



Study Tour on Kerala State Local Governance



**A Document by
ETC Srikalahasthi Team**

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The National Capacity Building Framework (NCBF) developed by Ministry of Panchayat Raj ,has highlighted exposure visits as an important mode of capacity building of PRIs. The Committee constituted under the chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog to restructure the existing scheme of the Ministry of Panchayat Raj as Rastriya Grama Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) has also recommended exposure visits by PRI members to be radically scaled up.

In this context , Commissioner APSIRD has accorded permission to The Principal ,Extension Training Centre, Srikalahasti to conduct exposure to the trainee Mandal Parishad Development Officers(BDOs) as part of 6 months Foundation Training , along with core faculty members from 7th to 10th Feb '18 to Kerala Institute of Local Administration(KILA),Thrissur on Local Self Governance and Management.



List of Participants:

Faculty: 1.Smt Y.Samatha

2. Smt S.PadmaRani

3. Smt M.Rupa Rani

4. Sri R.Jithendra Kumar

Trainee MPDOs:

1. Smt.J.Vima Devi

2. Smt.T. Swarna Latha

3. Smt.Y.Ramkrishna

4. Smt.M.Anupama

5. Sri. S.Subramanyam Sarma

6. Sri.M.Vijaya Kumar

7. Sri.A. Amarnath

8. Sri.C.Jayanthi Babu

9. Smt.G.Dhanalakshmi

10. Sri.S.Zakir Hussain

11. Sri.S.Amanullah

Objective:

- Contribution of Kerala to the Local Self Government system.
- To throw light on evolution of strengthened Local self Governments.
- Devolution of 3 Fs to Local Bodies.
- Participation of ERs and Public in effective planning to output.
- Positive impact in effective functioning or delivery of services.
- Mobilisation /Management of OSR (Own Source Revenue).
- Sustainability aspects.

Approach:

The tour has involved three distinct components:

1. Classroom sessions at KILA where we were given an overview on the prevailing LSGI (Local Self Government Institutions) structure and functions by distinguished faculty members.
2. Exposure visit to 3 tiers of Local bodies that are doing excellent work (thematic champions) to promote cross learning.
 - Interaction with elected bodies, committees and public.
 - Study of good governance mechanism with focus on proactive disclosure of information.
3. Insight into Innovative practices adopted by Kudumba Sree units.

Key Learnings:

The insights of Mahatma Gandhi on constituting and strengthening Panchayats is one of the prominent motivating forces, which also laid the intellectual foundation of local government system in the country. Perhaps the most enduring image of decentralization in India is Gandhi's vision of village 'swaraj'; Kerala is the promising example during the post constitutional amendment period

Principles of Decentralisation of Powers in Kerala

- 1. Autonomy:** The local self-governments are to be autonomous, functionally, financially, and administratively. The different tiers of local self-governments should be seen as complementary units rather than hierarchically organised.
- 2. Subsidiarity:** It means that what can be done best at a particular level should be done at that level and not at higher levels. That entire can optimally done at the lowest level should be reserved to that level. Only the residual should be passed on to the higher levels
- 3 .Role Clarity:** There should be clarity regarding the roles of each tier in the development process and clear division of functions between the tiers.
- 4. Complementary:** The functions of different tiers should not be overlapping, but should be complementary to each other.
- 5. Uniformity:** There should be uniformity of norms and rules.
- 6 .People's Participation:** The functioning of the local self-government should be such that it facilitates maximum direct participation of people in the development process.

7. Accountability: The elected representative accountability is not to be confined to the periodic electoral verdicts. There should be continuous social auditing of the performance.

8 .Transparency: People should have the right to information regarding every detail of the administration.

