION, DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA

S N Sangita\* and T K Jyothi\*\*

## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the role of democratic decentralisation in promoting inclusive governance (responsive, efficient equitable) and social security in the context of globalisation. Firstly, the paper argues that democratic decentralisation can empower the disadvantaged, particularly in rural areas, to protect their interests from the negative implications of globalisation. Secondly, democratic decentralisation can also facilitate efficient and equitable delivery of various services meant for the disadvantaged in the context of globalisation.*

## **SECTION-I**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The development policies and the development process in many countries, including India, are influenced by globalisation. Globalisation is not only a movement of ideas, information, capital, people, technologies, goods and services and labour across the nation-states; it also includes the serious impact it has on the social, economic and political spheres of life. Now global economic integration is presented as the best, the natural and universal path towards growth and development. This can be achieved by the application of the neo-classical free market principle as well as the liberal political philosophy. In this the role of the market (rather than the state) has to be increased through liberalisation of trade, finance and investment. Along with this, political liberalisation (participatory democracy, political economic and cultural rights and good governance) has also been advocated for developing countries to protect the rights of the people.

India globalised its economy with the liberalisation of trade and investment in the 1990s. Foreign capital and trade increased many times over. Disinvestment took place in a big way in the public sector. Unlike in other developing countries, many initiatives were taken in India to counter the negative implications of globalisation and protect the rights and livelihood of the disadvantaged, particularly in the rural and backward regions. The plan allocation for social security, health and education among others, has increased since the era of liberalisation in the early 1990s. Programmes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (NREGS), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), universalisation of education (Sarvashiksha Abhyan), national drinking water and sanitation and slum improvement schemes under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM) were initiated. The Eleventh Plan aims to promote inclusive growth, revive dynamism in agriculture, build necessary infrastructure in rural areas and expand access to health and education. Along with this the three-tier structure of local self government at the district, taluk, and village level has come into

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\* Professor, Centre for Political Institutions, Governance and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore 560 072.

\*\* Research Officer, Centre for Political Institutions, Governance and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore 560 072.

existence through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment in the late 1990s to empower the rural people, particularly the disadvantaged, to protect and promote their rights, interests and needs. Even the Right to Information Act came into existence in 1996 to empower the people and bring transparency in governance.

This paper examines the role of decentralised governance in promoting inclusive governance (responsive, efficient equitable) and social security in the context of globalisation. The second section discusses the implication of globalisation on local state, society and economy, particularly on disadvantaged groups and regions. The third section deals with the empowerment and capacity of the people, through decentralisation, to raise their voices and preferences for their welfare. The fourth section deals with the provision of services through decentralised governance in an efficient and equitable manner to the satisfaction of the needy. The fifth section focuses on the enabling conditions for the success of democratic decentralisation for promoting inclusive governance. The last section concludes with the policy implications.

## **SECTION-II**

### **2.1. Globalisation, Decentralisation and Inclusive Governance: Framework**

'Globalisation' means integration of economies and societies through cross-country flow of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services, capital, finance and people. Globalisation is the "inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before - in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach round the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before." Anthony Giddens (1990) describes globalisation as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'. Globalisation is 'accelerating interdependence' and time-space compression (Harvey 1990). Globalisation means no world state or, to be more precise, world society without a world state and without world government (Giddens 1990).

Many expressed concern about the consequences of global change for the well-being of various groups, the sovereignty and identity of countries, the disparities among peoples and the health of the environment (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Mittelman 1996). According to Srinivasan (2003) globalisation improves people's lives by making new products and ideas universally available, breaking down barriers to trade and democratic institutions, resolving tensions between old adversaries and empowering more and more people (Mickelthwait; Wooldridge 2000).

Globalisation provides opportunities for development. It is a positive force for sustainable development (Barro 1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil 1992; Sachs and Warner 1995). Per capita income in Africa had grown by about 0.8 per cent per year over the last 20 years after it opened up to the global economy (Atardi and Martin 2003).

