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## **Feasibility of Participatory Rural Governance in the Web of Representative Democracy – A Case Study in Indian Context**

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**Abstract:**

*Since Independence, Government of India has made several efforts towards participatory rural development. Among these, most remarkable is the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment (1992) that has conferred legitimated power on all rural voters for direct participation in planning, implementing as well as monitoring the development projects within the electoral constituency where they belong. The Amendment Act (1992) provides the Guideline to the States for devolution of functional as well as financial power to the rural self-government in a prescribed manner. Notification was done to amend the State Acts accordingly. By this change, all electors gain the right to attend village council's meetings to advice / to question the elected leaders. Electors are entrusted to prepare, to supervise the village plans as well as to scrutinize the budget in open meetings.*

*Participation of rural voters as authorized in the States' legislature is apolitical but the elected self-government itself is represented by the political party. The study aims at investigating the feasibility as well as utility of such participatory democracy within the frame of political representative democracy. A case study from West Bengal State of India shows that rural people are not interested to emit their legitimated power for participation. Conflict of Government policies, political biasness along with introduction of digital governance stand against peoples' active participation in rural governance*

**Keywords:** *governance, participatory democracy, representative democracy, rural self- government, village council*

### **1. Introduction**

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), in the article 'What is Good Governance?' mentioned 'Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law'.... and 'participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance'<sup>1</sup>.seven characteristics of 'Good Governance' are dependent on quality of participation. Peoples' participation may be direct or representative. Direct participation of people either rural or urban is usually phenomenon of local governance and participatory governance implies direct participation of citizens in aspects of development like plan formulation, implementation and monitoring. But at National and State Level, representative participation is followed. Democracy is always representative, but citizen's direct involvement is not compulsory. On the other, as mentioned in the same article that 'representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision.'<sup>1</sup>. Hence direct participation is important for good governance. Indian citizens enjoy the constitutional right to both *representative* as well as *direct* participation but through a complex multi-faceted parliamentary process.

### **2. Aim and Objective**

In the context of above, this paper *aims* to assess the workability of participatory planning which is nested within the representative democracy with case study. Peoples' participatory role in rural self-government in the state of West Bengal is emphasized in this study.

The *objectives* of the study are i) to point out the peoples' space for direct participation within the hierarchical parliamentary system in India, ii) to present an overview of government efforts for encouraging direct participation in rural governance with special reference to West Bengal, iv) to evaluate achievements of the state in rural development under the regime of participatory planning, iii) to analyze the nature of peoples' response to participate iv) to identify obstacles against participatory rural governance.

### **3. Participation in Hierarchy of Parliamentary Democracy**

Indian Federation holds a multi-level Government system. Each and every unit of it is the democratically elected people's representation. Thus representative democracy is admitted both in legislation and execution at the levels of centre, State as well as local government. Each and every adult citizen of India irrespective of class, caste, gender or race is entitled to be elected as well as to elect the members of parliament, members of legislative assembly and local self-government. All recognized political parties are

eligible to participate in election in a prescribed manner. Hence each and every tier of governance is a political representation. In addition to it, citizens' direct and non-political participation in local government is also ensured by the constitutional obligation.

The types of participation as permissible within the given frame of parliamentary democratic system in the country is presented in the flow diagram (Figure-1). The diagram shows that i) Indian governing system is mainly representative ii) space for direct participation is limited, it is granted only at lowest two sub-tiers. Again Gram Sansad, the lowest sub-tier (Dia-1) is not recommended in the constitution. It is created by the state legislature of West Bengal. iii) Since all voters, enlisted in electoral roll irrespective of his/her political creed are eligible to participate directly in decision making at Gram Sabha and Gram Sansad in rural local self government (LSG), therefore, these two units of government are non-political and accommodative. On the other hand, the LSG is democratic political representation itself. Thus it implies a non-political participation within a politically directed government unit.

**4. Policies for Participatory Rural Development**

Since independence, sincere efforts have been given for participatory rural development planning. A series of Committees have been formed for framing out suitable policies for participatory planning in local rural self governments through administrative decentralization. Among these, followings are remarkable.