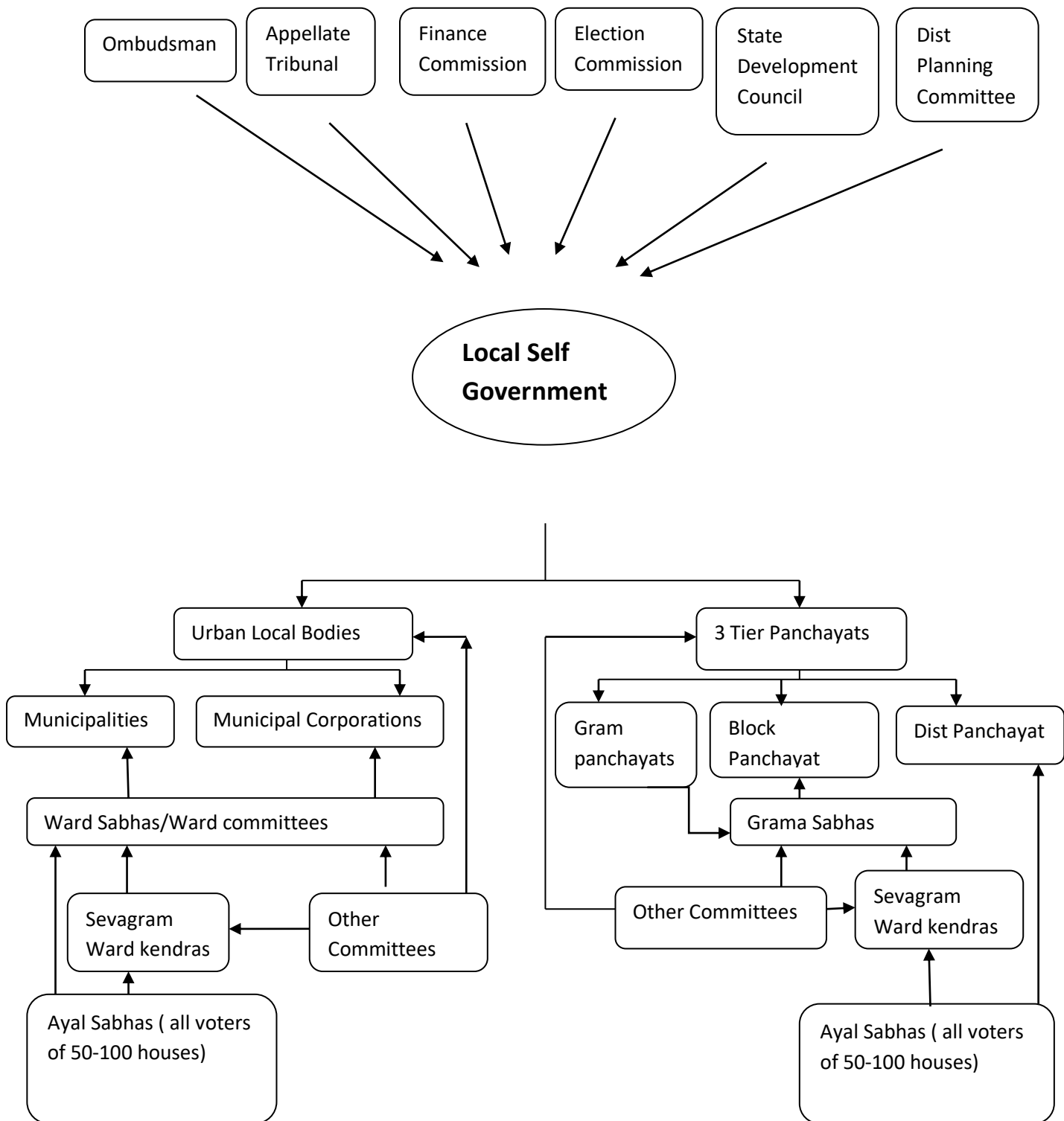
Existing structure

Dist Panchayat	- 14
Block Panchayat	- 152
Gram Panchayat	- 941
Municipalities	- 87
Corporations	- 6
<u>Total</u>	<u>- 1200</u>

Salient Features of Kerala Panchayat Raj Act:

1. Three tier system
2. Grama Sabha at ward level
3. Little control from above- each tier is Independent
4. Regular election –State Election commission
5. Reservation systems
6. State Finance Commission
7. District Planning Committees
8. Sustained political will

Organisational structure:



