

**EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PANCHAYAT
EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE
SCHEME (PEAIS) IN THE STATES OF CHHATTISGARH,
KARNATAKA, KERALA, PUNJAB AND RAJASTHAN**



**SUBMITTED TO
THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
GOVT.OF INDIA, NEW DELHI**

+

JOS CHATHUKULAM

CENTRE FOR RURAL MANAGEMENT (CRM), KOTTAYAM, KERALA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is the result of significant commitment shown by numerous individuals/organizations over the past few months. In particular, the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj of the States of Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala and the Officials in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi who have provided extensive support to the development of the report. Centre for Rural Management (CRM) recognizes the efforts of all those who contributed relevant information that are found in this report. CRM extends its acknowledgement to the SIRD's and Nodal Officers of PEAIS of the selected States. We would utilize this opportunity to thank the PRIs functionaries and officials of each State for their continuous support in fulfilling the objectives of the evaluation.

The case study is supported by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Govt. of India, New Delhi. We have a special thanks to Ms. Rashmi Shukla Sharma, Joint Secretary, MoPR, Govt. of India, New Delhi for providing excellent academic and administrative support for the assignment. We are also thankful to Ms. C V Sarada, Under Secretary & Mr. Aditya Vikram Singh, Consultant, MoPR, Govt. of India, New Delhi. The report has been presented on 17 June 2013 before the senior officials of the MoPR chaired by the Secretary. All the comments have been incorporated on the report. We are thankful for their valuable comments.

In addition, CRM would like to thank all of the individuals who responded to the original call for the report. During the evolution of the study several individuals have provided insightful comments and feedback most importantly Dr.B.S.Bhargava, Chairman, Centre for Rural Management for his guidance through out the period. Special thanks are given Prof. K.J.Kurian, Dr. M S John, Prof.M Gopinath Reddy, Prof. T M Joseph, Dr. K Gireesan, Dr. D Devendra Babu, Dr. Joy Elamon & Dr. N Sivanna. Dr. Preetham Ponnappa, Mr. C V Balamurali, Mr.V.G.Ramachandran Nair, Mr.Sunil K H, Mr. O.J.John, Mr. Sreejith M R, Dr. Thirunavakarasu, Mr. Ram Visal Sinha and Mr. T V Thilakan have initiated and coordinated all the field processes. Mr. Devavrathan S and Ms. Rekha V have contributed in materializing the report through qualitative and quantitative analysis and effective documentation. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Ms.Shamla Beevi and Ms.Siji K V for their support during the process.

August 2013

Jos Chathukulam

Director, Centre for Rural Management (CRM)

**EVALUATION OF THE PANCHAYAT EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE
SCHEMES (PEAIS) IN THE STATES OF CHHATTISGARH, KARNATAKA, KERALA, PUNJAB &
RAJASTHAN**

CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER 1 <i>INTRODUCTION</i>	32
CHAPTER 2 DYNAMICS OF DEVOLUTION PROCESS IN INDIA	43
CHAPTER 3 DEVOLUTION STATUS IN THE SELECTED STATES	51
CHAPTER 4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT THROUGH CASE STUDIES	77
CHAPTER 5 ASSESSMENTS BASED ON PRIMARY OBSERVATIONS	122
CHAPTER 6 EVALUATING THE IMPACT WITH THE HELP OF STATISTICAL METHODS: RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS	172
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	245
APPENDIX	259
ANNEXURE	266
REFERENCE	303

EVALUATION OF THE PANCHAYAT EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE SCHEMES (PEAIS) IN THE STATES OF CHHATTISGARH, KARNATAKA, KERALA, PUNJAB & RAJASTHAN

TABLE CONTENT

Table No. ES.1 : Cumulative Index of Selected Panchayats from the State of Punjab	16
Table No. ES.2: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Eight Award Winning Panchayats from the State of Rajasthan	18
Table No. E.3 Gives Panchayat wise cumulative score for eight award winning Panchayats from the State of Chhattisgarh	19
Table No.E.4: Gives Panchayat wise cumulative score for seven award winning Panchayats from the State of Karnataka	21
Table No. E.5: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Three Award Winning Gram Panchayats from the State of Kerala.	23
Table No. ES.5.i: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Two Block Panchayats and One District Panchayat.	23
Table No.P1: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score of Eight Award Winning Panchayats from the State of Punjab	186
Table No. R 1: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Eight Award Winning Panchayats from the State of Rajasthan	201
Table No. C1 : Gives Panchayat wise cumulative score for eight award winning Panchayats from the State of Chhattisgarh	215
Table No. KA1: Gives Panchayat wise cumulative score for seven award winning Panchayats from the State of Karnataka	230
Table No. KE1: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Three Award Winning Gram Panchayats from the State of Kerala	241
Table No. KE 1.i: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Two Block Panchayats and One District Panchayat from the state of Kerala.	243

EVALUATION OF THE PANCHAYAT EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE SCHEMES (PEAIS) IN THE STATES OF CHHATTISGARH, KARNATAKA, KERALA, PUNJAB & RAJASTHAN

DIAGRAM CONTENT

Diagram No .ES.1: Shows the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Punjab.	17
Diagram No .ES.2: Presents the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Rajasthan.	18
Diagram No. ES.3: Presents the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Chhattisgarh.	20
Diagram No. ES.4: Shows the Relative Performance after the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Karnataka.	21
Diagram No. ES.5: Shows the Relative Performance of Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Kerala.	24
Diagram No. ES.6: Shows the Relative Performance of Two Block Panchayats and one District Panchayat in terms of Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Kerala.	24
Diagram No. P 1: Shows the Performance of the Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS)	174
Diagram No.P 2: Shows the Performance of the Bathinda Zilla Parishad after the Award (PEAIS)	175
Diagram No. P3: Shows the Performance of the Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS)	177
Diagram No. P4: Shows the Performance of the Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS)	178
Diagram No.P5: Shows the Performance of the Kutba Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS)	180
Diagram No.P6: Shows the Performance of the Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	181
Diagram No.P7: Shows the Performance of the Sangrur Panchayat Samithi after the Award (PEAIS)	183
Diagram No. P8: Shows the Performance of Thalvandi Bharth Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS)	184
Diagram No. P9: Shows the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the impact of the Award (PEAIS).	187

Diagram No. R.1 Shows the Performance of the Chainpura Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	190
Diagram No.R 2: Shows the Performance of the Chauhathan Panchayat Samithi after the Award (PEAIS).	191
Diagram No. R3: Shows the Performance of the Churu Zilla Parishad after the Award (PEAIS).	193
Diagram No. R4: Shows the Performance of the Dhanari Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	194
Diagram No. R5: Shows the Performance of Ganeshwar Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	195
Diagram No. R6: Shows the Performance of Lodsar Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	197
Diagram No. R7: Shows the Performance of Solana Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	198
Diagram No. R8: Shows the Performance of Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti after the Award (PEAIS).	199
Diagram No. R9: Presents the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS).	201
Diagram No .C1: Shows the Performance of Dharamgarh Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	204
Diagram No .C2: Shows the Performance of Govindpur Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	205
Diagram No .C3: Shows the Performance of Kartala Janpad Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	207
Diagram No .C4: Shows the Performance of Lakshanpur Janpatd Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	208
Diagram No .C 5: Shows the Performance of Sarguja Zilla Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	209
Diagram No .C6: Shows the Performance of Sasauli Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	210
Diagram No .C7: Shows the Performance of Tarasgaon Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	212
Diagram No .C8: Shows the Performance of Umreli Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	213
Diagram No .C9: Presents the Relative Performance of the Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS).	216
Diagram No . KA1: Shows the Performance of Basava Kalyana Taluk Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	219
Diagram No . KA2: Shows the Performance of Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	220
Diagram No . KA3: Shows the Performance of Ghatboral Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	222

Diagram No . KA4: Shows the Performance of Gummagol Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	224
Diagram No . KA5: Shows the Performance of Ittamadu Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	226
Diagram No . KA6: Shows the Performance of Koppa Taluk Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	227
Diagram No . KA7: Shows the Performance of Madamakki Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	228
Diagram No . KA8: Shows the Relative Performance after the Award (PEAIS).	231
Diagram No . KE1: Shows the Performance of Mutholi Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	234
Diagram No . KE2: Shows the Performance of Chembilode Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	235
Diagram No . KE3: Shows the Performance of Nedumpana Gram Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	237
Diagram No . KE4: Shows the Performance of Cherpu Block Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	238
Diagram No . KE5: Shows the Performance of Chittumala Block Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	239
Diagram No . KE6: Shows the Performance of Kasaragod District Panchayat after the Award (PEAIS).	240
Diagram No . KE7: Shows the Relative Performance of Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS).	242
Diagram No.KE8: Shows the Relative Performance of Two Block Panchayats and one District Panchayat in terms of Impact of the Award (PEAIS).	243

EVALUATION OF THE PANCHAYAT EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE SCHEMES (PEAIS) IN THE STATES OF CHHATTISGARH, KARNATAKA, KERALA, PUNJAB & RAJASTHAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) is a landmark achievement in strengthening the process of devolution in India. PEAIS is one of the Central Sector Plan Schemes which is being implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj since 2005-06 with a small allocation of Rs. 5 crore, which was later raised to Rs.10 crore, to be given to highest performing States on the basis of extent of devolution carried out by them. This was to motivate States for greater devolution. A second component was introduced in 2011-2012 to incentivize Panchayats from States and UTs to put in place accountability & performance system and democratic style to make their functioning transparent and efficient. Thus, PEAIS is a centralized intervention for decentralization by State through devolution.

The executive summary details the results of the impact assessment of the award under the two components of PEAIS for the period 2010-2011. The aim of the study was to measure the effectiveness of the award under PEAIS on five selected States and the PRI's from the selected States. The States selected included Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala. Out of the five States, three States (Kerala, Karnataka and Rajasthan) are selected from the 'award winning category' and two from the 'non award winning category' (Punjab and Chhattisgarh). This is based on the ranking generated through devolution index which was initiated in the period 2004 -2005. The study was conducted among selected PRI's of the States mentioned above which included all the three tiers (Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat). The data was collected using qualitative methodologies. Statistical methods were used to quantify the data and to generate cumulative score and composite index which were used

to the measure the impact. Literature survey in the form of literature searches was also conducted to determine the trends of conducting impact assessments.

A Conspectus of the Evaluation

PEAIS is one of the flagship programs of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj ,Government of India. The report focuses on the evaluation of the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme award with respect to its effectiveness on the spheres of the PRI's. For this purpose, as mentioned earlier award winning and non award winning PRI's were selected from five states viz. Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala. To keep the task manageable, we concentrate on five major states and the assignment is expected primarily to concentrate on the extent to which devolution has been operationalized. Though the assessment is limited by information largely available in the five states, the scope is inevitably across the States and UTs. While starting the exercise, it was generally misunderstood that the time has not matured enough to assess the impact of the scheme and hence we are not very clear to say much about the impact of the scheme has been though it is likely to be in the long run. As the major objectives of the assignment, it is limited to the efforts to incentive States to devolve more functions, functionaries and finance to Panchayats and to strengthen the Panchayats in terms of performance and accountability and is concerned primarily with the State and Panchayat level responses to the scheme objectives .The overview provided in this report is the assessment of the scheme and it is an ongoing process.

The Structure of the Report

The report is organized in seven major chapters in addition to the Executive Summery, Appendix and Annexure. The introduction delivers the objectives, approach and methodology, introduces the methodology chart, discusses the formative steps, and lists out the PRI's from the five selected States. The second chapter deals with the process of devolution in India. The third chapter deals with the devolution status in the selected

States . The fourth chapter discusses the impact of the award based on the case studies. The fifth chapter discusses the impact of the award based on primary observations where as the sixth chapter discusses the impact with the help of statistical methods. The seventh chapter, the concluding session highlights the importance of the award as it is gathered from the experience of the study and there by bringing out recommendations for improving, scaling up, extension and continuation of the PEAIS award.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the study are as follows:

A. Devolution by States:

1. The reasons, logic and rational for introducing the PEAIS.
2. The Extent to which the Devolution Index (DI) has been improved / refined over the years to accurately reflect the extent of devolution across States and further improvements that can be undertaken in this regard.
3. The impact of the incentivization as per the DI with regard to devolution of 3Fs by States to Panchayats include in part 1X of the Constitution .The extent to which the schemes has been able to achieve its objective including.

(a)Has PEAIS encouraged States /UTs that have been given award to perform better?

(b)Has PEAIS motivated the media and decentralization activists to cover the achievements of the better performed States? If so, to what extent and its impact.

(c)What has been the impact on the decentralization and Panchayats in the States that have not won this Award?

4. To under stand the perception of the key persons (academicians, policy makers politicians functionaries of the Panchayats and media who have stake on the issue of devolution and strengthening PRIs.

B Assessment of Panchayats:

- 1 The reasons, logic and rational for introducing the assessment of individual Panchayats under PEAIS.
- 2 The extent to which the indicators questionnaire, marking scheme for the assessment of Panchayats performance, including of Gram Sabha and Standing Committees are effective ,and what are the improvements that can be undertaken in this regard ?
- 3 How objective, fair, inclusive and effective has been the process of Panchayat assessment? How can it be improved further?
- 4 The impact of PEAIS has made on the awarded Panchayats in terms of encouraging them to perform better?
- 5 To what extent has one year of implementation of PEAIS for incentivization of Panchayats generated awareness about Panchayat performance among States and Panchayats .How can the current level of awareness about the scheme to be enhanced?
- 6 How can the scheme are used to identify Panchayats that are performing below standard along with best performing Panchayats?
- 7 To examine gender sensitization and gender dimension of the scheme and suggest measures to accommodate more gender sensitization and dimension in PEAIS.
- 8 To look whether social and economic dimensions of development as envisaged in the Constitution has been incorporated in the scheme with adequate attention.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology is framed to incorporate the two components of PEAIS for the period 2010-2011. A set of case studies are used as the primary referral material on the basis of

which qualitative assessment of the impact is made. Three sources of evidence provided the basis for the case studies—key informant interviews, document review, and focuses group discussions (FGDs). Assessment and evaluation based on the primary surveys is also used. The primary and valid observations from each selected PRI are taken into account. A statistical model was utilized for bringing better quantitative outcomes. A Panchayat wise measurement of the effectiveness of PEAIS based on statistical methods was envisaged and put into practice. An average score value (composite index) was calculated for each sub themes on Panchayat wise. A composite score for each Panchayat (including all tiers) based on these indicators is constructed for assessing the impact of these Panchayats in the post PEAIS award period. A cumulative index for each PRI was prepared out of the composite scores and attempts were made to plot all the cumulative score values of different sub themes of the selected Panchayats of a State in a radar diagram. The same exercise was done in all the selected Panchayats of five states. The index thus formulated helped in comprehending the impact that the PEAIS had on the award winning and non award winning PRI's of the selected States.

Statistical Model

In the questionnaire/marking scheme, there are six sub themes and they are (1) Panchayat Functioning (2) Management of Personnel and Capacity Building (3) Planning and Budget formation (4) Income Generation (5) Performance of Panchayat and (6) Accountability and Transparency. Each sub themes were constructed based on a number of indicators. There are 15, 3, 8, 7,14, and11 indicators respectively for Panchayat functioning, management of personnel and capacity building, planning and budget formation, income generation, performance of Panchayat and accountability & transparency. Each indicator in the sub theme has been widely discussed among the functionaries of the selected Panchayats and finally the performance is marked. The performance of each indicator is fixed on a four point scale, viz, good, moderate, below moderate and nil. Marks are assigned and the respective marks are three, two, one and

zero for good, moderate, below moderate and nil. If the performance of an indicator is good it may get a maximum score value of three whereas if the performance is nil the score value is zero. The total score value of a sub theme is based on the number of indicators. For example, the sub theme of Panchayat functioning has 15 indicators, on the other side it is only three indicators for management of personnel and capacity building. In the first case the maximum score value is calculated as 45 whereas in the second case it is nine. Finally, the average score value (composite index) is calculated for each sub themes on Panchayat wise. A composite score for each Panchayat (including all tiers) based on these indicators is constructed for assessing the impact of these Panchayats in the post PEAIS award period. A cumulative index for each PRI is prepared out of the composite scores and attempts are made to plot all the cumulative score values of different sub themes of the selected Panchayats of a State in a radar diagram. The index thus formulated helps in comprehending the relative positions of each PRI. Achievements in several dimensions can also be aggregated into a single whole by appropriately designing the index making procedure. Present level of achievement of an entity can be divided by the maximum possible achievement. This kind of exercise would confine the range of value between zero and one. One advantage of this procedure is that better differentiation is built in this index, particularly when an entity is compared with another rather than when it is compared with itself over time.

Six sectors were suggested by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj viz. Panchayat functions, management of personnel and capacity building, planning and budget formation, income generation, performance of Panchayat and accountability & transferability. This was restructured in to eight broad sectors by the State of Kerala for assessing the performance of Gram Panchayats (The separate marking scheme of Kerala is included in Appendix No. I) . The sectors in the case of Kerala included governance, financial management, civic functions, welfare functions, development functions, *Kudumbasree* activities, audit clearance and innovative development interventions. Only four broad sectors are

suggested for assessing the performance of the Block and District Panchayats in Kerala which include governance, development functions, audit clearance and innovative development interventions. The Report was thus finalized taking into account the qualitative and quantitative exercises which was incorporated to reflect on the two major components of the Study. The Principal Investigator made a presentation of the report on 17 June, 2013 before the Senior Officials of the MoPR chaired by the Secretary. All the valuable comments on the Report have been incorporated.

UNDERSTANDING THE LEVEL AND EXTEND OF DEVOLUTION

There is a great variation in progress made during the period both across States for a given indicator and across indicators for a given State. And this is also applicable across Panchayats with in the State. It is observed that some of the variations across States are due to the differences to the scope and extent of devolution in that particular State. The report try to take care of these aspects with the help of qualitative and quantitative processes as discussed in the methodology part. The results of the analysis are presented in this section.

Impact on Devolution Index on the States (Qualitative Findings)

Though the State of **Rajasthan** had started an inspiring journey towards local democracy and governance in 1959, it is noticed that not much devolution took place in the post 73rd amendment phase. However, serious attempts are being made to clear the backlog of the developments in devolution. Rajasthan has now started moving forward with 5th position as per the cumulative devolution index prepared by MOPR /IIP in 2011-2012 . One serious area of concern is regarding the dimension of functionaries. The study indicates that the dimension of functionaries is relatively weak area in the status of decentralization and therefore more action may be needed to deploy more functionaries at the dispensation of Panchayats. The additional construction of devolution index in incremental performance is highly appreciated by the State. Special mention may be

made of the 'Panchayat window', the budget speech of the Chief Minister for 2011-2012, transfer of income from sales of minor forest produce (MFP), incentive based award grand for encouraging the Panchayats to mobilize resource from own source and special attention to PESA region. All the major stakeholders of the State compassionately argued for the relevance of the devolution index and its continuity. The political leadership takes the credit of the award. As an impact of the award under devolution index, it is generally expected to perform better for effective devolution in the coming years

Kerala has been placed first among the Indian States with a score value of 63.07 as against the national average of 41.92 for the year 2011-2012. Among the four dimensions, Kerala's position is top on two dimensions of finance and functionaries and the respective score values are 63.01 and 52.94. The other two dimensions of framework and functions, Karnataka surpass Kerala. It gives an impression that in the coming years there may be a healthy competition between the two States for accomplishing the top position in the devolution index. As Kerala had been successively winning the PEAIS award some degree of 'self complacency' and 'righteousness position' has infiltrated among the decentralization activists. Some of the limitations of Kerala decentralization have been discussed widely in the public sphere. In this context, it is argued that the Kerala decentralization demands major professional expertise for up gradation. Even in a State known for the high level of human development indices, vibrant civil society for public action and higher regime support for decentralization than those of other States, the lack of technical, administrative and financial know-how of the local governments seems to be the major bottlenecks. In a series of articles in a vernacular daily the former Minister of Local Self Government acknowledged the impact of the PEAIS. He said, "the overall recognition of the State received from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj based on the top position on the devolution index among the Indian States works out as protective shield from diluting the devolution process in the State of Kerala" (Paloli Mukamadha Kutty, 2012). In other words, the positioning of Kerala in the devolution index under

PEAIS may be an acid test to know whether the policies of the State Government have been diluting the decentralization process. What is noticed generally in Kerala is the total agreement on the methodology and the ranking of the States. The logic and relevance of the ranking of the States based on an index has been appreciated. The present Minister who is in charge of Panchayats admit that a healthy competition among the Indian States on devolution index may accelerate the process of decentralization provided every State should be capable enough to compete.

Karnataka has been placed second top among the Indian states with an overall score value of 62.15 for the reference period. The devolution index for the State of Karnataka reveals that some attention may be needed in the dimension of functionaries for marching towards the top position in the country. Among the four dimensions, Karnataka's position is top on two dimensions of framework and functions. The other two dimensions of finance and functionaries, Kerala surpass Karnataka. It is noticed that Karnataka seriously follows the developments in the construction of devolution index and the ranking of the States. The idea of applying devolution index as criteria for the performance linked funding is appreciated by the Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat, Government of Karnataka. It is noticed that Karnataka seriously follows the developments in the construction of devolution index and the ranking of the States. The methodology and indicators for ranking the States / UTs are simple and transparent according to the officials who are in charge of PEAIS. The motivation and support to the State by MoPR in the form of a package under PEAIS is highly appreciated. It is also admitted that the index is a powerful barometer to measure the degree decentralization among Indian States.

According to the Devolution Index of MoPR and IIPA for the year 2011-2012, the rank of **Punjab's** score was 27.22 which placed 17th among the Indian States and it is against the national average of 41.92. While the score for framework is near to national average as a result of the formal devolution, the fact that there has been very little

achievement in terms of devolution of finance and functionaries has resulted in the poor rank of the State as per the devolution index. The devolution index of the State of Punjab gives an impression that there is mismatch between the four dimensions. It shows the current dynamics in devolution of power, finances, functions and functionaries in the existing three tier system of Panchayati Raj in the State. It is to be stated that decentralized planning for socio economic development and social justice in its complete sense has not fully evolved in the State of Punjab. The decentralization and devolution process is still in its initial stages. It is high time to clear all the backlogs and address the existing gaps. The process of decentralization in Punjab has not kept pace with many other States and that devolution in Punjab is thriving to build successful models. During the discussion with State officials and political leaders it was understood that the State has more interest in the second component of the PEAIS, the verification of individual Panchayats. It is felt that the construction of incremental performance index has generated certain amount of confidence among the stakeholders in Punjab. The confidence is expressed in the words of an official who is attached to PEAIS at the State level “Punjab can also aspire an award for incremental performance under PEAIS provided the process of decentralization is adequately supported by political will”.

According to the devolution index prepared by the MoPR and IIPA in 2011-2012, the rank of **Chhattisgarh** is 8th among the Indian States. While considering the relatively higher score values of framework dimension and finance dimension, it gives an impression that the State of Chhattisgarh can perform better results, if reasonable degree of functionaries would have been deployed at the Panchayats. The discussions conducted at the State level reveals that both the components of PEAIS (1.construction of devolution index & ranking of States /UTs and 2.verification of individual Panchayats & its award) are known to the stakeholders. The faculty at SIRD, the nodal officer of PEAIS and the State officials of Social Welfare and Panchayati Raj, Government of Chhattisgarh has relatively good information and knowledge on the devolution index and ranking procedure on the status of decentralization in the States/UTs. All of them have the

opinion that index is based on scientific and objective criteria. Transparency is the hallmark of the exercise as commented by majority of them. The relevance of the index and ranking of the States are highly appreciated. All of them stand for continuing the exercises. One senior official commented that “it is our serious concern”. When he was asked to comment on incremental performance index, he said “it has more contextual relevance for certain States like Chhattisgarh”. The present Minister of the Panchayat has made a comment that the State of Chhattisgarh has to be appreciated its efforts towards decentralization with in the background of leftwing extremists. It is suggested that either the leftwing extremists affected States may be considered separately or additional weightage may be given while ranking the States based on the devolution index.

Impact on Award Winning and Non Award Winning PRIs (Qualitative Findings)

The case studies were also found effective in reading the impact of PEAIS on the award winning and non award winning States. The case studies from the award winning and non award winning States stand an answer to the question whether the PEAIS award has got any real impact on the PRI's of the respective States and whether it was successful in achieving its objectives. The case studies as mentioned earlier forms the primary referral material on which the assessment of the impact is made.

The visits to the award winning PRI's revealed that there were many non award winning neighboring Panchayats who were really interested in knowing the methods by which they have achieved the success. They visited the award winning Panchayats to understand the way in which local resources were mobilized from all possible sources to force the developmental activities. Most of the case studies point out that all the visitors (mostly officials and elected representatives of the neighboring Panchayats) no doubt, were inspired as well as incentivized and the award winning Panchayats has now become model to all of them. The case studies from Punjab and Chhattisgarh indicated that that there are remarkable changes which include increased frequency of Panchayat

Committees, active participation of Panchayat members, increase in the number of Gram Sabhas, efforts on local resource mobilization etc. One incident each to support the cases of Punjab and Rajasthan are produced below.

When the team reached the Talvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat, in Punjab Shri. Rajindar Singh, the Sarpanch of Dabawal Kalan Gram Panchayat and Shri. Guruvindar Singh, the Sarpanch of Kottla Gram Panchayat along with their secretaries were present at the Gram Panchayat office. These two Sarpanchs reported that they have a plan to apply for the award in the coming year. They were congratulating and appreciating the sincere efforts of Talvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat towards achieving the award. They told that it was their second visit to Talvandi Bharath after their achievement.

Lodsar Gram Panchayat (Rajasthan) has a 12 member Panchayat Committee with Smt. Santhosh Devi as the Sarpanch. Shri. Jeevan Nehara is the Gram Sevak of the Panchayat. On queries regarding the responses to the award the Gram Sevak had lot of things to explain. The local news papers *Rajasthan Pathrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar* gave good coverage of Lodsar getting adjudged as award winner. It is reported that total nine Sarpanchs (Shri. Harish Prik from Morangsar GP, Shri Damodar from Salasar GP, Shri Kanaram Didariya from Bhimsar GP, Shri Bhuraram from Malasisar GP, Shri Lakshman Meghwal from Sobhasar GP, Shri Ramakaran Jakhid from Sarotia GP, Shri Diwan Singh from Bhansisariya GP, Shri Punger Kileri from Harasar GP, and Shri Gopal Tiwari from Sandwarda GP) had visited Lodsar and enquired about details of their success story. The Sarpanch and the Gram Savak explained to them that they are trying to replicate the best practices found successful in other areas.

The case studies from Chathisgarh also reveal how the recognition of their award winning Gram Panchayat has impacted upon the other Panchayats in the neighborhood. Case studies from Karnataka indicate that there is commendable progress in terms of

physical and financial achievements in the utilization of allocation of funds under the three sub sectors of women development, SCP and TSP. Case studies from the Panchayats of Kerala shows the importance of innovative schemes in delivery of public goods and local economic development.

The Sarguja Zilla Parishad (Chhattisgarh) has received the award under (PEAIS) during 2010 -2011 financial year for the remarkable performance . The Chairman, Vice Chairman and CEO of the Zilla Parishd reported that after receiving this award their responsibility towards the citizens have increased and they have made measures to improve the quality of service delivery. It is reported that after the PEAIS the working time of the Zilla Panchayat (Saguja) and Janpad Panchayat (Lakhanpur) have increased by two hours in the evening and even Sundays also they are working.

During the FGD with the functionaries of the Ittamadu Gram Panchayat,(Karnataka) it is reported that after winning the award under PEAIS from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India, the status of the Ittamadu Gram Panchayat has improved and the relationship between the local public and the Gram Panchayat has changed, positively. The people's perception on their Panchayat is now different and the majority of the local population in the area is well aware of the status of Ittamadu Gram Panchayat. During the Focus Group Discussion, the Gram Panchayat Committee opined that this award (PEAIS) is powerful tool for the empowerment of the Panchayats. They agreed that the award is an inspiration to deliver service to the people. "The award brings more visibility, prestige and honor to us in one side and the other side it is a real challenge. We have to keep it up without slippage. The expectations of the people are now very high. The people expect efficient administration and good service delivery from our side. How to keep it up? We have to do a lot of hard work", the Committee added.

The Kasaragod District Panchayat (Kerala) received the award (PEAIS) for the period 2010-2011 for better performance in the area of empowerment and accountability. The evaluation team visited the District Panchayat and held discussion with the elected members and the officials. During the discussion with the officials it was reported that the award should have a continuation since it is an inspiration to the PRIs for the better performance. It is also reported that after winning the award the participation in the Panchayat Committee has improved. There is an improvement in the existing monitoring system of the District Panchayat. Local public are also well aware that their District Panchayat is the first in the State among other District Panchayats and the award is for its outstanding achievements. “We know what our position was when we were rated and awarded in the last year. And we know where we are today. We have improved a lot in all the four indicators. And also we have been in the process of moving towards improvements. These are our achievements and they are mainly because of the motivation and inspiration of the award only”, said a member of the Panchayat committee

The case studies reveal that the award under PEAIS is definitely creating a healthy competition among the PRIs for good governance. The award was an inspiration for hard work. The award creates more responsibility for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the major aspects of Governance. The case studies tell that the approach by the PRI's towards the PEAIS was scientific and effective and that the award has established its enduring presence and is one among the strong advocates in creating awareness for good governance principles among the Panchayats at all the three tiers in the selected five States .

In the context of the outcome oriented intervention in the form of the award under PEAIS , the study capitalizes on the evidence from the impact assessment and evaluation based on primary observations of the six sectors viz. Panchayat Functioning, Management of Personnel and Capacity Building, Planning and Budget Formation,

Income Generation, Performance of Panchayats and Accountability & Transparency of the selected five States. It tries to extract lessons about the impact of the award on the positive outcomes. The exercise was found effective in finding out the impact of the award on the selected PRI's of the selected States. Considerable improvements could be seen in the Panchayat Functioning aspects viz. the functioning of Panchayat committees, standing committees and Gram Sabha of almost all the PRI's from Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala. Majority of the Panchayati Raj Institutions felt the need of training as a serious business for running the Panchayats and as such the management of personnel and capacity building was taken seriously in all the States. The surveys indicate that most of the PRIs have got inspired and have made attempts to start timely preparation of annual plans of development programme and budget. Some elements of gender dimensions have been grafted in the budgets of the few Panchayats . Enquiries regarding own income of the Gram Panchayats in Punjab have made the Panchayat authorities to analysis the financial status of their own institution and find ways to increase own income. Hardly a few Panchayats in Rajasthan has taken right moves in the direction. In Chhattisgarh the own revenue mobilization of the Gram Panchayat is very negligible and generally the Panchayats are not properly attending to the collection of taxes. A few award winning Panchayats are seen concentrated in mobilizing own funds. In Karnataka some of the award winning Panchayats have succeeded to mobilize the contribution from the public and corporate management for the public cause and implementation of the projects. The tax collection of the three award winning Gram Panchayats were commendable in Kerala though this was not the case in other Panchayats. The exercise was also effective in assessing the impact of the award on the performance aspects of the selected PRIs. The impact is visible in all the States. The report also indicates that the award have incentivized the PRIs in keeping accounts up to date and in formats and registers prescribed by the Government in all the selected States. The efforts undertaken by the State of Karnataka could be termed remarkable.