- i. Rural Local self- government (village Panchayat) was placed under part IV of Indian constitution i.e. the Directive Principles of the State policy (1951)
- ii. Community Development Programme with an eye to peoples' participation at grass root level was introduced in 1952
- iii. It was followed by National Extension Service (1953) to secure peoples' direct involvement
- iv. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was formed (1957) to investigate causes of failure of previous efforts.
- v. Santharam Committee was set up in view to frame fiscal decentralization policy in 1963
- vi. Ashok Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj Institution (rural self-Government) was appointed in 1977.
- vii. GVK Rao Committee was set up (1985) for activation of participatory panchayat system.
- viii. LM Singhvi Commtee on 'Revitalization of Panchayati Raj Institution for Democracy and Development' was set up in 1986.
- ix. The Constitution (Seventy third Amendment) Act was activated in 1992. Article 243 in Chapter ix of Indian Constitution is inserted. Besides, eleventh schedule is introduced specifying sectors for participatory rural governance.

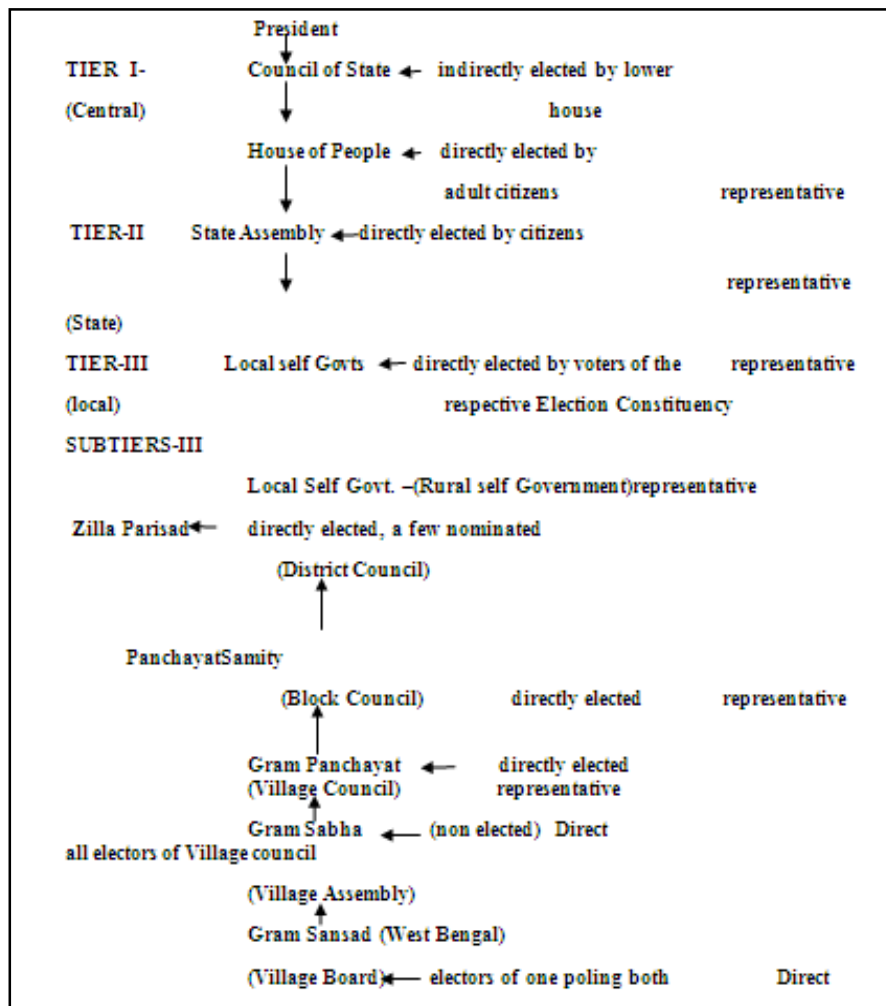


Figure 1: Types of Participation at Different Levels of Government

Following the recommendations given by the said committees, policies on participatory planning through decentralization have been initiated in the country. But the efforts failed to be much effective to invoke peoples' interest in participation. The present form of rural self government and peoples' participatory role are shaped by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act. Peoples' direct and specific role in local rural governance is legitimized by this Amendment Act. The Act introduces "Gram Sabha", a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls (243-A)<sup>2</sup>. 'A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide, a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice; b) the implementation of schemes ... as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule (243G)<sup>2</sup>. Besides, devolution of financial power is ensured to the peoples' local body. 'The Legislature of a State may, by law, - a) authorize a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees as assigned (243-H).' Thus the Act paves the firm path for grass root participation in local rural governance. But the word 'May' as mentioned in the said Article (243) in repeated manner may imply that it is not mandatory to the State. 'Legislature of State "may", by law, provide' it. Hence Peoples' legitimated right to participation is not obligation for the State. In this situation, question may arise that can voters irrespective of their party colour speak in a politically elected Gram Sabha? Can they express their real view with full freedom in a state-directed participatory system? Hence practicability of participatory governance is under question. Entire operational process of participatory rural governance under the State Legislation is to be evaluated. Hence, a case study on this aspect is done in respect to the State of West Bengal.

