Draft: Not to be quoted

DYNAMICS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN KARNATAKA*

Kripa Ananthpur
Asst. Professor,
Madras Institute Of Development Studies,
Chennai,
India.
kripa@mids.ac.in

***** This paper is a product of an on-going research project 'Formal and Informal Local Governance in India' supported by the Centre for the Future State, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, U.K. Data analysis is in progress and the findings reported here are preliminary and tentative. Please do not cite.

I. INTRODUCTION

Karnataka has a fairly long and impressive history of decentralisation. Democratically elected local government structures were institutionalised and political space created for marginalised groups long before the 1992 amendment that made PRIs constitutionally mandatory. Despite this, local governance in Karnataka has not become fully formalised. At the village level, elected Grama Panchayats continue to co-exist with informal, local governance institutions (ILGIs), which are rooted in traditional practices, values and power relations.

The popular perception is that formal elected local institutions (a) are quite distinct from the informal institutions and are relatively free of influences that bear on those informal institutions; and (b) are more powerful than the informal ones, and so tend to 'drive them out'. The extent to which these assumptions are in consonant with local reality is debatable. In reality, ILGIs are –

1. Typically are inter-caste institutions, comprising the leaders of different caste groups in a community, and are in some real sense representative bodies whose procedures are characterised more by deliberation, negotiation, and compromise than by simple rule enforcement.
2. Do not only enforce ‘traditional’ rules and norms, but also perform a range of useful collective functions at the village level, often in a consensual manner. They arbitrate a range of disputes at the village level, act as support structures by providing monetary and other assistance to people in distress, and often mobilise significant sums of financial and other resources for developmental projects.
3. Are not linearly declining or shrinking in the face either of modernity in general, and more modern, elected local councils in particular. Instead, they interact with these formal, local governance institutions, often in a positive way.

This indicates that local governance in Karnataka is a complex and contested site where formal and informal local governance institutions complement each other in some instances and are in conflict with one another at others.

The objective of this paper is to unpack the dynamics of local governance in Karnataka by studying the interaction between two sets of rural institutions, (a) the formal, elected *Gram Panchayats*(GPs), mandated by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1992, that typically cover a group of natural villages; and (b) the informal, long standing, village level ILGIs, which undertake dispute resolution and a wide range of other activities at the level of the individual natural village.

On the basis of field research in 30 villages in Karnataka, this paper tries to present a more holistic picture of ILGIs, including their role in village governance and service delivery; the ways in which they interact with *Grama Panchayats*, and the implications of this interaction and influence on local democracy.

II. Local Governance in Karnataka

Karnataka is one of the better-developed states in India. Land reforms and other developmental initiatives and opportunities aimed at backward classes and dalits in the '80s has created a society that is not as polarised as some of the other states in India. This has led the formation of a fairly cohesive society (Manor, 1997). A less well-known fact about Karnataka relates to its long experimentation with decentralisation. Attempts to devolve powers to local bodies had been initiated even before independence (Natraj and AnanthPur, 2003). A serious effort to decentralise its political structures in Karnataka came about in 1987 long before the 73rd amendment to the constitution accorded constitutional status to elected local governments[1]. The first major landmark in Karnataka was the 1983 Act, which introduced a two-tier, elected sub-state level governance structure. A notable feature was 25 per cent reservation for women in these bodies even before this was mandated by the

Constitution. Elections under this Act were held in 1987. The 1983 Act was substituted by a new law in 1993 (the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993) to accommodate the mandatory provisions brought in by the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution. The 1993 Act provides for a three-tier structure – Zilla Panchayat (district level), Taluk Panchayat (Block level) and Gram Panchayat (village level) - with representation for women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Hence formal, local institutions have been part of the local democracy landscape in Karnataka for nearly two decades now.

Grama Panchayats:

Of the three tiers of PRIs, Grama Panchayat is the most important tier as it is directly involved in local governance specially given its proximity to the rural population.