Globalisation has been linked with increased income and inequality among the people and regions. It helps dominant states and multinational companies to pursue material interests by exploiting new technologies to shape a world in which they can flourish according to their own rules. Globalisation

leads to unsustainable consumerism, deforestation, loss of plant cover and water pollution. Globalisation allows developed countries to export their “dirty” industries to the developing world. Trade is the major source of the invasive species being introduced into local environments.

Globalisation widens the gap between the rich and poor and increases inequalities and debt in developing countries (Atardi and Martin, 2003). The World Commission report found unequal distribution of growth and disparity across the nations and increasing unemployment and poverty. According to the report, the per capita income of the 20 richest capitalist countries went up to 121 times during 1985-2001. In 16 countries inequality was static and only in case of nine countries inequality had declined. The Human Development and ILO studies found increase in unemployment.

Poverty and inequality have increased post globalisation in many developing countries. Inequality and poverty increased in many Latin American and African countries, while China and some South Asian countries improved their economic growth and social development.

Globalisation constrains the authority and autonomy of the state. Free trade limits the ability of states to implement policies to protect domestic companies. Capital mobility makes generous welfare states less competitive. Global problems are beyond the scope of the individual state and global norms and institutions become more powerful. Globalisation leads to cultural homogeneity by diminishing differences and global norms, ideas and practices override local mores. Many cultural flows, such as the provision of news, reflect exclusively western interests and control. The cultural imperialism of the United States has led to the global spread of popular American symbols and culture (Schiller 1969; Hamelink 1994).

## **2.2. Decentralisation and Inclusive Governance**

Decentralised governance can contain the negative implications of globalisation on polity economy and society to some extent. Globalisation removes decision-making from the local and national stage to the global sphere of multi-national or non-national interests. Decentralisation on the other hand brings decision-making back to the sub-national and local levels. Devolution of powers strengthens democracy and enhances the legitimacy of the political system. It facilitates people’s participation in decision-making and reflects their needs and preferences. It promotes representative and responsible grassroots level leadership. It generates incentives for people to own the local government with newly assigned responsibilities and resources relevant to them. Decentralised governance makes it easier for the citizen to hold the government accountable through voter information, participation and monitoring. It promotes legitimacy, transparency and accountability. Devolution of powers, responsibilities and resources to local government facilitate better service delivery.

Democratic decentralisation tends, strongly, to enhance speed, quantity and quality of responses from government institutions. Local governments have both authority and resources to respond quickly to problems and pressures from citizens without waiting for approval from higher levels. It helps to mobilise both human and financial resources as well as to contain corruption and ensure accountability. Decentralised governments have more and better information regarding their constituents and are able to enforce and coordinate policies and programmes more efficiently (Bardhan

1996). Thus, decentralisation promotes expected improvement in allocative efficiency, welfare and equity through increased participation, transparency, empowerment, responsiveness and accountability.

Economists tend to frame their analysis in terms of costs and benefits of decentralisation while other social scientists and practitioners are generally concerned with the processes and democratic aspects of the processes (Blair 2000 cited in Mark Robinson, 2007). This paper deals with the expected results of democratic decentralisation in the context of globalisation - the processes and outcomes. The processes ensure empowerment and autonomy of the local people and governments in influencing the policies benefiting the people and bring political stability and social harmony. The second dimension is provision of various public services to the people efficiently and equitably. The provision of affordable, accessible and appropriate services to all categories of a population in equal measures is not only a universal standard (efficiency) but a social justice perspective on provision of privileges directly to economically and socially marginalised groups. Democratic decentralisation does not affect the outcome – provision of service in terms of quantity, quality or equity - directly but through its process variables like participation, empowerment, responsiveness and accountability.

### **2.3. Democratic Decentralisation in India**

India is one of the few developing countries that have been experimenting with the democratic decentralisation to promote development since independence. A major initiative was launched with the introduction of the three-tier structure of local self-government known as the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) at the district, taluk and village level in the late 1950s. The third tier of government (along with the central and state governments) for rural and urban areas with independent powers and resources was constituted in the 2000s with the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution of India.