Big bang approach: At one go Devolution of Five Fs as per Kerala PR Act, 1994

1. Funds
2. Functions
3. Functionaries
4. Freedom
5. Friends / Fraternity

1. Fund:

The State government earmarks one-third of its development plan size as devolved funds for bottom-up planning in development sectors transferred to local governments. In addition to that,

General Purpose Grant

3.5% of State Plan outlay for Core functions of LSGI

Maintenance Grant

5.5% of State Plan outlay for maintenance of Assets

2/3 for Road & 1/3 for Non-Road

Own Sources of Revenue

Tax, Non Tax

Property Tax

License Fees

Profession Tax, Rent

Entertainment Tax, Income from Property

Advertisement Tax, Permit Fee

Surcharge on Pro. Tax, Registration Fee etc.

2. Functions:

LSGI	Mandatory Functions	General Functions	Sector-wise Functions		Total (2+3+5)
			Sector No.	Functions	
1	2	3	4	5	6
G.P	27	14	19	76	117
B.P	-	3	14	28	31
D.P	-	3	16	65	68
Municipality	30	14	19	108	152

So, we can observe that out of 29 subjects to be devolved to local bodies, 27 subjects except Land Reforms and Forest produce are devolved completely to Gram Panchayats.

Mandatory functions: are functions to be performed compulsorily by a G.P/Municipality. Eg: Functions related to Public health, Public amenities, maintenance of public assets and regulatory functions. Any lapse in execution of mandatory functions, public can approach Ombudsman.

Functionaries:

Institutions transferred to Grama Panchayats

Krishi Bhavan

Veterinary Hospital

Primary Health Centre-Allopathic

Primary Health Centre-Ayurveda

Primary Health Centre-Homoeo

Anganwadies and Day Care centers

Balwadis

Government Primary Schools

Office of the Assistant Engineer (one AE for 2 GPs)

Tribal Extension office

Tribal Nursery Schools

Village Extension Office

Fisheries sub centers

Functionaries of above Institutions are functioning under Gram Panchayat administration. So much so, the President has the power to submit confidential report and to suspend in case of irregularities.

Freedom:

Local Bodies are functioning independently according to Rule of Subsidiarity and involving in successful decentralized planning.

Decentralized Planning:

'Working Groups' (at GP, BP and DP levels) have to translate the demands and recommendations of GSs and WSs into viable, technically acceptable projects. For each local body, there are about 8 –12 Task Forces/working groups dealing with different sectors. Each WG would be headed by an elected Member and convened by specified government official.

Committee System: All GPs, BPs and DPs would have Standing Committees (SCs); each assigned with certain subjects. The SCs have to co-ordinate with a Steering Committee consisting of the President, Vice President of the Panchayat and the chairpersons of the SCs. Panchayats are free to constitute sub-committees to assist the aforesaid committees. There is also provision for Joint Committees between neighbouring Local Governments.

Flow Chart of Planning Process:

Formation of Working Groups

- Each WG consists of People's representatives, Officials, Volunteers, Technically skilled, etc
- Separate WG for each development sector

Status Report

- Prepared by WG after discussion with stakeholders
- submitted to Standing Committees
- Standing Committees after scrutiny submit to Local Govt

Gram Sabha/Ward Sabhas/Aayal Sabhas

- Panchayats examine status reports and give it back to WGs for presenting before Gram sabha

Development Report Plan Document

- Incorporating GS suggestions
- Draft plan prepared by WGs and submitted to Panchayat Committees through Standing Committees

Development Seminar,

- One day Development seminar is conducted at local Govt. level

Development Report and Plan Document

- Standing Committees decide projects and
- final plan shaped in Steering Committee meeting

Project vetting and Approval approval

- Approval from higher officer of concerned development sector
- Approval from Standing Committee
- Approval from Local Govt. and DPC.

Sulekha Software: Plan vetting is ensured through sulekha Software.

Monitoring Committees: Working Groups function as Monitoring Committee at the time of project implementation.

Reflections:

Gram Panchayat:

We were lead to **Velur** panchayat with a population of 22,155 in Thalapilly taluk, Thrissur district by KILA team during field visit.



We were welcomed by a well equipped Gram Panchayat Office along with computerised help desk in the front porch.