Quantitative Findings

Composite scores for each sector and cumulative index for each PRI was formulated for comprehending the effectiveness of the award on each PRI. Based on the objectives of the programme, the major findings for each of the State with their respective cumulative scores are summarized below:

Punjab

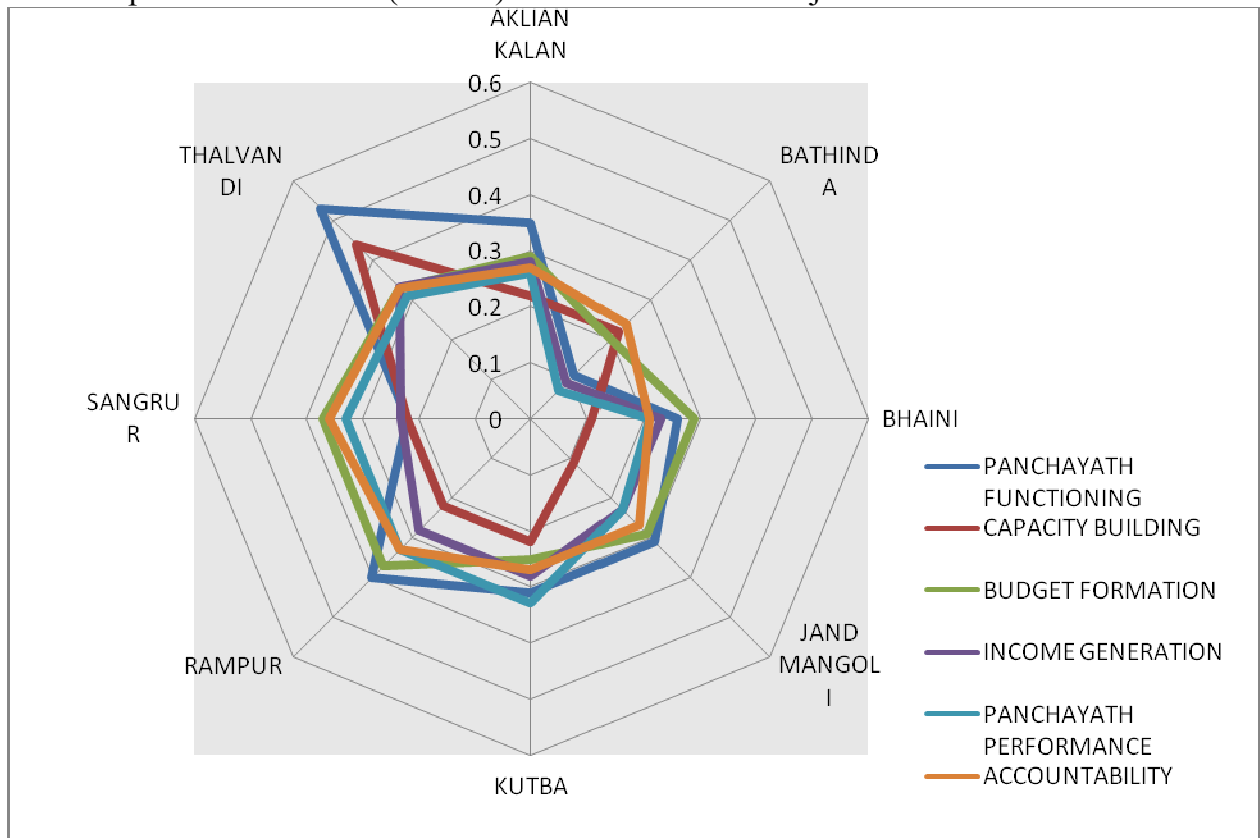
The impact of the award under PEAIS is visible and measured in all the eight selected Panchayats from the State of Punjab. Maximum impact is visible in Thalvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat followed by Rampur Sunra Panchayat, Sangrur Panchayat Samiti, Kutba Panchayat and Aklian Panchayat. Comparatively low impact is visible in Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat, Jand Mangoli Gram Panchayat, and Bathinda Zilla Parishad. But, in a relatively shorter period since the PEAIS award, the achievement could be termed remarkable. The cumulative index for each Panchayat could be visualized from the table No ES 1.

Table No. ES.1 : Cumulative Index of Selected Panchayats from the State of Punjab

SI No	Name of the Panchayat	Cumulative Index
1	AKLIAN KALAN G.P.	0.28
2	BATHINDA ZILLA PARISHAD	0.16
3	BHAINI JASSA G.P.	0.22
4	JAND MANGOLI G.P.	0.24
5	KUTBA G.P	0.28
6	RAMPUR SUNRA G.P	0.32
7	SANGRUR PANCHAYAT SAMITI	0.29
8	THALVANDI BHARTH G.P.	0.38

Source: Annexure No. P 2

Diagram No .ES.1: Shows the Relative Performance of the Selected Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Punjab.



Source: Annexure No. P 2

Results of the analysis are plotted on a 0.6 scale in the radar. The units of enquiry are placed according to their relative achievements in the post award (PEAIS) period. The graph indicates that the impact of the award (PEAIS) has been most effective in Talvandi Bharth and Rampur Munran Gram Panchayats.

Rajasthan

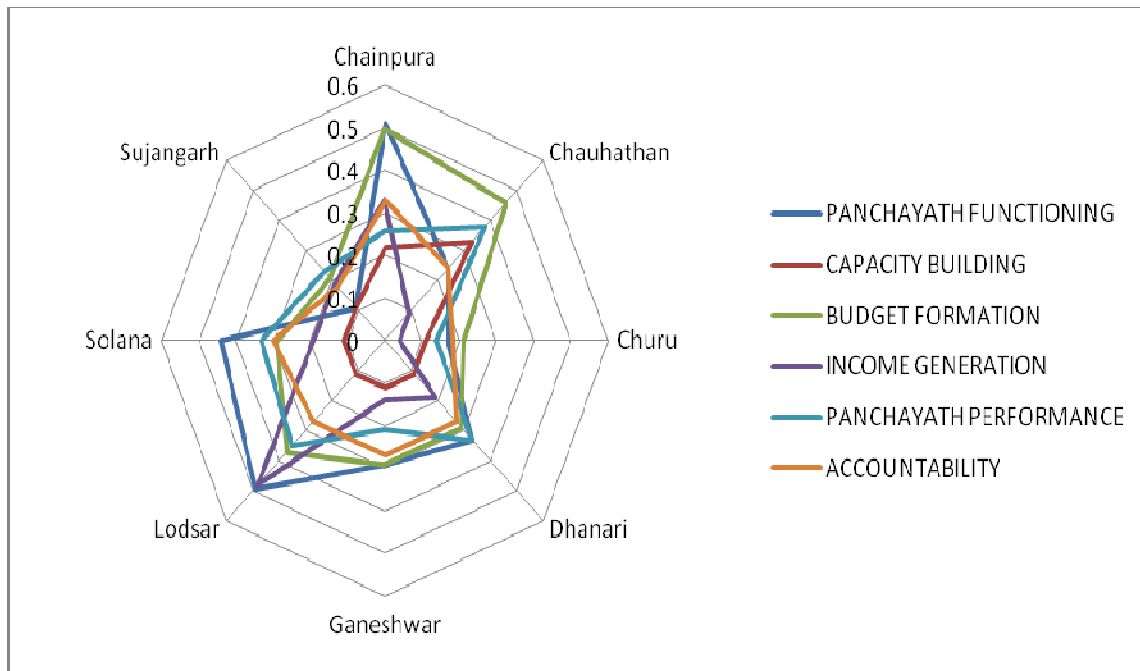
The impact from the case of Rajasthan is commendable as per the measurable evidence. Maximum impact in case of Rajasthan is visible in Lodsar and Chainpura Gram Panchayats which is followed by Chauhathan Panchayat Samithi and Solana Gram Panchayat. The impact is relatively lower in Dhanari and Ganeshwar Gram Panchayats. The impact is minimal in Churu Zilla Parishad and Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti. The cumulative index for each Panchayat could be visualized from the TableNo.ES.2 .

Table No. ES.2: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Eight Award Winning Panchayats from the State of Rajasthan.

SI No	Name of the Panchayat	Cumulative Index
1	Chainpura G.P	0.36
2	Chauhathan Panchayat Samiti	0.29
3	Churu Zilla Parishad	0.14
4	Dhanari G.P	0.25
5	Ganeshwar G.P.	0.22
6	Lodsar.G.P	0.34
7	Solana G.P.	0.28
8	Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti	0.17

Source: Annexure Nos. R 2

Diagram No .ES.2: Presents the Relative Performance of the selected Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Rajasthan.



Source: Annexure Nos. R 2

Results of the analysis are plotted on a 0.6 scale in the radar and the units of enquiry are placed according to their relative achievements in the post award (PEAIS) period. The graph indicates that PEAIS has been most effective in Chainpura Gram Panchayat.

Chhattisgarh

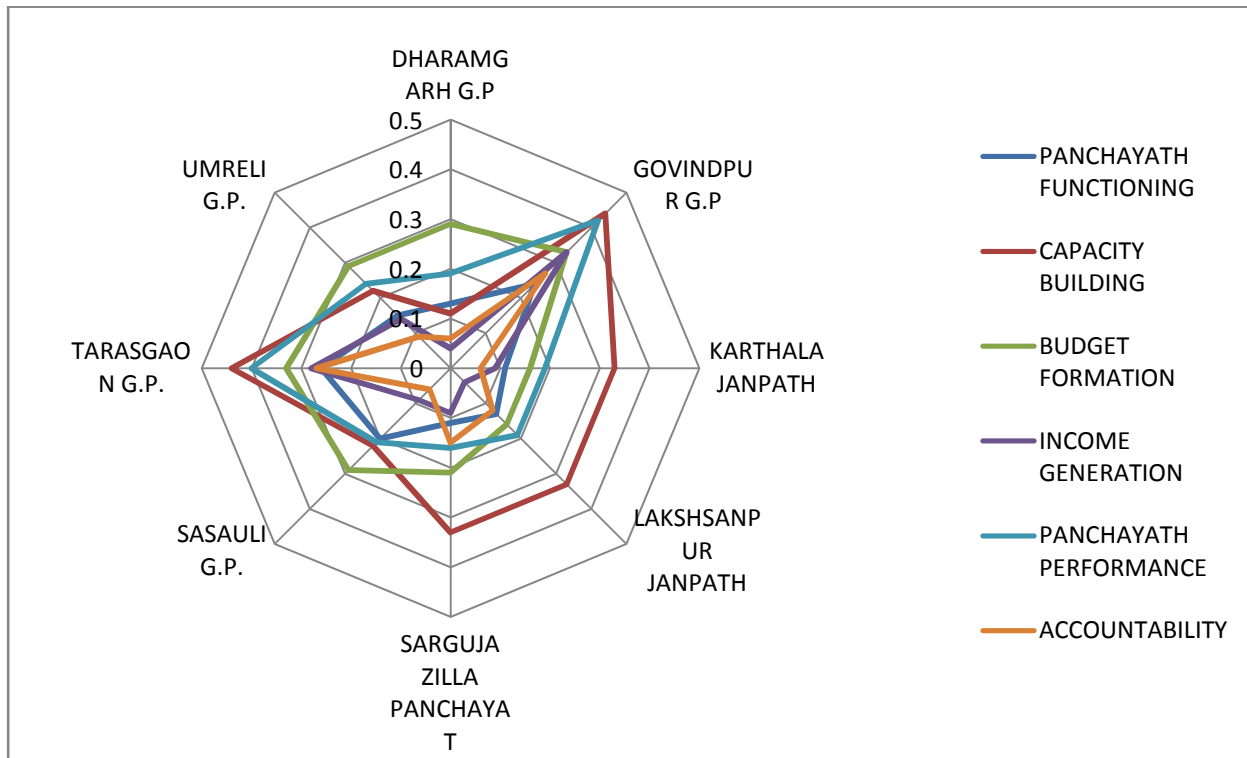
All the selected Panchayats in Chhattisgarh has succeeded to manifest measurable quantity of impact. The impact of PEAIS is high in Govindapur Panchayat closely followed by Tarasgaon Panchayat. The impact is comparatively low in Umreli Panchayat, Sasauli Panchayat, Sarguja Zilla Panchayat, Lakshanpur Janpad, Kartala Janapad and Dharamgarh Gram Panchayat. It could be stated that considering the shorter durations since the PEAIS award the impact is impressive in Govindapur and Tarasgaon. Relatively low but uniform improvement could be seen in the rest of the Panchayats. The cumulative index for each Panchayat could be seen from the Table No.ES.3 .

Table No. ES.3 Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Eight Award Winning Panchayats from the State of Chhattisgarh

SI No	Name of the Panchayat	Cumulative Index
1	DHARAMGARH G.P	0.13
2	GOVINDPUR G.P	0.34
3	KARTALA JANPAD PANCHAYAT	0.14
4	LAKSHSANPUR JANPAD PANCHAYAT	0.16
5	SARGUJA ZILLA PANCHAYAT	0.17
6	SASAULI G.P.	0.18
7	TARASGAON G.P.	0.33
8	UMRELI G.P.	0.19

Source: Annexure Nos. C 2

Diagram No. ES.3: Presents the Relative Performance of the Selected Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Chhattisgarh.



Source: Annexure Nos. C 2

As it is evident from the graph, the impact of PEAIS award is highly reflected on the Gram Panchayats of Govindapur and Tarasgaon top in this aspect.

Karnataka

The measurable evidences from the State of Karnataka also indicate that the award under PEAIS has helped to improve the quality of governance and social mobilization of local citizens . PEAIS has been most effective in Gummagol Panchayat which is followed by Madamakki and Ghatboral Gram Panchayats. The impact on management of personnel and capacity building and Panchayat functions have taken the scores of Gummagol and Ghatboral higher. The impact is relatively uniform in almost every aspect in Madamakki Gram Panchayat. The impact is relatively better and uniform in Madamakki, Ghatboral and Gummagol Panchayats. The impact is comparatively lower in Basava Kalyana Taluk

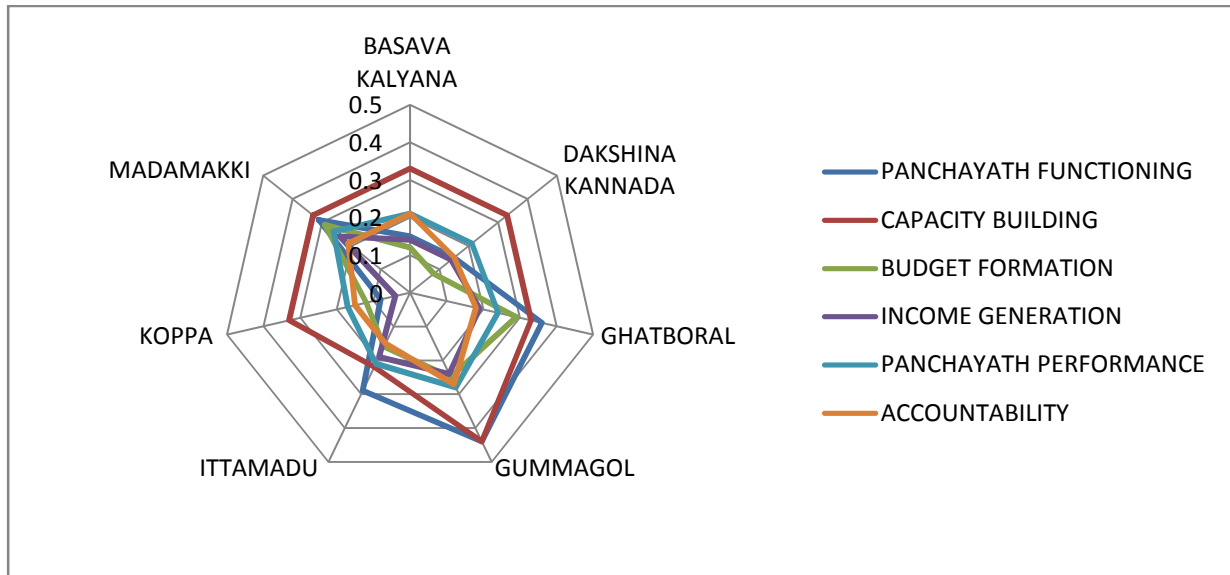
Panchayat, Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat and Koppa Taluk Panchayat. The cumulative index for each Panchayat is presented in Table No.ES.4.

Table No.ES.4: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Seven Award winning Panchayats from the State of Karnataka.

SI No	Name of the Panchayat	Cumulative Index
1	BASAVA KALYANA TALUK PANCHAYAT	0.19
2	DAKSHINA KANNADA ZILLA PANCHAYAT	0.18
3	GHATBORAL GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.26
4	GUMMAGOL GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.31
5	ITTAMADU GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.20
6	KOPPA TALUK PANCHAYAT	0.15
7	MADAMAKKI GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.27

Source: Annexure No.KA 2

Diagram No. ES.4: Shows the Relative Performance after the Award (PEAIS) from the Selected Panchayats of the State of Karnataka.



Source: Annexure No.KA 2

In radar of 0.5 scale, we have plotted the results of the analysis and the units of enquiry are placed according to their relative improvement in the post PEAIS period. The graph indicates that PEAIS has been most effective in Gummagol Panchayat which is followed by Madamakki and Ghatboral Gram Panchayats.

Kerala

The impact of PEAIS is reflected highly in the area of interventions in public action and delivery of public goods in Kerala . The impact is relatively high in development and civic functions in all the three Panchayats viz. Mutholi, Nedumpana and Chempilodu. The impact of PEAIS on Governance is comparatively higher in Nedumpana and Chempilode. The impact on financial management is relatively steady in Mutholi and Nedumpana where as it very minimal in the case of Chempilode Panchayat. The impact is minimal in welfare functions and audit clearance in all the three Panchayats. The impact is well reflected in the *Kudumbasree* activities in Mutholi and Nedumpana Panchayats where as its relatively low in Chempilode Panchayat. With regard to Cherppu Block Panchayat, Chittumala Block Panchayat and Kasargod District Panchayat the impact of PEAIS is reflected highly in the area of new interventions. The impact is comparatively higher in Kasargod District Panchayat. The impact is uniformly high in the development functions in the two Block Panchayats and one District Panchayat. The impact of PEAIS on governance is reflected uniquely in all the three administrative units. This is the same in audit clearance in the all the administrative units. The cumulative index for each Panchayats could be presented in Table No.ES. 5& ES. No.5.i.

Table No. E.5: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Three Award Winning Gram Panchayats from the State of Kerala.

SI No	Name of the Panchayat	Cumulative Index
1	MUTHOLI GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.23
2	CHEMPILODE GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.24
3	NEDUMPANA GRAM PANCHAYAT	0.23

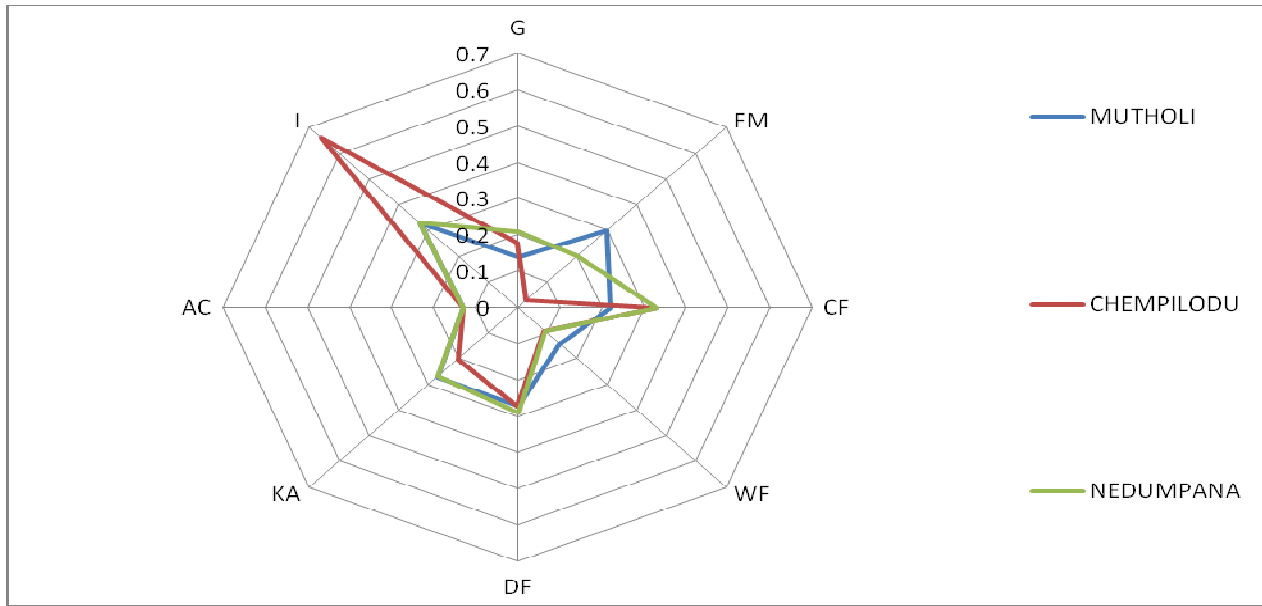
Source: Annexure No. KE 2

Table No. ES.5.i: Gives Panchayat wise Cumulative Score for Two Block Panchayats and One District Panchayat.

SI No	Name of the Block	Cumulative Index
1	CHERPPU BLOCK PANCHAYAT	0.25
2	CHITTUMALA BLOCK PANCHAYAT	0.25
3	KASARGOD DISTRICT PANCHAYAT	0.33

Source: Annexure No. KE 4

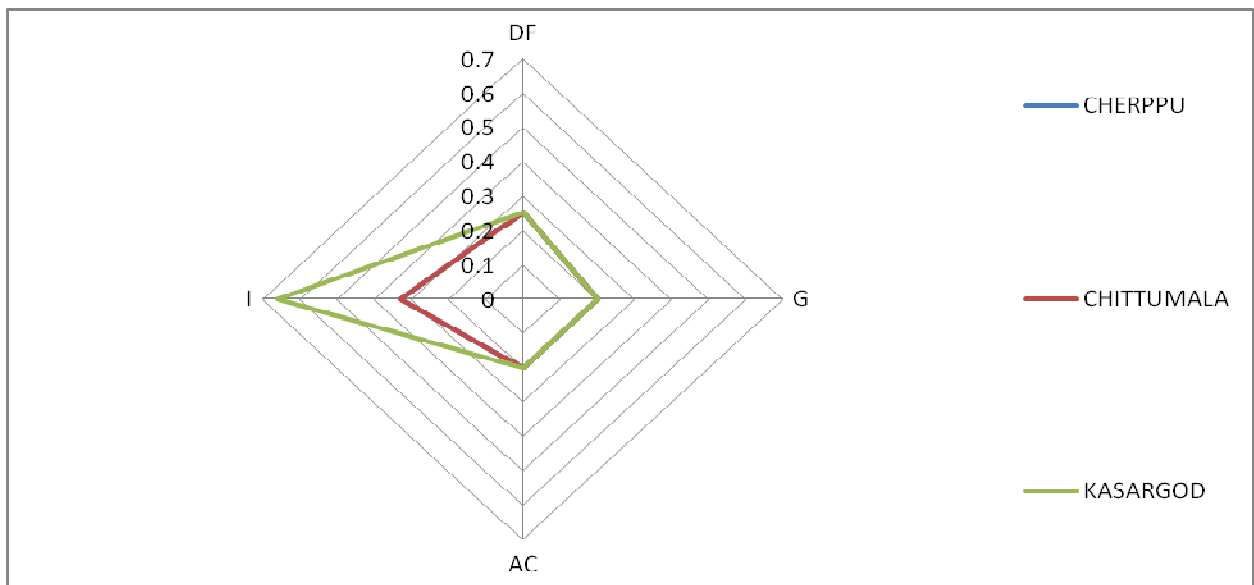
Diagram No. ES.5: Shows the Relative Performance of Panchayats in terms of the Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Kerala.



Source: Annexure No. KE 2

The Radar Diagram indicates that the impact of the award is high in Chempilodu Gram Panchayat which is closely followed by other Panchayats.

Diagram No. ES.6: Shows the Relative Performance of Two Block Panchayats and one District Panchayat in terms of Impact of the Award (PEAIS) from the State of Kerala.



Source: Annexure No. KE 4

The impact is comparatively high in Kasargod District Panchayat. The impact of PEAIS is considerably good in Gram Panchayats than in Zilla Panchayats in States other than Kerala. The index generated gives an impression that the overall performance of the Panchayat has come up, thanks to the award under PEAIS.

The conclusions derived from the case studies and primary surveys also reflected on the positive impact of the PEAIS award. This could be substantiated by few evidences from the field. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj could bring out an excellent monograph on 'Good Practice' which covers 54 case studies on the Panchayats, won the *Panchayat Sashktikaran Puraskar* across the country under the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) in 2011-2012. The PEAIS award has made the Panchayati Raj Institutions more efficient and transparent in their functioning provided and has provided a momentum to the developmental activities of the Panchayats. The justifies that the State Governments, its concerned departments and officials have now considered the award under PEAIS as an important recognition for their respective State in quality governance. This is evident from the words of eminent Ministers and responsible officials. It is noticed that the achievement has created tremendous amount of enthusiasm among political leaders, policy makers related to rural development and Panchayats department , a section of media persons and decentralization activists. The motivation and support to the States by the MoPR under PEAIS is highly appreciated. Transparency is the hallmark of the exercise as commented by majority of the eminent personalities in the field .The relevance of the index and ranking of the States are highly appreciated. The administrative units now stand for continuing the exercises. It is observed that the devolution index under PEAIS is gradually getting absorbed by the political spectrum as it is visible from the statements clubbed from the selected States.

The case studies brought out the success of the PEAIS award on the award winning and non award winning States and reveal that the PEAIS award is definitely creating a healthy competition among the PRIs for good governance. The award creates more responsibility for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the major aspects of governance. The

case studies tell that the approach by the PRI's towards the PEAIS was scientific and effective and that the award has established its enduring presence and is one among the strong advocates in creating awareness for good governance principles among the Panchayats at all the three tiers in India. The numerous lessons about the impact of the award are drawn from rigorous impact evaluation and primary surveys, which have studied a number of Panchayati Raj Institutions from five selected States. These exercises state that the award has motivated the PRI's in meeting the primary objectives of governance by keeping in tact all the sectors.

The results of the statistical exercise almost kept in par with the results derived from the case studies and surveys of award and non award winning PRI's from the selected five States. It could be stated that in a relatively shorter duration since the PEAIS award, the achievement is really impressive.

The reasons, logic and rational for introducing the PEAIS is traced back to the specific context of devolution index/ index of decentralization making in the country. The discontent on the existing devolution formula urged the financial architecture of the country to seriously search for a widely acceptable and justifiable formula for horizontal distribution of resources among States/ UTs from the Centre. The devolution index had been listed as one of the themes in the seven roundtable conferences held in the country and it was resolved that an annual report incorporating devolution index to be prepared by each State but it did not materialize. In this context, the PEAIS has succeeded to achieve two major objectives. (i) The devolution index under PEAIS may be a comfortable and scientific formula for horizontal distribution of resource among States/UTs and; (ii) The report with devolution index prepared by MoPR / IIPA serves the purpose of an annual report with the status of devolution in the country. It is a positive response towards the Srinagar Roundtable Conference.

Since 2010-2011 the IIPA has computed one new index which is known as ‘incremental index’ which is based on the new initiatives that the States have undertaken during last one year. The introduction of incremental index has revolutionized the process of PEAIS.

The reasons, logic and rational for introducing the assessment of individual Panchayats under PEAIS is to specifically capture the degree of the Panchayats’ accountability and performance. The assessment of the individual Panchayats under PEAIS as second component which was introduced in 2011-2012 is capable to incentivize Panchayats to put in place accountability & performance system and democratic style to make their functioning transparent and efficient.

Recommendations

Since the PEAIS has been proved as a successful initiative for strengthening Devolution in the context of federal polity of the country, the scheme has to be scaled up, extended and continued with a considerable amount of financial support.

A few possible points/recommendations for achieving this target are listed as under.

1. It is better to make value addition to the award by a process of gradation in terms of *PEAIS 1*, *PEAIS 2*.and *PEAIS 3*. There may not be any change in the process of PEAIS and it may be as it is. It can be termed as ‘*PEAIS 1*’ and it will be the initial stage of the process in the ladder. The ‘*PEAIS 2*’ is the graduation from ‘*PEAIS 1*’. After getting the award of ‘*PEAIS 1*’, one Panchayat has to wait for a period of two years for applying the award of ‘*PEAIS 2*’. During the two year period, the Panchayat who is intended to apply for the award of *PEAIS 2* may be seriously and constantly monitored. The verification may be based on a hard process with more weightage on sustainability, and further advancement on the indicators of governance, participation, accountability, and empowerment. The *PEAIS 3* is the graduation from *PEAIS 2*. For the award of *PEAIS 3*, one Panchayat has to keep three years after getting the award of *PEAIS 2*. During the three year period of continuous monitoring, there should be a

final verification and it is based on sustainability and innovation in the area of good governance.

2. It is better to constitute an independent commission for ranking the States and UTs on devolution. At present, the ranking of the States and Union territory is based on yearly assessment by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA). No doubt the quality of the work is excellent and the service of IIPA is to be appreciated. However, it can be replaced by a national commission for devolution .It may be named as ‘National Commission for Devolution’. If the ranking is done by a National Commission for Devolution, the efficacy and national reorganization of the award may be high and it may have more impact than the present one. Since the Constitutional backup of the Commission is a difficult exercise, the statutory provision for the Commission may be a workable formula.
3. Ranking of the States and the UTs based on the Devolution index is worked out with the support of a sound theory, mathematics and statistics. Though the methodology is highly appreciable among the academic circles it is aligned that it is not translated in to a language which can be easily understand to policy makers, political leaders and general public. Moreover, a self explanatory note which says why a particular State /Union Territories ranks top position and vice versa may be very much appreciated. And it may facilitate the stakeholders to take further steps in the devolution process in the respective State / Union Territory. Therefore, along with the ranking of the State, a supplementary note which gives all the details of the status of the devolution process in a State /UT may be prepared. It explains which indicator the State /Union Territory lacks behind and the actions need to be taken. It may be a roadmap for the policy makers and other stakeholders for addressing the issue of devolution in the respective State /UT.
4. Ranking of the States and the UTs under PEAIS may be based on more intensive action research built on the foundation of arduous field work within the State specific environment of decentralization.

