



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Public Administration**

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS**

**KEY WORDS:** Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Gram Swaraj, Decentralisation

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**ABSTRACT**

Mahatma Gandhi advocated decentralisation of power and creation of self-sufficient villages known as Gram Swaraj. According to him democracy emanates from the grassroot level i.e. village. As a result the idea of local self-government was incorporated in our Constitution under Article 40 of Directive Principles of State Policy stating 'The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government' 1. With the enactment of the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 the dream of Gram Swaraj visualised by Mahatma Gandhi became true.

In this Paper the researcher studied the organisational set up and functions of Nedungadu Commune Panchayat in Karaikal District of Puducherry Union Territory and investigated its role in achieving the goal of rural development in Nedungadu Commune Panchayat. The Supreme Court had directed the Union Territory in 2018 to hold the panchayat elections. Local body polls were last held in 2006 after 38 years and the term of office of the elected Commune Panchayats and village panchayats ended in 2011. Since then Puducherry is waiting for its locally elected representatives and the Commune Panchayats are administered by the bureaucrats under the State Government.

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS**

The first sign of healthy democracy is that collective decisions are made by the people who are most affected by them. Decentralisation is a prime mechanism through which democracy became truly representative and responsive.<sup>2</sup>

**Brief Background Of Panchayats In Pondicherry**

As Puducherry was a French Colony, its influence on local government is reflected from its nomenclature as *Commune Panchayat*. French Metropolitan (12 March 1880) divided the entire region into 8 communes. Each commune was provided with a municipal council consisting of a mayor, deputy mayors and councillors, for the administration of its affairs.

In June 1948 the French and Indian Governments came to an agreement as to how the future of the French Settlements should be determined. Municipal elections were held in Pondicherry, Karaikal and Yanam on 24 October 1948. The areas comprising the French establishments of India were merged de facto with the Indian Union on 1 November 1954. The Local Administration Department was constituted only on 1 July 1963 to deal with all matters connected with Local Administration at the secretariat level. The inspectorate of Municipal councils and Local Boards were formed in June 1967, to exercise control over the municipalities.

The Panchayat Raj system was in vogue in other parts of the country and Village Administration has been carried out through people's representatives from the village level to the block level. Moreover the old French laws had become so outdated that its replacement by a new law to meet the requirements of the changed circumstances was felt necessary. Adequate funds were not left to meet even the essential as well as basic needs of the population. Further, much of the powers conferred on the municipalities by the various French laws ceased to have effect as these laws had been replaced by Indian laws.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, the system was replaced by the Pondicherry Village and Commune Panchayat Act, 1973 and the Pondicherry Municipalities Act, 1973 respectively to govern village and town administration. The basic Law of Municipalities has now been replaced by the Pondicherry Municipalities Act 1973, which came into force on 26 January 1974. The Pondicherry Municipality, constituted under the Act of 1973, is a selection Grade Municipality.<sup>4</sup>

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To analyse the role of panchayat raj systems in the rural development of Nedungadu area in Karaikal district.
- To analyse the role of the Local Government in the socio-economic development of Nedungadu
- To evaluate the rural development activities of Nedungadu Commune Panchayat
- To identify the problems of panchayat in implementing rural development programmes
- To give suggestions for the better implementation of policies and development in Nedungadu Commune Panchayat.

**Significance Of The Study**

- The Panchayat Raj System is playing an important role in rural development.
- Due to no election in Nedungadu Commune Panchayat, bureaucrats have taken the responsibility of implementing various rural development programmes sponsored by both state and central governments.
- This study adopts a broad focus on rural development, examining how and what are the development activities done by Nedungadu commune Panchayat.
- This study focus on whether the developmental activities are reached at gross root level
- The study is crucial for evaluating the role of panchayat and the impact of the same on the development of study area.

**Research Methodology**

**1) Area of the study - Nedungadu Commune Panchayat**

Union territory of puducherry has ten commune panchayat (five panchayat in puducherry and five panchayat in karaikal). Karaikal is situated 150 kms down south from puducherry.

Five Commune Panchayat karaikal has 27 village panchayat -thirunallar (9 village panchayat), Kottucherry (5 village panchayat), T.R.Pattanam (5 village Panchayat), Nedungadu(4 village Panchayat), Neravy(4 village panchayat)

The area of study in this paper is Nedungadu Commune Panchayat. It spreads over 26.35 sq/km area with the total population of 17,146 (as per 2011 census).

Nedungadu Commune has four village panchayat namely Nedungadu, Kurumbagaram, Ponbethy, Melakasadudi and consisting of 28 wards.