### 5. A Case Study: Participatory Rural Governance in West Bengal

The state of West Bengal is acclaimed of the pioneer in participatory rural planning. The state played the role model for rest of the country. In fact, the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment was conceptualized on the basis of Bengal's experience.

The journey for peoples planning in West Bengal started during the early years of '80s when Rural Development Centre of IIT Kharagpur in collaboration with Medinipur Zilla Parishad had initiated an Action Research Project on 'Village Plan Prepared by Villagers' at eight Administrative Blocks of Medinipur District under supervision of Prof. A.N. Bose. Later the experiences of the project were incorporated into District Planning Process of the district of Medinipur<sup>3</sup> and policy for formulation of District Plan on the basis of plans prepared by villagers in all of 10380 villages of the District was framed out in the late 80's. At the same period, the then State Government was committed to hand over more power to the Panchayat (rural self-Government) to carry out local development programme through peoples' participation. West Bengal became the first state in the country i) to form Gram Sabha as peoples' participatory unit within Panchayat in 1978, hence far before its insertion in 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act (1992); ii) to go for political panchayats at all tiers even before the Ashok Mehta Committee had recommended it and to hold elections at regular interval since 1978 . i.e. more than a decade before the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment; iii) to represent a break from the past political patterns in India in terms of social background of rural leadership through mandatory reservation of seats for marginalized communities and women in all tiers of Panchayat; iv) to perceive panchayats as platforms for fighting against the rural vested interest and high-handed attitude of Govt. officials. The functional and financial power have been categorically handed over to the Gram Panchayat by amendments of Panchayat Act; v) to follow up bottom-up approach in true sense through conferring decision making power to Gram Sansad.

To understand the pro-people character of the rural LSG of West Bengal, an overview of the structure and functions of West Bengal Panchayatiraj Institute is necessary.

#### 5.1. Structure Functions and Power of West Bengal Panchayatiraj Institute- An Overview

The West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973 acts as the legal guideline for the structure, functions and power of the Institute. The Act has been amended time to time (1978, '81, '83, '85, '94, '97, 2003, 2006, 2007, '2014). These Amendments make the institutional structure of West Bengal Panchayati Raj more congenial for participatory planning. Functional areas for participation have become specific through these Amendments. Besides, financial power of rural LSG is also strengthened by the Amended Act. An outline of structure, functions and financial power of Panchayat are given below.

##### 5.1.1. Structure

A three tiered Panchayat system namely Zilla Parishad at District Level, Panchayat Samity at Block Level (middle tier) and Gram Panchayat at village level persists in the State. At each level, there is one Sansad (council) namely Zilla Sansad, Block Sansad and Gram Sansad as advisory unit (Sec115A, 163A)<sup>4</sup>. Besides, there are two Sthayee Samitis (standing committees) with ten sub-committees at each level of upper two tiers (S124, S171). The structure of West Bengal Panchayat system is presented in the Figure - 2. The Structure seems to be unique for two reasons:

- forward and backward links within the functionaries. The member of lower tier may be nominated/elected for upper tier. Again member of upper tier may function as ex-officio at lower tier (by 1994 Amendment Act). It makes the institute more close and intimate to the local people
- b) facilitation of participation at smaller unit area i.e. election booth level. In addition to Gram Sabha, two other units namely Gram Sansad (Amendment 1994) Gram Unnayan Samiti (Amendment 2003), have been created at lowest tier i.e. at Gram Panchayat as non-political platforms for direct participation. All voters as enlisted in the electors' roll in pertaining constituency (polling booth area) are members of Gram Sansad and are legitimated to take part in planning process in prescribed manner. Gram Sansad acts as pivot for entire operation of participatory governance. Gram Unnayan Samiti is the body of execution as formed by Gram Sansad. Gram Panchayat itself holds a cabinet type executive structure with five

*Upasamities*.i.e. functional subcommittees by the Amendment Act 2003. Members of the Upasamities are either elected or nominated.

### 5.2. Functions

To keep conformity with 11<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Section 207B has been inserted in the State Panchayat Act in 1994. By this Section State Government may transfer power, functions and duties to Panchayat in 15 matters- agriculture, irrigation, animal resource, health, public health engineering, social welfare, -child and women development etc, land and land reforms, cottage, small industry, public work and communication, education, social forestry, electrification, poverty alleviation and public distribution system etc.