5. The PEAIS is open to all States and UTs and as participants of the number of States and Union Territories is being increased by the years since the inception of the Scheme. However, all they have not been covered, and there are still small States and UTs who have not been covered under the scheme. This may be mainly because of two reasons. The one is the deficit of information among the non participants and other is lack of confidence on their own status on devolution. There may be a feeling among the non participants that it may be difficult to be considered under PEAIS. In this context, the agency role may be ensured to motivate the non participants. Passing of correct and timely information on PEAIS to the non participants is the first step towards the direction. Confidence building among the non participants is another strategy to increase the rate of participation under the scheme. Therefore, a separate package and strategy may be recommended to cover the scheme in all the States and UTs.
6. The introduction of incremental index as an additional component under PEAIS has motivated the States/UTs which is having relatively low entitlement record of devolution but attempts are made to improve the status of devolution during the last one year. As in the case of incremental index for States/UTs, it may be introduced among the Panchayats that has been improved from a low level of benchmark over a period last one year. A separate methodology and marking scheme can be developed for this purpose.
7. The PEAIS has a cash component and all of them opined that the 'award component' is more important than the 'cash component' and also reported that an award from the Government of India has its own recognition and prestige. However, the cash component is not that attractive since some of the State Governments have instituted awards with cash component which is higher than the cash component of PEAIS. (For example, in Kerala Rs.25lakhs is the cash component of *Soraj* Trophy which is given for the best Gram Panchayat.) In this background it is better to increase the cash component of PEAIS.

8. It is better to organize a few regional workshops in different parts of the country to disseminate the objectives, guidelines, methodology, and the processes of the verifications under PEAIS. The functionaries of the Panchayats, media representatives and other stake holders may be invited to the workshops. The dissemination workshops can be used as a strategy to outreach the PEAIS. Moreover, the PEAIS has to be advertised widely in the English and vernacular Dailies through out the country for wider dissemination.
9. Exposure visits to the award winning (PEAIS) Panchayats may be included as an item under capacity building programmes. Through exposure visit, the non award winning Panchayats may get a chance of understanding the innovative projects, accountability, transparency, governance and other areas of achievements of the award winning Panchayats.
10. The theory and measurement of devolution index may be included in the pedagogy of the module of the training which conducted by the different agencies (including SIRD and NIRD) across the country for the Panchayat functionaries.
11. It is suggested that either the leftwing extremists affected States may be considered separately or additional weightage may be given while ranking the States based on the devolution index.
12. Special attention may be given to both PESA States and PESA Panchayats under the scheme like what is being provided to the North Eastern States.
13. Documentation of award winning (PEAIS) Panchayats may be a strategy for wider dissemination of the achievements. Attempts may be made to proper documentation of the entire award winning States and Panchayats under PEAIS by using different modes including short films.
14. Experience sharing of the award winning Panchayats may arrange at the State level training institutions of SIRDs as part of wider capacity building exercises. The services of the functionaries of the award winning Panchayats may be utilized under the experience sharing exercise mode of pedagogy.

15. Of course, the Panchayat Raj Ministry has prepared a monograph of ‘Good Practices’ with 54 success stories among the Panchayats that won the *Panchayat Sahktikaran Puraskar* in 2011-2012 under PEAIS. And the Ministry has also made plans to document further cases across the country and it is under process. It is better to document detailed cases of all the award winning and Panchayats and attempts may be made for wider dissemination. As in the case of award winning individual Panchayats, attempts may be made to document the success stories of the States/UTs that won awards both under cumulative and incremental index.
16. There are certainly, one can find linkages between initiatives recommended by the 13th Finance Commission and parameters adopted for measuring the rate and status of devolution among the States and UTs across the country .It is noticed that six parameters induced by the 13th Finance Commission have been incorporated in the parameters. And same is the case with the marking schemes for identifying best performing Panchayats in the States. It is suggested to incorporate more initiatives from the recommendations from the National Finance Commissions. Similar attempt may be made to establish linkages between recommendations of different State Finance Commissions and the marking schemes for identifying best performing Panchayats.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION .

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India has introduced Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) in 2005-2006 as per the recommendations of the 5th round table conference held at Srinagar during October 28-29 2004. There are two components under the PEAIS .The first component is to incentivize States to empower Panchayats through devolution of 3Fs (Functions, Funds and Functionaries) in accordance with the article 243G of the Constitution. Performance of States is measured through a two stage assessment. The first stage is called the ‘Framework Criteria’ and is based on four fundamental Constitutional requirements. They are (a) establishment of State Election Commission, (b) holding of regular elections to PRIs, (3) setting up of State Finance Commission and (4) constitution of District Planning Committee. States that have fulfilled the Framework Criteria only included under the scheme. The indicators for the Devolution Index (DI) aims at assessing the status of devolution in respect of 3Fs. Awards are given to best performing States/UTs based on their rank on DI annually, which started in the year 2005-2006. It is interesting to note that the Devolution Index (DI) and the methodology were continuously improved and refined over the years by considering the perceptions of the different stakeholders. The incremental devolution index has helped a few States to be highlighted. “However, DIs developed for PEAIS so far do not specifically capture degree of the Panchayat accountability and performance” (V Ramachandran, 2011) As mentioned by Ramachandran, to address the limitation of the DIs developed for PEAIS, second component is introduced in 2011-2012 to incentivize Panchayats to put in place accountability & performance system and democratic style to make their functioning transparent and efficient. The performance of the Panchayats is assessed on the basis of systematically developed indicators, questionnaires and marking schemes. Total 236 Panchayats were incentivized for their performance during the year 2010-2011. The indicators, processes and awareness of Panchayats and incentivization process are

decided to be improved in the coming years as in the case development index. In short, the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) is subjected to improvements, modifications and value addition process including methodology. It is noticed that the achievement and award of the States/UTs and Panchayats are considered as an honor.

Therefore, it is essential to make an evaluation of the scheme. It is also important to note that a number of States have also initiated similar schemes to incentivize Panchayats by honoring the best performing Panchayats through an incentive amount and a gesture of appreciation. The report aims to evaluate the impact of the PEAIS award on selected administrative units across the country by assessing the changes that is visible in selected performance spheres of the units.

The primary objectives of the study are as follows:

A. Devolution by States:

5. The reasons, logic and rationale for introducing the PEAIS.
6. The extent to which the Devolution Index (DI) has been improved / refined over the years to accurately reflect the extent of devolution across States and further improvements that can be undertaken in this regard .
7. The impact of the incentivization as per the DI with regard to devolution of 3Fs by States to Panchayats include in part 1X of the Constitution .The extent to which the schemes has been able to achieve its objective including.

(a)Has PEAIS encouraged States /UTs that have been given award to perform better?

(b)Has PEAIS motivated the media and decentralization activist to cover the achievements of the better performed States? If so, to what extent and its impact.

(c)What has been the impact on the decentralization and Panchayats in the States that have not won this Award?

8. To understand the perception of the key persons (academicians, policy makers, politicians, functionaries of the Panchayats and media who have stake on the issue of devolution and strengthening PRIs.

B Assessment of Panchayats:

- 9 The reasons, logic and rationale for introducing the assessment of individual Panchayats under PEAIS.
- 10 The extent to which the indicators questionnaire, marking scheme for the assessment of Panchayats performance, including of Gram Sabha and Standing Committees are effective, and what are the improvements that can be undertaken in this regard ?
- 11 How objective, fair, inclusive and effective has been the process of Panchayat assessment? How can it be improved further?
- 12 The impact of PEAIS has made on the awarded Panchayats in terms of encouraging them to perform better?
- 13 To what extent has one year of implementation of PEAIS for incentivization of Panchayats generated awareness about Panchayat performance among States and Panchayats. How can the current level of awareness about the scheme be enhanced?
- 14 How can the scheme be used to identify Panchayats that are performing below standard along with best performing Panchayats?
- 15 To examine gender sensitization and gender dimension of the scheme and suggest measures to accommodate more gender sensitization and dimension in PEAIS.

- 16 To look whether social and economic dimensions of development as envisaged in the Constitution has been incorporated in the scheme with adequate attention.

While operationalising the above objectives more focus has been given the following objectives

1. To assess the impact of PEAIS on the selected awarded administrative units from Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala
2. To assess the indirect effects of the award on selected administrative units from Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala.
3. To bring out a composite index for each component in each Panchayat for figuring out the impact.
4. To understand the perception of the key persons (academicians, policy makers, politicians, functionaries of the Panchayats, media who has stake on the issue of devolution and strengthening PRIs.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Selection of States.

A multi pronged approach was adopted to achieve the main objectives of the study, and this included a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The main methodology for the study however was qualitative in nature. This was in the form of focus groups discussions (FGDs) for stakeholders, and interviews with the PRI officials. The qualitative tools enabled the research team to gather in depth knowledge of the situation where as the quantitative methods supported the reliability of the assessment.

Five States are selected for the evaluation study. Out of the five States, three States are selected from the ‘award winning category’ and two from the ‘non award winning category’. This is based on the ranking generated through devolution index which was

initiated in the period 2004 -2005. The award winning States are Kerala, Karnataka and Rajasthan and the non award winning States include Punjab and Chhattisgarh. Rajasthan received an incremental award and hence it was purposefully selected. Two States which are not awarded since the inception of the scheme are Punjab and Chhattisgarh. The scheme in its evolving stages was also made applicable to the Panchayati Raj Institutions viz. District Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Gram Panchayat. Hence considering this aspect selected award winning and non award winning PRIs were considered from the States mentioned above. A cumulative performance index was generated considering the variables or indicators selected. The number of indicators was the same for Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Karnataka whereas a different set of variables were used for Kerala. The index is considered as the indicator of change or the effect which was induced by the PEAIS award in various spheres of the Panchayat. All the three tiers of the system are considered in this regard. A cumulative index for each administrative unit was prepared. Individual case studies are also prepared. First hand information from the officials of the non award winning units is taken in order to assess the indirect impact of the award on these PRI's.

Technical reports, information available from existing literature, and websites were referred for designing various tools for evaluation work. Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat offices were contacted for information and focus group discussions(FGDs) were conducted. Discussions were held with various committees. In addition to this, separate tools were used for assessing the impact of PEAIS in different States and individual Panchayats . A three member team who are well acquainted with the theory and practice of local governance has spent three days in a Panchayat for the assignment of data collection and interaction with the functionaries. And in some cases the team has made a second visit also.

The MoPR has developed a detailed questionnaire/marking sheet for assessing the performance of different tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions based on certain crucial

performance indicators .Since each tier has different sphere of functions, deployment of functionaries and flow of finance separate set of questionnaires were ensured. The same model of questionnaires with improvisations were used for the proposed evaluation work. However, in many cases, the evaluation had crossed the boundaries of the questionnaires. In such incidents field notes and case studies were documented in the researcher’s diary. The purposes of using the same questionnaire were to compare the level of performance at two points of time (the time of verification and the time of evaluation). Since different agencies had verified the Panchayats from the five selected States the marking sheets were not used as bench mark for comparison. However, it was used for cross checking the data furnished by the evaluation team. By applying the questionnaire the status on each indicator at two different points of time has been marked. The ‘approach of before and after’ were applied to generate the data on the reference period. By keeping the objective of the study in mind (i)incentivize States to devolve 3Fs (functions, funds and functionaries) to Panchayats and (ii) incentivize Panchayats to put in place accountability systems to make their functioning transparent and efficient, only a few direct questions were posed to the direct stakeholders at the State level for assessing the impact of the scheme on different States.

TOOLS USED

State Level Questionnaire

District Level Questionnaire

Panchayath Level Questionnaire

Individual Level Questionnaire and FGD Formats

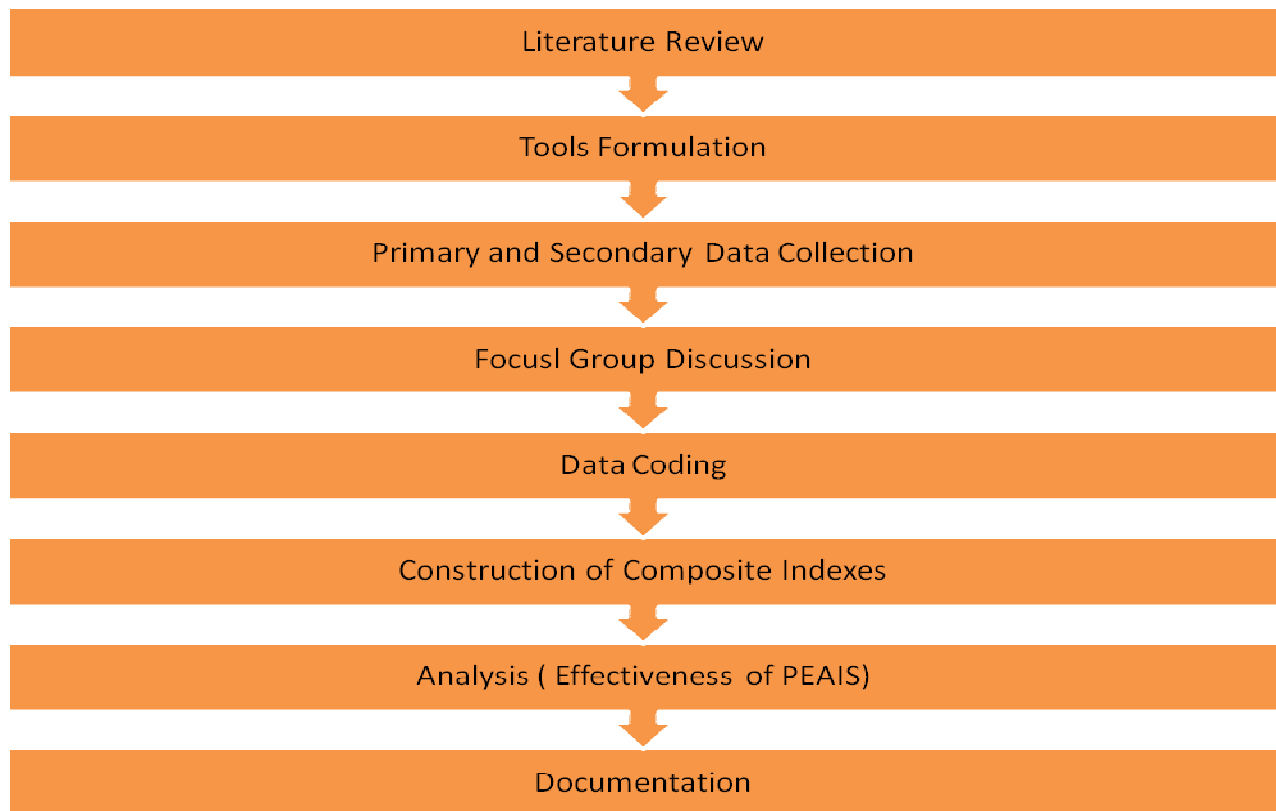
Composite Index

METHODOLOGY

In the questionnaire/marking scheme, there are six sub themes and they are (1) Panchayat Functioning (2) Management of Personnel and Capacity Building (3) Planning and Budget Formation (4) Income Generation (5) Performance of Panchayat and (6) Accountability and Transparency. Each sub themes were constructed based on a number of indicators. There are 15, 3, 8,7 ,14, and11 indicators respectively for Panchayat functioning, management of personnel and capacity building, planning and budget formation, income generation, performance of Panchayat and accountability & transparency. Each indicator in the sub theme has been widely discussed among the functionaries of the selected Panchayats and finally the performance is marked. The performance of each indicator is fixed on a four point scale, viz, good, moderate, below moderate and nil. Marks are assigned and the respective marks are three, two, one and zero for good, moderate, below moderate and nil. If the performance of an indicator is good it may get a maximum score value of three whereas if the performance is nil the score value is zero. Score values of two and one are given to moderate and below moderate, respectively .The total score value of a sub theme is based on the number of indicators. For example, the sub theme of Panchayat functioning has 15 indicators, on the other side it is only three indicators for management of personnel and capacity building. In the first case the maximum score value is calculated as 45 whereas in the second case it is nine. Finally, the average score value (composite index) is calculated for each sub themes on Panchayat wise. A composite score for each Panchayat (including all tiers) based on these indicators is constructed for assessing the impact of these Panchayats in the post PEAIS award period. A cumulative index for each PRI is prepared out of the composite scores and attempts are made to plot all the cumulative score values of different sub themes of the selected Panchayats of a State in a radar diagram. The index thus formulated helps in comprehending the relative positions of each PRI. Achievements in several dimensions can also be aggregated into a single whole by appropriately designing the index making procedure. Present level of achievement of an entity can be

divided by the maximum possible achievement. This kind of exercise would confine the range of value between zero and one. One advantage of this procedure is that better differentiation is built-in this index, particularly when an entity is compared with another rather than when it is compared with itself over time.

METHODOLOGY FLOWCHART



FORMATIVE STEPS

Literature Review on Impact Assessment Methodologies

Literature review was conducted to determine the methodologies utilized to conduct impact assessments. The results of this review indicate the following:

1. Each impact assessment is different.
2. The baseline information is needed to benchmark the performance
3. A successful impact must have indicators which are measurable.

4. Where baseline information is not available, it is advised that qualitative methodologies be utilized to collect information.
5. Qualitative methodologies are recommended in these instances
6. Sampling should be developed carefully to avoid bias in impact assessments.
7. Choosing the right methodology

Building a Baseline

The first phase of the program involved building on the database already held in order to establish a robust source of empirical data as well as to identify a core set of indicators.

Data Collection

Phase two involves the collection of qualitative and quantitative data through a survey, the initial results of which are the focus of this report.

Quantifying the Impact

This stage involves the quantification of the results and building up a statistical model to support empirical assessment.

Analyzing the results

The survey responses allow us to analyze respondents' perceptions of the benefits of the awards and the extent to which they have had wider impact.

The list of States and corresponding PRIs which are selected for assessing the effectiveness of PEAIS award is given below.

KERALA

AWARD WINNING	NON AWARD WINNING
1 .Mutholi Gram Panchayat	1 .Chelora Gram Panchayat
2.Chempilode Gram Panchayat	2 .Sasthamkotta Block Panchayat
3 .Nedumpana Gram Panchayat	3 .Thrikkovilvatom Gram Panchayat
4 .Cherppu Block Panchayat	
5 .Chittumala Block Panchayat	
6 .Kasargod District Panchayat	

KARNATAKA

AWARD WINNING	NON AWARD WINNING
1 .Basava Kalyana Taluk Panchayat	1 .Belevi Gram Panchayat
2 .Dakhshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat	2 .Bidadi Gram Panchayat
3 .Ghatboral Gram Panchayat	3 .Humnabad Taluk Panchayat
4 .Gummagol Gram Panchayat	4 .Kanketta Gram Panchayat
5 .Ittamadu Gram Panchayat	5 .Manchanayakahally Gram Panchayat
6 .Koppa Taluk Panchayat	6 .Maniknagar Gram Panchayat
7 .Madamakki Gram Panchayat	7 .Sringeri Taluk Panchayat
	8 .Uduppi Zilla Parishad

RAJASTHAN

AWARD WINNING	NON AWARD WINNING
1 .Chainpura Gram Panchayat	1 .Basundkala Gram Panchayat
2 .Chauhathan Panchayat Samiti	2 .Churu Panchayat Samiti
3 .Churu Zilla Parishad	3 .Jujunu Zilla Parishad
4 .Dhanari Gram Panchayat	
5 .Ganeshwar Gram Panchayat	
6 .Lodsar Gram Panchayat	
7 .Solana Gram Panchayat	
8 .Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti	

PUNJAB

AWARD WINNING	NON AWARD WINNING
1 .Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat	1 .Barnala Panchayat Samiti
2 .Bathinda Zilla Parishad	2 .Bhavani Garh Panchayat Samiti
3 .Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat	3 .Ubhowal Gram Panchayat
4 .Jand Mangoli Gram Panchayat	4 .Untsar Gram Panchayat
5 .Kutba Gram Panchayat	
6. Rampur Sunra Gram Panchayat	
7 .Sangrur Panchayat Samiti	
8 .Talvandi Bharth Gram Panchayat	

CHHATTISGARH

AWARD WINNING	NON AWARD WINNING
1 .Dharamgarh Gram Panchayat	Gagodi Gram Panchayat
Govindpur Gram Panchayat	Kariyapale Gram Panchayat
Kartala Janpad Panchayat	Korba District Panchayat
Lakshanpur Janpad Panchayat	Kulhard Gram Panchayat
Sarguja Zilla Panchayat	Raurvahi Gram Panchayat
Sasauli Gram Panchayat	Shoodpur Gram Panchayat
Tarasgaon Gram Panchayat	Udiakhurd Panchayat
Umreli Gram Panchayat	Urdara Gram Panchayat

The Report was thus finalized taking into account the qualitative and quantitative exercises which was incorporated to reflect on the two major components of the study. The Principal Investigator made a presentation of the report on 17 June, 2013 before the Senior Officials of the MoPR chaired by the Secretary. All the valuable comments on the report have been incorporated.

CHAPTER 2

DYNAMICS OF DEVOLUTION PROCESS IN INDIA

In recent decades, decentralization (devolution of functions, finance and functionaries) has been a major item on the agenda of many developing countries in the world. The development of indicators for measuring devolution, which enables comparison between regions that have followed devolution, is still an underdeveloped stage of exercise. Lack of clarity on the concept of devolution may be one of the reasons for the state of affair. Devolution is envisaged both as an empirically constructed one and as a normative assumption. Empirically, it is possible to compare between devolution effects made in different regions and rank them in relative terms. It is also important to note that a measurement of devolution exercise is expected to serve a number of functions. It will explain the constitutive elements of a devolution scheme and enable one to identifying new domains of relevance. It can also provide greater directions to advocacy, social action for a progressive devolution, apart from serving a heuristic function. Comparison between federating units (States) with in a single country may be more practical and realistic if the overall framework in which devolution is carried out is the same. This is more applicable in the case of India where the 73rd amendment laid down the broad framework with in which devolution is to be carried out in different States in India. The broad framework is known as ‘framework criteria’.

Devolution

There are several meanings attached to the word ‘devolution’ but the most appropriate meaning of devolution gives the statutory transfer of rights, powers, authority and resources as also roles, responsibilities, duties and obligations from a ‘higher’ level government to ‘lower’ level government by an Act of Parliament/legislative assembly rather than by the Constitution. Devolution is more subtle and often equated with statutory transfer of power and authority which definitely is manifested with transfer

of power over resources. In short, empowerment of ‘subordinate’ governments, here local governments or Panchayats, is devolution by a ‘superior’ government (or still better, State). That is one reason that District Panchayats and Block Panchayats have geographically wider jurisdictions but they do not have power to devolve *power* statutorily and factually speaking they are no way superior to Gram Panchayats (P.K.Chaubey, 2011). Endowment, authorization, assignment, provision and facilitation may all be taken as graded versions of devolution in the context for empirical exercise.

Introducing PEAIS

The introduction of PEAIS has been hailed as a land mark in the evolution of strengthening the process of devolution in India. The Union Government has several schemes, including central schemes and centrally sponsored schemes, which are in the legislative domains of the States. One such central plan scheme called ‘Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) was launched in 2005-06 with a small allocation of Rs. 5 crore, subsequently raised to Rs.10 crore, to be given to highest performing States on the basis of extent of devolution carried out by them. This was to motivate and support the States for greater devolution as it was gathered that many of them were not doing enough to empower their Panchayats. Thus, PEAIS is a centralized intervention for decentralization by State through devolution without transgressing any amount of federal principles

The NCAER presented an interim devolution index to the Ministry in August 2006. Thereafter, based on the data available with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and as obtained from different States/ other sources, NCAER measured the assessing environment for PRIs in different States and assigned scores and rankings to all the States and UTs. The Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme was operationalized during 2006-07 on this basis. The Index measured the States/UTs on three broad indicators viz. Devolution of funds, functions and functionaries.

The level and extend of devolution

There is a great variation in progress made during the period both across States for a given indicator and across indicators for a given State. And this is also applicable across Panchayats with in the State. It is observed that some of the variations across States are due to the differences to the scope and extent of devolution in that particular State. The pattern of deviations at the State level from the national average with the crude categorization of States in terms of devolution also can be worked out. The construction of index with a balanced composition of synergies between theory, mathematics and estimation is such a way that any slight change (increase or decrease) in the allocation of any one in of three Fs may reflect the index of progress for a particular indicator in a State. The deviation among the level of devolution from the national average captures the influence of any factors specific to the State. This is a crude proxy for the actual extent of devolution.

It is clear that the ostensible aim of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was to revitalize Panchayats with a constitutional status. The amendment provided certain mandatory and discretionary provisions and asked the individual States to enact legislation to devolve powers and resources to Panchayats and enable them to function as institutions of self government. Since local government being a State subject in the schedule 7 of the Constitution any legislation related to Panchayat has to be enacted by the State legislature. High level of degree of flexibility was noticed among the State legislation under discretionary provision of the amendment. The expected roles of the 'institution of self government' are wider and it has certain domain of policy /legislative implications though no direct mention of devolving legislative authority to Panchayats. Delivery of public services, construction and management of local public goods, planning for social and economic development of the marginalized communities, implementation of development activities and programs to address poverty and ensure social justice are the major realm of sphere responsibility of institution of self government. As per the

provisions of the Constitution, legislative domain over Panchayats is exclusively assigned to the States. Therefore, without any space for doubt one can assert that in India the final responsibility for the construction and design of Panchayats lay with the States. As Chaudhuri rightly argues, “unsurprisingly, given the diversity in their historical trajectories and current sociopolitical and economic situations, across the states there has been tremendous variation in the design, scope, and extent of devolution to local governments” (Chaudhuri, 2007). In this context, one pertinent question is, to what extent has the passage of the constitution amendment changed the situation of pre 1993 scenario? It is suggested that with perhaps a couple of exceptions, the progress by the States in genuine functional and financial devolution has been extremely limited (Chaudhuri, 2007).

With regard to decentralization, it is better to classify States and UTs based on the generation or stage of devolution as one has been developed by the central government on similar lines. It was suggested that while doing such an exercise emphasis may be given to the ‘environment of decentralization’ rather than the ‘outcome of decentralization’ (Shaylendra and Rajput, 2009)

PEAIS has an indirect dimension of citizen oriented welfare mechanism. As it is already mentioned, the ostensible aim of the PEAIS is to incentives the Panchayats for better governance. A greeter degree of devolution is expected to reduce transaction cost, lead to greater efficiency in the demand for and delivery of public services and to generate a greater efficiency in the process of governance (Mitra and Verma.1997). Higher the extent of devolution in a given State, there is greater the possibility of shaping empowered Panchayats. It is suggested that empowered Panchayats are determined by a greater degree of devolution. Empowerment of Panchayats can be understood as means of mobilizing citizen participation for co- production and synergy in local economic development efforts and thereby deepening local democracy. Empowered Panchayats only can make appropriate provisions for civic services including sanitation, drinking

water, street lights drainage etc; significantly improving the survival strategy of rural community. In corollary, it is argued that, “an important reason for the relative lack of success of many flagship programmes in India is that the lack of institutions that should run these programmes are not adequately empowered” Therefore, with high degree of confidence one can argue that it is people who will ultimately suffer if State fails to implement devolution measures effectively.

State Government’s view on devolution index is very positive and encouraging.

This is very clear from their memoranda submitted to the 13th Finance Commission. In their memoranda to the commission 14 State Governments have urged horizontal devolution parameters for *inter se* distribution of local body grants. “*Most of these States were of the view that index of decentralization could be considered as criteria, though their perception on the weight to be given for each parameter varied*” (13th Finance Commission, 2012).

In addition to this, three States have also suggested that “computing an index of decentralization and using it as a parameter for *inter se* distribution of local body grant” in their memoranda to the Commission. The memoranda said “*it is necessary to incentivize States to devolve functions and funds to local bodies, although an index of this kind is basically a reward for past moves in this direction rather than an incentive for further effort*”.(13th Finance Commission)

The 13th Finance Commission recognizes the importance of the PEAIS and devolution index and it admits that “*the most significant initiative so far for creation of devolution has been the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) implement by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj through the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). Data on Panchayat functions, finances and functionaries were directly collected from State Governments by NCAER. Data collected on finances included delegation of powers to collect taxes; implementation of SFC reports*

,delegation of powers to prepare plans; presence of separate line in State budgets; percentage of local bodies whose accounts are audited; own revenue as a percentage of expenditure and untied funds as percentage of total plan and non plan grants . Data collected on functions included the number of functions transferred based upon notifications ;the number for which activity mapping has been completed; whether district planning committees are being involved in the preparation of district plans; whether Gram Panchayats are implementing the flash programmes of the government ;and to what level these bodies have been empowered to sanction expenditure .Data collected on functionaries include nature of their support to PRIs, accountability and training A simple average of 5 sub- indices for functions ,15 sub –indices for finances and 14 sub- indices for functionaries then determined the devolution index, based upon which the states have been ranked” .

The Commission appreciates the PEAIS and the devolution index by saying that “*this is an excellent ground –breaking initiative to measure the extent of devolution to PRIs across states .The questionnaire adopted is reflective of the areas where Panchayats need to be empowered”* .

Five sub- indices are proposed to compute this index and they are (i) untied investible funds devolved to Local Self Governments (LSGs) as a percentage of state expenditure; (ii) own revenue ;(iii) the number of personnel directly employed by the local bodies vis-à-vis those in the employment of the State Government;(iv) the percentage of local bodies not having elected representatives and (v) delegation of financial and administrative authority and responsibilities to local bodies and the extent of fiscal decentralization.(13th Finance Commission, 2012).

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, in its memorandum to the 13th Finance Commission, has argued that first generation of Panchayati Raj reforms has been implemented by almost all States. As a result, a five pronged strategy has been proposed to address the second generation of reforms. They are the following;

1. To implement activity mapping such that each tier of Panchayati Raj is allotted clear cut functions and responsibilities for those of 29 activities listed in the schedule XI which have been devolved by the State Governments to the PRIs.
2. To provide budgetary support to the PRIs in consonance with the devolution of functions as well as ensuring transparency for such devolution through a Panchayati Raj window in the budget of both central and state governments ;
3. To encourage preparation of participative plans for all the Panchayats which are consolidated at the district level by the district planning committee (DPC);
4. To build capacity of the PRIs and imparting training to the core functions; and
5. To make PRIs more accountable and enhancing opportunities for citizens to review performance and approve plans in Gram Sabhas

All the five second generation of reforms are mainly synchronized in one single programme, called the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS). Along with other requirements, the Ministry has proposed one per cent of the divisible pool be given as a specific purpose grant in aid to incentivize of State Government to empower Panchayats. Incentivization of State Government to empower Panchayats may be considered as the core activity under the PEAIS.