For collecting the general information about Nedungadu Commune Panchayat the researcher visited Nedungadu Commune and visited some male and female employee in that office.

**2) Pilot Study**

It is the prime duty of the researcher to conduct a pilot study to determine the feasibility or applicability of the study. To study about the feasibility, the data about administration and developmental activities made by that Commune had been collected through Nedungadu Commune Panchayat and finalized the research work in Mathar sangam in this commune.

**3) Research Design**

Research design is always considered as the Blueprint of the research.

The researcher has selected descriptive design for the research

The descriptive design would describe in detail about role of panchayati raj in rural development, schemes for development, administrative setup of Nedungadu Commune panchayat, reservation in this commune.

**4) Universe and Sampling**

The researcher has collected the information from Nedungadu Commune Panchayat, Karaikal about the total number of mathar sangam in that commune.

The total universe of sampling is the sampling technique adopted for the study is Lottery Method.

**5) Tools of Data Collection**

The tool adopted for data collection is Interview Schedule. The reason is most of the respondents are not well versed in their education, the personal information is possible, greater depth is obtained and samples can be controlled more effectively. Thus the researcher has undergone data collection through interview method.

**6) Actual Data Collection**

The researcher actually collected the data from March 15, 2020 to March 25, 2020. The researcher has spent nearly 15 days for the data collection. The researcher collected the data from 50 respondents. Most of the respondents are well co-operated and shared their views without any hesitation.

**7) Mode of Analysis**

The collected data were carefully analysed through tables, flowchart and diagrams. Due to words limit constraint researcher is not giving the details of all the tables and diagrams and presenting here the concluding remarks of the research.

**Nedungadu Commune Panchayat**

Union territory of Puducherry has 5 Municipality – 2 in Puducherry, 1 in Karaikal, 1 in Mahe and 1 in Yanam. And it has 10 commune panchayat – 5 in puducherry (namely Ariyankuppam, Bahoor, Mannadipet, Nettapakkam, Villiyannur) and 5 in karaikal district (namely Kottucherry, Nedungadu, Neravy, T.R.Pattinam, Thirunallar).

Five Commune Panchayats in karaikal districts has 27 Village Panchayat

- 1) Thirunallar – has 9 village panchayat
- 2) Kottucherry – has 5 village panchayat
- 3) T.R.Pattanam – has 5 village Panchayat
- 4) Nedungadu – has 4 village panchayat
- 5) Neravy – has 4 Village Panchayat

**Population Of Nedungadu**

Area of Nedungadu spread over 26.35 sq/km area with population of 17,146 people (as per 2011 census), comprising of 4 Village Panchayat (namely Kurumbagaram, Ponbethy, Melakasakudi, Nedungadu)

**Table 3.1: Population Of People In Nedungadu Commune Panchayat<sup>5</sup>**

Name of Commune Panchayat	Name of Village Panchayat	Population of Village Panchayat [as per 2011 census]
Nedungadu	Kurumbagaram	5,138
	Ponbethy	4,057
	Melakasakudy	3,488
	Nedungadu	4,463
	Total	17,146

**Wards in Nedungadu Commune Panchayat**

These four village panchayats in Nedungadu consist of 28 wards. Before delimitation it had 33 wards.

**Table 3.2: Wards in Nedungadu Commune<sup>5</sup>**

S. No	Name of the Village	No. of Existing wards	No. of Delimitation wards
1.	Kurumbagaram	9	8
2.	Ponbethy	7	7
3.	Melakasakudy	6	6
4.	Nedungadu	11	7
	Total	33	28

**Reservation of Seats in Village Panchayats in Nedungadu Commune Panchayat**

**Table 3.3: Reservation of seats<sup>5</sup> for S.C/S.T, BC**

S. No	Name of the village panchayat	Total No. of seats	No. of seats reserved for scheduled castes	No. of seats reserved for scheduled tribes	No. of seats reserved for Backward classes
1.	Kurumbagaram	8	1		3
2.	Ponbethy	7	3		2
3.	Melakasakudy	6	2		2
4.	Nedungadu	7	2		2
	Total	28	8		9

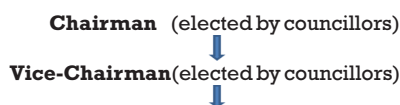
**Table 3.4: Reservation of seats for women<sup>5</sup>**

S. No	Name of the village panchayat	Total No. of seats	S.C women	S.T women	General Women	Total
1.	Kurumbagaram	8	0		3	3
2.	Ponbethy	7	1		2	3
3.	Melakasakudy	6	1		2	3
4.	Nedungadu	7	1		2	3
	Total	28	3		8	11

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION**

Nedungadu Commune Panchayat has 28 ward members elected from each ward, 4 President, 4 Vice-President elected from each Village Panchayat, 1 Councillor, 1 Chairman and 1 Vice Chairman for Nedungadu commune Panchayat.