Some of the key features of Grama Panchayats in Karnataka are as follows:

- Democratically elected bodies
- Constitutional status through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution
- Elections to *Grama panchayats* are conducted once in five years.
- Constituted for a group of villages (5-7000 population)
- One representative for every 400 population
- 33% seats reserved for women
- Reservation of seats for SCs & STs in proportion to their population
- 33% seats reserved for OBCs
- Reservation for the post of president and vice president
- Tied and untied funds from the state and central governments.
- Vested with powers of taxation

Given that *Grama panchayats* have become institutionalised and influential, one would expect that Informal Local governance institutions (ILGIs) at the village level in Karnataka to have become defunct and faded away. In fact it is

[1] The 1992 constitutional amendment (73rd) established an elected three-tier government structure at the sub-

generally believed that the' traditional' *village panchayats,* studied and documented by Srinivas(1987), Ishwaran(1968) and others, no longer exist in Karnataka. Village elites, instead of the *village panchayat,* are now seen as mediators of power relations and influencing the process of local governance (Inbanathan, 2000). But field research in 30 villages from three different districts[2] of Karnataka indicates that ILGIs are not only prevalent but also quite active in all 30 villages. Rather than declining ILGIs continue to be ubiquitous and influential.

Informal Local Governance Institutions[3]:

Unlike *Grama panchayats,* ILGIs functions at the village level and have authority only over the 'natural' village within which it operates. Typically a single *Grama Panchayat* may include several ILGIs. In contrast to *Grama Panchayats,* the basic structure of ILGIs is rooted in 'tradition' and customs. Srinivas describes 'village councils' (ILGIs) as being 'informal and flexible' bodies with 'no hard and fast rule about who should constitute them'. He has also observed a variation in membership over space and context (2002:81). Mandelbaum's (1970) detailed study of 'village *panchayats*' from different parts of the country indicates a similar flexible pattern of representation. Though variable, ILGIs broadly have a similar pattern of representation – a set of members or *panchas* headed by a leader- *Yajamana*. These are people who are recognised as having the right or duty to meet in a structured way to discuss, debate and, sometimes, to decide. The membership to ILGIs is intrinsically embedded in caste and gender. Virtually all *panchas* are men and are usually the caste leaders[4] of individual caste groups present in the village. The size of an ILGI is broadly proportional to the number of caste groups present in a village. Although headed by *Yajamanas,* ILGIs are rarely, if ever, controlled by a single, dominant caste leader or big landowner of the village. It

---

state level known as Panchayati Raj Institutions.

[2] 10 villages each from Mysore, Dharwad and Raichur districts were chosen to study the interaction between the formal and informal local governance institutions.

[3] For a detailed description of ILGIs, see 'Rivalry or Synergy? Formal and Informal Local Governance in India', IDS working Paper No.226, June, 2004.

[4] Some caste groups in a few villages have a leadership, usually hereditary but at times elected, and accounts (of funds collected by that particular caste group for religious and other purposes) that are checked by the people

is perceived as a more deliberative forum, where decisions are arrived at after discussions and consensus. This 'egalitarianism' is not unique to Karnataka ILGIs but also found in the village councils of Rajasthan where '*panchas'* (representatives) of all caste groups sit as equals on the central platform'. (Krishna, 2002: 136).

A major criticism against ILGIs is that they reinforce caste and gender hierarchies. The pattern of representation in the ILGI, to a certain extent, confirms this view. This is particularly visible in the marginal representation, in ILGIs, of Scheduled Castes[5](SC) in some villages to complete exclusion of women in all the 30 villages. However there is evidence that ILGIs are adapting to the changing socio-political context. For instance, there is a better representation for SCs in villages with dominant SC population (at least in three villages SC and Scheduled Tribe members were the *Yajamanas* of the ILGI) and in a couple of villages, female elected members of the formal *Grama Panchayat* sometimes were invited to join in the deliberations of the ILGI for specific purposes[6]. Krishna finds that in Rajasthan, 'though representatives of the scheduled castes (previously known as untouchables) sit some distance apart or even at a lower level from other panchas, they have equal say in the decision, particularly when a person from their own caste group is involved as a party' (Krishna, 2002:136). In Karnataka, particularly in some villages of Mysore district, SC leaders sit together on the same platform with other caste leaders while resolving disputes. This ability to adapt has made ILGIs more pluralistic (with limitations) and also able to project a more modern image to outsiders.

ILGIs have also begun widen their base of representation in an attempt to adapt to local democracy. In all 30 villages apart from the core membership (caste based), ILGIs include other members many of whom are members of the elected *Grama Panchayats*. The inclusion other members is based on

belonging to that particular caste group around every Hindu New Year. Caste Panchayats have jurisdiction over all families belonging to that caste in the village. These organisations are often quite formal and institutionalised.