After the constitutional amendment, the PRIs emerged as units of local self-governments for promoting development programmes. The PRIs enjoy political, administrative and financial autonomy in many respects. All major responsibilities along with resources (central and State plan schemes and other resources) rest with the PRIs. Many centrally sponsored programmes have been transferred to PRIs in many states. All 29 functions as mentioned in schedule and resources have been transferred to the PRIs (assigns 30 specific subjects to VPs, 28 to TPs and 28 ZPs in Karnataka). The PRIs can prepare plans for agriculture, animal husbandry, primary and secondary education, public health, rural roads and housing, women and children, social welfare, public distribution, public libraries and so on. The GPs can undertake regulatory functions such as issue of licenses, approval of building plans, and maintenance of common properties, assets and buildings. They can provide basic services such as drinking water and sanitation and maintain village roads, buildings and streetlights. The elected heads of the PRIs are entrusted with executive powers and control over officials. The State Election Commission is entrusted with the responsibility of holding free and fair elections to PRIs. The State Finance Commissions are constituted to devolve financial resources to the PRIs.

## SECTION-III

### 3.1. Democratic Decentralisation and Empowerment

Democratic decentralisation empowers the people to articulate interests and improve livelihood. People are also mobilised through other democratic movements (civil society/political parties) to counter the negative implications of globalisation. Democratic decentralisation makes participation easier and makes empowerment more feasible at the local level than at the national level, especially for minorities and vulnerable groups. Firstly, democratic decentralisation enables the people to participate in the country's governance. The establishment of small and decentralised governance structures/units like the VPs ensures proximity to the people (6,000 and 400 population for GP and ward, respectively) and regular elections motivates people to participate in the election of responsible leaders and selection of relevant development policies (responsiveness). The high turnout in PR election reflects this trend<sup>i</sup>.

Secondly, the mobilisation of people through elections (contesting, campaigning, and voting and so on) brings awareness among the rural people about their rights and entitlements. Elections also bring information about the leaders and political parties and their programmes and policies. Even the Grama Sabha (Village Assembly) and Ward Committee meetings make the people aware of the relevant schemes and resources available with the PRIs to take correct decisions. As a result, the poor people's dependence on the rural rich has come down. This is evident from the people's assertion and articulation in defeating the sitting members and incumbent regimes in PR elections. Even the poor can now raise their voice if their needs are not fulfilled and wrongdoings of the PRIs.

Thirdly, decentralisation has also opened a wider political arena for the disadvantaged to take up leadership positions in the PRIs. Reservation enables disadvantaged groups to occupy seats of power. For instance around 36-38 per cent of women, 17-20 per cent SC, and 7-11 per cent ST got elected to the VP, TP and ZP accounting 27,31,199<sup>ii</sup>.

This representation has helped the disadvantaged to improve their administrative skills and articulate in local governance. For instance, women's association with PRIs has brought transformation in terms of empowerment, confidence and political awareness. Some studies have revealed that the women who reluctantly entered into politics showed great maturity in outlook, enthusiasm in strengthening their political consciousness and fine-tuning their perception of their role and responsibility. Most of the women who were elected for the first time without political experience started asserting control over resources and officials and challenging male authority and supremacy. Initially many of the women who were first-timers and illiterate depended upon their menfolk (husbands and other male representatives) to conduct the panchayat activities and to shield them from the PR officials. Gradually, they become independent and exercised control over the officials. This has also resulted in a positive change in the power equation between husband and wife.

Besides, the women from the lower caste take much interest in the PRIs than their counterparts from the higher castes. Studies have found that the participation of the weaker sections (SC/ST, women) in meetings and in decision-making is quite satisfactory (Litvack et al. 1998; Klitgaard 1988). It was reported that about 80-90 per cent of women, particularly from the lower income group, attend the PRIs meeting regularly. Women are responsible for changing the work culture in PRIs and in articulating issues related to women. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001) found that the women leaders of

village councils concentrate more on developing infrastructure that is relevant to the needs of the rural women (drinking water, fuel and roads). The power of the weaker sections over resources has increased through the PRIs.