The role of PRIs in planning, implementation and monitoring has been recognized by eleventh plan document. And it would be essential to ensure inclusiveness in growth process and would require adequate incentives to be put in place for State Governments to empower PRIs through devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to the PRIs. Again, the eleventh plan document argues that “*this could be done through a suitably designed devolution index*”. In other words, there is a strong demand from the eleventh plan document for a well designed devolution index. It is also important to remember that

Eleventh Finance Commission had constructed a ‘decentralization index formula’ and it was later dropped by the Twelfth Finance Commission.

The criteria for assessing devolution, to the considerable extent, evolve contextually and therefore certain set of indicators may be given higher salience in a particular place compared to others. Hence indicators that appear to be universally applicable also need to be adapted to local situations in order to make them valid and realistic. The process and desirable extent of devolution depends on the concrete context. Measurement of devolution done purely on the basis of legislations, government orders and rhetoric without seeing how the system actually functions at the ground level can produce erroneous results. Devolution is a process moving towards the realization of certain desirable outcomes and not simply an end state that can be rapidly achieved. It means that any measurement scale that neglects the process dimensions would be impoverished to that extent. That is why while constructing indicators, tools and scale for measuring the devolution in different States, the MOPR/IIPA have realized this dimension. Since an index is constructed to capture the field realities across States and UTs, the States are allowed to accommodate idiosyncrasies of State specific environment of devolution. As a result, restructured schedule and marking schemes by the individual States are suggested to capture elements that are idiosyncratic to the State. This space has been utilized by the State of Kerala by arguing that first and second generation of Panchayat Raj reforms have broadly been implemented in the State and hence it is argued the ‘model schedule and marking scheme’ prepared to cover many States in India has very little relevance in the State. Accordingly, the State of Kerala had modified and prepared a different set of indicators, schedule and marking scheme (with altogether different indicators and marking schemes) for the exercise. It is also important to note that separate indicators and marking schemes have been developed for three tiers of Panchayats.

CHAPTER 3

DEVOLUTION STATUS IN THE SELECTED STATES

The State of Rajasthan

Among the States in India, Rajasthan has the distinction of being the pioneer in the introduction of Panchayati Raj, a three tier system of representative Government and it was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. However, the Village Panchayats was established throughout the State when the Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1953 was enacted. The other two levels of local Governments, Panchayat Samitis at the block level and Zilla Parishads at the district level came in to existence in 1959, based on the provisions of the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959. In addition to this, certain provisions of the Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1953 was amended to integrate the three levels of administration in to a vertically structured form of governance. In the pre amendment phase there are two set of Acts and Rules for Panchayats in Rajasthan. In accordance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act was passed in 1994. As far as the structural anatomy of the Panchayati raj system is concerned, there is no major difference in the pre and post Constitutional Amendment phase in the State. Gram Panchayats are the basic unit of governance and it constitutes of directly elected Sarpanch and a team of ward Panchs. In each Gram Panchayat there is a Secretary. At the block level, there is Panchayat Samitis and the implementation of all the major rural development programmes are vested with the Panchayat Samitis. The Panchayat Samitis have certain specific peer group responsibility over Gram Panchayats. It is headed by an elected representative known as Pradhan. The Block Development Office (BDO) who is in charge of day to day administration and he /she is assisted by a team of technical and ministerial staff. Zilla Parishad is at the district level. It consists of Zilla Pramukh and other elected members from territorial constituencies. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Parishad is the Project Director of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and is assisted by a team of professional experts.

Activity mapping for the transfer of functions have been completed in Rajasthan (IRMA, 2008). As per the Government, functions of 18 departments with functionaries and funds of 16 departments were transferred to the Panchayats Raj Institutions. It is noticed that primary education was fully transferred to the Panchayats whereas some other subjects / different activities under the same subject were transferred to different tiers of Panchayati raj Systems. However, the Third State Finance Commission (2008) expressed dissatisfaction on the above facts. The Commission made a comment that “the Panchayati Raj Department has submitted to this Commission that 18 subjects have been transferred to the PRIs but on a closer scrutiny the above claim has not been found correct and sustainable. This shows that the State Government has so far not involved the PRIs in the basic activities of enumerated above departments under schedules 1, 11 and 111.” (The 3rd SFC, 2008) In 2009, as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Panchayati Raj in the State, certain initiative has been taken. It is worthwhile to mention one significant order on complete devolution of five departments namely, elementary education, medical and health, agriculture, social justice and empowerment and women and child development.

There are six standing committees at each level of the Panchayats but in many cases these are really not functional. The State Government has fixed dates /days for convening meetings of standing committees on a regular basis. “Village secretariats” at the Gram Panchayat level has been constituted and fixed dates for grievance redressal meeting. The State has adopted a detailed decentralized planning process for the preparation of annual and five year plans of the district. However, due to the absence of detailed rules of the functioning of DPC in practice, the planning exercise is still with the district level officials. Though the disciplinary authority to impose minor penalties is vested with the Panchayats rarely it is exercised. It is mainly due to two reasons. One is that, majority of them are not aware of the power to exercise disciplinary and the second is that of the hesitation on the part of the Panchayats to take such actions against the functionaries. As per an order issued on 2nd October 2010 by the Government, issues related with

devolution of functionaries became clearer. Day to day supervisory control of staff (transfer with in the district/block, imposition of minor penalties, annual performance appraisal) has been vested with the Panchayats. The other powers such as appointment, service conditions, promotions, inter district transfer and major penalties are exerted by the line department.

Recently, some initiatives have been taken for strengthening Panchayats. The State Government has directed the line departments not to undertake implementation of the transferred activities at the department level and also not to issue any direction or order to the transferred functionaries, directly. The finance commissions in the State could realize that one of the reasons of poor functioning of Panchayats is the lack of resources. Most of the Panchayats suffer from resource crunch and are completely dependant on the State assistants. In this context, the development in the area of devolution for the creation of a 'Panchayat window' in the budget is praiseworthy and it has been created by coupling the budged head of Panchayati Raj department with sub heads of Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti. It is argued that the provision of 'Panchayat window' has not been properly acknowledged and a major share of the fund is going again to the line departments. The Third State Finance Commission (SFC) has recommended transfer of the amount to the Panchayat as 'untied fund'. Though the recommendation has been accepted by the State Government, the conditionalities extended by the Government dilute the concept of 'untied fund'. The fourth State Finance Commission (SFC) has been constituted in April 2011. A provision of Rs. 861.60 crore for two years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012) has earmarked by the State to the Panchayats as per the recommendations of the 4th State Finance Commission (SFC). It is reported that the recent awards of the Central Finance Commission (CFC) has been released to the Panchayats by the State Government. In 2009 the State Government has taken some serious initiatives towards in the devolution of powers to the Panchayats. The present Chief Minister, in his budget speech for 2011-2012 has emphasized the importance of fiscal devolution in favor of Panchayats. Under the 'Panchayat window' in the budget, the fund flow of five

departments is clearly demarcated to enable them to discharge the transferred functions. For PESA region, allocation of income from sales of minor forest produce has been given to the Panchayats in the forest area. The State also announced incentive based grand for encouraging the Panchayats to mobilize resources from own sources.

Ranking as per MoPR /IIPA Devaluation Index and its impact in the State.

Though the State of Rajasthan had started an inspiring journey towards local democracy and governance in 1959, it is noticed that not much devolution took place in the post 73rd amendment phase. However, serious attempts are being made to clear the backlog of the developments in devolution. Now, Rajasthan has started moving forward with 5th position as per the cumulative devolution index prepared by MOPR /IIP in 2011-2012 . The State of Rajasthan has received a total score value of 57.90. The score for framework is 89.50, the score for functions is 62.36 and the score for finance is 54.65. However, the score value for functionaries is relatively low and it is only 41.89. And, Rajasthan is at the top while ranking in terms of the incremental performance index in 2011-2012. The devolution index for the State of Rajasthan suggests that the dimension of functionaries is relatively weak area in the status of decentralization and therefore more action may be needed to deploy more functionaries at the dispensation of Panchayats. It is noticed that both the achievements received by the State of Rajasthan in 2011- 2012 , the 5th position in cumulative devolution index and the 1st rank in incremental performance devolution index has made tremendous amount of enthusiasm among political leaders, policy makers related to rural development and Panchayats, a sections of media persons and decentralization activists. The general observation is that the devolution index is a powerful sensor which could capture any amount of developments in decentralization in any State and it could capture the recent developments in Rajasthan. It is admitted that the ‘devolution index is like an antenna for measuring the status of the State of Rajasthan’. The additional construction of devolution index in incremental performance is highly appreciated by the State. An official at the State level commented that “we have

received the first incremental performance award under devolution index as it is made exclusively for Rajasthan and we deserve it”. He added that “it is really some amount of motivation for us”. The response was quite positive, when we asked a few specific questions on the devolution index in the State of Rajasthan. The awareness of the Scheme (PEAIS) is quite good among the direct stake holders. Though the details are not aware, majority of them have heard the devolution index in which the State of Rajasthan has received some position. When we posed other questions related to the methodology (theory and calculations) of devolution index it is revealed that majority of them are not fully aware and there is nothing to be surprised of. Therefore, very little suggestions for improvement and refinement of the scheme have been generated. However, all of them compassionately argued for the relevance of the devolution index and its continuity. Moreover, a feeling of satisfaction is noticed when the nodal officer has commented that “we are generally in agreement of the score values which have been marked in the devolution index”. He added , “it is an eye opener for all of us ,we know where we are strong and where we are weak ,thanks to devolution index”. The political leadership takes the credit for the award since they accept that it is the reflection of the recent initiative by the State and special mention may be made of the ‘Panchayat window’, the budget speech of the Chief Minister for 2011-2012, transfer of income from sales of minor forest produce (MFP), incentive based award grand for encouraging the Panchayats to mobilize resource from own source and special attention to PESA region. As an impact of the award under devolution index, it is generally expected to perform better for effective devolution in the coming years.

The State of Kerala

The trend of devolution in Kerala has not been a linear one. The evolution of rural local government in Kerala was not uniform through the State since parts of it were under princely rule and the rest under the British province of Madras. The area under princely rule did not institute Panchayats akin to modern Panchayats before India became

independent. In contrast in the areas under British rule, some rudimentary forms of local government were established. Even after independence, Kerala has been impervious to developments that took place in other parts of the country in the field of Panchayati Raj. Until 1995, Kerala had only a single tier, the Gram Panchayat and was behind most States in India, in the area of devolution. The only silver lining before the 73rd amendment was the district council experiment in 1991 which could not survive because of regime change. The Kerala Panchayat Act was passed in 1994, in conformity with the provisions of the Constitutional Amendment (central Act) and the People's Planning Campaign (PPC) was initiated in 1996. People's Planning Campaign was a socio-political movement for strengthening the process of devolution. It has succeeded in mobilizing people to participate in local planning and local economic development beyond party lines. The budget of the Government of Kerala for the year 1996 is important to comment. It made a landmark in the history of fiscal devolution in the country by introducing separate annexure for local government and the resource allocation to them is subjected to legislative approval and control. More over, in the budget document, for each local government there is separate allocation for SCs and STs under Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) respectively. In the financial devolution programme, proportionately higher weightage has been given to the SCP and TSP targeting welfare of SCs and STs. Though it is true that in Kerala in mid 80s attempts were made to decentralize the allocation of funds up to the district level, only under PPC it was further decentralized to the Gram Panchayat level. When the PPC was started, it was felt that certain provisions of the then existing Kerala Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 was really a faltering block for the deepening local democracy and the process of devolution in the State. There was a demand for further amendments to the State Act. As a result, a committee on decentralization of power known as *Sen Committee* was constituted to suggest reforms in the 1994 Act. The *Sen Committee* put forward a number of progressive suggestions most of which have later been incorporated in the amended Panchayat Act 1999. The committee recognized the importance of the right to

information, provided for citizen's charters, recommended the formation of a local government ombudsman and tribunal, suggested the strengthening of Grams Sabha and increased its frequency, among others. The committee was uncritically influenced by the methodology and practices of decentralized planning which were initiated before the committee actually started functioning

In Kerala, Gram Panchayats are powerful as compared to Block Panchayats (intermediate) and District Panchayats at the district level. The relations among the three tiers is not organized in a hierarchical manner and they function in an environment of co-responsibility and some kind of notional sphere autonomy, of course with functions such as co-ordination being confined mainly to the intermediate and district level tiers. Regular opportunities for participation exist in Kerala with the institution of the Gram Sabha. In Kerala, in the real sense the Gram Sabhas are functioning at ward level, all the voters of the ward being its members. As a result, in many cases planning process takes place at the level of the constituency of a ward member, below the level of the Gram Panchayat. As part of the 'constituency management' and the Act, the ward member of a Gram Panchayat is responsible to convene the 'Ward Sabha' and expected to undertake ward level planning.

In Kerala, the Gram Panchayats prepare the village plans and annual reports. It is also responsible for accountability and transparency of local governance. The functionalities of the departments devolved to PRIs have been and transferred under the Panchayats at village, block and district levels. In the case of devolution of functions also, Kerala has achieved to a great extent when compared to other Indian States. The Gram Panchayats levies and collects taxes from the local people. Taxes levied by the Gram Panchayats are property tax, profession tax, entertainment tax, advertisement tax, service tax and show tax including surcharge. The State Government devolves around 30 percent of the plan budget directly to local government. There is a sound financial and social audit mechanism among the Panchayats. The Gram Sabha has been located as the appropriate

space for conducting social audit. The Kerala Panchayati Raj Act says, “every person has the right to ask such information from a Panchayat in accordance with the procedure prescribed”. Audit team is being constituted at each tier of the Panchayat to conduct the audit of the Gram Panchayat, intermediate Panchayat and District Panchayat under the performance auditing system. The audit reports are prepared annually and the report is submitted to the State performance authority. In the area of the introduction of e-governance in Panchayats, Kerala is moving ahead with the initiative of mainly Information Kerala Mission (IKM). In Kerala, the District Planning Committee (DPC) integrates the plan proposals of rural and urban local governments. The DPC also formulates the integrated development plan for urban and rural areas of the district. It is observed that, “*one can firmly maintain that decentralization planning has been virtually abandoned by the majority of the States with impunity. Although all the States have constituted State Finance Commission, the Commission’s task will remain incomplete without reference to the DPC. In fact DPCs are alive and kicking only in Kerala*” (Oommen, 2002). Unlike all other States in India, Kerala made huge human and material investments in devolution from 1996 onwards through the decentralized planning process. Many scholars hail the Kerala experiments as a significant and unprecedented step. However, as per the composite devolution index prepared by the Eleventh Finance Commission, Kerala scored low value (4.1) when compared to Madhya Pradesh (9.6), Maharashtra (9.1) and Karnataka (5.9)

Local Governments in the State had relatively better financial position even before the constitutional amendments. Measures were also taken for strong financial devolution after the constitutional amendments. This was not accidental, but a conscious and historical process. It was made possible due to strong political will and important roles played by champions of this cause, media and civil society. A long term sustained political process resulted into efficacy, trust in these devolutions and increased visibility of local governments. Long before the constitutional amendments, Kerala had four commissions for examining the finances of local governments. The recommendations

were very comprehensive and ahead of times. Their relevance has not been lost even today. As in the case of Karnataka state, Kerala too has been in the forefront in constituting State Finance Commission (SFC) once in every five years. So far four SFCs have been constituted and they all submitted detailed and decentralization friendly reports to the Government. The fourth SFC of Kerala has gone beyond conventional approach and opened a new domain on local finance and a wider spectrum of planning, local development as well as local democracy. The constitutional mandate to plan for economic development and social justice with the reservation of marginalized communities enables the SFC of Kerala to endeavor to work towards the inclusion of excluded and that is why there is a chapter on “*Devolution and Inclusion of the Excluded*”. The ‘Excluded in Kerala’ has been broadly defined and a deprivation index has been constructed. The SFC also has identified ‘Vulnerable Panchayats’ and ‘Most Vulnerable Panchayats’ based on the deprivation Index. A proposal was made for special grants for these two categories of Panchayats. These learning from Kerala experience of SFC can be of immense help while devising the strategies for strengthening the SFCs in other States.

Ranking as per MoPR / IIPA Devolution Index and its impact in the State.

Kerala has been placed first among the Indian States with a score value of 63.07 as against the national average of 41.92 for the year 2011-2012. Among the four dimensions, Kerala’s position is top on two dimensions of finance and functionaries and the respective score values are 63.01 and 52.94. The other two dimensions of framework and functions, Karnataka surpass Kerala. It gives an impression that in the coming years there may be a healthy competition between the two States for accomplishing the top position in the devolution index. At the very inception of the scheme, way back in 2005-2006 the State had been ranked top in many years. All the appreciations in the form of awards under PEAIS from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India was a real motivation to keep the thrust on decentralization. In the context of Kerala where two political forces are equally exerting all forms of articulations and public actions towards

power, the award from the Government of India has a special significance of its own. The top ranking position of Kerala on devolution index on different years (2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2008-2009, 2009-201, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012) were widely discussed by different stake holders and media. As Kerala had been successively winning the PEAIS award some degree of 'self complacency' and 'righteousness position' has infiltrated among the decentralization activists. And it resulted in arguing to the extent that Kerala should not be ranked as it is ranked among other States in India rather Kerala needs to be ranked any of the well developed local governments in the world.

On the other side, when Kerala was eluded from the prime position on 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, the State Government was criticized for the reasons thereof and shortfalls of Kerala decentralization. Some of the limitations of Kerala decentralization have been discussed widely in the public sphere. In this context, it is argued that the Kerala decentralization demands major professional expertise for up gradation. Even in a State known for the high level of human development indices, vibrant civil society for public action and higher regime support for decentralization than those of other States, the lack of technical, administrative and financial know-how of the local governments seems to be the major bottlenecks. It is observed that what ever may be the Kerala's ranking position it is a subject matter for argumentation and contestation in the public sphere and it keeps the decentralization dialogue active in the public sphere.

In a series of articles in a vernacular daily the former Minister of Local Self Government acknowledged the impact of the PEAIS. He said, "the overall recognition of the State received from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj based on the top position on the devolution index among the Indian States works out as protective shield from diluting the devolution process in the State of Kerala" (Paloli Mukamadha Kutty, 2012). In other words, the positioning of Kerala in the devolution index under PEAIS may be an acid test to know whether the policies of the State Government have been diluting the decentralization process. What is noticed generally in Kerala is the total agreement on the methodology

and the ranking of the States. The logic and relevance of the ranking of the States based on an index has been appreciated. The present Minister who is in charge of Panchayats admit that a healthy competition among the Indian States on devolution index may accelerate the process of decentralization provided every State should be capable enough to compete. When we asked a specific question to the Minister, (can you suggest the devolution index as a formula for horizontal distribution of resources among States and UTs from the Centre?), it was replied that he needs more political consultations to answer the question.

The State of Karnataka

A three-tier system of Union Panchayats, Taluk Boards and District Boards were established under Mysore Local Board Act, 1902, in the princely state of Mysore. In all the three bodies were different types of members representing from different constituencies such as a minimum number of elected members with a large share of representation from nomination and appointment. Immediately after the reorganization of the State, the old Act was replaced by the Mysore Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act, 1959, in which a new local self government structure was introduced. In 1985, the State brought out a path-breaking legislation for devolution of powers to the Panchayati Raj. Certain of features brought out by the 73rd constitutional amendment appeared much earlier in the State of Karnataka under the legislation of 1983 (*The Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluk Panchayat Samitis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayat Act, 1983*). In conformity with the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, new Panchayati Raj Act came in to force in 1993 (*The Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act 1993*). As a result, the devolution efforts and policies initiated by the State in the 80s had continued without any major break. The same three tier structure of PRIs was adopted with minor changes with the *Gram Panchayat* (GP) at the village level, the *Taluk Panchayat* (TP) at the intermediate level and the *Zilla Panchayat* (ZP) at the District level. There are at present, 5653 GPs, 176 TPs and 30 ZPs in the state. In, 2002, a high power committee had been

constituted to study the status of devolution and suggest reforms for strengthening the devolution process in the State (*Report of the Working Group on Decentralization, Government of Karnataka, 2002*). A recent amendment has stipulated that a minimum of two Gram Sabhas should be held at Panchayat level and two meetings (ward sabha) at ward level (constituency of an elected member). The amendment also incorporated the holding of a Gram Sabha exclusively for children. However, it is revealed that Gram Sabha meetings are not held regularly and it is not held for the purpose for which it is constituted. The general observation is that “the periodicity and utility of Gram Sabha has not been very positive”.

The reservation pattern prescribed by the 73rd Amendment Act has been very well incorporated in the provisions of the Karnataka Act. In addition to the constitutional requirements, there are provisions of reservation for backward class (one –third of the total seats), 50 percent seats are reserved for women and the reservation pattern adopted for seats (membership) is also applied to authority positions including vice president post.

In Karnataka as part of administrative devolution, adequate personnel are deployed in the Panchayats. The Gram Panchayats have the power to appoint temporary staff on *ad hoc* basis. Except Panchayat Secretary, all the other staff are being appointed by Panchayat and paid from the Gram Panchayat fund. As per order, the personnel of various line departments at taluk and district level are brought under the purview of the respective TP and ZP. In a way, the large contingency of personnel serving in PRIs in general and Zilla Panchayats in particular may be considered as a reflection of the administrative devolution in Karnataka. However, one is equally concerned as to whether the Panchayats are in a position to control the staff assigned to them and take disciplinary action against the erring official. Due to the existence of dual control of bureaucracy one can not assume that the staff is under the direct control of Panchayats. The staff are recruited and controlled by the State Government even though they are expected to function under the Panchayat. Another factor is that the major size of the personnel

-serving the Panchayats is on deputation from various line departments. These personnel in general owe allegiance to the heads of their parent departments rather than to the Panchayats. It is observed that during the post - 73rd Amendment phase, Zilla Panchayat was headed by a senior IAS officer in the district, who was called the Chief Secretary. The President of Zilla Panchayat was given the power to write an annual Confidential Report (CR) on the Chief Secretary (CS). In the pre- 73rd Amendment phase the situation has been watered down, the designation of Chief Secretary has been changed to Chief Executive Officer(CEO) and the position in terms of seniority also has been downgraded with non -IAS category in majority cases

It is argued that by and large, while making the division and distribution of functions from state to PRIs and between the three tiers of PRIs the principle of subsidiarity was followed. There are certain functions/ activities /schemes / subjects having village orientation and that have been vested with GPs .Inter- village orientation is the criteria to entrust functions to Taluk Panchayats whereas inter- taluk or district orientation of functions to that of Zilla Panchayat.. Accordingly, as per records, large number of functions has been assigned to Panchayats by the state. The State Act clearly demarcates the functions of the PRIs in to different Schedules/Lists. The Schedule -1 is assigned to Gram Panchayats with 30 functions. The other two tiers, the Taluk and the Zilla Panchayats are assigned with Schedule-11by covering 29 functions and with schedule - 111by covering 30 function, respectively. As a result, in the State all the major domain of subjects listed under article 243(G) of the Eleventh Schedule of the constitution have been assigned to PRIs .This is one of the significant features of the functional devolution in Karnataka. Rajasckhar and team have estimated that a total of 665 (including small and invisible) plan and non plan schemes of both centre and state sponsored schemes under 29 sectors are vested with PRIs in the State. Since the long list of schemes has posed problems related planning, integrating and allocating resources ,the State has under took a ‘rationalization of schemes’ and it is resulted in cutting down the schemes in to 434 (314plan and 120 non plan schemes, reshuffling of schemes between tiers and making

autonomy for PRIs to formulate plans based on local needs . It is reported that even after the ‘rationalization of schemes’, there are problems of overlap, ambiguities and lack of clarity. “The 30 –odd schemes transferred to the Gram Panchayats in the mid 2000 are either on paper or are under the control of line departments”(Rajasekhar *et al.*2011) . Moreover, the PRIs have only limited power and in majority cases decisions are coming from the top (state) and it makes difficulties in decentralized planning.

In Karnataka, taxation power is vested only with the Gram Panchayats and according to the section199 of Karnataka Panchayati raj Act ,1993 the tax base is also very wide. However, a large proportion of Gram Panchayats depended on grants from higher levels of government to undertake the functions assigned to them. The proportion of own revenue by the Gram Panchayats to the total expenditure was about 15 per cent. It is also observed that the contribution of own revenue to total expenditure, varies across districts in Karnataka. The Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat depend entirely on grants from the centre and state. Though the overall impression is that state government has been transferring large share of its budget provision (plan and non plan grants) to the PRIs, in percentage terms a decreasing trend is observed from 2002- 2003 onwards(Babu,2012). Karnataka has been in the forefront in constituting State Finance Commission (SFC) once in every five years. So far three SFCs have been constituted and they all submitted detailed reports to the government. However, the fourth one is in due as per the adherence of time. The first finance commission is known for its ‘*pragmatic normative approach*’ whereas the second one is for ‘*balanced financial allocation*’. Though the second and third SFCs have been recommended a higher share to PRLs from the state revenue, the successive governments have failed to act on these recommendations. As a result, PRIs have lost their legitimate share from state resources. This can be statistically proved by analyzing time series data on financial devolution in Karnataka. It shows that devolution to PRIs from the State’s own revenues prior to73rd amendment was 36.10 per cent of the states’s total revenue, in the post73rd amendment period it was reduced to 30.85 percent (Babu, 2012).

Karnataka is the one state who has not only pioneered the process of devolution even before 73rd amendment but motivated policy makers to frame the provisions of the very 73rd Constitution Amendment Act .The State is also having the credit of incorporating all the major provisions of the central Act while making the state legislation on Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act .It is noticed that further amendments, rules ,orders, directions have strengthened the process of devolution through the mechanisms of transparency and accountability . Though the Karnataka is ahead of other States in India in terms of devolution there are certain domains which need urgent attention. By and large the State is moving towards in making a higher devolution index. PEAIS may be an additional catalyst for further devolution in the State. Water and sanitation committee set up by the Village Panchayats are successfully running many water supply schemes in Karnataka. Many of these committees are functioning at district and village level. In the State of Karnataka ,29 subjects have been transferred to the PRIs .In the State ,Panchayats are running schools ,supervising dispensaries, engaging in group farming ,constructing rain water structures and setting up small plants. The Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act 1993 has a detailed activity mapping for three tier PRIs with regard to 29 subjects transferred to these institutions.

The State of Karnataka has adopted a decentralized planning model. In an open meeting the Gram Sabha prepares and promotes the felt needs of the community. There is a provision to list and document all the ‘wishing list’ of the villages in the Gram Sabha .As per the records, the major demands seems to be school building, drinking water supply schemes, primary health centre, veterinary dispensary and rural connectivity .Based on the demands, a draft sub plan is being prepared and submitted to the Panchayat for consideration. After the preparation and approval of the plan by the Village Panchyat, it is submitted to the Taluka Panchayat (TP) and it will consider and incorporate it into the Taluk Panchayat plan and again sends it to the Zilla Panchayat for similar action .Finally, all the plan documents will be integrated at the district level by the District Planning Committee (DPC). A planning calendar is also available in Karnataka by indicating the

dates within which each tier has to prepare its assignment. The accounts of the Panchayats are maintained in single cash book showing income and expenditure for each year. The Secretary prepares and presents accounts to the Panchayat. The accounts of the Taluk Panchayat and District Panchayats are being maintained by the accounts officer and chief accounts officer respectively.

Ranking as per the Devolution Index of the MoPR / IIPA and its impact in the State

Karnataka has been placed second top among the Indian states with an overall score value of 62.15 for the reference period. Karnataka has received the highest score value (92.50) for framework dimension after Andaman & Nicobar Islands (95.00). The score value for functions and finance is 65.65 and 59.38 respectively. The dimension of functionaries is scored with a value of 47.24 as against the national average of 29.83. As in the case of other States, the dimension of functionaries is the relatively low score value in Karnataka too. However, Karnataka has ranked as number two in this dimension which is behind Kerala (62.07). The devolution index for the State of Karnataka reveals that some attention may be needed in the dimension of functionaries for marching towards the top position in the country. Among the four dimensions, Karnataka's position is top on two dimensions of framework and functions. The other two dimensions of finance and functionaries, Kerala surpass Karnataka. It gives an impression that for accomplishing the top position in the devolution index, there may be a healthy competition between the two States in the coming years. It is noticed that Karnataka seriously follows the developments in the construction of devolution index and the ranking of the States. The methodology and indicators for ranking the States / UTs are simple and transparent according to the officials who are in charge of PEAIS. The motivation and support to the State by MoPR in the form of a package under PEAIS is highly appreciated. It is also admitted that the index is a powerful barometer to measure the degree decentralization among Indian States. However, as a suggestion it is mentioned that the self administered schedule by the respective States and UTs may be subjected to stiff cross verifications.

There may be a provision to verify the data furnished by the States /UTs and it is also suggested to put the data under public domain. The idea of applying devolution index as criteria for the performance linked funding is appreciated by the Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat, Government of Karnataka. Composite decentralization index developed by Eleventh Finance Commission, Karnataka scores 5.9 as against 4.1 by neighboring State of Kerala

The State of Punjab

As in the case of any other State, the historical evolution of Panchayati Raj in Punjab can also be classified in three phases and they are the phase during British rule, the phase after independence and the phase of post 73rd constitutional amendment period. After independence, the Gram Panchayat Act, 1952 was enacted by the Government of Punjab, which replaced the Village Panchayat Act 1939. In 1961, a three tier structure of the Panchayati Raj system (with Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level) was introduced by abolishing the earlier existing of districts boards. In the functional history of Gram Panchayats there was no discontinuity except in the late 80s due to political turmoil in the State. The Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads were dissolved during 1970-1975. With the passage of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, the earlier Gram Panchayat Act, 1952 was replaced by the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. It is observed that, though all the major features of the Act are in conformity with central legislation, the functional domain of the Panchayats seems to be very weak in Punjab.