Functions of Gram Panchayat are categorically mentioned in Sec-19 and 20<sup>4</sup> of the Panchayat Act (Amendment 2003). In this Section, duties of gram Panchayat are classified as i) obligatory; ii) regulatory; and iii) complimentary. As obligatory duty, Gram Panchayat shall function as a unit of self-government for achieving the goal of human development including social and economic development and securing social justice for all (Sec-19(1)) and "shall" ... (a) prepare a development plan for the five-year term and (b) prepare an annual plan based on Gram Sansad plans. Hence direct participation of stakeholders is indispensable in rural governance in West Bengal. Upa-samities are assigned to finalize the plans in consent with Gram Sansad for the aspects as mentioned in Sec-19 (2). The action areas of Upa-Samiti as well as of Sansad are summarized in Table-1.

Based on Sansad plan and approved by Gram Sabha Upasamities of G.P. finalize G.P. level plans. Proposed plan at G.P level are sent to the upper tier i.e. Panchayat Samiti at Block level for supervision and then proposed plans along with budget are sent to Zila Parisad for finalization of District Plan. Zila Parisad assesses the proposals along with and passes the draft plans to the District Planning Committee. In this approach, peoples' plan (Sansad plan) becomes the base of District plan and bottom-up planning norms are maintained. But this is to note that a huge responsibility has been assigned to the Gram Panchayat. But staff strength at G.P. is marginal. And again there is shortage of staff. 18% post at G.Ps remained vacant during 2008- 2009 (calculated from Annual Administrative Report, W.B. P&R D-2008-09).

#### 5.2.1. Power of People for Participation

Following the Section 16A of W.B. Panchayat Act, persons registered at any time in the electoral roll pertaining to a constituency of a Gram Panchayat, are members of Gram Sansad. Gram Sansad is the legitimated participatory planning unit at village level. It is stated in Section 16A (6) Sansad shall guide and advise the Panchayat in regard to the schemes for economic development and social justice undertaken or proposed to be undertaken in its area. According to the existing West Bengal Panchayat Act, the functions of Gram Sansad are 'a. Identify, or lay down principles for identification of the schemes which are required to be taken on priority basis for economic development of the village (2007).

Functional areas	Sectors of Planning	Duties assigned to	Consultation with		
		Upa- Samiti	Gram Sansad plans		
Social Security & Development	i. Education	1. Education & public health		Gram Sansad plans	
	ii. Public Health				
	iii. Children, women welfare	2. Women & child welfare			
Production & livelihood	iv. Agriculture and related	3. Agriculture and livestock			Gram Sansad plans
Infrastructure	v. Small and Cottage Industry	4. Industry and Infrastructure			
	vi. Road, communication				
Finance	vii. Plan co-ordination budget finalization	5. Finance planning	Gram Sansad plans		

Table 1: Functions of Upa- Samities (Standing Committees) of West Bengal Gram Panchayat

- b. Identify, or lay down principles for identification of the beneficiaries for various poverty alleviation programmes (2007).
- c. Constitute a Gram Unnayan Samity (GUS) with such number of functional committees as required for ensuring active participation of people in implementation, maintenance and equitable distribution of benefits with respect to such subject as may be prescribed (2003)
- d. Mobilize mass participation for community welfare programmes for adult education, family welfare and child welfare.
- e. Promote solidarity and harmony among all sections of the people irrespective of religion, faith, caste, creed or race.
- f. Record objections to any action of the Pradhan or any other member of the GP for failure to implement any development scheme property.'

Following Section 16a (2) & (4) at least two meetings of Sansad shall be held in a year, generally in the month of May and November under presidency of Pradhan/upapradhan/any member of the panchayat. Place, date and hour is fixed by Panchayat. By section 16a (3) Panchayat shall give public notice of such meeting by beat of drum.

One-tenth of the total members (voters) shall form a quorum of Gram Sansad (Sec 16A (4a)). It is obligatory on the part of every GP member elected from the concerned constituency to attend such meeting Sec 16a (5). The GP is required to consider every resolution adopted at the meeting of the Gram Sansads. The decisions and actions taken by it will be reported to its next meeting. Following the Section 17A and 18 the GP shall place its budget to the Gram Sansad, report on the work done during the previous year, and propose of work to be done in the following year. The Panchayat shall also place the latest report on audit and accounts before the Gram Sansads

during their half-yearly meetings. Thus GS helps Gram Panchayat for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the developmental program under taken by the Gram Panchayat.