Studies have also pointed out that reservation has improved the perception levels of women and has created an urge in them to participate in the governance. Twenty-five per cent of the women members found visible change in their status within the family after they had been elected. About 60 per cent of women said that they would encourage women to contest election. About 60 per cent is contemplating to contest the forthcoming elections (PRIA, 2000). In the all-women GP of Mydolalu in Karnataka it was found that the women fared better than men in implementing development programmes. Interestingly, all the women in this GP had been elected for the first time and had no previous experience. Similar observations were recorded regarding other disadvantaged groups such as the SC/ST/OBCs.

### **3.2. Village Panchayats Voices Against Mega Projects**

Many VPs have protested against multinational companies (MNCs) and mega projects that have come up as a result of globalisation. For instance, the Plachimad VP in Kerala voiced concern over Coco Cola for exploiting ground water. Even some VPs opposed the acquisition of land for the Special Economic Zones (SEZ). Similarly many VPs in Goa have raised their voice against mega projects. The GSs have passed resolutions for cancellations of licences for housing projects obtained by fraudulent means. Expert committees were appointed to scrutinise the licences given to the builders. Even demands were made for investigation by the Vigilance Commission in the dealings with the builders. The VPs have also gone to court for cancellations of mining permits and have also succeeded in securing compensation for the loss of agricultural crops from the mining companies<sup>iii</sup>.

### **3.3. Democratic (People/Civil Society) Movements**

Many civil society movements have come into existence to take up issues relating to plight of the poor and the environment in the context of globalisation. The people have rallied against the SEZs over acquisition of land and compensation to the farmers. For instance, Singur, Nandigram, Narmada and many other movements can be mentioned in this regard. Farmers in Maharashtra voted against the acquiring of land for SEZ by Reliance. Similarly the farmers in Singur and Nandhigram in West Bengal stalled the Tata's small car project and SEZ, respectively. In Andhra Pradesh the notification of acquiring land for the Coastal Corridor in between Kakinada and Vishakapattanam was cancelled after a movement was launched by the opposition parties. As a result, a new rehabilitation package to protect the interests of the farmers came into existence.

Apart from this, political parties are also mobilising people against the negative implication of globalisation. Competitive politics compelled the political parties to promote welfare schemes in the government's plans, budgets, programmes and election manifestos as well. In recent times, both DMK and AIDMK in Tamil Nadu and Congress and Telugu Desam parties in Andhra Pradesh announced popular schemes like waiver of loans and free electricity for farmers, Rs 2 per kg of rice, houses, pension, health care and insurance to win the elections. For instance, the Congress party under Ms

Sonia Gandhi introduced popular schemes like the NREGS, NRHM, and so on, to promote inclusive growth. Political parties are going slowly in the introduction of economic reforms (labour laws, FD in banking and insurance sector, disinvestment in PSUs and so on) due to fear of losing the people's support. Reform regimes under Vajpayee at the centre and Chandra Babu Naidu, S M Krishna and Digvijay Singh at the state levels faced defeat in the 2004 elections.

## **SECTION-IV**

### **4.1. Decentralisation and Service Delivery (Allocative Efficiency)**

Democratic decentralisation not only generates allocative and productive efficiency but also accelerates service delivery. Allocative efficiency is high in decentralised governance rather than the government at a higher level. It facilitates a perfect match between resources and needs. Local information and needs can be ascertained by local governments more accurately and thereby identify projects/schemes that have maximum utility or welfare gain. Selection/location of projects/members is very effective, whenever the local people participate in the process. The involvement of the GS has brought down the selection of wrong places and persons. This is more so where needs are more diversified. For instance some village needs water facility rather than road. In such situation the utilisation of the former is more than the latter, which is provided by the government at a higher level through uniform policies and guidelines. Many centrally sponsored rural development programmes in the past have failed due to wrong priorities, design and location. Infrastructure facilities like roads, school buildings, hospitals, water and field channels have not been used because they have not been strategically located to suit the needs of people. Similarly, many hand pumps are out of order because the people did not feel the pride of ownership. Ultimately maintenance and sustenance of such projects and schemes under decentralised governance was very high (Sangita, 2002). It was found that many assets created under various central schemes were under-utilised.