In this context one may raise a question, why there is wide difference in the functional domain of Panchayats across the States, when the features of the Panchayati Raj Acts of the Indian States are more or less same with little variation. In order to probe the question and to improve the working of the Panchayati Raj system, the Government of Punjab had appointed several committees (Rajinder Singh Committee, Badal Committee, Harcharan Singh Committee and Departmental Officers Committee) The Badal Committee may be

one who could understand the reasons of the deficiencies and the poor performance of the Panchayati Raj system in Punjab and it may be worthwhile to refer. *“Panchayati raj was introduced in this State more as a result of the National Policy of the Central Government rather than as an act of faith and as a means to bring about effective decentralization. Although comprehensive legislation was brought about through Panchayati Raj Acts, yet these institutions suffered from lacks of funds and genuine transfer of power and responsibly”* The devolution process had started only in 2004, after a decade of passing the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act 1994 , by transferring six departments to the Panchayats by the Government of Punjab . The activity mapping has been conducted and as per the role is fixed. The departments are; social security, women and child development, welfare of Scheduled castes and backward classes, public health , rural department & Panchayati Raj , health & family welfare ,and school education . As per the activity mapping, the Gram Panchayats have been given the power to select beneficiaries and implementation of certain development programmes, Panchayat Samitis to provide technical support to the Gram Panchayats for the implementation of the programmes whereas Zilla Panchayats have to allocate and monitor different schemes. However, it is observed that the real autonomy in discharging the activities of the transferred subjects is not vested with the Panchayats and Panchayats are having only consultative role. It is observed that the concerned department of the State decides the final selection of beneficiaries though legally it is assigned to the Gram Panchayats. In any developmental issue it is argued that the final decision is vested with officials rather than the elected representatives and in real judgment, the Panchayats are only permitted to assist the departments of the Government. Since the process of decentralization has been started very late in Punjab, the level and passion of devolution is also very slow as compared to other states of India.

The Panchayatt Raj system consists of a three tier structure with the Gram Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. There are altogether 12775 Gram Panchayats, 143 Panchayat Samitis and 22 Zilla

Panchayats (including newly formed districts of Fazilla and Pathankot). A Gram Panchayat consists of a Sarpanch and five to 13 members. Under the Panchayati Raj Act, it is envisaged that a Gram Panchayat will discharge duties and responsibilities relating to the subject mentioned in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution. Among the powers, preparation of annual development plans and budget are the major assigned activities of the Gram Panchayats. There may be 15 to 25 members in the Panchayat Samiti whereas the number of the Zilla Panchayat is between 10 and 25. It is noticed that 26 functions are assigned to Panchayat Samiti. In the case of Zilla Panchayat, the Act assigns 22 functions. There is a provision in the Act to constitute standing committees in all three levels of Panchayats. There are three standing committees for every Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti. At the Zilla Panchayat level there are five standing committees. Though the functions of the standing committees are envisaged in the Act, in practice it is surprise to note that these committees are not functional in any of the Panchayats in the State. Though the District Panning Committees are in operational there are certain impediments for the democratic functioning of the institution. The chairperson of the DPC is not an elected representative of Panchayat or Municipality. It is observed that in 2010-2011 not even a signal DPC had prepared and submitted an integrated district plan to the State Government. And the record of DPCs in 2011-2012 is also poor, only two of them had submitted the district plan. The autonomy of the Panchayats may be explained by examining the 'control mechanism exerted by either the department or the Government. The autonomy of the Panchayats is challenged by certain provisions in the State Act. (1). The representatives of the Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats can be suspended by the State Government and Director of Panchayat respectively, (2) The State Government has the power of suspending the Panchayat committee, and (3) A State level officer (the Director of Rural Development & Panchayatas) has the power to resent the resolutions of the Panchayats. The real status of the Panchayats in the State has been reflected in the devolution index prepared by the Eleventh Finance Commission

and as per the index, Punjab scores only 2.0, as against the score value of 9.6, 9.1, and 5.9 by Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, respectively.

While exploring the answer of a major question related to devolution (why Government Devolve), Mitra and Verma have tried to work out possible determinants of devolution. Two determinants of the authors may be applied to explain the status of devolution in Punjab. First is the attitudes and perception of the governing elite at the State level and it is known as willingness to devolve (WTD). WTD tries to measure the attitudes and perceptions of the ruling elite. These may be the possible factors worked behind the policy decision of the government on the degree of devolution. It is hypothesized that poor the WTD, more negative the attitude of the ruling elite towards the devolution of power to local bodies and poor the extent of devolution. The degree of the willingness of the governing elite at the State level to share power and patronage to the local governments shows the reflection of the poor status of devolution in Punjab. Ethno-linguistic fractionalization (EFI) is the second determinant of devolution in a given State. EFI shows the probability that any two persons selected by random sample from within a group belong to different ethno-linguistic fractions (Mauro, 1995). It is hypothesized that the lower the EFI, the lower the extent of ethnic diversity in the concerned State. An index is worked out, which is known as diversity index (DI) by considering the diversity of the population (number of caste/community /linguistic groups within a State). Low level of diversity among the Punjabi population estimates fairly low DI. While measuring the quality and level of devolution in the State of Punjab, the fairly low value of the two major determinants (WTD and DI) works against. The combination of two factors along with others factors may be a possible explanation of the poor record of decentralization in the State of Punjab.

Ranking as per Devolution Index of MoPR/IIPA and its impact in the State

According to the Devolution Index of MoPR and IIPA for the year 2011-2012, the rank of Punjab's score was 27.22 which placed 17th among the Indian States and it is against the national average of 41.92. The score for framework was 73.63, for functions the score

was 46.42, for finance the score was 6.16 and for functionaries it was 17.34. All the score values of Punjab is less than the national average .While the score for framework is near to national average as a result of the formal devolution, the fact that there has been very little achievement in terms of devolution of finance and functionaries has resulted in the poor rank of the State as per the devolution index. The devolution index of the State of Punjab gives an impression that there is mismatch between the four dimensions. The major question of the status of devolution in Punjab is about how the local governments can perform the assigned functions with a very poor support of finance and functionaries. The index brings out the extent of devolution carried out by the State of Punjab during last year. It shows the current dynamics in devolution of power, finances, functions and functionaries in the existing three tier system of Panchayati Raj in the State. It is to be stated that decentralized planning for socio economic development and social justice in its complete sense has not fully evolved in the State of Punjab. The decentralization and devolution process is still in its initial stages. It is high time to clear all the backlogs and address the existing gaps It could, however, be concluded by stating that the ranking provided by the MoPR / IIPA is clear, acceptable and authentic. The process of decentralization in Punjab has not kept pace with many other States and that devolution in Punjab is thriving to build successful models.

During the discussion with State officials and political leaders it was understood that the State has more interest in the in the second component of the PEAIS, the verification of individual Panchayats. Since Punjab is placed as a low ranking State in the devolution index, the general perception is that the State may have very little chance for getting the award under PEAIS. Therefore, as it is reported, there was not much interest among the stakeholders on the methodology and ranking of the States based on the performance of devolution index. However, the introduction of incremental performance and the ranking of the State Rajasthan in the top place under incremental performance index have motivated the stakeholders of decentralization in Punjab and it has started seriously watching the developments in the devolution index. It is felt that the construction of

incremental performance index has generated certain amount of confidence among the stakeholders in Punjab. The confidence is expressed in the words of an official who is attached to PEAIS at the State level “Punjab can also aspire an award for incremental performance under PEAIS provided the process of decentralization is adequately supported by political will”. A new approach is to be formulated in this regard which would help in taking forward the decentralization process and will help in evolving a new dynamics in local self governance in Punjab.

The State of Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh State was formed on 1 November 2000 as the 26th State of the Indian Union, and it is divided from the Madhya Pradesh state. In 1998, the Union Government drafted a bill for the creation of a new state of Chhattisgarh. This draft bill was sent to the Madhya Pradesh assembly for approval and it was unanimously approved by the Madhya Pradesh assembly in 1998. Since elections to Indian Parliament were declared, the draft bill could not be approved. The new Government sent the redrafted Separate Chhattisgarh Bill for the approval of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, where it was once again unanimously approved and then it was tabled in the Lok Sabha. This bill for a separate Chhattisgarh was passed in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, paving the way for the creation of a separate State of Chhattisgarh. On the 25 of August 2000 the President of India gave his consent to the Reorganization Act 2000. The Government of India subsequently set the First day of November 2000 as the day on which the State of Madhya Pradesh would be bifurcated into Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. As per the Madhya Pradesh Reorganization Act 2000, any law already in force in the State of Madhya Pradesh when Chhattisgarh was created remained applicable in the new State of Chhattisgarh. Here, the Panchayati Raj legislation in Madhya Pradesh at the time the State was divided became applicable to Chhattisgarh State also. The present Act is called Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam, 1993.

As per the provisions of the Constitution, Chhattisgarh State followed three-tier Panchayat system. In Chhattisgarh there are 9,820 Gram Panchayats, 146 Janpad Panchayat (Intermediate Panchayats) at the block level and 18 Zila Panchayat at the district level. In addition to this, there is the Gram Sabha, which is the fundamental unit of the Panchayati Raj system. The first Panchayat election in Chhattisgarh is held on January 2005.

In Chhattisgarh Gram Panchayats are the basic units of local-self governance. The Gram Panchayat area is divided into wards and each Panchayats have not less than ten and not more than twenty wards and each ward have one elected member. Each Gram Panchayat consists of the elected members and a Sarpanch, who is the head of the Gram Panchayat. An Up-Sarpanch is also elected, who is the deputy of the Sarpanch. The Gram Panchayat also has a Secretary known as *Sachiv*. As per the provision in the Act, the executive body of the Gram Panchayat is the elected body. The Gram Sabha is the general body of the Gram Panchayat and the executive has to perform its duties as per directions given by the general body. A Gram Panchayat creates a Gram Panchayat fund and all sums received by the Panchayat are posted to this fund and it is utilized for development activities or other expenses as approved by the Government.

Each district is divided into blocks, and a Janpad Panchayat is constituted in each block. Each Janpad Panchayat has an elected body which consist 10-25 elected members. All the elected members of the State Legislative Assembly within the jurisdiction of the block, one-fifth of the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches with in the area of the block on a rotation basis for a period of one year are also members of the Janapad Panchayat. The Janpad Panchayat is headed by a President who is elected by the members and also a Vice President who is also elected by the members. In each Janpad Panchayat there is also a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is the administrative head of the Janpad Panchayat. There is a provision that each Janpad Panchayat establishes a 'Janpad Panchayat fund' and the fund is utilized for developmental works and other expenses approved by the State Government.

As per the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act, Zilla Panchayat was constituted in each district. A Zilla Panchayat has elected members of normally between 10-35, Members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Assembly with in the jurisdiction of the district and all the Presidents of Janpad Panchayats in the district. The Zilla Panchayat is headed by a President, who is elected from the members of the District Panchayat; in addition to the President a Vice President was also selected. The administrative head of the Zilla Panchayat is Chef Executive Officer. In each district a Deputy Director of Panchayat is appointed and in his control there are Panchayat Inspectors responsible for Gram Panchayats and Janpad Panchayats and who is in charge of inspection and audit. A Zilla Panchayat fund is created similar to the fund of Janpad panchayat and Gram Panchayat and the amount is utilized for activities related to development or any other expenses approved by the State Government. The Zilla Panchayat controls and supervises the administration of the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) and all the functions and schemes assigned to DRDA by the State Government should be implemented under the supervision of the Zilla Panchayat.

Devolution Status

In Chhattisgarh, the Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act is followed due to the bifurcation of the State in November 2000. An activity mapping is also conducted in the State in 2006. As per the Panchayati Raj Act of the State there is a provision for tied and untied funds for the local self governments in the State. In addition to this, the finance commission grant is distributed in the ratio of 20:30:50 at Zila Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat and Gram Panchayat respectively. As per the 11th Schedule of 73rd Constitution Amendment 29 subjects should be transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in each State. As per activity mapping document of the Chhattisgarh, out of 29 subjects 27 subjects are devolved to the Panchayati Raj Institutions only two subjects namely, minor forest produce and technical training and vocational education are not devolved. It is observed that activity mapping is completed in the State but in practice the

devolution of powers has not fully taken place due to the lack of awareness or lack of cooperation from the part of the stakeholders..

As per the Panchayati Raj Act of the State, the Gram Panchayats are authorized to collect house tax, business tax, livestock registration, bazaar tax, tax from nal-jal yojna, street light tax, other taxes like market fee, penalty or fines, arrears of tax, entertainment tax, tax on fisheries pond, cess on land, duty to transfer of property, rent from community hall.etc .In Chhattisgarh, Zila Panchayat and Janpad Panchayat are authorized to collect taxes like cess on land, duty to transfer of property and rent from community hall and collected amount should be deposited in the bank and the same can be utilized for the administrative purpose only after the preparation of budget and its approval by the Joint Director/Deputy Director at District level.

The Gram Panchayats can appoint the staff in following departments like education, health, rural development, social welfare, women and child development, fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture and horticulture service, *shiksa karmi* Grade I, II and III. The Gram Panchayat Sachiev is appointed by CEO of Zilla Panchayat. The Chief Executive Officer at Zilla Panchayat, Chief Executive Officer at Janpad Panchayat and additional Chief Executive Officers who shall discharge functions as may and be appointed by the State Government.

Ranking as per the Devolution Index of the MoPR / IIPA and its impact

According to the devolution index prepared by the MoPR and IIPA in 2011-2012, the rank of Chhattisgarh is 8th among the Indian States .The overall score of the State is 49.69 as against the national average of 41.92 .The score of framework is 73.13 whereas the national average is 74.39. The score of functions is 49.51 which is higher than the national average of 46.75. The score value of finance is 51.15 whereas it is 35.33 in the case of functionaries. While considering the relatively higher score values of framework dimension and finance dimension, it gives an impression that the State of Chhattisgarh

can perform better results, if reasonable degree of functionaries would have been deployed at the Panchayats. The discussions conducted at the State level reveals that both the components of PEAIS (1.construction of devolution index & ranking of States /UTs and 2.verification of individual Panchayats & its award) are known to the stakeholders. The faculty at SIRD, the nodal officer of PEAIS and the State officials of social welfare and Panchayati Raj, Government of Chhattisgarh has relatively good information and knowledge on the devolution index and ranking procedure on the status of decentralization in the States/UTs. All of them have the opinion that index is based on scientific and objective criteria. Transparency is the hallmark of the exercise as commented by majority of them .The relevance of the index and ranking of the States are highly appreciated. All of them stand for continuing the exercises. The questionnaire and date sheet framed by the MoPR / IIPA and forwarded to the States is a road map in decentralization and an agenda for further action. It is widely used for making a SWOT analysis in the State .One senior official commented that “it is our serious concern”. When he was asked to comment on incremental performance index, he said “it has more contextual relevance for certain States like Chhattisgarh”. Though there was no specific comment for strengthening and refining the construction of the index a suggestion has been made. Special attention may be given to both PESA States and PESA Panchayats. . The present Minister of the Panchayat has made a comment that the State of Chhattisgarh has to be appreciated its efforts towards decentralization with in the background of leftwing extremists. It is suggested that either the leftwing extremists affected States may be considered separately or additional weightage may be given while ranking the States based on the devolution index.

CHAPTER 4

IMPACT ASSESSMENT THROUGH CASE STUDIES

This part of the report constitutes a pool of case studies which are used as the primary referral material on the basis of which the whole assessment of the impact is made. Three sources of evidence provided the basis for the case studies—key informant interviews, document review, and focuses group discussions. Case studies for Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala are presented below and the methods deployed also allows for a comparison of the impacts. The case studies are presented as being narrated by the members of the evaluation team.

CASES FROM THE STATE OF PUNJAB

Award Winning / Non Award winning PRIs

The impact of PEAI's award on non award winning neighboring PRIs was also an important aspect specially looked in to by the evaluation team. In their field visit the team tried to focus specifically, on this important point.

1. Talvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat

When the team reached the Talvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat, Shri. Rajindar Singh, the Sarpanch of Dabawal Kalan Gram Panchayat and Shri. Guruvindar Singh, the Sarpanch of Kottla Gram Panchayat along with their secretaries were present at the Gram Panchayat office. These two Sarpanchs reported that they have a plan to apply for the award in the coming year. They were congratulating and appreciating the sincere efforts of Talvandi Bharath Gram Panchayat towards achieving the award. They told that it was their second visit to Talvandi Bharath after their achievement. The words as uttered by the Sarpanch of Dabawal Kalan are reproduced here. *“I was hearing about the development activities of Talvandi Bharath and visited the Panchayat to find out whether I can replicate the Talvandi Bharath development model in Dabawal Kalan Gram*

Panchayat". *"I will visit this Gram Panchayat again to get a ground feeling"*, he added. Shri. Gurvindar Singh the Sarpanch of Kottla Gram Panchayat was very anxious to know the details of PEAIS award. The team explained to him that the award was specifically for enhancing transparency, efficiency and accountability of the PRIs in which the Gram Sabha has a great role in selecting the beneficiaries, making suggestions in the plan formulation and discussing financial statement. Conducting Gram Sabha in a transparent way is surely one of the important criteria in ranking for PEAIS, the team explained. *"I would surely improve the line of functioning of our Gram Sabha in Kottla Gram Panchayat as best as I can"* was the reaction of Shri Gurvindar Singh's once the team briefed the award and asked its impact.

When asked to narrate the major changes in governance after the award (PEAIS), the following areas were highlighted by the Panchayat Committee. It is asserted that the changes are mainly due to impact of PEAIS.

1. The frequency of Panchayat Committee meetings has increased.
2. Circulation of advance notice for Panchayat Committee.
3. Active participation of Panchayat members
4. Panchayat minutes are made up to date
5. Number of Gram Sabha meeting has increased
6. Social audit for schemes
7. Created demand for attending training
8. Review of schemes in the presence of officials has been started
9. More effort on local resource mobilization

2. Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat

The news, that Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat was selected for the award under PEAIS, spread in the neighboring PRIs. Appreciations were showered on the Sarpanch (Shri. Sajit Singh) and the Panchayat Committee through short message service (SMS) by mobile phones. The Sarpanchs of Aklia Khurd Gram Panchayat (Shri. Kevel Singh), Balhar Mehma Gram Panchayat (Shri. Sikhender Singh), Harrabour Gram Panchayat (Smt. Manjul Kour) Gonaina Kalan Gram Panchayat (Shri. Lab Singh) and Kolhen Inder Gram Panchayat (Shri. Raja Singh) had intimate contacts with the Sarpanch of Aklian Kalan. They used to pay courtesy visits and used to discuss development issues related to their respective Panchayats. The news of Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat being honored by the MoPR, Government of India with the prestigious award was big news to all of them.

It was reported that the two Sarpanchs (Aklia Khurd GP and Baihar Mehma GP) had come across Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat to understand the way in which local resources were mobilized from all possible sources and usher in development activities. The case of one rich farmer meeting the expenses of starting a hospital in Aklian Kalan in the memory of his mother was one such instance. The Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat was able to get the assistance from the Zilla Parishad for meeting the day to day running expenses. Such innovative measures for fund raising for welfare activities in Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat attracted these neighboring Sarpanchs. Through their visits they wanted to learn more about such schemes and wanted to replicate in their Gram Panchayats as well.

Three other nearby Sarpanchs (Harrabour GP, Gonaina Kalan GP and Kolhen Inder GP) got attracted by some other schemes introduced by the Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat. They realized that the Sarpanch of Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat received full backing and support from the entire members of the committee. They also wanted to adopt the same style of team work in their Gram Panchayats, as well. These Sarpanchs also wanted

to learn the details of the skill development programmes specially chalked out for unemployed SC youth of the Aklian Kalam Gram Panchayat. It could better be said that these eight Sarpanchs were all the more incentivized as well as empowered by their visits to Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat.

The Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat has realized that social audit brings accountability and transparency which has resulted in providing more emphasis on social audit. The elected representatives of the Panchayat are now keen in attending more capacity building programmes. On the performance side, rural poor were addressed by providing IAY houses and safe drinking water.

3. Kutba Gram Panchayat

Kutba Gram Panchayat is located in Mehal Kalan Panchayat Samiti in Barnala District. Shri. Ajit Singh is the Sarpanch and Shri. Surjith Singh the Secretary. Shri. Ajith Singh is an influential person in the Panchayat who is holding the post of Sarpanch for the last several years. Kutba is a developed village with basic civic amenities and other infrastructural facilities. The Gram Panchayat has also the credit of bringing Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP). Kutba is viewed as a progressive village by the nearby Gram Panchayats. This was the prime reason why the Sarpanchs of the neighboring Gram Panchayats always looked to Kutba Gram Panchayat and its Sarpanch for guidance and consultancy.

It was reported that immediately after the announcement of the award, the Sarpanchs of Hardaspura GP (Shri. Balvinder Singh), Pandori GP (Shri. Charanjit Singh), Chappa GP (Shri. Darashan Singh) and the Secretary of Bahmanian GP (Shri. Surjith Singh) paid visit to Kutba Gram Panchayat. The purpose of the visit was to get the exact details about how the Gram Panchayat managed to implement different development schemes and finally got the award. The way in which the Sarpanch managed to drill nine bore wells to provide drinking water, the scheme of total sanitation, good drainage system (*nallas*),

provision of electricity and street lights, maintenance of school infrastructure and surroundings were all attractions to the nearby Panchayat functionaries.

They were also equally curious to know the functioning of the Panchayats. The Kutba Gram Panchayat has succeeded to convince the importance of the governance aspects of the Panchayat such as the number of Panchayat committee meetings, the conduct of business, participation of members in the committee meetings, recording of the meeting, Gram Sabha participation and its proceedings, preparation of planning and budget, implementation of schemes, mobilization local resources and social audit. One interesting comment from one of the visiting Sarpanchs is reported here. *“Until we reached here we had no idea about what underlie Kutba Gram Panchayat. Now we have seen both the inside and out side. Both are strong and beautiful”*. It is revealed that they returned with a firm determination to emulate Kutba and having a dream of achieving an award under PEAIS.

4. Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat

Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat is another Panchayat which got the award under PEAIS, belonging to the Barana Panchayat Samiti in Barnala district. Shri. Ved Prakash is the Sarpanch and Shri. Gurnal Singh the Secretary. There are 63 GPs in Barnala Panchayat Samiti and Bhaini Jassa has topped the list while considering the performance indicators. Bhaini Jassa GP along with Kutba GP was selected for award. Selection of two Gram Panchayats from the same district is a very rare event. Smt. Harvinder Kour of Fatehgarh GP and Shri. Varinderpal Singh of Bhure GP visited Bhaini Jassa on hearing the news of the Panchayat getting selected. They congratulated the Sarpanch, the Secretary and members of the Gram Panchayat.

Smt. Harvinder Kour of Fatehgarh Gram Panchayat is a leader among the women Sarpanchs in the area. She is one among those elected women representatives who has challenged the rigid boundaries set up by the male members. She is literate, knows

Panchayat Act and Rules and has built up the capacity to tackle unwanted political and bureaucratic interference. The Sarpanch had also played an active role in mobilizing women of Bhaini Jassa to public action in the Gram Panchayat area. This also might have prompted Smt. Harivinder Kour to pay a visit to Bhaini Jassa GP. The plus points with Bhaini Jassa were the holding of Gram Sabha four times in a year instead of the stipulated two. Above all at this time they had Smt. Kavita Singh the lady IAS officer as Dy. Commissioner who had been doing programmes to empower the women elected representatives and to channelize their energy and capabilities towards development of the Panchayats which they represent. Shri. Varinderpal Singh, Sarpanch of Bhure Gram Panchayat also paid several visits to Bhaini Jassa. As a Sarpanch he wanted to have an insight into the development activities. He was very much impressed by the way in which the Panchayat managed to converge the MGNREGA fund with other schemes. The construction of additional bore wells, expansion of drinking water supply to the poor, the construction of a comfortable rest place for senior citizens, the innovative schemes of giving prizes to students of tenth class especially girls to attract them to classes and to reduce drop outs etc. details of which were curiously taken note of by the Sarpanch of Bhure. The Panchayat made provision for establishing a tailoring centre for women from the SC community. Moreover, the very scheme for women could be presented as an impact of the idea on 'gender budget', which they could understand during the PEAIS verification process. The Secretary of Bhure GP introduced the concept of 'gender budget' and showed how it can be applied in the Panchayat while allocating resources and schemes to different sectors. It is found that, both the visiting Sarpanchs returned with a firm determination to introduce such schemes in their respective Panchayats also and if possible try their best for this award (PEAIS) in the coming year.

5. Sangrur Panchayat Samiti

Sangrur is the only Panchayat Samiti in the entire State of Punjab selected for the award under PEIAS. Shri. Harbhajan is the Chairman of the Samiti. The Samiti has eighteen

members apart from the Chairman. The Vice Chairman is a lady belonging to the Scheduled Caste.

While discussing with the officials and the members of the Panchayat Samiti it was felt that there is a harmonious relationship between them which may be a model to be replicated in other Panchayat Samitis. There is 65 Gram Panchayats in the geographical area of the Panchayat Samiti. Some of the GPs are more resourceful with extensive area as common land. All this area is very fertile, well irrigated and raises double crop (wheat in *rabi* season and paddy during *kharf*). The common land under the Samiti is estimated as 532 acres and the Samiti has taken steps to auction this land on base in most transparent way issuing tender notice and gathering suggestions from the local community in the Samiti area. All these measures have received wide acceptance from the officials as well as from the general public. So the recognition of the development initiatives of the Samiti was long expected and everyone agreed that the declaration of the award (PEAIS) to Sangrur Panchayat Samiti was a step in the right direction. The Chairmen and BDPOs of the two nearby Panchayat Samitis of Lahara Gage and Barnala were eager to know the inner details of Sangrur development projects and its plan of action. All these dignitaries were in touch with the Chairman and BDPO over phone, ever since they got the news of the award. The Barnala Panchayat Samiti had already deputed Shri. Sardar Dakshin Singh, the BDPO to Sangrur to get all details. The team came to know that Shri. Sardar Dakshin Singh had come to Sangrur and had a detailed study about all development programmes. The enhancement of own income from common land through transparent auction to Rs.17 lakh was above the first thing taken note of by the BDPO.

Shri.Sardar Dakshin Singh was also impressed by the way in which Sangrur BDPO kept the officials records. He found the records up to date, with a good track record of timely reply and proper follow up action. Even though there was no fund flow from MPLAD and MLALAD grants, the Sangrur Panchayat Samiti made up a budget provision of Rs. 1

crore in the present year. The important attraction in the budget provision was that of IAY houses. Provision for the construction of 784 IAY houses was made with special allotment of a few houses for the handicapped. The Panchayat Committee openly admitted that the award (PEAIS) was the motivation to prepare such a detailed budget. It is remembered that during the time of the verification of PEAIS the idea of a detailed budget had been given to the notice of the Panchayat Committee. *“That was our concern for the detailed budget”* said, the Chairman of the Panchayat Committee. It gives an impression that it is a post award (PEAIS) development. Such schemes for the socially excluded and physically disabled had been widely commended and fully appreciated by Rural Development, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Punjab as well as the civil society activists . The representatives of the other Panchayat Samities are now trying to copy these innovative models.

6. Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat

Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat has seven elected representatives, of which one is the Sarpanch who is directly elected. Shri. Ram Singh is the Sarpanch and is in the fourth successful year as Sarpanch. During this short span of time he built up a reputation of his own as a Sarpanch of good foresight. He possessed an inquisitive mind and was ready to take up hard tasks. He succeeded to coordinate all the members and the officials as a team. The Panchayat committee attempted to establish linkages with all development schemes. The idea originated when the application of PEAIS was filed. The Panchayat Committee was supported and encouraged to apply ‘convergence model’. In this way, the Panchayat Committee managed to construct a community hall worth Rs.10 lakhs. There was a combined effort from the part of the Panchayat Committee to raise the income from the common land (100 acres). They succeeded in enhancing the revenue from this land to Rs. 10 lakhs. Efforts were made to reconstruct and renovate a school at a cost of Rs. 17 lakhs. The Sarpanch was effective in convincing the local MLA about the priority developmental needs of the Panchayat and solicit the support. Shri. Gurdev

Singh, the Sarpanch of Unstar Gram Panchayat and Sarpanches of Kamy Khurd GP, Chamara GP and others are now frequent visitors to Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat. The Sarpanches along with their secretaries take special care in having detailed discussion with the members of the Panchayat Committee. They all have great appreciation for the development initiatives of Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat. *“Now we have a model before us and we will follow the path of Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat to attain PEAIS award next year”* said Shri Gurdev Singh, Sarpanch Untsar GP. Confidence was visible from his words.

CASES FROM THE STATE OF RAJASTHAN

1. Ganeshwar Gram Panchayat

Ganeshwar Gram Panchayat is one among the five award (PEAIS) winning Panchayats in the State of Rajasthan. The vernacular dailies highlighted this achievement of Ganeshwar Panchayat. The focus was on the united efforts of Panchayat Committee, which is headed by a lady *Sarpanch*, Smt. Saroj Devi. With a meager own annual income of Rs.94, 000 the Panchayat was in a position to carry out a number of development works. There was convergence of the schemes and also mobilizing people’s participation. Shri. Mali Ram, the *Gram Sevak* explained their notable achievements. He further explained how this recognition of their Gram Panchayat has impacted upon other Panchayats in the neighborhood. *Sarpanchs* of the neighboring Panchayats along with the *Gram Sevaks* have started visiting Ganeshwar. Smt. Saroj Devi of Gowari Gram Panchayat, Shri. Panchlall of Dipwas Panchayat, Shri. Suresh Sharma of Chiplatan Gram Panchayat along with their respective *Gram Sevaks* visited Ganeshwar after hearing about the declaration of the award. When the evaluation team asked the functionaries of the Panchayat to comment on the impression of the team who made the visit in Ganeshwar, the *Gram Sevak* responded that *“none of them had thought about introducing the schemes in such a systematic way. They also found that how a Panchayat office could keep the records and*

documents up to date, and the special care". All the visitors, no doubt, were inspired as well as incentivized. Ganeshwar has now become model to all of them.

There was detailed discussion and enquires during the verification of PEAIS on civic amenities in the Gram Panchayat. The Sarpanch admitted that though they were selected for the award, their coverage was not 100 percent and thus they made all the efforts for achieving it. The scarcity of drinking water was a big problem in the entire area and was acute in the case of SC households. The Panchayat made special schemes for 100 per cent coverage in water supply. Additional tube wells were dug and water supply installed in those neglected areas to help the poor families of SC. Construction of toilets for individual houses, coverage of drainage and sanitation works in public places also were given top most priority. Beneficiaries of all such schemes were selected in the Gram Sabha, ensuring the maximum participation and transparency. Even though the mandated number of Gram Sabha is four in one year, the Committee has decided to convene more meetings. The Panchayat Committee was very strict with regard to the attendance of the Panchayat functionaries in the Gram Sabha. It is reported that the Gram *Sevak* has made serious attempts not only to discuss the annual plan in the Gram Sabha but also to incorporate the suggestions in the plan document. Both the Sarpanch and the Gram *Sevak* have admitted that during the verification there was an active discussion on the role of the Gram Sabha in the plan formulation. All needed details of the activities, beneficiary list etc. were posted on the notice board, punctually.

The *Sarpanch* insisted that the agricultural assistant, ANM, veterinary staff of sub centre, head master of the school, PDS dealer and such others connected with village level administration be present for review of schemes during the Panchayat Committee. The Sarpanch and *Sevak* have openly revealed that the idea of scheme review with the presence of the local officials in the Panchayat Committee is the major visible impact of the PEAIS.