[5] Those belonging to caste groups previously considered as 'untouchables'.

[6] Specially disputes related to women.

modern criteria such as their political linkages, education, mobility, ability to interact with government officials and their membership in the formal *Grama Panchayats*. The emergence of new and parallel leadership at the village level is not a new phenomenon and is commonly found in most rural areas (Bailey, 1960, Beteille, 1971, Krishna, 2002). But Karnataka seems to differ in that the 'new leaders' often find a place on ILGIs and play active roles there (AnanthPur, 2002).

In Karnataka ILGIs perform a wide range of useful, collective activities. These include organising social activities, dispensing informal justice, providing financial and moral support to those in need, and maintenance of local law and order. Some ILGIs have also taken up village development activities with their own resources. With the formal elected *Grama Panchayat* taking care of the development needs of the villagers, ILGIs have not become redundant as they provide valuable services to the rural citizens that are not offered by the formal *Grama Panchayats*. The following is a list of activities/functions that ILGIs generally perform at the village level. ILGIs may perform some or all these functions depending upon their influence and degree of activism.

1. All ILGIs are involved **religious activities,** such as organising religious festivals, rituals and processions (*Jathre*), temple construction, repairs and maintenance.
2. ILGIs are involved in **dispute resolution** in all the 30 sample villages. They not only arbitrate disputes but also help maintain local law and order and thus play a key role in internal regulation of villages. Villagers do not necessarily see dispute resolution by ILGIs as an end point, but rather as the first opportunity for justice because it is quick, affordable and accessible.[7] In most villages, villagers have the option of approaching the police station or the formal legal system if disputes are not satisfactorily resolved there. On an average 80% of local disputes are resolved by the ILGIs in these 30 villages.

[7] While in most cases villagers respect the ILGI as an institution capable of delivering fair judgement, there are instances where ILGIs have been accused of being biased and corrupt.

3. ILGIs also provide **social services and support** to those in need. There are a number of cases of their helping destitute or widowed women to get a share of their husbands' property, collecting funds from the villagers to help accident victims (generally from poor families), arranging funeral rites for the insolvent people, organising mass marriages for the poor, donating stationery to local school children, or supporting the education of gifted students. ILGIs have also played a significant role in maintaining communal harmony in villages with substantial Muslim populations.
4. Some ILGIs have also taken up **development activities** using their own initiatives and resources. ILGI members have donated or solicited donations of land from villagers or neighbouring villagers for building roads, schools, anganwadis (pre-schools), community halls and/or living quarters for village government functionaries such as local nurses, teachers, doctors.
5. Another area where the ILGI is becoming an important actor in local governance, relates to **informal resource mobilisation**. ILGIs, in all the villages studied, were involved in some form of informal resource mobilisation. The amount raised per year may range from a minimum of Rs.1000/- to a maximum of Rs.1,00,000/-. Informal resource mobilisation may include donations or contributions in cash and kind. Many ILGIs maintain bank accounts and submit the expenditure statement to the villagers once a year. There are also instances of ILGI (sometimes along with the GP members) negotiating successfully either with villagers or neighbouring villagers for donation of land for building schools, anganwadis (pre-school)or community hall. Apart from raising resources for religious purposes, ILGIs also play an important role in mobilising resources for development projects. Increasingly a number of development projects initiated through GP now require matching contributions from the villagers. It is here that the ILGI's ability to raise local funds comes into play. One such programme is the rural water and sanitation programme, which requires 10% matching grants to be raised by the community. While in a few villages, ILGI has been successful in raising this matching grant, in others the

project was not initiated, as the ILGI was not involved in the process. Some ILGIs have also donated money collected through fines (from the process of dispute resolution) and additional or left over funds collected for religious festivities for this purpose. However there were just two cases of ILGIs mobilising local resources on their own for village development.

While the institutional structure of ILGIs embodies an inherent contradiction to the democratic principles, their functional characteristics complement the functions of local democratic institutions. But despite their progressive and functional aspect, as an institution dominated by the village elite, ILGIs are largely seen as vehicles for 'elite capture' of local democratic institutions and processes. The extent to which this proposition is valid is tested in the next section where I explore the different ways in which ILGIs interacts and influences Grama Panchayats.