### **4.2. Decentralisation and Service Delivery (Productive Efficiency)**

Productive efficiency is also high in decentralised governance due to people's participation in the implementation and monitoring of the development programmes. Firstly, people's involvement in the formulation and implementation of development programmes results in reduction in transactional cost (such as administrative costs, salaries, complex procedures, waste, leakages and corruption). The former Prime Minister, the late Rajiv Gandhi, used to say that only 15 paise out of one rupee spent reaches the poor through various anti-poverty programmes.

Decentralisation contributes towards better compliance and enforcement with low cost because decisions regarding selection of schemes and design of projects are taken in consultation with the various stakeholders. This is particularly so in the management of community property resources like forests and water tanks where law enforcement and punitive regulations are minimal.

When the people monitor the implementation of programmes and projects, wastages and leakages are minimised. Their close observation prevents the procurement of substandard inputs like goods and materials. Close monitoring by PRIs helps to improve the attendance of teachers and doctors in schools and hospitals, respectively. Regular monitoring by elected representatives (monthly review

and surveys) ensures that the policies and programmes serve the intended purposes. Further, the increased transparency and accountability that results from such vigilance by civil society enhances efficiency by decreasing the potential for diversion of resources due to patronage or corruption (Brinkerhoff, 2000: 604).

Productive efficiency also increases due to transparency and accountability in delivery of services. PR election has become a powerful mechanism for ensuring accountability. If the elected leaders do not work for the uplift of rural society, they will not be able to win the next election. The defeat of a large percentage of sitting members in PR elections reflects this trend. Studies have even mentioned that the accountability of officials to the elected representatives has improved. Responsible officials (like PHC medical officer, agricultural and veterinary officer etc.) can be asked to attend PRIs meetings. In the meeting an officer may be asked/questioned for his/her performance. Productive efficiency can also be improved through social auditing and monitoring. Social audit (Jamabandhi) through Gram Sabha (GS) and Ward Sabha (400 population) in Karnataka has enabled citizens to monitor the progress of works and ensure administrators accountable for the entrusted tasks and responsibilities (Sivanna N, 2004).

Productive efficiency can be achieved by reduction of corruption under PRIs. A study found that decentralised governance enhanced greater transparency and reduced the incidence of corruption. Another study found that corruption among PRI functionaries was minimal where media and civil society were effective. Rent rates are higher in areas where institutions like the Grama Sabha, the media and civil society organisations are not functional<sup>iv</sup>.

Productive efficiency can also be improved in decentralised governance by mobilising additional resources (voluntary contribution like land, capital and labour) for promoting rural development. Such contributions accounted for 20 to 40 per cent of the expenditure of the community development blocks in the 1950s. Many villagers donated lands for construction of schools and hospitals and even provided resources for the repair of field canals and tanks and construction of buildings and roads. Even people's involvement has also helped in managing village common property resources and improvement in collection of levies and betterment and user charges. For instance, PRI functionaries and representatives in Belandur and Kinnigoli GPs have taken many innovative measures to mobilise local resources and promote development<sup>v</sup>.

### **4.3. Decentralisation and Service Delivery**

Decentralisation has improved the provision of the services to the public in sectors like education and health. It was observed that there was a significant improvement in the area of medical and public health facilities and the supply of drugs in Karnataka. The attendance of doctors and paramedical staff improved considerably under the constant monitoring of local leaders in many PHCs and hospitals. VP leaders played a positive role by exerting moral pressure on the staff not to avoid their regular duties. Availability of doctors and para-medicals in medical centers are 74 per cent and 93 per cent, respectively. With regard to behaviour of doctors and teachers, 31 and 26 per cent of households, respectively, expressed satisfaction. The utilisation of resources, which has been transferred to the

PRIs, was much better than it used to be under the respective departments. Developmental works are being executed more speedily under PRIs (Meenakshi Sundaram 1994).