2. Chainpura Gram Panchayath

Shri,Ratan Lal, the Gram Savak openly admitted that after the verification of the PEAIS, the record keeping and documentation of the Panchayat has become more systematic. Moreover, classification of files and records has been made. Information was also gathered regarding meetings of the Gram Sabha in Chainpura Gram Panchayat, and it was noticed that the Gram Panchayat had called Gram Sabha meetings more than the mandated number of four. The.Sarpanch mentioned that in the last meeting of the Panchayat Committee there was a discussion on Gram Sabha and the major concern was how to increase the participation and the quality of the discussions. It was decided to select the beneficiaries of different schemes only through Gram Sabha. The indicators and questions on Gram Sabha in the format of PEAIS have educated the importance of the participatory form and it is believed that Gram Sabha is also as important as Panchayat Committee. *“It is the duty of the Panchayat Committee to activate the Gram Sabha and we are moving in that direction. It was taught to us by the indicators on Gram Sabha from the PEAIS questionnaire”* Commented one Member of the Committee.

The Gram Savak explained how the English and Vernacular news papers (*Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Pathrika and Times of India*) flashed the news about Chainpura winning the award. He further explained that the news attracted the attention of the nearby Sarpanchs (Shri Raghunath Prasad from Radhakrishnapura Gram Panchayat and Shri Prabhu Dayal from Purohit Kabas Gram Panchayat) and Gram Savaks (Shri Puranma from Gungara Gram Panchayat and Shri Omprakash from Raghunathgarh Gram Panchayat). They made exposure \visit to Chainpura Gram Panchayat to understand the process and dynamics of local development initiatives and the quality of governance of the Chainpura Gram Panchayat.

3. Lodsar Gram Panchayath

Lodsar Gram Panchayat has a 12 member Panchayat Committee with Smt. Santhosh Devi as the Sarpanch. Shri. Jeevan Nehara is the Gram Sevak of the Panchayat. On queries regarding the responses to the award the Gram Sevak had lot of things to explain. The local news papers *Rajasthan Pathrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar* gave good coverage of Lodsar getting adjudged as award winner. It is reported that total nine Sarpanchs (Shri. Harish Prik from Morangsar GP, Shri Damodar from Salasar GP , Shri Kanaram Didariya from Bhimsar GP, Shri Bhuraram from Malasisar GP, Shri Lakshman Meghwal from Sobhasar GP , Shri Ramakaran Jakhid from Sarotia GP , Shri Diwan Singh from Bhansisariya GP, Shri Punger Kileri from Harasar GP , and shri Gopal Tiwari from Sandwarda GP) had visited Lodsar and enquired about details of their success story. The Sarpanch and the Gram Savak explained to them that they are trying to replicate the best practices found successful in other areas. They have narrated the capacity building exercise which they (both the elected representatives and officials) had undergone at SIRID. The visiting Sarpanches were also provided information about the way in which Lodsar Gram Panchayat is conducting Gram Sabha and Panchayat Committees. It is reported that they used to convene Gram Sabha every month (on the 27th of each month) and the sittings of Panchayat Committee is fixed on the 5th, 12th and 20th of every month. Lodsar had introduced the ‘Special Gram Sabhas’. It is also reported that the officials are strictly instructed to submit a correct and factual report of their actions and based on that their work/scheme implementation is reviewed. Both of them ascertained that these developments have taken place during the post PEAIS award phase. “*We are convinced that it is our responsibility to review the schemes*”, said the Sarpanch.

The Sarpanchs were also given information about the way in which Lodsar is making use of the services of non governmental organizations (NGO). An NGO, *Baruda* has its deep roots in Lodsar. Ms. Amitha along with seven other dedicated followers takes care of the nutritional needs of children and pregnant women. ‘Save the Children Programme’ has

been of great help. The rainwater harvesting programme initiated in Lodsar was another attraction to the neighboring Panchayats. The ‘convergence model’ which is adopted in Lodsar between MGNREGA and other development schemes was also an innovative measure and quite unknown to the visiting Sarpanchs. Similarly Lodsar’s attempts in enhancing own income through progressive measures were also lessons for the others to learn. The award (PEAIS) motivated us to adopt ‘convergence model’ and stake holder consultation with NGOs in the preparation of plan. When the evaluation team asked more clarifications on these two issues, the Sevak replied that these two indicators were very much on the PEAIS questionnaire, and we had serious discussions in the Panchayat Committee. It was finally suggested to prepare a detailed plan with the support of local NGOs. The idea of convergence was introduced by the block level officials. He revealed that, *“after the award the officials have more consideration towards Lodsar. They have confidence on us”*. Lodsar has an efficient financial management system, the Sarpanch explained. The PEAIS award amount is a great incentive. There are big plans, a community toilet, marriage hall, total sanitation etc. The Sarpanch was sure that the Panchayat will receive the much awaited Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP).

4 Sujangarh.Panchayat Samiti

Sujangarh and Chouhatan are the two Panchayat Samitis selected for the award (PEAIS) along with one Zilla Parishad and five Gram Panchayats. Smt. Nani Devi is the Pradhan. Shri. Vikas Singh, her husband is presently the Zilla Parishad member. She openly acknowledges that this has added to the prestige and power of Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti.

Sujangarh has developed a model for day to day administration. A committee was specially formed for coordination. This committee invariably has a sitting every month. All departmental officials have to attend this meeting without failure. They present monthly progress reports. Difficulties if any are solved by coordinated efforts.

Structures for rainwater harvesting and tube wells have been built up in all the Gram Panchayats under the geographical area of Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti. Sujangarh is best example of a Panchayat Samithi putting in all efforts to make the best possible use of MGNREGA funds. The Samiti has also taken steps to converge MGNREGA with other schemes. The number of infrastructure schemes taken up is good example for the other Panchayat Samitis of the district. The check dams, school building, pond for school, Jal Kands in all GPs etc are examples for the convergence model. The programme for encouraging family planning measures in all the Gram Panchayats through people's participation has been appreciated by the Government of Rajasthan. The benefits of information, communication and technology (ICT) were fully canalized towards keeping the records in the mandated formats. MGNREGS muster roll and progress report are all prepared and transmitting by using this new device.

Within minutes of the declaration of the award, the news that Sujangarh also is one of the recipients spread throughout locality. The next day, it was an item in newspapers of Rajasthan *Pathrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar*. Pradhans of eight Panchayat Samitis (Shri. Bolarm from Ladanu PS, Shri. Bhagawana Ram Burdak from Diwana PS, Shri. Baburam Choudari from Dughargh PS, Shri. Ranjith from Sakota PS, Smt. Vimala Puniva from Raghath PS and Smt. Ankori Devi from Taranger PS) visited Sujangrah and tried to learn details of the development works which made the Panchayat Samiti eligible for the award (PEAIS). The award made long lasting impact on these leaders.

5. Solana Gram Panchayat

Smt. Sumitra Devi is the Sarpanch of Solana Gram Panchayat. As a Sarpanch, she got chance to attend the training programmes in and out side the district. All these measures had widened her vision and have given enlightenment. The PEAIS award to Solana she said "*was the greatest achievement in my life*". The women Sarpanchs of the neighbouring Gram Panchayats were very glad to hear about the award. All of them congratulated the Committee and four Sarpanchs (Smt. Savitri Devi of Badundakaia GP,

Smt. Manohari Devi of Chennana GP, Shri. Hakeemudeen of Suntand GP and Shri Ram Niwas of Gowla GP) made visit in the Solana GP .They were very anxious to know all the details of the functioning of Solana. They all came to Solana with an inquisitive mind. The Sarpanch and Gram Sevak explained to them clearly the path they traced to attain the award. First important thing came to their notice was the systematic functioning of the Panchayat committee. The Committee invariably had the meeting on 5th and 20th of every month. The official department meetings were also held on appointed days. Gram Sabha was held four times in a year and already decided to convene more than four times. All deliberations were transparent. Minutes of such meetings were accessible to one and all. The detailed discussion on the governance issue in the Panchayat clearly gives the difference between the situation in the pre and post PEAIS phase. The Panchayat functionaries opined that in the post PEAIS phase, the governance of the Panchayat has been changed. Cases were cited as follows;

1. More time was taken for Panchayat meetings and in majority cases with full quorum.
2. Almost all issues which listed in the PEAIS format (water, education, livelihood, nutrition, health, sanitation streetlight connectivity etc) had been discussed.
3. Discussion on the allocation and utilization of funds demarcated for SCs and women.
4. The Panchayat Committee had taken a decision that Gram Sabha should be conducted only after a through preparation. It is reported that casual way of conducting the Gram Sabha should be avoided.
5. It was decided that any forms of complaints, grievances and redressal from the public should be addressed after hearing both the parties.

One of the aims of the visiting Panchayat representatives was to find out how the Sarpanch of Solana was able to mobilize resources. The Panchayat could mobilize Rs. 8 lakhs from MPLAD and Rs. 5 lakhs from MLA fund. Also got assistance from “*Sanudayak Vikas Sasthan*” (a trust) for watershed development and has been well utilized. A three year programme at a cost of Rs. 90 lakhs was changing the cropping pattern of the area. There was also a scheme for tapping solar energy. A big tank which was constructed on the hill top has assured the supply of water. Even the burial ground was all green with different species of trees, drip irrigated, giving a calm and quiet background was another innovative development model to other visiting Pradhans. It is observed that some of the development activities had started much earlier than the award. But the timely completion, its proper maintenance and local management of the assets seems to be done in the post PEAIS award phase. “*The award was the real motivation and inspired all of us*” said the Sarpanch. The focus group discussion (FGD) among the local community was a social auditing on the activities of the Panchayat.

6. Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti

Smt. Sana Khan an advocate by profession got elected to Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti and became the Pradhan. Her entire family has a tradition in politics and has elected representation at different levels of Panchayati Raj System. Her mother is also a member of the Panchayati Samiti, Chauhatan. Her father is presently the Zilla Parishad member.

Many Pradhans and Sarpanchs began to visit to Chauhatan to understand the process of the development works in the Panchayat Samiti. Drinking water shortage was a serious problem in this desert prone area. The Panchayat Samiti under the leadership of Pradhan prepared an elaborate plan for rain water harvesting. Two hundred water tanks were constructed to store rain water in proper way. Open well were also dug. Arrangements were also made to store and supply water to the cattle population, especially to grazing goats. Goat rearing was taken by many subsistence farmers as vast area as common land was available for grazing. During the year, unusual rains have also made the Pradhan to

chalk out schemes for animal husbandry. Development plans on sectors like water shed, agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture was considered as a great help to the poor families.

After getting the award, it is reported that four Pradhans from the nearby Panchayat Samitis (Sheo, Badmer, Dhorm, and Pali) had visited Chauhatan. At Chauhatan, the visiting Pradhans could find a number of such development schemes introduced by the Panchayat Samiti. The Pradhan noticed that enrolment of girl students in schools was very low in the area. As an educated and qualified layer she could communicate the value of education to girl students. She spared time to go around the area, from house to house to spread the message of education to girl students. Her approach, pleasing appearance and friendly behavior were added qualities to attract the community and oblige her demand. Inspired and motivated by the message of the Pradhan, the enrolment rate of girl students increased.

The increasing number of drop outs at high school level was another serious problem in the education sector as noticed by the Panchayat Saniti. The issue was more serious in the case of girl students. The Panchayat Samiti found a solution with the support of the State Govt. and introduced a scheme to provide free cycles to school going girls of 9th to 12th standards. The scheme was found successful. *“There are many more progressive ideas put in practice”*, explained one member of the Panchayat Samiti.

In Rajasthan women have higher positions in the Panchayati Raj System. Reservation to the extent of fifty per cent and reservation to the post of Sarpanchs have made larger number of women in these prestigious positions. However, in this context, illiteracy among women elected representatives is a major impediment in the local governance. The Pradhan found that unless the women representatives are given orientation in Panchayati Act and Rules and other procedures they cannot effectively play the responsible role to which they had been elected.

Since the Pradhan is a lawyer by profession she is well acquainted in Panchayat Act, Rules and other procedures. She arranged periodical orientation classes to all the elected women representatives in the area. This has greatly helped them and has improved their self esteem. This sincerity and open mindedness of the Pradhan has been appreciated by the local community and the peer groups. *“The award is recognition of our work and it also motivated us to strengthen the activities. Now, the responsibilities and pressure from the people have been increased. And finally, award is an entitlement to the local community”*, said the Pradhan, Panchayat Samiti, Chauhatan

7. Dhanari Gram Panchayat

Inhabitants are mostly agriculturists in a subsistence economic background. Hearing about Dhanari Gram Panchayat coming in the list for the award (PEAIS), Sarpanchs of eight Gram Panchayats (Shri. Ishwar Sing from Naya Sanwada GP, Shri. Kaluram Janwa from Borga GP, Shri. Fakaram Meghwl from Kauboli GP, Shri. Rajendra Rohim Meghwal from Rohida GP, Shri. Yoge Singh Rathod from Vasnthghar GP, Smt. Geethade Viprohit from Achari GP, Shriundra from Padmabhanu GP, and Shribhavar Singh from Ginwada GP) made an exposure visit to Dhanari to observe and understand the dynamics of the development process in the Panchayat. The Panchayat area was spread around few hamlets. One such hamlet was exclusively of SCs. Even minimum basic facilities like drinking water, housing, electricity, sewage system and toilets were not available. The resource constraint was reported as the reason for poor infrastructure in the SC habitation. *“The local community look towards the Panchyats for immediate and urgent solutions”*, said the Sarpanch. Even with this back ground in Dhanori, *“we are doing the best of what we can”*, explained, the Gram Savek.

The Sarpanch further explained the steps he took in evicting the encroachers from the common land. There were strong political pressures to stop the actions taken by the Panchayat Committee against the encroachers. Finally, the Committee could succeed in the action and land could be taken by the Panchayat and proposed to be used for public

purpose. The Sarpanch expressed the opinion that the high efficacy and trust upon the Panchayat by the local community was the only moral support which contributed to the success story. And he added, the award (PEAIS) became an enabling factor for building efficacy and trust upon the Panchayat committee. For solving acute scarcity of drinking water, the Panchayat Committee took steps to extended water supply to the SC settlement colony. The committee could get the sanction of railway authorities for extending pipe line to the hamlet, Golia, across the railway track. Drains were made for the free flow of sewage water to a place outside the village. The Committee claims that care was taken for administering the Panchayat in the democratic way. Transparency was assured. Gram Sabha was held beyond mediatory provisions for getting consensus. Efforts were made to have maximum attendance in the Gram Sabha proceedings. It is important to mention that while discussing with the members and Gram Sevak of the Panchayat Committee ,the words such as '*democracy*' ,'*transparency*, '*accountability* 'empowerment ,and '*social audit*' has been repeatedly recited by them . These vocabularies in local political discourse are new developments and the process of PEAIS has also contributed to this. All these projects on village development and the quality of governance were eye opener for the visiting Sarpanchs. They are now aware of how to proceed with innovative schemes. The Sarpanchs returned with a firm determination to aim for PEAIS award in the coming year.

CASES FROM THE STATE OF CHATHISGARH

1. Sarguja Zilla Parishad

The Sarguja Zilla Parishad has received the award under (PEAIS) during 2010 -2011 financial year for the remarkable performance . The Chairman, Vice Chairman and CEO of the Zilla Parishd reported that after receiving this award their responsibility towards the citizens have increased and they have made measures to improve the quality of service delivery. Improving the quality of service was one of the major items in the agenda of the Panchayat committee meetings. After the detailed discussion in the

committee it was unanimously decided to assure more efficient performance in various scheme implementations. As part of the measures taken to improve the service delivery of the office of the Zilla Parashad, the following two initiatives are important .

1. The duration of the working time of the office has been extended by two hours on every day and they have also started opening the office of the ZP and extending the service to public even on every Sundays. This has been widely appreciated by the public. As it is reported during the discussion among the local community, the efficacy of the Zilla Parashad has been increased, considerably.
2. The members of the Zilla Parishad have reported that the idea of convergence is more effectively implemented in the district after getting the award under the PEAIS. The convergence of the various development schemes was already started in the district even before the PEAIS verification and the announcement of the award, but after receiving this award they were seriously thinking about the possibilities of applying convergence of the various schemes more effectively at the district level. The records and field cases indicate that the convergence between MGNREGS and other schemes like TSC, SGSY, BRGF, Horticulture Development Scheme and various other State Sponsored Schemes are being effectively implemented in the district. The members of the ZP have claimed that due to their serious efforts of making the scheme implementation in a convergence model the overall impact of schemes may be rated as optimum. They have asserted that the implementation of MGNREGA in a convergence model could mitigate the migration of the working population from the district. It is also reported that for the efficient management of the laborers the district also started constituting a ‘labour bank’ in a selected Janpadh Panchat.

2. Sasauli Gram Panchayat

The Sasauli Gram Panchayat in the Sarguja District has received the PEAIS award during the 2010-2011. Immediately after the announcement on the award, a public reception was

convened by the local citizens in the area to congratulate the committee of the Gram Panchayat. In the meeting, it is asserted that the award is not only the recognition of the committee but also for the entire community of Sasoli. During the wider consultation among the local public it is felt that they are aware of the criteria based on which Sasauli was selected for the award. The Sarpanch and the Secretary reported that after getting the award, the participation in the Gram Sabha has increased and local people have started discussing more effectively in the Gram Sabha. *“The attitude towards the Gram Sabha has now changed. The people now feel that Gram Sabha is a serious business and they are also serious in the discussions”*, said the President. He also ascertained that the behavioral change of the local community is only due to the award. The committee also decided to introduce house tax for each and every house in the Gram Panchayat. Now the committee has certain level of confidence to raise some resource from the public. This happened at the time of the verification of PEAIS because there was some degree of discussion on a question towards ‘own tax collection details’. After a detailed discussion with the Panchayat committee the evaluation team felt that the committee may succeed or fail, but the committee has convinced that to carry out all the responsibilities some sources of own revenue is a must.

3. Lakhanpur Janpadh Panchayat

In Chhattisgarh State one of the award winning Janpad Panchayat is Lakhanpur of Sarguja District. It is reported that the Lakhanpur Janpadh Panchayat has effectively implemented the MGNREGS with convergence to other schemes like BRGF, SGSY, Irrigation projects and Horticulture Development Programme etc. Due to the convergence of different programmes, more person days could be generated and in turn it alleviated the migration of the local people. The Janpad Panchayat has succeeded to organize a ‘labour bank’ in the Block level and it is reported that 7200 laborers from 22000 families have already registered in the Labor Bank. It is reported that after winning the award the major concerns of the committee were “how to sustain the level of governance and how

to improve the level of governance”. Serious discussion on the issue has compelled the committee to take a unanimous decision that all the pension schemes be implemented through the Banks /Post Offices and Lakhanpur is the first block in the district which could achieve 100 percent of the disbursement of pension amount through the account of the beneficiaries.

The Lakhanpur Janpad Panchayat Committee reported that after winning the award the working time of the office of the Panchayat has increased by two hours in the evening and now every day the office functions up to 8.30 p.m. The discussion among the staff reveals that they used to work even Sundays and they have no hesitation to work such an unconventional working pattern rather with a high dignity of honor. When it was probed further the President replied that, *“when we have received a prestigious award from the Government of India ,we thought that something has to reciprocate to the community and that is why we have decide to give an award to local community . The extension of our office time is the award”*. It is reported that after winning the award the Panchayat Committee has decided to review the schemes implemented at the Janpadh level and as a result the achievement rate of the IAY and SGSY is cent percent. The idea of reviewing development schemes by the Committee was first introduced during the PEAIS verification. *“The particular indicator on the review of schemes has really motivated us to start the business of review, seriously “*, said the CEO of the Lakhanpur Janpad Panchayat.

4. Kartala Janpadh Panchayat

When a direction was posed towards the members of the Kartala Janpad Panchayat, it is reported that after winning the PEAIS award the functioning of the committee has improved and all the elected members are attending the committee meeting without delay. All the decisions in Panchayat Committee are taken after detailed discussions and in many cases, unanimously. Again, it is reported that after winning this award the Committee took a decision to conduct awareness programme for the public about the

various schemes implemented by the Janpadh Panchayat and Gram Panchayats in the block area. This awareness programme is conducted in different parts of the block area. During this awareness programme the application for various pensions scheme is also distributed to the public.

After winning this award, the Committee took a decision to implement the various pension schemes through banks / post offices in the block area. The Committee also admitted that the filling up of the application form of PEAIS is a self learning process. *“After filling this application only, we could understand our responsibilities, powers and functions. When we discussed the item by item in the application form of the PEAIS, we could judge where we are, what is our strength and weakness”*, one member of the Kartala Janpad Panchayat commented.

5. Umreli Gram Panchayat

The Umreli Gram Panchayat of Kartala Block in Korba district received PEAIS award in 2010-2011. During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the Panchayat Committee reported that after winning the award the functioning of the committee has improved in a substantiate level. After the award the committee has started to review of the progress of the implementation of various schemes and also review the performance of the local institutions. It is reported that the application submitted by the public to the committee is seriously being considered. And actions are also being taken in time bound manner. The Gram Panchayat committee also started to monitor the progress of teaching and other facilities in the schools.

When a question was asked on the improvements in the area of local resource mobilization, it is reported since the award the Panchayat Committee has taken a decision to improve the tax collection. The committee could take a unanimous decision to levy and collect the house tax from the current year onwards. The Panchayat Committee also claimed that the relationship between the Gram Panchayat and the general public has

improved after winning the award. The award became an instrument to think that the Panchayat is a responsible body by the local public. In one of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), in the habitations of the marginalized communities, the majority opinion was that the level of governance of the Panchayat has improved in terms of frequency of the visits of the Sarpanch and attention of the delivery of service.

CASES FROM THE STATE OF KARNATAKA

1. Ittamadu Gram Panchayat

During the FGD with the functionaries of the Ittamadu Gram Panchayat, it is reported that after winning the award under PEAIS from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India, the status of the Ittamadu Gram Panchayat has improved and the relationship between the local public and the Gram Panchayat has changed, positively. The people's perception on their Panchayat is now different and the majority of the local population in the area is well aware of the status of Ittamadu Gram Panchayat. It is also reported that after the award the people's participation in the Ward Sabha and Gram Sabha has improved in terms of both quantity and quality. The President opined that special emphasis had been given by the committee to enhance the participation of marginalized communities including women, SCs and STs. *“The separate queries on ‘the participation of women, SCs and STs in the Panchayat committee and the Gram Sabha’ during the time of verification of PEAIS has really motivated us to think seriously on these issues and finally we could find out a set of protocol. We have introduced a format to enter the attendance of participation in Gram Sabha with gender and caste so that separate analysis of the participation on gender and caste is possible. Moreover, we have fixed a target which is more than proportionate to their population size”*, said the Panchayat President. Very recently, the Ittamadu Gram Panchayat has organized a children's Gram Sabha (*makkala panchayat*) to discuss about the problems faced by the children in the GP. (In Karnataka, a recent amendment to the Panchayati Raj Act has incorporated the provision of separate Gram Sabha for children) It is reported that as a special initiative

the Ittamada Gram Panchayat would take up *Makkala Panchayat* and to develop in to a workable and sustainable model. The discussion on ‘special initiative of the Panchayat during the verification of the PEAIS has motivated the idea for searching such a case, for developing special initiative.

As part of transparency and accountability, the Gram Panchayat has already opened a computer education centre and knowledge centre for the local people. It is planned to disclose all available information to local people under public domain .The Panchayat Committee has the opinion that due to the transparency and accountability, the people of Ittamadu are ready to contribute for the public cause. The Panchayat has developed a plan of action to mobilize public support and local resources for local development.

During the Focus Group Discussion, the Gram Panchayat Committee opined that this award (PEAIS) is powerful tool for the empowerment of the Panchayats. They agreed that the award is an inspiration to deliver service to the people. *“The award brings more visibility, prestige and honor to us in one side and the other side it is a real challenge. We have to keep it up without slippage. The expectations of the people are now very high. The people expect efficient administration and good service delivery from our side. How to keep it up? We have to do a lot of hard work”*, the Committee added.

2. Koppa Taluk Panchayat

After winning the award (PEAIS), the Koppa Taluk Panchayat has regularized strengthened and institutionalized the already existing review meetings of all the Gram Panchayats in the Block area and review of the progress of each and every schemes implemented by the Gram Panchayats has become a serious business . In the review meeting all the Panchayat Development Officers (PDO) were directed to attend and present the progress report of the concerned Gram Panchayats. When it was asked whether there is any change in the review mechanism of the Taluk Panchayat after the PEAIS verification, the above statement was the explanation from the Shri. Thippesh the

Executive Officer of the Koppa Taluk Panchayat. In addition to this, the Taluk Panchayat has its own system to review the schemes and the officials attached to the Koppa Taluk Panchayat. He said, *“When we started strengthening the review of all the 22 Gram Panchayats, the review of Taluk Panchayat also becomes more effective and we are getting the ground realities which in turn helps for the formulation of decentralization plan at the taluk level”*.

During the FGD with the functionaries of the Taluk Panchayat, it is reported that all the 22 Gram Panchayats are looking towards the Taluk Panchayat for ‘some form of guidance and consultancy’ and it has created a sense of peer group responsibility of the Taluk Panchayat. More over local public is well aware of the achievements due to the news coverage of the award by print and visual media. *“How to fulfill the expectations, seems to be the real challenge before us after the award”*, said the President of the Taluk Panchayat.

It is reported that after winning this award, the Taluk Panchayat could improve the delivery of local services. The commitment made in the area of sanitation, connectivity, drainage, street light and water supply during the verification of the PEAIS has started working as a pressure on Taluk Panchayat. This has started working as a pressure window to change the style of the governance structure in the Koppa Taluk Panchayat and the participation in the Taluk Panchayat committee has also improved considerably. The Panchayat committee took a decision to cover cent percent civic amenities to the entire area by providing water supply, sanitation, street light and drainage. The TP has succeeded to provide water meter in all the households having water supply connection. It is also reported that the Panchayat Committee has facilitated for clearing the electricity bill of Gram Panchayats in connection with street light and water supply. As a result, all the 22 Gram Panchayats are having no dues on electricity bill. The Taluk Panchayat Committee also takes initiative to organize water and sanitation committee in all the 80 villages of 22 Gram Panchayats. Presently, it has succeeded to organize such committees

in 43 villages. The Koppa Taluk Panchayat has now achieved the status of 'cent percent paperless correspondents' with all the 22 Gram Panchayats. When the local people are contacted, it is felt that they are well aware on the achievement of the Panchayat and have good feel on the local governance .

3. Madamakki Gram Panchayat

The Madamakki Gram Panchayat in Uduppi District has received the award (PEAIS) during 2011-20102. The Panchayat Committee reported that after receiving this award the visibility and credibility of the Gram Panchayat has increased. During the time of the verification of PEAIS the status of the Panchayat Committee in terms of its meetings, attendance, decisions and recording of minutes, were discussed in detail. The President said, *“Though we had presented our strong points in a persuasive style we were equally aware of our limitations. Immediately after the award, we had taken serious attempts to address our limitations. During the last few months we did it.”* When the evaluation team asked to give a brief narration of such cases, the following points were highlighted.

1. Serious attention has been taken to conduct Panchayat Committee meetings in regular interval.
2. Sittings should be more than the mandated number of 12 in a year.
3. Maximum participation should be ensured and if possible there should not be any absenteeism in the meetings of the committees of the Panchayats.
4. Agenda notice of the meetings should be circulated in advance.
5. Minutes should be properly recorded and be closed with attestations
6. All members and officials be tried to get proper capacity building programme and etc.

It was mentioned that the attempts were made only to strengthen the Panchayat functioning. The Panchayat functionaries are aware that the award has created more

responsibility of the Gram Panchayats to be more effective and efficient in service delivery mechanism. It is also reported that this award is an inspiration to other non award winning Panchayats for better performance. Madamakki Gram Panchayat admitted that award has actually generated a kind of competition among the nearby Gram Panchayats for better performance.

It is reported that after winning the award the Panchayat Committee has concentrated on timely implementation of the various projects and committee directly monitored the progress of the work at the field level. The Committee without any hesitation openly admitted that they were not aware of 'gender budget in the Panchayat' and they were explained on the 'gender budget' only at the verification of PEAIS. 'Gender budget' is simply understood as a separate allocation in the budget and it is exclusively for addressing women related issues. After getting convinced, the Panchayat Committee seriously discussed on the issue and they took a decision to start a tailoring unit exclusively for the women in the locality. The tailoring training centre was started on August 2012 with own source of resource of the Panchayat and presently the unit is seemingly moving well with a group of 26 women. *"In the coming years we will take up the issue of gender budget with sufficient financial backing and it will be properly integrated in the annual plan and budget allocation of the Panchayat"* said the President. When the Panchayat Committee was asked to comment on the overall impact of the award in a very precise form, they replied that they are fully convinced that their responsibilities are very high and capabilities are not enough to fulfill those responsibilities. They now feel the need for more training programs.

4. Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat

Among the Zilla Panchayats in Karnataka, Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat got the award under PEAIS in the year 2010-2011. During the FGD with functionaries of the Zilla Panchayat, it is reported that after winning this award the style of administration of the ZP has improved. In all the Committee meetings of the ZP, they have developed a

system to review the programmes of women development, Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in the district and took follow up actions based on the review. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has categorically stated that the “*system of special review and separate analysis of schemes addressed to marginalize communities*” by the Panchayat is a post award (PEAIS) phenomena. The same system has been followed in all other standing committees. The Zilla Panchayat opined that as a result, commendable progress in terms of physical and financial achievements took place in the utilization of allocation of funds under the three sub sectors of women development, SCP and TSP. The Zilla Panchayat has taken a decision to inform all the Taluk Panchayats to introduce the same review system developed by the Zilla Panchayat. The sittings of the standing committees have been regularized and the functional linkages between the Zilla Panchayat Committee and all standing committees were strengthened. During the discussion, it is felt that after receiving the award by the Zilla Panchayat, considerable amount of enthusiasm seem to flourish among the Gram Panchayats in the district and there is a competition among them for the award. The Zilla Panchayat informally acts as a ‘nodal agency’ in the district and offer support to Gram Panchayats for getting award under PEAIS.

After winning this award, one nationalized bank has come forward to sanction a loan to the Zilla Panchayat to improve the life of HIV affected people in the district. The committee has the opinion that though the process had been started much earlier than the award (PEAIS), the announcement of the very award could legitimize the decision of sanctioning the loan amount. The functionaries of the Zilla Panchayat opined that this award has motivated all the PRIs in the district for better performance. All the elected members of the Zilla Panchayat claimed that the award was a real recognition of their hard work. It is also mentioned that there are a few queries from other Zilla Panchayats in the State to know the procedures and formalities for submitting application under PEAIS and getting the award. They also congratulated the Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat

for the achievement. The Zilla Panchayat has taken a decision to apply for the scheme during the coming year also.