5.3. Funds

Success of planning depends on the financial strength of the implementing agent. Panchayat receives funds as i) schematic grants (central and State Government), ii) untied fund from the State’s revenue as per recommendations of State Finance Commission (SFC), iii) share of State’s entertainment tax, professional tax, cess and incentive grant iii)General Purpose Grant, General Performance Grant and Special Area Grant as per the recommendations of Central Finance Commission (CFC), iv) departmental fund v) Panchayat’s own sources of revenue vi) loan and project grant vii) donation.. SFC fund is distributed within three tier of Panchayat at present at a ratio of 12:18: 70. Distribution of CFC grant is done on the basis of a set of criteria. Hence there is no dearth of fund specially at lowest tier (G.P.). For example, Inter-government Transfer of fund was Rs83million/G.P. in2006-07 and Rs66 million/G.P. in 2007-08.<sup>4</sup>

6. Rural Development under Participatory Governance in West Bengal

To assess the states’ achievement in the field of rural development two aspects namely agriculture from production sector and primary education as welfare sector are chosen.

A sharp growth in agriculture was observed since mid’80s to mid ‘90s. A legendary success in land reforms through panchayat system as well as progress in community irrigation led to miraculous growth in agriculture. The state is credited for highest production in paddy and potato and overcome the ‘agrarian impasse’<sup>6</sup> during the mid 80s (fig-1). The state has bagged Krishi Karman Award in 2013. But the trend of growth is declining. Utilization of created irrigation is also declining and its full capacity is never being used (fig2). It implies that the enthusiasm for participation is declining. Moreover, overproduction of crop rather than crop failure is now a serious problem of the state. There is no scope to find out the solution of overproduction within the given power of Sansad. Standing committee on Agriculture and Livestock Development under G.P. is assigned for agricultural planning. The committee under-uses its functional potentiality. Concerning welfare aspects, performance of G.P. is well. i. e.girls’ enrolments andii) enrolment from backward community in primary education are taken under consideration. And in both cases West Bengal is well ahead of country’s overall performance (Fig-3,4). It proves the functionality of existing participatory system to eliminate gender and caste disparity also. It can be said thatWest Bengal rural self-Government is not much effective for development of economic aspects but in welfare sector achievement is remarkable.

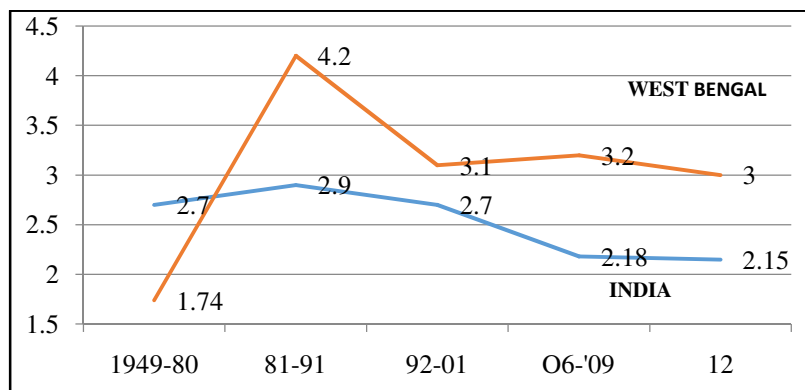


Figure 2: Average Agricultural Growth % in India and West Bengal

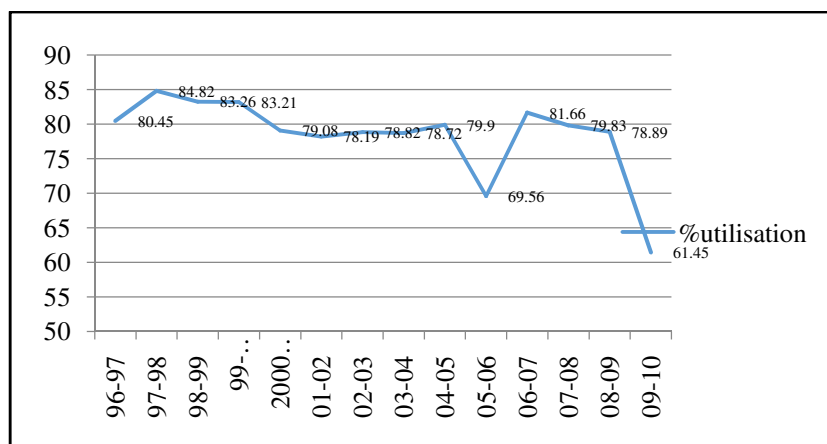


Figure 3: % utilisation of created Irrigation in West Bengal  
Data Source-CMIE reports, Agri. Current Affairs (2013-14), EPW<sup>7</sup>