#### **4.4. Decentralisation and Service Delivery (Equity)**

Decentralised governance ensures effective delivery of services like poverty alleviation programmes. Decentralised governance is more sensitive to poverty and unemployment according to the World Bank (2002) and John (2000). According to these studies, PRIs in India have done remarkably well in respect of devolution of power and implementation of the centrally sponsored employment generating and anti-poverty programmes (NREP, PDS, and IRDP) especially in Karnataka, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kerala and other states.

Westergard's (1986) study suggested that NREP had considerable success in providing employment to the rural poor. Some studies found the food-for-work programme successful. Dreeze (1990) also found that the IRDP overwhelmingly benefited landless labourers. Swaminathan (1990) noticed similar success while comparing the state performance in implementing IRDP in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Webster (1992) found that the benefits under the employment generation programme and IRDP had gone to the poor and improved their living condition.

Leakages and wastages have come down under PRIs in implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. Bardhan and Mookherje (2000) in their study of the IRDP and agricultural mini-kits during 1978-98 in West Bengal found that the proportion of Gram Panchayat (GP) seats secured by landless doubled (10 per cent to 20 per cent). Distribution of the IRDP leakage rate to the medium and large landowners was quite low (less than 4 per cent) as against 87 per cent of benefits for small and marginal farmers.

## **SECTION-V**

### **5.1. State (Government) and Civil Society for Success of Decentralisation**

The success of decentralisation depends upon the commitment of the state (central and state governments) and the support of civil society organisations and movements as well. Political regimes (parties and leaders) with strong commitment to decentralisation and development are responsible for delegating adequate power and resources to local governments. For instance, the PRIs came into existence at the initiative of the Congress party under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and S K Day in the late 50s. Similar attention was given by Rajiv Gandhi in the 90s that ultimately resulted in PRIs acquiring constitutional status. Janata Party Chief Minister Ramkrishna Hegde along with a dedicated band of bureaucrats was responsible for delegating major powers along with resources to PRIs in the 80s in Karnataka.

The Left governments in Kerala and West Bengal passed supporting legislation along with the resources to strengthen the PRIs to reduce poverty and promote social development. At the same time, civil society organisations and movements were instrumental in mobilising the people for devolution of powers and resources to PRIs. Political parties in Kerala and West Bengal with reforms on their agenda created opportunities for collective action from the grassroot level by mobilising small and marginal

farmers and the landless to take advantage of the benefits of PRIs and the anti-poverty programmes (Mark Robinson, 2007). Even civil society organisations and movements mobilised the people to delegate powers and resources to PRIs. Some of them have empowered PRIs through protests, advocacy, capacity building and so on. In recent years, NGOs in Karnataka have fought for the rights of the PRIs, when State government tried to dilute the powers given to PRIs. Similarly, the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad played a significant role in shaping and implementing the people's campaign for decentralised planning in the late 1990s (Mark Robinson, 2007; David A. Crocker, 2008).

## **SECTION-VI**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

It is evident from the above review, that the democratic decentralisation along with civil society organisations can play a significant role in empowering the disadvantaged to raise their voices against the negative implications of globalisation. Democratic decentralised institutions like the PRIs create awareness among the rural people to articulate their interests and protect them from the negative implications of globalisation. The intensive electoral battles among the candidates and parties for positions in PRIs have liberated the rural poor from the influence of traditional leaders and the rural rich. It has also enabled them to elect the leaders of their choice and raise their voices without any fear.