5. Ghatboral Gram Panchayat

The Ghatboral Gram Panchayat in Bidar District is one of the award (PEAIS) winning Panchayats during the 2010-2011. During the FGD the Panchayat functionaries unanimously opined that the award is recognition to the Panchayat for their better performance and it has entrusted more responsibility of delivering better services for the local community. Immediately after the announcement of the award, the Panchayat committee had a special meeting in which they discussed the status on different subjects which appeared in the questionnaire (format) used for applying PEAIS such as water, education, livelihood, nutrition, women's issue, SC, ST issue, child care issue, sanitation, road connectivity and street lighting etc. And finally, it was decided to prepare a detailed plan document in consultation with Gram Sabha and Ward Sabhas. It is interesting to note that the format only enabled the Panchayat to understand that the activities under the subject 'nutrition' is entrusted with the Gram Panchayat. This information has motivated them to conduct a one day awareness camp on 'nutrition management' for mothers (both pregnant and lactating) and adolescent girls on 11 May 2012 at the Panchayat Hall.

It is noticed that the detailed enquires on the development of marginalized communities by the Panchayat during the verification of PEAIS has motivated them to improve their intervention. The Panchayat committee reported that the specific question on STs (the participation of ST community in Gram Sabha, the attendance of Panchayat committee meetings by the member from the ST community, details on the special schemes and the utilization of funds earmarked for ST community) were challenging questions for them. Considerable number of *Lambani* tribals is located in the Ghatboral Gram Panchayat area, who is settled recently but earlier they were nomadic. After the award, the Gram Panchayat has decided to constitute 'social protection committees' in each ward for creating awareness among the people on 'harassment against marginalized communities

(SCs , STs and women) in the Panchayat area. It seems the Gram Panchayat effectively implements the programme and the members of the Panchayat have been given direct responsibility to monitor the progress of the work.

The Panchayat committee also pointed out that all the people in the Gram Panchayat are well aware on the achievement (award).The discussion with the local community has revealed that the efficacy and good will of the Panchayat has increased thanks to the performance in the social service delivery. As a result, the rate of participation of the marginalized communities, particularly tribal communities in the Gram Sabha has been improved.

6. Basava Kalyana Taluk Panchayat

The Basava Kalyana Taluk Panchayat is one of the two Taluk Panchayats in Karnataka which received the award (PEAIS) during the previous year. When a discussion with the functionaries of the Panchayat committee it is revealed that such kind of a national award is an inspiration for better performance. When it was asked to specify the area in which the better performance has been achieved, it was listed by Shri Chandrakanth N, the Member of the Panchayat as follows;

1. The review of schemes by the Taluk Panchayat has been regularized and strengthened. Even before the award the schemes were reviewed by the Panchayat. After the award the intensity and frequency has increased and review of schemes is part of the system.
2. The standing committees were not functional. Attempts are being made to revitalize the standing committees. The relevance of standing committee is fully understood in assigning specific responsibilities of the members of the Panchayat.
3. A few members were not very particular in attending the committee meeting. It was discussed in detail in the presence of the concerned members and as a result absenteeism was reduced.

4. The plan and budget documents were prepared as a formal exercise without any wider consultation. The seriousness and purpose of the documents are fully convinced. Attempts are being made to prepare a detailed plan by considering the proposals of the entire Gram Panchayats in the area. The purpose is to cover 100 per cent coverage of water supply, sanitation, drainage as it is discussed during the verification of PEAIS

5. All the records and documents were kept without any classification and it caused difficulties and delay in finding it out whenever it is necessary. It is planned to introduce classification system for records and documents.

With the initiative of the Executive Officer, the Taluk Panchayat committee took a decision to improve the efficiency of the administration and to ensure better service delivery to the local people. The Panchayat has started visiting local institutions such schools, primary health centers, anganwadi rural libraries and other public offices. It is also reported that to address the financial stability of the Panchayat, a shopping complex is under construction with the financial support of the business community of the locality. They reported that this award is an inspiration to complete the shopping complex with in limited time. All unanimously opine that the discussion and the technique used during the verification of PEAIS worked as a 'power full tool for self assessment, self evaluation, self learning and corrective measures by themselves'. *"We have reached a new area for local administration by undergoing all the process of PEAIS. It is a power full tool for Panchayat empowerment"*, commented Shri Basava Raj, the Executive Officer.

7. Gummagol Gram Panchayat

During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the elected representatives and the officials of the Gummagol Gram Panchayat of Dharwad district, it is reported that the award (PEAIS) was a good inspiration for moving towards improving the administration of the Panchayat. It is also stated that due to the wider news coverage by the print as well

as the visual media, the visibility of the Gram Panchayat became high. The Panchayat has established good relationship with local people. As a result, the rate of participation in the Gram Sabha has increased.

“While we were filling the application form for submitting the award under PEAIS, there was a question, and it says ‘In which scheme were beneficiaries selected by Gram Sabha in financial year 2010-2011? Please tick mark, (a) Indira Awas Yojana, (b) Old Age Pension Scheme, (c) Widow Pension Scheme, (d) Disability Pension Scheme, (e) Family Benefit Scheme, and (f) Annapurna Scheme’. The beneficiaries of all the pension schemes were not selected by Gram Sabha. Then how are they selected? Why they are not be selected by Gram Sabha? I have raised these issues in many places and finally, I could understand they are selected by a different channel (Revenue Department). I am fully convinced that the beneficiaries of these schemes should be selected through the Gram Sabha. I want to know the situation in other states ’, said, Ms.Madevi F. Wali, the Vice President of Gummagol Gram Panchayat.

The Panchayat committee has decided to prepare an innovative scheme for senior citizens. It was decided to make a detailed survey to understand the problems of the aged. The idea originated during the verification of PEAIS where the Panchayat was asked to present an innovative scheme. It was unanimously decided to work on geriatric. The Panchayat Committee has started mobilization of voluntary contribution to implement the proposed innovative and newly formed project on aged population. The Panchayat also conducted a health camp for the aged after winning the award.

Capacity building was another area which motivated the Panchayat committee. It is revealed that the indicator on *‘Whether all elected representatives and functionaries attend at least one training programme’* had been widely discussed in the committee during the verification of PEAIS. *“So far we have not considered training as a serious business, though we were frequently invited to attend training programs by the department. Now we could understand the importance of training. We are ready to attend*

any training programs. Moreover, we could organize training programs for our fellow members in the district”, said Shri Bhimappa.S.Hebballi Member of the Panchayat Committee .The Panchayat Committee had organized a one day workshop for the SC and ST members from the Gram Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats of the district, on 30 April 2012 .In this workshop, the activities of the Gummagol Gram Panchayat was introduced to the participants.

The Chief Minister of Karnataka visited the Panchayat on 22 September 2012 to appreciate them for getting the award and made an open commitment of declaring the Panchayat into a model and offered all support for making it in to a training centre of excellence. Along with the Chief Minister, other dignitaries including Member of Parliament (MP), two Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA), President & CEO of the Zilla Panchayat (Dharwad), Mayor, Dharwad Municipal Corporation and Deputy Commissioner Dharwad District were present. It was really an honor not only for the Panchayat committee but for the entire Gummagol Community. The Panchayat is a trend setter in tax mobilization and it had collected an amount of Rs 114.98 lakh for 2010-2011 and Rs.103.14 lakh for 2011-2012. When the case of the Panchayat was reported in connection with the award (PEAIS), the case of tax collection was also covered as a major success story by the print and visual media. This is the motivation for the elected members from the Zilla Panchayat, Karwar District for making a visit at the Gram Panchayat. A team of members had visited the Panchayat on 12 June 2012 to understand the system of tax collection.

CASES FROM THE STATE OF KERALA

1.Kasaragod District Panchayat.

The Kasaragod District Panchayat received the award (PEAIS) for the period 2010-2011 for better performance in the area of empowerment and accountability. The evaluation team visited the District Panchayat and held discussion with the elected members and the

officials. During the discussion with the officials it was reported that the award should have a continuation since it is an inspiration to the PRIs for the better performance. It is also reported that after winning the award the participation in the Panchayat Committee has improved. There is an improvement in the existing monitoring system of the District Panchayat. It is revealed that the relationship among the elected representatives and officials are very good and it was one of the major reasons for the achievement in local governance. It is also important to note that after winning the award the relationship between the District Panchayat and the local people has improved and the visibility of the District Panchayat has increased at the State level. Local public are also well aware that their District Panchayat is the first in the State among other District Panchayats and the award is for its outstanding achievements.

The District Panchayat Committee has opined that it is a challenging task before them to maintain the existing achievements and to make further improvements in the area of governance, accountability and transparency. The District Panchayat committee has taken a decision for effective implementation of various schemes. A regular web based monitoring system by the District Panchayat is suggested and it is under serious consideration. *“The most important aspect is that, we have to sustain our achievements without slippage. The second is to address our limitations. After the award, we keep these two challenges in our agenda and we are moving in that direction”*, the president told. It is revealed that the Panchayat Committee is fully aware of the indicators in which they were rated and awarded. The indicators are governance, development functions, audit clearance and innovation development intervention. *“We know what our position was when we were rated and awarded in the last year. And we know where we are today. We have improved a lot in all the four indicators. And also we have been in the process of moving towards improvements. These are our achievements and they are mainly because of the motivation and inspiration of the award only”*, said a member of the Panchayat committee. The Panchayat Committee is very clear that in the area of ‘governance’, there are some improvements. It was informed that the discussions and deliberations in the

Panchayat Committee became serious business; the functioning of the Standing Committees has improved and is properly integrated with Panchayat Committee. As far as ‘development functions’ are concerned, the Panchayat is very clear on what has to be prioritized. The rate of utilization of funds has to be improved. More attention is needed in the case of Special Component Plan (SCP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), Women Component Plan (WCP) and Sub Plan Components on other marginalized communities. In the case of ‘audit clearance’ the Panchayat Committee has the opinion that not much has to be done from their side, though there are some areas for further improvement with the support of the State Government. The Panchayat Committee has the opinion that their performance in the case of ‘innovation development intervention’ (projects related to the rehabilitation of the victims of Endo Sulfan and Population with HIV Positive) is commendable. The Panchayat Committee is very confident that the rating will be higher than what they had last year. “*And we are very certain that we will be awarded this year also*”, told the Vice President.

2.Chembilode Gram Panchayat.

The Chembilode Gram Panchayat of Kannur District got the award (PEAIS) last year. The evaluation team visited this Panchayat and held discussions with all the elected members and the officials of the Panchayat and local community. During the discussion, the very idea of the institutionalization of such an award was highly legitimized by the President of the Panchayat. He told that certain parameters have been developed to compare the Panchayats across the country and certain standards are also fixed as targets for achievement by introducing the PEAIS. The president and the members unanimously opined that “*the activities of the Panchayat were not for targeting towards any kind of award but we had to perform better service to the local citizens as part of our democratic responsibility*”. The president also pointed out that this award creates more responsibility on the members and the staff of the Panchayat for delivering public goods. The Panchayat Committee also unanimously acknowledged that the social capital and

vibrancy of the civil society in Chembilode enables the Panchayat to perform good governance and deliver better civic amenities .By and large it is recognized that the local people are really behind the award. During the discussion it was felt that the Panchayat Committee and staff actually got inspiration from the award and they all have an opinion that the award is a powerful tool for inspiration, motivation, self esteem and empowerment.

It is pointed out that the award is definitely recognition to the Gram Panchayat and the people of Chempilode. After winning the award, the general public of Chempilode arranged a function to congratulate the Panchayat Committee and the staff for the award. During the focus group discussion (FGD) one senior citizen commented that *“this kind of an award is really good and it creates a healthy competition among the Panchayats”*.

In the post award phase, the Panchayat has taken a decision to implement some innovative projects. Based on a detailed discussion in the Panchayat Committee, waste management has been selected as a major civic issue in Chembilode. As a result, the Panchayat initiated a solid waste management plant in the Panchayat. Participation of Gram Sabha was another concern of the Panchayat Committee. ‘Gram Sabha’ is listed as an agenda in some of the Panchayat Committee meetings by considering the importance of Gram Sabha in planning, social audit, beneficiary selection and local resource mobilization. The prioritization of Gram Sabha as an agenda in the Panchayat Committee has enabled better results in terms of participation. This is the realization of the fact that higher level of Gram Sabha participation is one of the strong indicators in the verification of PEAIS. In others words, PEAIS has been an instrumental for strengthening the Gram Sabha in the Chembilode Gram Panchayat. Good media coverage (both print and visual) had been given to the Gram Panchayat. The efforts of Chembilode Gram Panchayat were appreciated by the State Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and local community for the remarkable achievement.

3. Mutholi Gram Panchayat

The Mutholi Gram Panchayat in Kottayam District has received the award (PEAIS) on 2010-2011. During the discussion with the evaluation team, the Mutholi Panchayat functionaries reported that even filling the PEAIS application form itself was a learning process, each and every item in the format was discussed thoroughly by the team constituting of members of the Panchayat Committee and officials (including officers of the transformed institutions). In effect it was more than a training programme. *“Since the format is so simple and self explanatory we could make correct calculations of our proposed marks”* said the President. *“The indicators in the format are really a road map which gives in what direction we have to go for achieving transparency, accountability, social justice, local economic development and participatory democracy and empowerment”* he added. The committee has the opinion that all the Gram Panchayats in the State have to undergo such a process as the format of PEAIS has the potential of the application of ‘self- learning pedagogy’.

The Gram Panchayat is very moderate in saying that the award made an impact in the local politico administrative scenario. The President had received appreciations and queries from different Gram Panchayats within the district and outside. The Panchayat Committee had given directions to other Panchayats who wanted to apply under the scheme. The Secretary mentioned that he had given detailed information to more than 30 Panchayats on how to apply under the scheme. He said, *“I just worked as a free consultant for more than 15 Gram Panchayats who approached me. Since Mutholi was the recipient of the award, everyone wants to hear from us. We like tight competition and only tight competition brings sportsman sprit and more honor to the award”*. After the award, the Panchayat selected a few indicators related to financial management for further improvement in the coming year. The explanation for selecting the financial management as told by the Secretary is produced herewith, *“we are concerned, it needs more serious attention and which is the hard terrain others can rarely touch. If we score good marks on the indicators of financial management, we can win over others”*. It is observed that

attempts are being made to improve the tax collection with the full support of the Panchayat Committee and the staff. It is important to note that after winning the award the Mutholi Gram Panchayat has taken initiatives to improve the sanitation facilities and waste management in the Panchayat area.

4.Nedumpana Gram Panchayat

The Nedumpana Gram Panchayat in Kollam district of Kerala is one of the Panchayats which received the award PEAIS in 2010-2011. It was reported that the award is result of the team work of the Committee and officials of the Panchayat. The President of the Gram Panchayat reported that the decisions are taken unanimously after the discussion. The President also reported that all the staff in the Panchayat is committed, hard working and cooperative to the Committee.

While filling the format for submitting the application for the award, the Panchayat could locate some sectors which require further improvements. During the discussion with the functionaries of the Panchayat it was revealed that immediately after receiving the award, the Panchayat committee had a special sitting exclusively to discuss the follow up activities of the scheme (PEAIS). It is understood that all the indicators in the marking scheme were discussed in detail and improvements to be taken against each indicator were also suggested. The Standing Committees were asked to direct the respective assigned functions to them. The Secretary of the Panchayat supported the decision to strengthen the Standing Committees and he added *“Serious attention is paid to energize our Standing committees.* When the team asked, which the institution is /sector improved the maximum after the award, the unanimous answer was the Standing Committees and it was explained that without strengthening them it is not possible to improve the quality of governance. *“We are very sure that next year there will be more competition and more applicants may be there for the award .Our aim is how to sustain the achievements. We ourselves are cautioned against slippage and self- complaisance. To avoid these two possible situations we have developed a technique of self criticism. In committees, we*

used to have free and open discussions and sometimes we used to criticize our own actions”, said the President of the Gram Panchayat. In a separate discussion with the President, it is revealed that the concept and practice of ‘criticism from within’ and ‘internal criticism’ which she is personally acquainted with the political culture of the party she belongs is being successfully applied for improving the performance of the Panchayat Committee.

It is reported that after winning the award, the Minister of Local Self Government, the Speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, local MLA, MP, Principal Secretary of Local Self Government and Chairman of the Information Kerala Mission (IKM) congratulated the Gram Panchayat for the remarkable achievement . The case of Nedumpana is being cited in many of the development discourses by the leaders. The President repeatedly stated that this achievement is the result of the team work .The generally presumed understanding that where ever there is good team work and cooperation among the members and the officials of the GP there is a high possibility of achieving good governance and better delivery of local public goods. The developments of the post PEAIS phase in the Nedumpana Gram Panchayat have proved the above hypothesis.

5.Chittumala Block Panchayat

The Chittumala Block Panchayat in Kollam district of Kerala had been selected for the award (PEAIS) during last year. It is revealed that team work and team spirit of the elected members and the staff of the Block Panchayat are identified as the major factors of achievement for the award .The Panchayat Committee unanimously shared the view that the institutionalization of this kind of an award has really the potential to act as a powerful tool for empowering of the PRIs. In the pre award phase it was noticed that the functioning of the Panchayat Committee and Standing Committees were not very active and it was considered as an area which needs further corrective measures.”*We had analyzed all these details while submitting the application under PEAIS. The Panchayat*

had a very high record of 31 sittings during last year whereas the average number of the sittings of the four standings committee was eight only. It is also noticed though we had a higher number of sittings; the attendance of the members in the Panchayat meetings was only 87 per cent”, said the Secretary. After winning this award the overall functioning of the standing committees has improved. The meetings became more effective and the participation of the members in the committee meetings has been activated. Complete attendance was recorded in all the committees as it is reported by the Vice President who is also the Chairman of the Finance Standing Committee. The Block Panchayat Committee is very keen in keeping good relationship with all the officials. The officials have shared the same view. *“We are moving together”*, said the Secretary of the Block Panchayat who is also the BDO of the Block Development Office.

The Block Panchayat was appreciated by the local MLA for the remarkable achievement of getting the award. The MLA offered financial assistance from the MLALAD for starting a slaughter house. The Block Panchayat also prepared a project for the solid waste management with the assistance from Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) and Gram Panchayats in the block area. *“These two development projects are offered because of the confidence on us and the award (PEAIS) is considered as a solid proof to demonstrate our capability”* Said the President.

Another area of intervention during the post award phase was the utilization of expenditure related to SCP/TSP and other marginalized groups. It was convinced that only by increasing the expenditure on the sectors, the Block Panchayat can sustain the level of achievement it has already been performed. Moreover, the issue on the ‘utilization of the 100 per cent of the plan fund of the Panchayat’ had been seriously discussed in one of the Committee. It resulted in developing a monitoring system to review the progress of the fund utilization. The committee also discussed strategies to increase the per cent of expenditure of the centrally sponsored schemes (IAY, SGSY). The previous year only 28 per cent of fund had been utilized under SGSY and 68.81 per

cent was the case of IAY. *“We had realized that during last year the level of achievement was poor in this sector. Our major concern was how to improve the expenditure on the schemes. We had given strict directions to the officials who are in charge of IAY and SGSY. As per the norms are concerned, the beneficiaries of IAY are to be selected by the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayats have to conduct Gram Sabha for preparing the beneficiaries list. It is a long process and in many cases it is delayed. We have already communicated to the Gram Panchayats to get the list in time and it is in the process. This year, we expect high percent of utilization. The preparations for applying the award under PEAIS for the coming year, has become an instrumental for establishing good relationship with Block Panchayat and six Gram Panchayats”*, said the President of the Block Panchayat.

During the discussion with the functionaries of the Block Panchayat, it is reported that the training for the elected members and staff is not effective in Kerala. *“It is reflected in the poor performance of our audit clearance. We could clear only around 74 per cent of ‘audit Para’ during last year, it is an achievement. However, the same level of achievement may not be able to win the award in the coming year”*, commended the Secretary. As part of the capacity building exercise, the Panchayat Committee had attended a few training programmes at Kerala Institution of Local Administration (KILA) As the committee felt that it is very much essential for attaining good governance and there is a high demand for training . Thanks to PEAIS, there is an urge for attending the training.

6.Cherpu Block Panchayat

The Cherpu Block Panchayat of Thrissur District in Kerala State had been selected for the award (PEAIS). *“This was due to the implementation of some innovative schemes in the block and based on the overall performance of the Panchayat administration”*, said the President of the Bock Panchayat. In Cherppu, the Panchayat Committee had initiated few initiative projects known as (1) *Santhwanam Project* for the aged population in the

block area, (2) Laundry Project for the SC women and (3) Utilization of waste land for paddy production.

During the discussion with the Block Panchayat Committee it was unanimously opined by members that PEAIS should be continued because it is very much help full in strengthening the PRIs. *“The PEAIS is definitely creating a healthy competition among the PRIs for the good governance. The award was an inspiration for hard work. After winning the award we had strengthened the monthly review of the various schemes because this award creates more responsibility to us and we had made an implementation calendar. We had already taken a decision to utilize the full amount under SCP fund during this year; it was only 94 per cent in the last year”*, said the President. The Panchayat had admitted that the very process of filling the format of the application for the scheme (PEAIS) itself is a tool for empowerment. A member in the Panchayat Committee who has some professional experience had commented, *“It is group learning, some kind of group counseling and administrative psychotherapy”*. It is opined that every Panchayat, irrespective of its performance should undergo such an exercise. *“Our approach towards the PEAIS was scientific and effective. Very systematically we had studied each and every indicator in the format . After going through the format; we could understand the level of our performance. It was really a SWOT Analysis”*, added the above member. When the Block Panchayat applied for the award under the scheme, their expectation was low as it was reported. On certain sectors their performance was not very encouraging. The functioning of the Standing Committees is one area which needed improvement. While the evaluation team made a detailed analysis, it was observed that the previous year the average number of meetings of the Standing Committees was less than 10. *“ The data on separate meetings of the Standing Committees indicated that the Health Standing Committee had the record only five”*, said the Secretary. He also explained further that attendance of the members in the Panchayat Committee meetings has not reached the expected level. The expenditure on the allocation of fund under SCP, Maintenance, SGSY and IAY were the areas which

were under utilized. It is also reported the performance on 'audit clearance' was not at the desired level and the recorded per cent was only less than 22. The records shows that immediately after the award, the Panchayat Committee took steps for administrative improvements, *"We could realize that the same level of performance is not going to work in the coming year"*. They visualize that this year the competition may be higher. *"We have fixed the target; our Block Panchayat should get the award, this year also. Continues efforts are going on in the areas the functioning of Panchayat Committee, Standing Committees, fund utilization and audit clearance"*, said the Secretary. An improvement in governance is clearly visible in the Cherppu Block Panchayat and it is understood that PEAIS is the major motivation. The Block Panchayat suggested that it is better to organize a platform to share the experiences. The Panchayat Committee opined that there should be improvements in the questionnaire and the marking scheme for the PEAIS to reflect the achievements and limitations of the system.

CONCLUSION

The case studies from the award winning and non award winning States stand an answer to the question whether the PEAIS award has got any real impact on the PRI's of the respective States and whether it was successful in achieving its objectives. The case studies as mentioned earlier forms the primary referral material on which the assessment of the impact is made.

The results around the impact of the award winning and the non award winning States are clear from this part of the report. The visits to the award winning PRI's revealed that there were many non award winning neighboring Panchayats who were really interested in knowing the methods by which they have achieved the success. They visited the award winning Panchayats to understand the way in which local resources were mobilized from all possible sources to force the developmental activities. There were instances where many realized that social audit brings accountably and transparency. Most of the case studies point out that all the visitors (mostly officials and elected representatives of the

neighboring Panchayats) no doubt, were inspired as well as incentivized and the award winning Panchayats has now become model to all of them. The case studies from Punjab and Chhattisgarh indicated that that there are remarkable changes which include increased frequency of Panchayat Committees, active participation of Panchayat members, increase in the number of Gram Sabhas, efforts on local resource mobilization etc. The case studies from Rajasthan also reveal how the recognition of their award winning Gram Panchayat has impacted upon the other Panchayats in the neighborhood. Case studies from Karnataka indicate that there is commendable progress in terms of physical and financial achievements in the utilization of allocation of funds under the three sub sectors of women development, SCP and TSP. Case studies from the Panchayats of Kerala shows the importance of innovative schemes in delivery of public goods and local economic development .

In conclusion, the analysis within this part suggests that the case studies were effective in bringing out the success of the PEAIS award on the award winning and non award winning States in Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala. The case studies reveal that the award under PEAIS is definitely creating a healthy competition among the PRIs for good governance. The award was an inspiration for hard work. The award creates more responsibility for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the major aspects of Governance. The case studies tell that the approach by the PRI's towards the PEAIS was scientific and effective and that the award has established its enduring presence and is one among the strong advocates in creating awareness for good governance principles among the Panchayats at all the three tiers in the selected five States .

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENTS BASED ON PRIMARY OBSERVATIONS

Assessment and evaluation based on the primary surveys is presented in this chapter. The primary and valid observations from each selected PRI from the selected States are produced below. The evaluation is based on six sectors and the observations are produced based on the order of the same.

ASSESSMENT BASED ON INDICATORS FROM PUNJAB

Panchayat Functioning

One of the sub areas on ranking the Panchayats for the proposed award was a set of points regarding the functioning of Panchayats. It has three components (the functioning of Panchayat committee, standing committee and Gram Sabha). Talwandi Bharath Gram Panchayat is one of the PRIs which received the award (PEAIS). *“We understood the importance of holding Panchayat Committee meetings at regular intervals only when such a question was put to us for ranking the Panchayat for the award”* commented Mr. Onkar Singh, the Sarpanch of the Panchayat. Earlier they were having Panchayat Committee meetings only once in a month. Now they hold Panchayat Committee meetings twice in a month instead of the mandated one sitting. Moreover, this has created an atmosphere for a better visualization of the problems of the Gram Panchayat. It has also led to better transparency and active participation of the members of the Panchayat Committee, including members from the women and marginalized communities. Another special feature to be noticed in Talwandi Bharath was circulation of the notice for the Panchayat Committee meetings with special mention of the agenda well in advance, to the members of the Panchayat Committee. Circulation of advance notice for the meeting specifying the agenda was made compulsory as some of the opposition members used to remain absent from the meeting under the pretext that they did not get intimation for the meeting and were not found to accept the decisions taken in such ‘unlawful proceedings’.

The queries regarding the minutes of the Panchayat Committee meetings for PEAIS have made a very good impact on the officials as well as heads of PRIs. Sangrur Block Panchayat has taken a lead and is a role model in all such initiatives. E-Panchayat system appears to be progressing well in all Panchayats. The progress is fully monitored by a separate Directorate with an exclusive Director of E- Panchayats for the same. The E-Panchayat Directorate has set its target of training the Panchayat personnel. The Director assured that all the three tiers of the PRIs, the State Department and the Central Ministry, would be interlinked and all data could be made accessible on line. In Sangrur, there is an independent register for each account and all the details are computerized. Similar is the case with the Gram Panchayat. In Talwandi Bharath Gram Panchayat the minutes are up to date and there is clear transparency. Separate registers for cheques issued agendas of the Gram Sabha are kept in tact. In the case of Rampur Sunra Gram Panchayat also, a practice of keeping minutes of the meeting of the Gram Sabha has been followed and it is up to date.

The number of mandated meetings of the Gram Sabha for a year is two but the evaluation team has found an entirely new approach in Talwandi Barath Gram Panchayat. Instead of two mandated meetings of the Gram Sabha in Talwandi Barath Gram Panchayat there were four Gram Sabha meetings conducted in the year. Maximum number of citizen participation was visible in these meetings. *“Gram Sabha is the source from which we get the pulse of the people and we try to mobilize maximum participation and take criticism if any with an open heart”* told Shri. Onkar Singh, the Sarpanch. The Gram Sabha proceedings and the way in which the minutes are kept, have all brought credit to the Sarpanch.

Regarding beneficiary selection for IAY and other pension schemes, Talwandi Barath Gram Panchayat found to be following a good example. Here, all beneficiaries are selected in the Gram Sabha and a list is prepared. The list is transparent and is open to all for inspection at any time. In Gram Panchayats of Talwandi Barath and Rampur Sunra

there are registers relating to the minutes, agenda register and beneficiary list of Gram Sabha and all are kept up to date. The inspiration for maintaining all such registers came from the queries regarding this for the PEAIS verification and award.

Gram Panchayats of Aklian Kalan, Bhaini Jassa, Jandmangoli, Kutba, Rampur Sunra and Talvandi Barath functionaries found that conducting social audit is a must for transparency and for recognition of the Gram Panchayats. In Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat the authorities in addition to MGNREGA went a step forward and conducted social audit for other schemes also. The Panchayat Committees have now assured that they would continue in the same line and would try to improve upon as far as possible. This becomes an example of empowerment and incentivization of PEAIS.

Management of Personnel and Capacity Building

The development literature on local self government indicates that the Panchayats have not been adequately empowered to meet the second generation problems of the State. Therefore, there is a need to build their capacity in local governance. Efforts were taken to improve the capacity of the officials and elected representatives of Panchayats. It is found that both the elected representatives and officials have understood the importance of attending the training programmes conducted by the SIRD (at the regional as well as at the State level) and the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID). The separate enquiry and discussion on the participation of training programmes by each elected representatives and officials during the verification of PEAIS had created a sense of necessity in attending training. *“Majority of us felt training is a serious business for running the Panchayats”*, said one member from the Bathinda Zilla Parishad during the focus group discussion (FGD). In Punjab seven subjects had been transferred to PRIs but the elected representatives mostly women representatives had very little idea about their functions and responsibilities. It is reported that many women representatives at the time of election were helpless due to lack of support and submissive nature. Changes are now visible. The women representatives have support

within family, within community and in some cases, by the society at large. Change is visible as it is evident from the fact that there is a very good awareness that women representatives need to develop skills and abilities. Thanks to the dedicated training programmes. The elected representatives of Bathinda Zilla Parishad, Sangrur Panchayat Samitis, Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat, Kutba Gram Panchayat, Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat and Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat are showing keen interest to attend the training programme. Few of them have started demanding for exposure visits to other places and even to outside the State, as it was suggested by the training faculty of the SIRD, Punjab. The increasing demand for training, level of active participation as it is reported, is a major impact of the award (PEAIS).