III. INTERACTION WITH GRAMA PANCHAYATS:

In India, the Constitutional amendment that mandates local governance has remained silent on the role of 'Informal/customary institutions' in local governance. It does, however, make provision to accommodate the tribal laws and customs for tribally dominated regions. In fact special Constitutional provisions have been designed to protect the tribal governance structures by bringing the tribally dominant regions under the Vth schedule of the Constitution and providing them a central role in local governance. In 1996, a national level legislation – 'The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act 1996'- allowed for the accommodation of the tribal laws and customs in tribally dominated regions.[8] This development came in the wake of objections and protests that formal, local governance structures as mandated by the Constitution would impede and destroy the tribal ways of life (Mahi Pal 2000). ILGIs do not get similar recognition in the Constitutional amendment mandating local governance. This makes the role of the ILGIs in

[8] India has a significant tribal population. It is estimated that they constitute about 8 per cent of the total population. Quotas are provided for the tribal population in various spheres to make the governance and development process more inclusive.

formal, local politics in the Indian context somewhat unique, as they do not have any legally or formally assigned role to play in the process of local democracy. The interaction between ILGIs and Grama Panchayats has remained largely un-explored as these two institutions occupy different spaces, mainly state and non-state spaces. They also operate at different levels - formal and informal levels. This makes the interaction almost invisible not only to the outsiders but also to the villagers.

ILGIs interact and influence GPs various ways, which I've grouped into two main categories.

(a) Influence over GP Elections(IGPE)

(b) Influence over GP Activities(IGPA)

(a) Influencing GP Elections (IGPE):

ILGIs try to influence the GP elections by –

(1) Trying to influence the choice of candidates for GP elections – in 29 out of my 30 research villages, ILGIs have played a role in influencing the selection of candidates for GP elections.

(2) Trying to contest elections themselves or through their relatives thus leading to overlap of leadership in both institutions – In 26 out of my 30 villages, some form of overlap of leadership exists. For example, the *Yajamana* of the ILGI in one village is also the president of the *GP*. In another village, an ILGI leader was the previous president of *Grama Panchayat*. In the same village, the son of the ILGI *Yajamana* is presently a member of the *Grama Panchayat*. In a number of villages, *panchas* are also members of the *Grama Panchayat*. But when the extent of overlap of leadership is assessed for all 30 villages, it constitutes around 32% of all GP seats.

(3) Ensuring that their candidates hold the positions of president or vice president of GPs where possible – ILGIs has played an important role in ensuring that elected GP members from their village get access to the positions of president or vice president of GP. However this is dependant upon several things including

the type of reservation that particular GP comes under etc. Nearly 28% of positions of president or vice president are held by either ILGIs leaders or candidates selected by the ILGI.

(4) Trying to control election outcomes by encouraging uncontested elections - ILGIs have tried, where possible, to concretise their choice of candidates by trying to ensure 'unanimous' (uncontested) elections. In 18 out of my 30 sample villages 'unanimous' elections took place in 2000: in four cases all the seats were uncontested, and in 16 villages at least one seat was uncontested. A total of 38% of seats were uncontested in the 30 research villages.

(b) Influence over GP Activities (IGPA) –

In almost all the villages I studied, the ILGI leaders play an important role in negotiating with the formal, local representatives and institutions for benefits to the village even where they have had little involvement in the selection of formal local representatives. ILGI leaders and members play an important role in –

- Implementation of development projects - By and large the ILGIs supports its GP members in ensuring that development projects allocated through the Grama Panchayat are delivered to the village. In addition, the ILGIs also tries to improve the village infrastructure by soliciting donations, in cash or kind, for village development. For instance, there are numerous examples of ILGIs donating land for construction of anganwadis, living quarters for school teacher/village nurse, high school building etc. This reflects the positive role the ILGI can play in ensuring effective service delivery.