Leaders elected to PRIs from the disadvantaged groups through affirmative action are effective in taking decisions independent of their mentors. Many women (who initially depended on the male members in their household and administrators) are asserting their control over local governance and influencing the policies benefiting them. Many of these leaders, particularly those representing VPs are opposing mega projects (including MNCs) that affect the livelihoods of the local people. PRI leaders along with civil society organisations are preventing over-exploitation of natural resources and protecting the rights of the disadvantaged.

Democratic decentralisation is also promoting inclusive growth through effective provision of public services meant for the rural poor. Wastages and leakages have come down in major social security programmes initiated in the context of globalisation. Major efficiency gains have been noticed in the delivery of health, educational and other services. Thus democratically governed institutions, along with civil society organisations and movements have acted as the filters in protecting the interests of the disadvantaged groups. The benefits of globalisation can be harnessed and spread positively and evenly. The negative shocks associated with globalisation can be prevented with effective implementation of social welfare policies and antipoverty programmes. The positive effects of globalisation on growth and equity can be found when institutional conditions are tempered by participatory, democratic, transparent and accountable mechanisms to manage social, economic and political conflicts arising out of globalisation.

## End Notes

### **i Decentralisation and Voting**

In its study of 53 villages in Rajasthan and MP, for instance, the World Bank found that voter turnout in PR elections was well over 90 per cent for all categories (in terms of gender, class and caste). This is significantly higher than the turnout in 1998 *Lok Sabha* elections, which was 61 per cent for women and 65.9 per cent for men.

### **ii Elected Panchayat Members**

Rural people and disadvantaged were empowered after the 73rd and 74th of the Constitutional amendments. The total elected representatives in 539 district Panchayats was 15,759 (as on 1st December, 2006) out of them, SC constitutes: 2769 (17.57 per cent), ST 1680 (10.66 per cent) and women 5821 (36.94 per cent), 58328 members were selected in the 6105 intermediate Panchayats. Out of this, SC were 33128 (21.08 per cent), ST 11538 (7.34 per cent) and women 58328 (37.11 per cent). 2657112 members were elected for 2, 33,251 GP's in which SC accounted 491305 (18.49 per cent), ST 314942 (11.85 per cent) and women 975723 (36.72 per cent). Prior to the 73rd constitutional amendment, women representatives in PRIs were from the dominant caste/class (Marathas families above twenty acres of land in Maharashtra and lingayats and vokkaligas in Karnataka). However after the amendment, majority of members were illiterate and lower income strata. They were comparatively younger and predominantly first-generation entrants in politics (Nirmala Buch, 2000).

### **iii Cheyyar Panchayats Oppose Special Economic Zone:** Eight of the ten VPs of Cheyyar taluk in Tiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu, passed resolutions at their GS meetings on October 2, 2008 against the government's move to acquire 2,200 acres of land for the expansion of the Cheyyar Special Economic Zone. The villagers of these VPs have been agitating against acquisition of agricultural land under the banner of the Tamil Nadu Movement Against Special Economic Zone (Sirrappu Porulaathara Mandala Ethirpu Eyakam) for the last six months. They have already expressed their objections orally and in writing to the District Collector (Panchayat Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, Vol. XV (10), October 2008).

**Panchayats Raise Their Voice Against Mega Projects:** Many VPs in Goa raised their voice against mega projects that were given permission through illegal means. For instance, Benaulim VP in Goa (following the growing movement against mega projects led by Ambelim, Nuvem and Curtorm panchayats) in its meeting on June 2, 2008, after three marathon sessions, demanded the revocation of construction licenses of all the four mega projects which were executed. The GS demanded that the replies received from the builders are to be scrutinised by the committee consisting of villagers, legal experts and architects so as to prepare a watertight case against mega projects and not let the builders take advantage of any loophole. It also adopted a resolution demanding an enquiry by the vigilance commission into all the construction licenses issued by the VP for the last 10 years. Even the villagers marched to Panaja city to protest against the director of panchayats for favouring builders. Similarly, Kolva panchayat on June 3, 2008 revoked the license of mega housing projects for not adhering to the regulations based on the GS resolution. The VP

decided not to issue occupancy certificate unless the matters related to garbage, road, power and water were resolved. Villagers of Sirsaim on June 16, 2008 unanimously resolved not to permit any mega projects. The VP had issued licenses for the project comprising 22 bungalows, 10 apartments, one tennis court and two swimming pools without consulting the GS. They gave permission overlooking several technical discrepancies and illegalities relating to approach road, sewage treatment plant, garbage disposal, water availability<sup>1</sup> (Panchayat Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, Vol. XV (6), June 2008).