At village panchayat level has one president elected by people, one vice-president elected by ward members and one councillor for each village panchayat with ward members. In commune panchayat council has one chairman, one vice chairman for one commune panchayat elected by councillors



**Councillors**(directly elected by people)

↓  
**President**(directly elected by people)

↓  
**Vice-President** (elected by ward members)

↓  
**Ward Members** (directly elected by people)

**Gram Sabha**

- Each village panchayat has one gram sabha
- All voters in that village panchayat are members of gram sabha.
- President is head of the gram sabha.
- Once in a 6 month gram sabha should be gathered by village panchayat

**President**

- Each village panchayat has one president.
- The tenure of president is 5 years
- Elected through ordinary election by people.
- Delegate any of his functions to the vice president and in his absence to any other member

**Functions of President**

- The function of president convene the meetings of the village panchayat,
- Have full access to the records of the village panchayat,
- Discharge all the duties specifically in articles
- No official correspondence between the village panchayat and the Government shall be conducted except through the president.

**Vice-President**

- Replacing president, if president is not available or until president return.
- He is elected by village panchayat from among its members.

**Chairman and vice chairman**

- There shall be a chairman and vice-chairman for commune panchayat council
- The chairman shall be elected by the persons in a commune panchayat whose names appear in the electoral rolls for all the village panchayat.
- Provided that a person who stands for election as chairman shall not be eligible to stand for election either as a member or president of a village panchayat
- Provided further that a person who stands for election either as a member or president of a village panchayat shall not be eligible to stand for election as chairman
- Provided also that no member or president of a village panchayat shall be eligible to stand for election as chairman
- The election of the chairman may be held ordinarily at the same times and in the same places in a commune panchayat as the ordinary election of the members of all the village panchayat
- The chairman shall be an ex-officio member of the commune panchayat council and shall have all the rights and privileges as that of other commune panchayat council.
- The vice chairman shall be elected by the commune panchayat council from among its member.

**Function of chairman**

- Convene the meeting of the commune panchayat council;
- Discharge all the duties specifically imposed and exercise all the powers conferred on the chairman by this Act and the rules
- The chairman shall have full access to all the records of the commune panchayat council and no official correspondence between the council and the Government shall be conducted except through the chairman
- When the office of chairman is vacant, the vice-chairman

shall exercise the functions of the chairman until a new chairman assumed office

**Executive officer**

- executive officer shall be appointed by the Director for any village' panchayat
- The executive officer shall be subordinate to the village panchayat.
- The executive officer shall ordinarily attend the meetings of the village panchayat and shall be entitled to take part in the discussions
- He shall not entitle to vote or to move any resolution.

**Function**

- Carry into effect the resolutions of the village panchayat
- Control all the officers and other employees of the village panchayat
- Discharge all the duties specifically imposed and exercise all the powers conferred on the executive authority by or under this Act

**Commissioner**

- A commissioner shall be appointed by the Government in the case of each commune panchayat council
- No recovery shall be made from the commune panchayat council towards the salary and allowances paid to any commissioner or towards his leave allowances, pension
- The commissioner shall have the right to attend the meetings of the commune panchayat council or of any committee and take part in the discussions thereat, but without the right to move any resolution or to vote

**Developmental Activities By Nedungadu Panchayat In Last Five Years**

- Provide social facilities like Sanitation
- Build cultural stages in Ponbethy and Kezhasemaiyangal area under Nedungadu Commune Panchayat.
- Build an Anganwadi in Melaponbethy
- Maintaining and cleaning ponds, Rivers under Nedungadu Panchayat
- Provide a road facilities in many villages and build roads in nearly 17 areas (Some of them are :Manalmedupet road, Vadamattam pet road, mathakovil pet road, postoffice road, Hospital road, Thiruvengadam road, Kurumbagaram middle street, Thatangulam road, panchasalapuram road, Kiliyanur road, LDR colony, Ambethkar Nagar Concrete Road, Melakasakudi Kaliyamman kovil street)
- Issues a birth, death and marriage certificate
- Reddresal of Public grievances
- Issues birth , death and marriage certificate have to get within 30 days

**FINDINGS**

This chapter deals about the research findings. The findings are listed below.