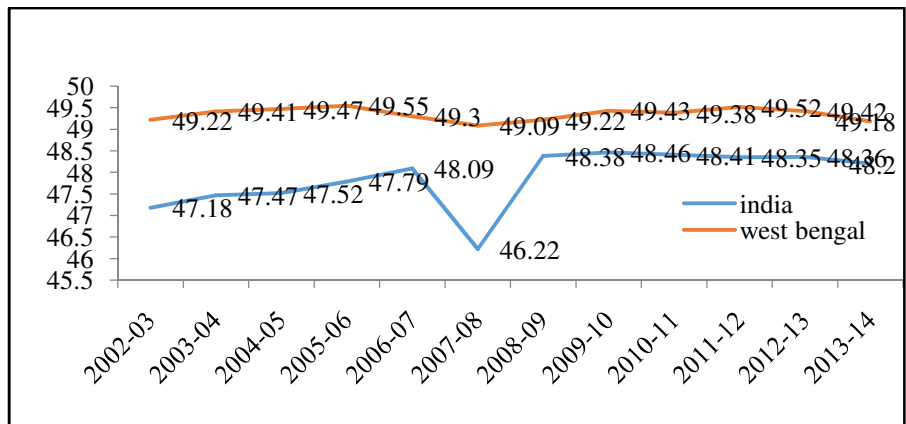


Figure 4: Girls' Enrolment % in Primary Education  
Data Source: Economic Review of West Bengal 2011-12

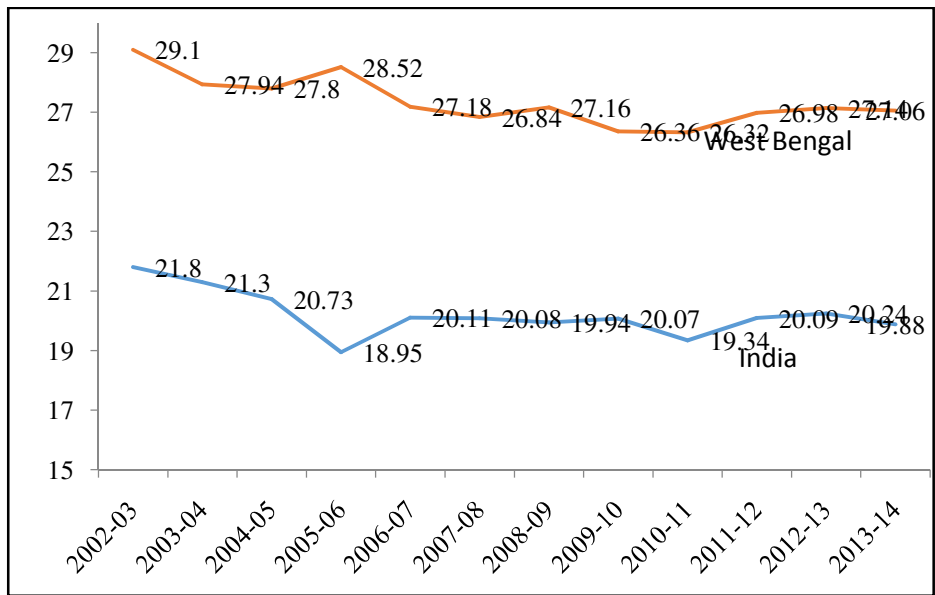


Figure 5: Enrolment of Backward class Children in Primary Education %  
Source: Analytical Tables 2002-03 to 2013-14; DISE

**7. Nature of Participation**

In West Bengal Gram Sansad meetings are held twice in a year (November-December and May-June) at convenient locations for each polling Booth area.

The villagers should prepare plans on the basis of their resource position, existing problems, past experience. Such plans are to be integrated at village cluster level and resolutions are sent to the Gram Sabha for approval. Peoples' eagerness for participation could be understood from the attendance in Sansad's meetings. Attendance at a ten years gap is compared. It is found that attendance in Gram Sansad meetings is marginal and is declining (Fig-4). Attendance does not exceed 18%. Therefore, there is every chance for biased proposal and unscrutinized budget.