The Gram Panchayat office housed various offices with two vehicles at disposal of Sarpanch and Secretary, and an ambulance.



Panchayat team proudly took us around each chamber in the office and we could view well maintained office atmosphere true to the achievement of **ISO certification**. We were lucky to participate in meeting conducted for review of project performance.

Awareness and active involvement of Ward members is observed. They explained about meeting procedures and how promptly proceeds including Agenda are updated in Sagarma software. Every member has a Login ID to carryout official process.Usage of local language (Malayalam) in all software applications have made digital information accessible to all, leading to transparency and accountability.

Child Friendly Panchayats: 'Child friendly' Panchayat is defined as an approach which is working towards ensuring every child's right to survival, development, protection and participation (through Bal sabhas) at each stage of the child's life cycle.

Block Panchayat: To observe the working of middle tier of LSGI, we were taken to Angamly Block Panchayat in Ernakulam district. Population being 1, 75741, with 8 G.Ps.



We observed a vibrant elected body interested to share many achievements. They had a deep insight into powers and working of LSGI.



They also explained about innovative service activities taken up by the team as part of the plan. Employment being their prime focus, they successfully contributed towards educating through

Saksharatha programme –adult education,

Aksharalakshyam –compulsory education,

Skill development programme-special initiative to develop 18 types of professional skills in SC, ST youth.They will get Rs 15,000 per person along with free VISA .With the assistance of Block panchayat 14 people are working in abroad.

Free coaching for competitive exams like UPSC, SSC..., and sponsoring eligible students to abroad

Other innovative programmes like-

Vimukthi –awareness programme agaist tobacco

Jalavarshini-water conservation

Haritha keralam-organic farming, vegetable shops

Green protocol-avoiding plastic usage

Geriatric centre-medical care and rehabilitation to oldaged

Keralothsavam-special programme to improve talent of youth

We had an opportunity to meet Block body.

Offices transferred to Block Panchayat:

1. AEE
2. Asst Director of Agriculture
3. Child Dev. Officer
4. Community Health Centre
5. Dairy Extention office
6. Scheduled caste Dev. Office
7. Indusrial Extension Office
8. Block Development Office
9. Veternary Poly Clinic.

To adorn all these offices the block team has a huge vision of a beautiful building complex. This came true as it is being sanctioned.



District Panchayat:

Next we were headed to **Ernakulam** District Panchayat by KILA team lead Mr. Ramakrishna .The District Panchayat Office is much modernised and boasts to be one among the three district panchayats in Kerala to be ISO certified.

Institutions transferred to Dist panchayat

1. High Schools - 111
2. Dist hospitals - 3
3. Dist Agro farms - 1
4. State Seed Farms - 2
5. Coconut Nursery - 1
6. Govt Commercial Institutions - 3
7. Govt Institute of Fashion Designing - 3
8. ITI - 1
9. Dist Ayurvedic Hospital - 1

10. Dist Homeo Hospital - 1

11. Dist Geriatric Centre - 1



Fund allocation – Total fund allocated by state government is 55 crores.

Roads 47.35 cr

Non roads 7.50 cr

General Infrasture - 30%

Waste management -10%

Earmarked to women -10%

Alloted to aged - 5%

Differently abled and children - 5%

Activities undertaken:

1. Oldage Homes through govt grant
2. Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam Ayurveda Hospital

3. Rabbit breeding farm
4. Dist Nutmeg and turmeric farming
5. Panic alarm for oldage
6. Motorised scooters for disabled
7. Fire extinguishers to shoos
8. Haemophelia centres
9. **Child friendly initiatives**
 - scholarships to mentally challenged,
 - Overseas higher education scholarships to S
 - Special handicraft skill training to disabled.
10. **Initiative for girls** –Taekwondo training to school girls
 - Sanitary napkin vending machines.
11. First AC Bus shelter in Kerala.

Kudumbasree:

As part of our study tour we had a dialogue with stake holders of kudumbasree, and we were able to visit units maintained by Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs). An overview of this programme was given by Mr. Radha Krishna, Asst. Dist. Mission co-ordinator in the class room session.