- Nearly 38% of the respondents are in age group of 18-36 years.
- 42% of the respondents are in primary level of education.
- 60% of the respondents are coolie.
- 54% of the respondent's income is less than 5000 since most of them are working as coolie.
- 69% of the respondents are married.
- 80% of the respondent's family type is nuclear family.
- 60% of the respondent's income is not sufficient to meet monthly expenditure.
- 87% of the respondents has own house.
- Most of the respondents are residing in hut houses.
- 50% of the respondents are not to be a member in any political party.
- Most of the respondents are not participate in panchayat election since the panchayat election is not held for past 10 years.
- 40% of the respondents are satisfied with the performance of panchayat.

- Most of the respondents felt that maximum benefits are availed by the relatives of bureaucrats.
- 45% of the respondents accept that panchayat has done good work to their area.
- 65% of the respondents are not satisfied with their road facility and they did not get good road facility through panchayat.
- 42% of the respondents expressed that welfare programs are executed by panchayat.
- 55% of the respondents expressed that they has no good street lighting facility.
- 54% of the respondents felt that the panchayat did not provide self-employment opportunities to them.
- Most of the respondents felt that the bureaucrats get corrupted.
- Majority of them told that public only initiated to do work for corruption.
- 48% of the respondents are not satisfied with the financial position of the panchayat.
- 54% of the respondents felt that the grant in aid given by the state government is not sufficient for the panchayat.
- 46% of the respondents expressed that the panchayat has ability to raise its own resources.
- 34% of the respondents expressed that the government officials cooperate during plan formation is only at average level.
- Most of the respondents accept that panchayat employees whole heartly implementing the rural development programs
- 46% of the respondents are unaware about the development programs executed through the panchayat.
- 42% of the respondents accept that panchayat raj institution plays an important role in rural development programs.
- 74% of the respondents must need panchayat election.
- 42% of the respondents are not satisfied with the functions of panchayat under the control of bureaucrats.
- 75% of the respondents expressed that the reservation for women in panchayat is necessary.
- 36% of the respondents rate the working of women in panchayat is good.
- 58% of the respondent agreed that the women's are performing better than male.
- 52% of the respondents wants to increase the reservation of women in panchayat.
- 28% of the respondents expressed that political parties create groupism in rural society through caste wise.
- 54% of the respondents feel that political parties control the panchayat.
- Political parties control over panchayat by issuing certificate, by providing old age pensions and in development schemes
- Most of the respondents receive monetary fund from panchayat.
- 35% of the respondents receive fund for self-employment schemes.
- Most of the people actively participate in rural development programs.
- 37% of the respondents expressed that the development programs are implemented by bureaucrats within prescribed frame work of rules and regulation to some extent.
- 64% of the respondents feel that self-employment of women will enhance their effectiveness in decision making.
- 75% of the respondents definitely need panchayat raj system in India.
- 58% of the respondents accept that the rural development is not possible without panchayat.
- 42% of the respondents need improvement in local bodies for rural development.

#### SUGGESTIONS

The researcher is wishing to give suggestion to improve the panchayat system rural development activities. Few

suggestions are listed below.

- The current infrastructural situation in rural communities contributes to the lack of socio economic development. The lack of quality infrastructure forces poor people to be much vulnerable on poverty. Infrastructure of rural communities must be prioritized for rural development to be successful.
- Rural roads need to be on top of rural development. It will improve economic development and social environment as small business opportunities will be created for sustainable rural development. Roads to rural communities are poor and it cost much time for people such as visitors to reach areas that are far to town, therefore if these roads can be improved it will be easy to speed-up the pace of rural development through distribution of resources on time.
- Transportation system for rural areas needs to be improved through bringing quality and cheap transport to transport people.
- Thus, the panchayat should provide good road facility, good infrastructure and transportation facilities and employment opportunities to the rural peoples for improving their economic status
- The Panchayat should provide more facilities like drinking water, sanitation, health services, school buildings, adult education, roads and bridges, street lights etc.
- This paper strongly advocates autonomy for local governments in such a way and manner that enhances its performance of constitutional and ancillary roles.
- Local governments should strive to raise and maintain revenue that would enable her deliver projects and services that guarantee quality living to the grassroots.
- Every panchayat should take adequate steps to implement these necessary things to the people.

#### CONCLUSION

As this study clearly indicates that with the emergence of such panchayat raj institution there is a significant change in the lives of rural people. The implementation of rural developmental schemes and programmes to be made through the system of panchayat raj institutions. In the economic front of the rural development programs have created an improvement in economic position of the selected area, as a result of implementation of rural development programs most of the people gain additional income. As the data shows that without the panchayat raj institutions nowadays it is not possible to initiate any state or central governmental plan.

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