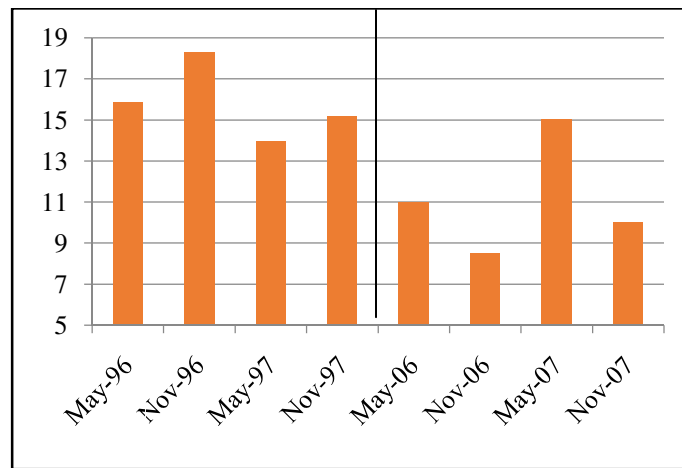


Figure 6: Attendance in Sansad Meetings % in West Bengal

Data Source Annual Administrative Reports of Gram Panchayat and Rural Department, Govt. West Bengal

7.1. Non-Attendance in Gram Sansad Meetings-A Micro-Level Study

To understand the causes for people’s reluctance in attending meeting, a field survey has been conducted at a selected G.P. namely Maipith-Baikunthapur G.P.of Kultali coastal P.S., South 24 Pgs, West Bengal. 90% people of the area depends on agriculture. Cultivation is the main occupation. Fishing (inland as well shallow sea fishing) is the second dominant occupation. Occasional flood, dearth of sweet water, declining productivity of crops as well fish, inaccessibility to market are some common problems (as reported by 100% respondent) for the sustainable livelihood. Therefore, Sansad’s performance in connection with the said problems are scrutinized in respect to i) attendance and ii) matters discussed in meetings.

This is noted that attendance is always low and now is decreasing drastically with increasing polewise variation (Fig-5,6).Causes for non-attendance as stated by voters are also varied. (Table-2)

village	unhappy experiences	illness	not important	opponent party	other work	shyness	difficulty of tongue & understanding	persons interrogated
Binodpur	1.695	8.475	2.542373	5.085	41.53	32.2	8.475	118
Baikunthapur	9.231	15.38	1.538462	6.154	13.85	38.46	15.38	65
Krishorimohopur	6.944	15.28	5.555556	5.556	11.11	29.17	12.5	72

Table 2: Causes of non-attendance (%) in G.S meeting (Dec2010)

. Variance is co-related to election and political turmoil. Therefore it accelerated in 2011 after change in party leadership through State Assembly election (fig 6). During last two years no meeting is called for May season. Even Nov-meeting is not much announced. Matters discussed in the meetings are changing from beneficiary-oriented to social welfare schemes oriented. (Dia-3). Nothing is discussed about the burning problems related to agricultural production and marketing. A huge amount of fund inflows into G.P under the head of flagship programmes. It limits the scope of discussion in Sansad meetings as given in the Sec-16A (6) an in W.B. Panchayat Act.

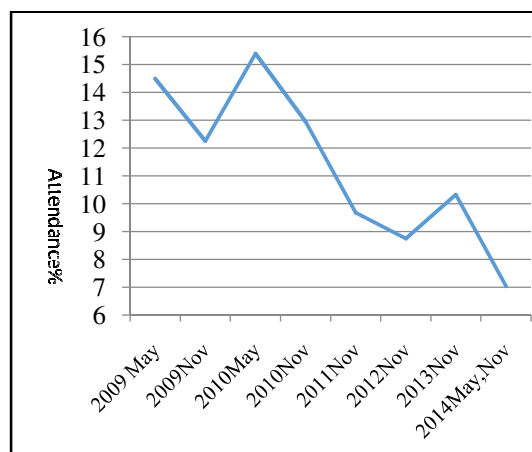


Figure 7: Attendance in Sansad Meetings at Studied Gram Panchayat (%)

Data Source: Maipith-Baikunthapur Gram Panchayat Office

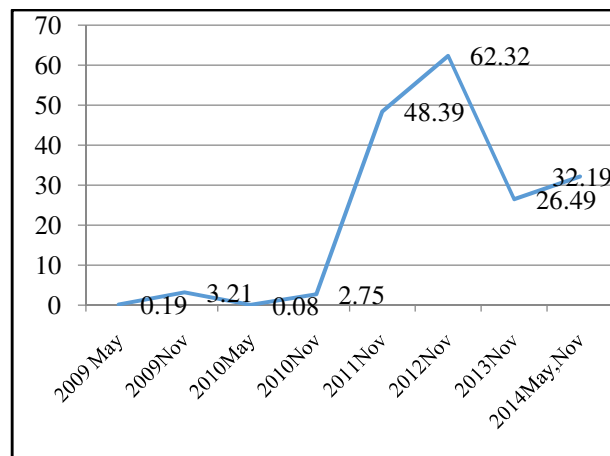


Figure 8: Variance of Attendance in Sansad Meeting in Studied Gram Panchayat

#### 7.1.1. Lowering Importance of Gram Panchayat and Reversion of Peoples' Power

This is worthy to note that the task of identification of beneficiaries is assigned to Sansad by Panchayat Act(S16B). This was the main issue for intimacy of common people with G.P. But at present this duty has been transferred to the upper tier of administration.