- Selection of beneficiaries for anti-poverty schemes - An important aspect of the influence deals with decisions impacting directly on the poor. The process of selection of beneficiaries for anti-poverty schemes takes place in the Grama Sabha – the village assembly. All adults in the village are members of the Grama Sabha and are allowed

(and expected) to participate in this process. Usually the leader and some members of the ILGI participate in the Grama Sabha and play an important role in the selection of beneficiaries for various anti-poverty projects and schemes. Again their involvement in this process is not necessarily bad as it may make the selection process more transparent. But this democratic decision making process gets subverted when it is used to strengthen the ILGI's position in the village, by favouring those that support them. Group discussion with diverse sets of people such as SC women, SC men, and in general the poor in the village indicates that poorer sections are in favour of the involvement of ILGIs in such development initiatives as the ILGI leaders have the ability to question decisions of the GP members and make the process more transparent and accountable.

Constructing an Index of ILGIs' Influence over GP:

The previous section indicates that ILGIs try to influence the process of election and activities of GP in various ways. In order to assess the extent of ILGI's influence over GP, I constructed an Index of Influence over GP (IGP) by giving equal weightage to all the six components of IGPE and IGPA mentioned above. IGPs were calculated for all 30 ILGIs using information generated from my personal interviews with ILGI leaders, local GP members and key male and female informants in the village(and triangulating it) as well as factual information on elections such as the extent of unanimous elections and so on. Aggregating the village level data, a district-wise index of Influence over GP was constructed to assess the influence of ILGIs over GP across three districts. Table 1 given below illustrates the inter-district variations in the influence.

Table 1. Index of Influence over GP (IGP)

Index	Weight	Average	DHARWAD	MYSORE	RAICHUR
IGPE(Influence over GP Elections)	**100%**	**0.48**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.45**
A1(Sel)	25%	0.97	1.00	1.00	0.90
A2(Overlap)	25%	0.32	0.45	0.31	0.19
A3(P/VP)	25%	0.28	0.20	0.37	0.27
A4(Unanimous)	25%	0.38	0.36	0.34	0.44
IGPA(Influence over GP Activities)	**100%**	**0.77**	**0.85**	**0.90**	**0.55**
B1(Dev_proj)	50%	0.90	1.00	1.00	0.70
B2(Sel_benef)	50%	0.63	0.70	0.80	0.40
IGP(Index of Influence over GP)		**0.63**	**0.68**	**0.70**	**0.50**

Table 1 indicates that the average IGP (Index of Influence over GP) for all three districts is 0.63. Both Dharwad and Mysore district have an index higher than the average where as IGP in Raichur is below average. Both Mysore and Dharwad districts have the same level of influence over GP elections but the way in which this is achieved varies. Dharwad seems to have a stronger overlap of leadership in both ILGIs and GPs where as in Mysore districts the influence over capturing positions of president/vice president of GP seems to be stronger. ILGI leaders/members seem to be least involved in GP activities in Raichur as compared to Dharwad and Mysore.

Villagers' perceptions of ILGIs' influence over GP:

The field data depicts a rather a negative view of ILGIs as institutions undermining local governance and democracy. People representing the ILGI do influence the choice of candidates, try to ensure unanimous elections and where possible attempt to occupy formal positions. By denying rural citizens a chance to participate in free and fair elections, ILGIs seem to be capturing local democratic institutions. This view, by implication, perceives rural citizens as mute, passive recipients of this process.

In order to assess the extent to which villagers are aware of the influence of ILGIs over GP, a perception survey was carried out in all 30 villages. Based on random sampling, a total of 2183 villagers (of which 51% were males and 49% were females) were interviewed. A series of cross-tabulations was carried out to study the levels of knowledge of different groups of people regarding the interaction between ILGIs and GPs. Variables such as gender, caste, occupation, age and literacy were cross-tabulated with levels of knowledge. In general, cross-tabulation indicates that variables such as literacy, occupation, caste, and landholding make little difference to the levels of knowledge. Villagers' awareness regarding the role played by ILGIs in influencing GP elections as well as activities was assessed. Perception survey of villagers from 30 villages indicates that villagers are quite aware of the role played by the ILGI in local elections. Preliminary data indicates that nearly 74 per cent of the surveyed villagers were aware that ILGIs were involved in selection of candidates for GP elections. Villagers were not only aware of the ILGI's role in local elections but also, at times, supported and at others, opposed the ILGI's influence over local elections. The role played by ILGIs in election process is perceived by the villagers in different ways: as making the democratic process more efficient; as reducing unnecessary expenditure on election campaigning; maintaining community peace as elections are seen as fostering factionalism within villages.