**High Court Stays Government Order** the Gujarat High Court has stayed industries and mines department's decision to lease 140-acre gauchar land of Bhimdeval village in Junagadh district to Gujarat Heavy Chemicals Ltd. The GP of Bhimdeval has been contesting grant of lease of this disputed land to Gujarat Heavy Chemicals for the last three decades. In 1976, a sarpanch and her husband got false documents drawn up to help state government departments to give the plot to Gujarat Heavy Chemicals<sup>1</sup> (Panchayat Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, Vol. XV (10), October 2008).

**Panchayat Succeeds in Securing Compensation for Crop Loss:** Mining companies will pay Rs.3.40 crore to 761 farmers of Suriya village in Goa as compensation for crop losses. This is the largest ever compensation for crop loss in the state. The petition had been filed by the Suria panchayat seeking compensation for crop loss due to mining activity of seven companies. The petitioners said that because of dumping of mining rejects, crops in the adjacent fields had been damaged and soil adversely affected Panchayat Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, Vol. XV (6), June 2008.

#### iv **Decentralisation and Corruption**

In Karnataka during the late 1980s, the overall amount of money stolen from local development funds plummeted. People who had earlier stolen between 25 per cent and 40 per cent of these funds behind closed doors - without the knowledge of ordinary people - now found that they could pilfer no more than 5 per cent or so because the new system was so transparent. But that very transparency persuaded citizens that more money was now being stolen {James Manor, 1997}.

#### v **Experience of Belandur VP in Bangalore District**

Belandur has the most successful VP with an income of more than Rs 1.7 crore and 100 percent tariff collection. It has underground drainage system and garbage collection facilities. It has provided mini water schemes with 5 overhead tanks to every ward. The GP has made by-laws for fair delivery of water to all households. A penalty of Rs. 2000 can be levied for illegal water connection or the regular connection may be disconnected for a period of six months. About Rs 25 lakh has been spent on the construction of a drainage system. Toilets are being constructed for all the households, including those living below the poverty line. There is no evidence of open defecation in the panchayat area. In 2001-02, about 365 toilets were constructed in this panchayat under different schemes. The GP took a mandatory decision that it will construct more than 40 latrines in a year. Factors that play a crucial role for the success of the VP are many. However the important factor is the quality of leadership as provided by the president of the panchayat and his team (**Source:** Nayak, Bhargava and Shubha 2004).

### **Experience of Kinnigoli VP in Dakshina Kannada**

This VP demonstrated that water supply schemes can be maintained successfully by collecting tariffs from the households. The scheme comprises bore-wells that feed 5,000-litre capacity overhead tanks. There are nearly 100 pipe connections to individual houses. The total cost of the scheme was estimated at Rs 7 lakh of which 10 per cent was contributed by the villagers. The VP ensured regular water supply to all the households. The VP expected to levy and collect a one time advances charge of Rs 1000 for each connection but failed to collect the water charges. It was decided to levy a higher rate on higher incremental consumption. A new tariff formula was devised for the **Guttakaadu** scheme based on monthly consumption( Rs 50 for 3-10 Kls, Rs. 100 for 15 - 30 Kls, and Rs 350 for above 30 Kls. Water meters are fixed for all 133 house pipe connections. separate electric meter is fixed for submersible pump to keep a proper account of electric power consumed.. The system is working very well and the cost collection is 100 per cent (**Source:** Deccan Herald, April 19, 2003).

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