B.P.L list is very much important for various reasons and was prepared and scrutinized by Gram Sansad so far. It was the main issue for discussion in Sansad meeting (CHART-) But now 13 points based BPL listing is being done through BDO ignoring the G.P. It is stated in the guideline for BPL Census that census enumerators to be 'selected from Directorate and Department such as Planning and Statistics. Census work could also be assigned to reputed and capable NGOs (Sec16). Sub-Divisional Officer will be accountable for the correctness of the census (Sec16)<sup>5</sup>. Role of Gram Sabha as stated in the report is merely to break 'the tie' if two household getting the same score (Sec 8). 'District/Block PRI should counter check the situation in the village with very large or very small percentage of very poor and poor households' (Sec9)<sup>5</sup>. Importance of rural self government as well as Gram Sansad as a part of G.P is reduced.

Moreover, introduction of E-Governance in Panchayat also cuts down GPs' power. Beneficiaries' names and their bank/post office account numbers are uploaded in computer. Wages, Aids and Grants whatever may be the monitory dues of the beneficiaries are now transferred directly from upper tier governments (both central and state) to the beneficiaries' accounts by-passing G.P. In fact, these are the main reasons for low attendance in Sansad meeting.

### 8. Hurdles against Participation

The study unveils some hurdles against participatory rural planning. Those are summarized.

- i. Participatory rural governance is always appreciated in India. A repeated effort for insertion of participatory rural governance through setting up recommendation committees implies that the task is not easy at all. The committees on this aspect as mentioned earlier (sec-3) were not much successful to identify the true causes for the peoples' reluctance to participation.
- ii. Non political participation within a politically represented Self- Government (Panchayat) seems to be incongruous (sec-2) A whole hearted and open participation is difficult in this system.
- iii. People get no clear idea of their entitlement and what to do in meeting (sec5).
- iv. Welfare related sub-committees work excellently to achieve inclusive development (sec-5). But other subcommittees which are directly related to the economic production fail to work at least in West Bengal. Therefore, very local issues like over-production or underproduction of crop, soil and water degradation for local causes, declining productivity etc remain unaddressed by Gram Sansad.
- v. Sub- Functions of LSG is not stated in the Act very specifically. As found in W.B. Panchayat Act, only the sectoral duties are mentioned in S19 and S207B (sec-4). There is overlapping of functions of State Department and LSG. Every sector of development is over-controlled by the state. Keeping parity with amendments in Panchayat Act, other Departmental Acts have not been changed and Hands-off approach could not be followed.LSG as well as local people have limited scope to participate in decision making.
- vi. Contradiction of different Government policies sets barrier to the participatory planning (sec-4). It withers the role of peoples' body. As a result peoples' interest in participatory planning declines (sec-5).
- vii. Gram Panchayat acts like a state cabinet and performs sectoral responsibilities as stated in the Panchayat Act and State rules (sec-4). For the majority of people Panchayat is something like government department. People fail to participate spontaneously.
- viii. Huge responsibilities have been handed to the lowest tier of Panchayat. But due to shortage of staffs and knowledge, keep it away from best practice.
- ix. Huge amount of fund is flowing towards the lowest tier without much specification on expenditure. In the situation of staff shortage, undefined sub-functions, and huge work load, the fund may call corruption.



- x. A bottom-up approach in rural planning is persuaded where peoples' plan is the base of District plan. But it is done without any assistance from professional expert. A local person with traditional knowledge but without any institutional training hesitates to express their expertise. It causes under-appraisal of available resources.
- xi. Market overplays the ideal planning. Exploring market for potential production is important for development. But it is yet to be considered in participatory planning.

## 9. Conclusion

Participation is the base for good governance. Efforts given by the Central as well as State Governments of India through boosting of Panchayat system in rural governance can never be challenged. Still it is realized from this study that direct and neutral participation within the nexus of democratic representative government system is highly difficult. The study has identified a set of hurdles against participatory rural governance. These observations are important for reshaping the participatory rural development policies in the country. The study may also be useful to other democratic countries where participatory governance is appreciated.

### 9.1. Acknowledgement

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