Even the overlap of leadership many times has the endorsement of the villagers. Villagers often propose, initiate and support the candidature of ILGI *Yajamana* and/or members for representation in the *Grama Panchayats.* For villagers this is not 'elite capture' but a way of choosing effective and efficient leaders; those capable of performing and serving the village better by bringing development to the village. Unanimous elections where effected and accepted is seen as reducing costs (campaigning expenses), time and effort by the villagers.

Equally the influence of the formal processes and institutions on the informal cannot be disregarded. As *Grama Panchayats* have become institutionalised and influential, villagers have begun to consider contesting local elections as

being important and prestigious. This has led to an increased interest in local political participation and representation. Consequently a slow resistance to ILGIs' influence over local election processes is emerging. In a couple of villages, the ILGI *Yajamanas* who belong to the dominant caste groups, have little interest in controlling nominations as all the seats in the village are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In another case, there was opposition within the village to the list of 'consensus candidates', as there were a number of villagers interested in contesting elections. In yet another village, some people did not accept the unanimous choice of an ILGI *Yajamana's* son as the candidate for *Grama Panchayat*, and nominated another candidate. Although the ILGI *Yajamana's* son went on to win, the show of dissension itself indicates the changes that reforms from above, in the form of reservation of seats and the process of democratic decentralisation, have initiated in the rural regions. This view is further substantiated by the fact that there are at least couple of instances of *panchas* or their kin losing the elections to candidates who were not part of the ILGI. Such incidents, although limited in number, point to the importance of opening up formal spaces and their potential influence in countering the local political monopolies that ILGIs often represent.

In addition, I'd asked an open-ended question as to which institution people preferred and why. Based on the answers given I categorised them into 5 groups- (a) don't know (b) Only ILGI,(c) only GP, (d) Both ILGI and GP(wanting both the institutions) and lastly, (e) Neither. I tried to assess if there were significant variations in the preference given by people for GP and/or ILGI of three districts. While cross-tabulating different variables with preference, interesting pattern starts to emerge. There is a clear gender difference in preference. Women prefer ILGIs more -36% as compared with 17% to men. 40% Men prefer GP more than ILGI –but a slightly lesser percentage of men – 35% - want both ILGI and GP. It is only in the age category of 'under 25yrs' that women and men, belonging to both literate and illiterate categories, indicate a definite preference for GP. While tabulating and correlating preference with different variables, gender and literacy both show clear statistical significance. In general, with increase in literacy the opinions

are more crystallised and the choice moves towards GP but even more significantly towards 'both GP and ILGI' option. This is especially true of literate men of both dalits[9] as well as dominant[10] caste groups. With literacy the preference of SC and ST women shows a clear shift towards GP but also a significant shift towards 'Both GP and ILGI' category whereas the preference of literate as well as illiterate women belonging to other caste groups (including dominant caste groups) remains firmly on ILGI. Two of the main reasons cited for wanting 'both ILGI and GP' are that (1) the ILGIs offer useful services not offered by GPs and (2) the ILGIs make the formal process more transparent and accountable. Women prefer ILGI as they feel that it provides local law and order at the village. Women showing a clear preference to ILGIs despite the fact that women find no representation in ILGIs and the general shift in preference towards both institutions with increase in literacy indicates that ILGIs play an important role in local governance which is generally not recognised by the 'outsiders'.

IV. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS:

A district level comparison of IGP indicates that Mysore, which is the most developed district[11] of the three, has the highest IGP and Raichur, which is less developed, exhibits the least influence. Formal local governance institutions such as *Grama Panchayats* are striking roots and are relatively more active in Mysore district compared to the other two districts[12]. A correlation of the preliminary findings of the study with the development status of the three districts indicates a clear pattern. The high power committee report for redressal of regional imbalances in Karnataka has evolved a composite development index to rank various districts in Karnataka. According to the report, Mysore is ranked 4th, Dharwad – 8th and Raichur – 16th out of 20 districts(before the formation of new districts) in the state (p. 83). Mysore district also has a higher per capita income than both Dharwad

[9] Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

[10] Vokkaligas, Lingayats and Kuruba Gowdas – land owning and numerically dominant caste groups.