Regarding the impact on review of schemes, it could be noticed that the Sangrur Panchayat Samiti has taken up review of schemes with utmost seriousness. The officials who are in charge of water, education, livelihood, nutrition, health, etc were called for a monthly review meeting. Ms. Neelam Sharma, Block Development and Panchayat Officer (BDPO) is very strict regarding the attendance of designated officers of the different departments and also insist on getting progress report of the respective development schemes under each one of them. If there was deliberate delay in the execution of schemes, the concerned officer was held responsible and punished. She revealed that the review system was introduced after the verification process of PEAIS in the Panchayat Samitis. It could be noticed that the attendance of officials in the meetings of the Panchayat Committee was one of the important indicators in ranking the Panchayats for the award.

A welcome change has to be noticed with regard to the attendance of the meetings of the Gram Panchayats. School teachers, anganwadi workers, veterinary and medical personnel and all other staff working in the Panchayat area usually attend the meetings of the Panchayat Committees without failure. A proper review of the role of the officials in scheme implemented in the Panchayats could also be noticed.

Such an impact could also be noticed in Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat where the Sarpanch was keen to conduct monthly review meeting with all the officials working in the Panchayat area. This has enabled the Sarpanch to find out the obstacles in the execution of development schemes. In such cases where he could not solve the issues locally he tried to contact the higher officials at the block as well as district level to find out the needed follow up actions. The case of Talwandi Barath Gram Panchayat is a typical example which could be replicated else where. This may be analyzed in the background of the State Panchayati Raj Act 1994, which envisages that only Panchayat secretaries are under the direct jurisdiction of Panchayats.

Planning and Budget Formation

Similarly, another important impact which needs special mention is regarding the preparation of the annual plan of development programme and budget of the Gram Panchayats. All the eight PRIs including the Zilla Parishad as well as the Panchayat Samitis have got inspired and have made attempts to start the timely preparation of annual plans. While discussing this with the functionaries of Gram Panchayats they reported that this year they are in a position to submit these documents in the Gram Sabha for discussion and to the higher authorities for approval at the stipulated time. It is admitted that though there is a provision in the Act that the Gram Panchayat shall prepare its own budget and plan of development programme and lay for approval before the Gram Sabha, it was not seriously followed. *“The specific questions and issues in the marking scheme on planning and budget was really an eye opener to all of us “*, commented, one Sarpanch of a Gram Panchayat. *“It was only during the time of verification of PEAIS that we could understand that the preparation of annual plan and budget is our first assigned duty and responsibility and we are now under the process, very seriously”*, commented another Sarpanch. He also added, *“Though it was taught in the training programme, we could never consider it as serious”*. A member stated that *“we had no idea that the annual plan should be discussed in the Gram Sabha “*. *“The role*

of Gram Sabha in the preparation of annual plan had been explained by the verification team and now we could understand the importance of both and the linkages between the two”, said the Secretary of a Gram Panchayat. He has the opinion that the verification process turned in to a capacity building exercise. When the functionaries of the Panchayat Samitis were asked to explain the working details of the Standing Committee on finance, audit and planning, it was reported that such a standing committee is not in operation (in practice none of the standing committees are in operation in the State). As per the Act, it is the duty of the Standing Committee for finance, audit and planning to prepare budget of the Panchayat Samiti for the next financial year. In the absence of such a Committee, it is reported that, the budget is prepared by the officials of the Panchayat Samitis. The Chairman of one of the Panchayat Samitis reported that, immediately after the verification of PEAIS, they have decided to take it up as a challenge. The process of the preparation of annual plan and budget of the Bathinda Zilla Parishad had been widely discussed. They admitted that in the absence of finance, audit and planning standing committee the documents are being prepared by the officials under the guidance of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). As per the Act, the Standing Committee on finance, audit and planning has the full responsibilities on issues related to the subject. *“We wrongly understood that we had no real role in the preparation of the documents. We thought that it is the officials who have to do it. Moreover we were not trained. Now we all are aware. Our misunderstanding had been cleared by the verification team under PEAIS. But, how to start it? , Still we are not very clear. It is a challenge and we will address all challenge”* they said emphatically in the focus group discussion (FGD).

The PRIs have started adopting the mandated procedure of submitting the annual plan in the Gram Sabha for the suggestions and approval of the members. The suggestions were also incorporated and the plan was subsequently modified, accordingly, as reported by functionaries of Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat in a focus group discussion (FGD).

There is a general complaint that in matter related to development issues, the stake holders (farmers, women groups, youth groups, CBOs, and NGOs) are not consulted and their opinions were very often left unheard. It is a common knowledge that local people know their problems better and that they can offer solutions of their problems through local initiatives. In Sangrur Panchayat Samiti and Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat it was found that the Panchayat authorities have given due weightage to the above stakeholders and their suggestions are incorporated in the annual plan and is reported as a post PEAIS development .

Another interesting impact of the scheme which was noticed in Sangrur Panchayat Samiti, Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat and Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat was the convergence between MGNREGA and other departmental schemes which is making a good impact on the project. *“Convergence as an indicator in the questionnaire of the verification format had really inspired to apply in the field”*, opined the functionaries of Sangrur Gram Panchayat. They made convergence between MGNREGA and IAY (earth work portion) and other schemes.

An official commented that, prior to the initiation of the award (PEAIS) there was no attempt for the preparation of a proper budget from the side of elected representatives. During the verification, the queries and discussions related to planning and budget motivated them to initiate such an exercise. Now, the PRIs who had already subjected to the process of PEAIS verification had understood the importance of the budget and they have started preparing their own budget, systematically.

During the initial days there was no special allocation for women and no notion of ‘gender budget’. Presently, a typical case was noticed in Sangrur Panchayat Samiti. In this case, training was given to 150 women, (majority of them are from SC community) in tailoring. Also special allocation was made for the distribution of tailoring machines for the fifty women from among these who got training. This was a special budget provision on self employment programme for disadvantaged and under privileged of this

Panchayat Samiti. *“When we narrated this case as one of the activities of our Panchayat, it was highly appreciated by the verification team (PEAIS) and they classified it as part of ‘gender budget’. Now, we know what gender budget is. We will make similar attempts in future”*, said the Chairman of Sangrur Panchayat Samiti. Another Gram Panchayat, Bhaini Jassa also made provision for addressing the ‘practical gender needs’ by establishing a tailoring training centre for 20 women from SC community. This project and special allocation for women also could be cited as an impact of the particular question on gender budget under PEAIS verification. The above achievements of the Panchayats are important in the overall scenario of the State where the process of local planning and citizen participation are yet in its infancy and still to get evolved.

Income Generation

In the State of Punjab there is no serious attempt by the Gram Panchayats to raise own income. Though there is provision in the Panchayati Raj Act of the State for raising revenue from different sources of taxes, the own revenue generation through taxes by the Panchayats is meager. According to the State Finance Commission reports, a large share of the own revenue generation is from ‘*shamlat lands*’ (common village lands) and is shared by the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis on 80; 20 ratio. Except collection of house tax by the Gram Panchayats and liquor tax by the Panchayat Samitis no other major tax is levied and collected in the State. The tax domain of the Panchayat Samiti is very limited. The Zilla Parishad is not empowered to levy any tax. The per capita tax of Panchayats is very low in Punjab when compared to other States. And the same is the case with expenditure as a natural corollary. The analysis of total revenue of Gram Panchayats shows that nor the Government of Punjab has initiated any genuine action neither the Gram Panchayats have made any serious attempt to collect tax from the people or to raise own resources. In this background the attempts of the award (PEAIS) winning Panchayats to rise the own income have to be appreciated. Enquiries regarding own income of the Gram Panchayats during the time of PEAIS verification have made

the Panchayat functionaries to analysis the financial status of their own institution and find ways to increase own income. For example, in Jandmangoli Gram Panchayat income from common land went up to Rs.11, 00,000 from Rs.9, 00,000. In Sangrur Panchayat Samitis the income under the same head had gone up from Rs.13, 00,000 to Rs.17, 00,000. In Aklian Kalan Gram Panchayat an attempt was made to evict encroachers from the Panchayat land and this land was given in auction for Rs.7, 00,000.It is reported that previous auction amount was only Rs.2, 88,000. Again they were searching for new sources and found out the three fish ponds as a good source. They were auctioned and got Rs.75, 000. In Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat the income from the common land was formerly only Rs. 8, 00,000. In the next auction which was fully transparent and without any loophole .Therefore, the rent amount got enhanced to Rs.8, 77,000. This is another notable impact and incentivization of PEAIS. Similar efforts were seen in the case of Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat also. There were also efforts on the part of PRIs to generate additional income through assets creation. There are a few examples to cite;

- i. Bathinda Zilla Parishads has newly constructed a marriage hall cum complex centre and gave it to rent for Rs. 4,00,000/ per annum.
- ii. In Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat, a pacca building was constructed and given it on rent for Punjab National Bank for Rs. 4150/per month.
- iii. Also a mini stadium was constructed in the Gram Panchayat and the auction process is in progress.

It is true that these assets are created not because of award or the award has nothing to do with the assets, directly. However, it is reported that serious attention has been made to give these buildings on a higher rate of auction and the process of auction has been done without much delay. During the focus group discussion (FGD), it was argued that this is the impact of the award (PEAIS). The indicator on ‘the efforts on resource mobilization’ in the marking scheme of the questionnaire for PEAIS had made some amount of

pressure on them to mobilize resources and they have limited options without taxing the voters.

Performance of Panchayats

There are also very good examples of people's participation in voluntary contribution. The NRIs of Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat sponsored a PHC Building. Similarly, in Talvandi Barath Gram Panchayat anganwadi building was constructed by mobilizing funds through the contributions of the local people.

Every local body has a moral responsibility to provide a healthy environment. Aklian Kalan has shown a very good example of providing facilities to the depressed and needy people of the Gram Panchayat. The IAY houses sanctioned during the current year were exclusively for SC community. Another example for extending assistance to SC is that of Sangrur Panchayat Samiti and Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat. Tailoring machines were distributed to the SC families to provide them employment. Similarly in Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat, there was a very praise worthy activity on the part of the Panchayat committee. In this case a burial ground was constructed exclusively for SC community.

A model scheme for self employment was initiated in Sangrur Panchayat Samiti. There are 150 women belonging to the BPL families who were trained in garment making. They were also provided with tailoring machine to take up tailoring and garment making for self employment.

It is better to understand the impact of the award winning Panchayats under the PEAIS on the domain of civic services in the overall background of the existing civic amenities in rural Punjab. It is generally alleged that Panchayats provide only rudimentary civic services and the best of these services are merely included under the civic agenda. There is no provision in the budget of an average Panchayat to provide protected water supply, transport and dispose of solid waste. In the marking scheme of the questionnaire under PEAIS, there was a separate indicator to assess the performance of the Panchayats on the

quality and services of civic amenities. It is noticed that the indicator has succeeded to communicate the message of addressing civic amenities by local government. There are attempts on the part of the Panchayats to cover the entire area by providing connectivity, electricity, water supply and drainage. On enquiry regarding provision of safe drinking water, it was made available to the entire households by the Gram Panchayats of Aklian Kalan, Kutba and Rampur Munran. Moreover, it was informed that nine bore wells were installed and pumping was energized, recently by Kutba Gram Panchayat. There had been 100 per cent coverage of electricity in Kutba and Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat. Regarding drainage facilities in Kutba and Rampur was fully attended to by providing good quality of drainage. Rampur Munran Gram Panchayat had shown a replicated model by providing house sites for landless. The Gram Panchayat has drawn up a well drawn out plan for providing house sites for 132 families in five acre plot of the Panchayat. The SC families had been allocated house sites and they are constructing houses in these plots. Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat became another model by constructing an old age home. All these are some of the responses on the queries and discussions regarding the sub theme on the performance of Panchayats in connection with the verification of PEAIS award

There was also effort on the part of PRIs to strengthen educational institutions. Kutba Gram Panchayat committee had gone for repairing a high school building in the village. Students of lower primary classes were given bags and other study materials to attract students to the schools and reduce the number of drop out by Bhaini Jassa Gram Panchayat. It is reported that the enquiries and field visits on local institutions during the verification of the PEAIS had provided an entry point to establish strong linkages between Panchayats and local intuitions. As it is recorded, many of them (Panchayat functionaries) now are visiting schools, anganwadi centers and health sub –centers which have resulted in improvement of enrolment to schools and anganwadi centers. As a result, a system of performance assessment of the Panchayats has just started and it may be important for improving the performance of various local delivery outlets.

Accountability and Transparency

The queries regarding maintenance of records in connection with the award (PEAIS) have incentivized the PRIs in keeping accounts up to date and in formats and registers prescribed by the Government. Regarding computerization of accounts, both Bathinda Zilla Parishad and Sangrur Panchayat Samiti are models. In these PRIs, all accounts are computerized and all information is available through a computer net work. The initiative of the above one Zilla Parishad and one Panchayat Samiti may be seen in the background that there is no tradition in the State for preparing computerized annual financial accounts and other documents. Generally, Panchayats do not have a complaint redressal system in the State. It is noticed that the other indicators such as pending audit paras, complaints addressed and application under RTI Act have made very little visible changes in the accountability and transparency of the Panchayats in the State.

ASSESSMENT BASED ON INDICATORS FROM RAJASTHAN

In the State of Rajasthan, altogether eight Panchayats have received PEAIS award in the year 2011-2012. They are (1) Chainpura Gram Panchayat (Sikar District), (2) Dhanari Gram Panchayat (Sirohi District), (3) Ganeshar Gram Panchayat (Sikar District), (4) Lodsar Gram Panchayat (Churu District), (5) Solana Gram Panchayat (Jungun District), (6) Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti (Churu District), (7) Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti (Badmar), and (8) Churu Zilla Panchayat (Churu District).

The evaluation team had active interaction with the elected representatives, officials of the award winning Panchayats, and also local communities. As the PEAIS was based on certain performance indicators the evaluators also focused on such issues on which the ranking was made for the award. The issues related mainly to (i) functioning of the PRIs, (ii), management of the personnel and capacity building (iii), planning and budgeting (iv), field performance (v), resource mobilization and (vi) transparency and

accountability. Focusing on these broad areas an effort was made to assess the impact of the award on other PRIs and the extent of incentivization.

Panchayat Functioning

In Chainpura Gram Panchayat the award made a very good impact. The Gram Panchayat was located in a far of place with minimum facilities. Terrain was hilly, transport facilities were lacking, and the residents were very poor and living in subsistence economy, a rocky area, less fertile consisting mostly of agricultural workers. They had a good record of keeping minutes of the meeting up to date and all relevant papers transparent. Moreover, the Panchayat committee meetings proceedings were excellent. The evaluators also found that whatever said is absolutely correct and this is the reason why Chainpura GP in such a remote area in Rajasthan got the maximum ranking with regard to keeping the minutes up to date and all records as per the official guidelines.

The Principal Secretary, Rural Development of the State has very good opinion of the functioning at the PRI system in the state. During the discussion he explained that in Rajasthan the PRI system has evolved a perfect administrative system of its own. There is a well laid out norm for the functioning of the system. He further explained that in the panchayat meetings the agenda was circulated in advance and there was proper recording of the minutes of all the panchayat committee meeting.

In Chainpura, the Panchayat Secretary was fully aware of the details of all the records. The minutes book of the meetings of the Panchayat committee was systematically recorded and kept up to date. A similar situation was experienced in Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti and Churu Zilla Panchayat. In these two PRIs there was even an effort in computerizing the relevant records. In the case of the other five PRIs also, meetings of the minutes were recorded but comparatively with less perfection. Inspiration no doubt, was visible.

The evaluation team came across a conspicuous situation in the functioning of the Panchayat Samiti of Chauhatan. Ms. Shama Khan, the Pradhan of the Samiti explained her innovative ways through which she was effectively bringing about the development plan at the grass root level. When other Panchayats Samities are conducting Samiti meetings once in a month, Ms. Shama Khan insists that the elected representatives should meet invariably on every Monday. The Pradhan also insists that the officials of the line departments should attend the meeting fixed for them on an appointed day every month.. In many women headed Gram Panchayats, it is the husband who is running the business. In the case of SC/ST women Panchs, there is issue of caste and in some cases they are fully ignored by the upper caste. To put an end to such practices while moving around the Panchayati Samiti area she vigorously explained the role that the women Sarpanchs and the Panchs have to play in Panchayats. *“Gram Sabha is the village Parliament to plan prioritizes, implement, audit and review all development activities”*, she explains to all elected women representatives. She also motivated the Panchayat in conducting the Ward Sabhas. Ward Sabhas in Rajasthan has on an average only 300-400 members. Because of her efforts she has now been able to enhance the capability of Panchas. They are now bold enough to preside over their Ward Sabhas and have made the ward an effective unit, a pivot for development and plan implementation at the grass root level.

A detailed review of all on going schemes such as drinking water, education, livelihood, nutrition, health, women’s issues, child care, SC/ST, sanitation, road connectivity and street lights is a specific agenda in every meeting. Though the Panchayat Samiti used to review the progress of the schemes and review the work of the different transferred departments/institution (mainly veterinary, health, ICDS, and education), the intensity and frequency of the review mechanism have been increased after the verification of PEAIS.

Information was also gathered regarding meetings of the Gram Sabha. In Rajasthan according to the Panchayati Raj Act, there should be four mandated meetings in a year. In

the Gram Panchayats of Chainpura, Dhanari and Solana it was noticed that these Gram Panchayats had called Gram Sabha meetings more than the mandated meetings of four. In Dhanari Gram Panchayat, the official record gives an impression that five times Gram Sabha has been held. In the case of Lodsar Gram Panchayat one interesting and praise worthy aspect was that in these Panchayats two 'Special Gram Sabhas' were called exclusively one for senior citizens and another for children. In the Gram Sabha, relevant issues relating to the aged and also children were discussed in detail. And during the discussion there were suggestions for solving outstanding issues connected with them. Issues related to geriatrics were the major concern of the first Gram Sabha whereas child abuse and child right was the focus of the second special Gram Sabha. The new challenges of local governance were also issues taken up for discussion in the two special Gram Sabhas. In Lodsar Gram Panchayat, a 'Special Gram Sabha' was called specifically for discussing the issues of sanitation. Here, an attempt was made to find out the exact figure of those households which had no toilets. It was found that out of the total 1169 households there were 456 households without toilets. A project was prepared to provide toilets to all the households. It was decided to apply for Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) in the coming year. The Gram Sabha was called on 6-07-2012 and the agenda was exclusively on Sanitation. The health officials (lady health visitor and ANM) were strictly instructed to come with exact details of households having no toilet and the problems of open defecation in the area. During the discussion in the Gram Sabha, it was decided that there should be convergence of MGNREGA with that of Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). It was decided that the beneficiaries could make use of maximum available assistance and construct toilets of their own without much financial burden. Ms Santhosh Devi Sharma, the Sarpanch appeared to be very confident that Lodsar would get the NGP, the coming year. During the interaction it was found that earlier in many of the cases there were reluctance in attending Gram Sabha and in certain cases the Gram Panchayat authorities were forced to adjourn the Gram Sabha due to lack of quorum. But now the award (PEAIS) has come as an inspiration and the earlier situation is now fully

changed. On enquiry, it was found that the situation in the Gram Panchayat of Chainpura has also completely changed as in the case of Lodsar. Now in these Gram Panchayats the problems of lack of attendance and adjournment of Gram Sabha never exist, instead there is more enthusiasm and active participation of the citizens. The Panchayat members went round their area, meeting the people and explaining to them the need of peoples' participation in the Gram Sabha. Such efforts of the Sarpanchs and members of the Panchayat committee have influenced the local people and have resulted in enhancing the participation in the Gram Sabha. It is felt that every attempt is being made to keep the quality of local governance intact with out slip back. It was also noticed that while coordinating the Gram Sabha meetings, the proceedings have been properly documented. Not only the impact of the award is high on the award winning Gram Panchayats but also it has a percolating effect on the adjoining Gram Panchayats. Basundakala Gram Panchayat is the adjoining one to Solana Gram Panchayat and certain impact of better performance of Solana is visible in Basundakala. *(This case is highlighted in the non award winning Panchayats from Rajasthan)*

A very good record of the Gram Panchayats, Chainpura and Lodsar also was brought to notice with regard to the selection of beneficiaries in Central / State sector schemes like IAY, IGNOAP/ Widow/ Disability / Pension and also Family Benefit/ Annapurna Schemes. In these two GPs they have an excellent record of selecting the beneficiaries of the above schemes as transparently as they can through an open of Gram Sabha. The mode of beneficiary selection was an important query for award. Since then these Panchayats are taking utmost care in the conduct of Gram Sabha.

Planning and Budget

For the verification of PEAIS there are a few queries on the preparation of annual plans and budget. The query on annual plan now seems to have made a good impact on the Panchayats. Even the Gram Panchayats have now moved in the line of preparing annual plan systematically. The BDOs and CEOs explained that now there is clear division of

functional responsibilities between the three tiers on the basis of activity mapping. It is reported that activity mapping had been completed for 18 departments. And detailed development plans are being drawn on the basis of the activity mapping.

Earlier, the Gram Panchayats had no clear idea about preparation of the annual plan and even if the Panchayats did something in the name of planning it was only in a half hazard way and was quite imperfect, not serving the purpose for which it was intended to. Presently, it appeared that the Panchayats have understood the importance of having a well drawn out plan of action for the proper utilization of the limited resources at their disposal. They have now learned how to draw suggestion from the Gram Sabha and fix priorities based on Gram Sabha recommendations. The Secretary of the Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti is ahead and is a model now to other Secretaries of the Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats in the district. Chainpura Gram Panchayat has taken inspiration from Chouhatan Panchayat Samiti. It is reported that the Secretaries of the Gram Panchayats (Dhanari, Ganeshwar, Lodsar, and Solana) have made serious attempts not only to discuss the annual plan in the Gram Sabha but also incorporated all the suggestions in the plan document. All of them have admitted that during the verification there was an active discussion on the role of the Gram Sabha in the plan formulation and these discussions have incentivized them.

‘Gender budget’ was not at all of any concern anywhere in the Panchayat budgets in Rajasthan. The Sarpanch and a few members of the Panchayat opined that their earlier understanding on Budget was that it is “neutral” and this was dishonored during the verification. *“Now, we are aware of the notion that gender budget can be used as a power full tool for women empowerment”* they added. It is noticed that the Chouhatan Panchayat Samithi has excelled in handling gender issue as well. The Pradhan was very enthusiastic in explaining how she took the issues concerning women in its proper perspective while preparing a plan document. The Pradhan, an advocate by profession found time to go around the entire area under the spatial jurisdiction of Panchayat Samiti

to have a first hand knowledge about the major gender issues. She made number of consultations at different levels. In certain pockets, illiteracy was a great problem as she identified. She managed representatives to conduct adult literacy classes to the illiterate women. She was also educating the elected women representatives (EWR) of Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis on issues related to Acts, Rules and proceedings of the Panchayats. There are also evidences of addressing gender strategic needs. One example can be cited in the demarcation of funds for providing bicycles to the girl students of classes 8 to 10. This decision of Panchayat Samiti was an added incentive to the girl students who lived in far of places to attend classes regularly. Functionaries of other Panchayats used to visit the Panchayat for consultation and for getting idea on planning including gender mainstreaming. They openly admit that it is all only because of the idea generated during the verification of PEAIS.

Income Generation

Shri. C S Raja, the Principle Secretary, Government of Rajasthan gave an opportunity to the evaluation team to attend the Discussion Meet held at Jaipur where members of Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission and top officials of Rajasthan along with Shri. C S Raja was present. The Chhattisgarh SFC dignitaries wanted to understand the recent developments of the status of devolution of powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan. As it is mentioned, in 2010-2011 the devolution index (DI) study of MoPR /IIPA has considered another supplementary index based on the account of incremental achievement since 1st April 2009, in addition to cumulative achievement of the States in India. The introduction of incremental performance Panchayat devolution index has encouraged the States that have a low base on devolution and those States can also win an award based on their current achievements. Rajasthan may be cited as the best example. The top score and rank obtained by the State of Rajasthan based on the performance (the 'Incremental Panchayat Devolution Index') for the year of 2010-2011 have prompted the delegation to visit the State of Rajasthan.

The State officials explained the major sources of the finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan. The PRIs, it was pointed out that entirely depended on State assistance. And, practically there was no effort from the side of Panchayats to generate their own revenue even though provisions for raising revenue have been clearly laid down in the State Panchayati Raj Act. On enquiry regarding income generating assets created in Panchayats, only Lodsar Gram Panchayat had a positive response. Common land in the possession of the Panchayat was major source from which the Panchayat can enhance own income. But it was very seldom that the Panchayats tried to tap these sources effectively. In the case of Lodsar Gram Panchayat, a change has been noticed as it is found that generating additional income from common land could make a score on their performance. The Panchayat committee tried to auction the common land to the highest bidder. In the auction they managed to raise the bid to Rs, 11, 00,000 from the previous amount of Rs. 8, 00,000.

Another innovative revenue raising step was also taken by Lodsar Gram Panchayat. Earlier there was no local transportation tax for vehicles operating in the Gram Panchayat area. To raise own income, the Gram Panchayat imposed a tax of Rs. 150/- multi axle truck and Rs.100 for ordinary truck. This was a new tax and all truck owners tried their best to resist the imposition of such a tax. The Panchayat committee managed to overcome all threats and pressures. This act of the Panchayat was highly appreciated by many from in and out side of the Panchayat area. The enhanced, expected tax income was Rs. 11, 00 000. Another inspiring example in raising own income other than from taxation is that of Chainpura Gram Panchayat. Generally, there is fallow land under the ownership of the Gram Panchayat which is spread over a considerable area of the Gram Panchayat. This land is kept as common property and is kept as open and free area for cattle grazing purposes. No Gram Panchayat dared to raise revenue from such fallow land by imposing any levy or tax on it. Here, Chainpura Gram Panchayat took a bold step to generate income by auctioning this grazing land for an amount of Rs. 20,000/-. This is a small amount of revenue for the Panchayat but that is not the case with other Panchayats.

This method can be adopted in all Gram Panchayats of Rajasthan, says Ms. Prem Kamal Upsarpanch of Chainpura. In both the cases, it was openly admitted in the focus group discussions that the real motivation was to make the Panchayat self sufficient and financially sound. This idea was also generated during the verification time of the PEAIS

Panchayat Performance

There were also enquiries regarding the utilization of funds for SC/ST during the financial year. It was noticed that the Panchayat Samitis of Chauhatan and Susangarh have taken special efforts for the allocation of funds for SC/ST on special schemes. For example, in Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti, Rs 2, 00,000 was the special allocation for SC for constructing open well and a water tank. Similarly, such a special scheme for drinking water for SCs was also sanctioned in Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayats of Dhanai and Solana. It is openly admitted by all the Panchayats that during the verification of PEAIS the coverage of the three major services of water supply, streetlight and drainage had not been achieved 100 percent. The three queries on, (1), “Does the Gram Panchayat provide for safe drinking water supply to 100 percent households”, (2) “Does the Gram Panchayat provide streetlight to 100 per cent area”, and (3) “Does the Gram Panchayat provide drainage facility to 100 percent area” have served as source of power full directions, incentives and motivations. It is felt that if these items (with an emphasis on 100 per cent coverage) had not been incorporated in the questionnaire under PEAIS the Panchayat would not have thought of their full coverage with immediate effect.

There is an instance of a very innovative initiative taken by Dhanori Gram Panchayat to improve the life of the marginalized. In Dhanari Gram Panchayat quite a good number of households were in a separate area beyond the railway line. Most of them were living in low socio-economic background. Poor accessibility to drinking water was a major problem to them. The Panchayat Committee found that with out covering that area also it cannot claim for 100 percent coverage. Since it is an isolated area and separated by

railway line from the mainstream, extension of water connection was very difficult. There were earnest efforts from the part of the Panchayat Committee to persuade the railway authorities to extend the pipe line digging a passage beneath the railway track. The Gram Panchayat has to deposit Rs. 1,35,000 to the Railway authorities for constructing the pipe line passage beneath the railway track. At last drinking water was made available to this area. *“The success of our efforts in extending pipe line and providing drinking water to this acute water scarce area is the greatest achievement for me as a Sarpanch”* says Mr. Mahendra Ravel. When a question was posed, how the verification under PEAIS or the specific role of PEAIS in achieving the success case, the immediate answer is that *“of course, we started our effort much earlier. However, the seriousness of full coverage of water supply was felt only during the verification of PEAIS and that has motivated us to persuade the Railway continuously”* It is added that *“now we are being consulted by other Panchayats in similar cases”*.

Accountability and Transparency

Chauhatan Panchayat Samiti has taken serious efforts for computerizing all records of the Panchayat Samiti and this fact was brought to the notice of the visiting them. Also it may be noted that other Gram Panchayat has taken up Chauhatan as a model and is following Chauhatan’s example. Regarding the query whether accounts are placed before the Gram Sabha for discussions, it was pointed out that the Gram Panchayats of Chainpura and Lodsar have followed the directives and there is transparency due to the discussions in the Gram Sabhas of above Gram Panchayats.

ASSESSMENT BASED ON INDICATORS FROM CHHATTISGARH

In Chhattisgarh eight award winning and eight non award winning PRIs were visited by the evaluation team and collected detailed data regarding the PEAIS. The team also held a detailed discussion with the elected representatives of the PRIs and the officials.

Panchayat Functioning.

It was generally observed that the number of meeting of the award winning Panchayat Committees is equal or sometimes more than the mandated number. Shri. Narayan Singh Sorri, the President of Tarasgaon Gram Panchayat who has been in the chair of the President for the last 17 years are fully aware of the provision of the Panchayati Raj Act. The capacity building exercise, trainings and exposure visits makes the elected representatives and functionaries aware of the provision of the Act. Shri. Lalit Singh Thakkar representing ward No. XIII and former president of the Govindpur Gram Panchayat of Kanker District has commented that the questionnaire during the verification exercise of PEAIS have reminded the duties and responsibilities of the Panchayat Committee. Smt. Drupad Bai Kurai, representing ward No. IX of the Panchayat who is a neo -literate from the literacy programme revealed that she is now aware of the essential requirements for considering for PEAIS. In Sarsoli Gram Panchayat the attendance in Panchayat Committee meeting also very effective as per the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat where as in Umereli it should be improved. In Umereli, the participation in the Panchayat Committee meeting is not fruit full and the functionaries of the Panchayat now only understood the importance of participation in the Panchayat Committee after the PEAIS. It is reported that in Umereli Gram Panchayat the committee decided to give necessary support to the poor families by the way of food and shelter. The committee also monitors the standard of education in the schools and where there is any support is needed it is given by the committee. The committee also positively intervened the appointment of teachers where the post is vacant.

Non award winning Panchayats of the State have started to convene regular meetings as per provision contained in the Act. Shri. Chaman Lal Salam, Sarpanch, Kulhad Katta Gram Panchayat stated that all members have undergone training organized by the SIRD, but it was only after filling up of the application for PEAIS the correct procedure for the meetings of the Panchayat Committee is followed. Resolutions were not specified in the