Salient features of this mission include:

- ✚ Kudumbashree is the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme implemented by the State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) of the Government of Kerala.
- ✚ The name Kudumbashree in Malayalam language means 'prosperity of the family'. Kudumbashree was set up in the year 1997.
- ✚ Kudumbashree has a three-tier structure for its women community network, with Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) at the lowest level, Area Development Societies (ADS) at the middle

level, and Community Development Societies (CDS) at the local government level.

- ✚ Though autonomous in structure, they work closely with the Gram Panchayat. The Panchayat president is the patron of the CDS whereas the ward member is the patron of the ADS, Member Secretary of CDS is Asst. Secretary of GPs. 5 women ERs will be nominated to CDS as Ex-Officio members without voting rights.
- ✚ 10% of the local fund has to be spent for women empowerment.
- ✚ The slogan of Kudumbashree is “Reaching out to families through Women and reaching out to community through families”.

Though kudumbashree programme was initially meant for economic development ,in these 10 years they have come a long way and are participating in social development and implementation of Govt sponsored schemes making the slogan apt for it,like:

- ✓ **Ashraya project** to make kerala destitute free
- ✓ **Buds and BRCs** for mentally challenged
- ✓ **Snehita** 24 hr help desk for women protection
- ✓ **ABC** animal birth control programme
- ✓ **Women construction groups** (LIFE livelihood inclusion and financial empowerment) – PMAY

Santhwanam: is a major intervention of Kudumbashree in the Health sector. With lifestyle diseases on the rise, a visit to hospitals and clinics for periodical checkups has become common among the poor as well as the elite. This prompted Kudumbashree to think of an alternative and thus Santhwanam project became part of Kudumbashree livelihood programmes.

Santhwanam is a collaborative effort of Kudumbashree, Health Action by People (HAP) and the State Bank of India (SBI). Women from Kudumbashree families having a plus-two education or graduation in

science are selected for enterprises. They are given seven days of intensive training on technical inputs and personality development by HAP, an NGO headed by a group of committed doctors. The entrepreneurs are trained in checking the height, body weight, body mass index, cancer detection, blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol of people they visit at home to check on their diseases. The medical equipments and strips required for the check ups are supplied by HAP.

Kudumbashree imparts performance improvement training to these people after every six months of functioning. The Santhwanam groups also take part in fairs and festivals, where they get plenty of patients to carry out checkups on and earn a good income. This is in addition to the regular house visits they undertake for periodic checkups. The main benefit of this scheme is that the periodic checkups give individuals a warning about their state of health so that they can go to a hospital in time for further treatment if necessary.

During field visit we were lucky to have an interview with Kudumbasree members **Marina and Kochu Rani of Shakti NHG and Ishwarya NHG** about working of Swanthanam. To purchase two wheelers they received Rs. 50,000 bank loan, Rs.7, 500 from kudumbasri and revolving fund of Rs.10,000. Now they go home to home for monthly checkups and earn Rs.15,000 per month. People are happy as they get service at their door step.

Amrutham Food Supplement: Nutritional food supplement provided through Kudumbashree to 33000 anganwadis of the State.

Cafe Kudumbashree:

Cafe Kudumbashree is a sub brand of Kudumbashree in the hospitality sector. More than 1000 units serving ethnic delicacies are functioning across the state bringing together the diversity of ethnic Kerala cuisine under one roof. Over the years, Cafe Kudumbashree has established

itself as a strong brand in the restaurant sector, through a series of food festivals, catering orders and also by running canteens.

Second unit visited was a catering unit. As part of Café Kutumbasree, 14 women of Vijayasree NHG established a catering unit. Trained for 1 month by kila. Total 34 members are working in this unit . NHGs pay a daily wage of Rs 600 to additional 20 members.

It's praise worthy note that Govt. is supporting these caterers in all Govt. Institutions.

Conclusion:

It has to be noted that the Kerala model Decentralization can now be developed a viable and replicable model, to adopt Administrative decentralization, participatory planning, setting up supporting institutions for Local Governance, linking local governments with experts, professionals, activists and community based organizations and so on.