[11] Source: High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances, Final Report, Government of Karnataka, 2002

[12] For instance, the Total Own Revenue collection of GPs in Mysore is much higher than the other two districts(source: www. Kar.nic.in/ rdpr website).

and Raichur. The presence of high IGP in Mysore district in this context is indeed surprising. This is at variance with the dominant paradigms, which assume that with modernization and development, 'traditional' institutions give way to modern political institutions centred on liberal values[13].

Two findings that stand out from preliminary analysis are:

(a) ILGIs co-exist and interact and influence GPs, not always negatively. What we see in Karnataka is a 'hybrid' situation. Villagers are not only aware of this interaction but also seem comfortable with this hybridity of having access to both institutions. Rather than conflicting, ILGIs seem to complement the initiatives of *Grama Panchayats.*

(b) ILGIs are more active in interacting and influencing GPs in better developed districts compared to less developed districts.

These findings raise a number of pertinent questions. Is the changing character of ILGIs leading to this hybridity or vice versa? Why is there a variation in the extent of influence between ILGIs? Is development of the village positively correlated to the levels of interaction and influence even at the individual village level as at the district level? These aspects are currently being studied by deepening the analysis to inter-village comparisons. But at a broader level, an important question that is relevant in this context is - Do all ILGIs interact and influence, not always negatively, with *Grama Panchayats* or ILGIs in Karnataka, unique? Here Manor's(1997) analysis of Karnataka as a more cohesive society compared to other states assumes significance. Karnataka villages are less acutely polarised than some of the north Indian villages. Slow and steady growth of the economy, land reforms, development initiatives that were strategically aimed at OBCs and dalits and subsequent political representation for OBCs in local governance have all contributed to the creation of a society where 'traditional' institutions such as ILGIs often play a positive role in local governance. Comparative research will indicate if this is indeed unique to Karnataka.

[13] For instance, David Apter (1996) links the shift towards modernization with a move from 'a society based on the

V. SUMMING UP:

Policy makers, donor agencies and NGOs have been investing both financial and human resources to strengthen formal, elected local institutions. Karnataka research on formal and informal local governance indicates that GPs do not function independently of local institutions. ILGIs interact with GPs and impact local development processes. Research also indicates that this interface is not always negative. The collective action component of ILGIs often supplements and complements formal development initiatives. Field data indicates that ILGIs are involved in the implementation of development projects and also selection of beneficiaries for anti-poverty schemes at the village level. Hence a deeper understanding of the dynamics of this interaction would greatly increase the capacity of government agencies and social movements to intervene effectively to help promote the interests of the poor and disadvantaged.

REFERENCES:

1. AnanthPur, K., 2002, 'Interfaces in Local Governance in Karnataka', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol.XXXVII, No.42, 19-25th October.
2. AnanthPur, K., 2004, '*Rivalry or Synergy? Formal and Informal Local Governance in Rural India*', IDS Working Paper No. 226, June.
3. Bailey, F.G., 1960, *Tribe, caste and nation: a study of political activity and political change in highland Orissa,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
4. Beteille, A., 1971, *Caste, Class, and Power Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore village,* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
5. Government of Karnataka, 2002, *High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances*, Final Report.
6. Government of Karnataka, 1993, *Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993*
7. Inbanathan, A., 2000, *Power, Patronage and Accountability in the Panchayats of Karnataka.* Working Paper, No. 68, Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bangalore.

"sacred-collectivity model' to a one based on the "secular-libertarian model"'.

8. Ishwaran. K., 1968, *Shivapura: A South Indian Village*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
9. Krishna, A., 2002, *Active Social Capital,* New York: Columbia University Press.
10. Leftwich ,A.(ed.)., 1996, *Democracy and Development*,
11. Mahi Pal, 2000, 'Panchayats in Fifth Scheduled Areas', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. XXXV, No. 19, 6-10th May, 2000.
12. Mandelbaum, D.G., 1970, *Society in India,* Bombay, Popular Prakashan.
13. Manor, J., 1997, 'Karnataka: Caste, Class, Dominance and Politics in a cohesive society', in Sudipta Kaviraj (ed.) *Politics in India,* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
14. Natraj V.K., and AnanthPur K., 2003, *Delegation to Devolution: Karnataka*, MIDS Working Paper No. 184, February.
15. Srinivas, M.N., 1987, *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays,* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
16. Srinivas, M.N., 2002, *The Collected Essays,* Delhi: Oxford University Press.