



ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION IN DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON NSAP IN MURSHIDABAD

Niti Mollah¹ and Prof. J. K. Sarkhel²

¹Research Scholar ,

²Professor, DLIS, Kalyani University, Nadia, West Bengal.

ABSTRACT

The constitutional obligation as the directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India enjoin upon the State to undertake within its means a number of welfare measures. It is in accordance with these noble principles that the Government of India introduced the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) in 1995. Information gap between information-poor and information-rich is created by the accessibility to information and also due to the barriers that exists, has detrimental effect on overall successful implementation of the schemes and thereby progress of the society as a whole. Panchayati Raj Institution may play a pivotal role in bridging the gap. Without its proactive role, the implementation of NSAP will remain incomplete. The study makes an effort to find out the role of PRI to successful implementation of NSAP schemes and to what extent information gap existing among the village communities gets bridged by PRI. The study is mainly



based on primary survey of the beneficiaries of the selected C D Blocks (four) and selected mouzas (two) from each block. From each mouza 10 beneficiaries have been selected thus total 80 beneficiaries have been interviewed for the purpose. The primary data has been supplemented by secondary data collected from blocks and also from the district level implementing agency. The result reveals that the PRI has a very important role to successful implementation of NSAP.

KEYWORDS: Information Gap, NSAP, PRI, Directive Principle of Constitution, Information Dissemination.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Information is generally considered as news, facts, statistics, reports of

contemporary events and activities and even the archive of past events. Information and knowledge had been the corner stone of human development societal progress all through the history of human civilization. Information gap between the societies and individuals often determines the stages of development of the societies. All the advanced societies are relatively better informed about the facts and events as compared to the societies having lesser access to information. Information gap could exist due to several reasons, a few of them are – i) economic weakness (poverty), ii) limited or no less access to knowledge (illiteracy), iii) discrimination along caste, creed, religion, race and even colour of skin, iv)

social and political injustice to less powerful group, v) geographical remoteness, and vi) lack of innovation to generate, organize and preserve information, knowledge or ideas etc. The information regarding different development and social support schemes sponsored by both central govt. of India as well as state govt. are not available equally to each deserving individual. Information gap causes inequality in the society that has propelling effect. Prevailing level of access to information often decides who will be beneficiary of a govt. sponsored scheme. Greater the information gap more is the difference between the haves and have-nots. The role of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) could be a crucial one to bridge the gap between information poor and information rich.

It has been enshrined in the NSAP guidelines that PRI is primarily responsible to disseminate information about the NSAP schemes. Harnessing information resources for development can only be achieved as stated by Kamba (2009) when the rural communities value

information, such that they are ready to seek and use information in solving daily activities regardless of the distance, format or medium in which the information is available. Empowering rural people to be among global players in the knowledge-based economy can only be done by making them aware of the importance and role of information for development.

It's undeniable fact that a section of Indian society reels under the poverty, destitution and many are severely vulnerable. In order to check the vicious cycle poverty, destitution and deprivation, Govt. of India has envisaged a host of schemes at national level. Budget allocation for such schemes is also quite impressive at the tune of Rs. 8447 crore in 2012-13 only for National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which was raised to 9,541 crore in 2013-14. The increase of allocation at the tune more than three folds from Rs. 2891 crore to Rs. 9082.00 between the budgets 2006-07 to 2015-16 is quite remarkable (<http://post.jagran.com/budget-201213-allocations-for-social-security-hiked-13131922057> accessed on 08/03/2016). In spite of having such a huge number of schemes and spending huge amounts, substantial improvements in the qualitative up gradation in life standard target group is not reflected in the society. It's quite disgraceful that total literates in India are still higher than cumulative population of quite a few countries of Europe. Ex-Prime minister in his address at the release of HUNGaMA (Hunger and Malnutrition) Report admitted that 42 per cent of our children are suffering from malnourishment and hence have stunted growth (P.M. on HUNGaMA speech <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1125> accessed on 13/02/2016).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

It's imperative that proper implementation of a scheme relies on the easy access to information. The NSAP schemes aim at improving upon the socio-economic condition of the underprivileged section of the society. Obviously, in India the people at villages remain deprived of the benefit of the global information revolution partly due to want of information and partly due to incapability of availing themselves of the access owing to a number of barriers including illiteracy. So they cannot exploit resources even at their disposal. Wise exploitation of information resource, of course, adds to both an individuals and groups ability to make it to precise decision and acquire better living. Patriarchy, however, puts barriers in the way of the fair sex to information (Patil, 2012 p. 1).

In a study Mchombu (1996) hints at awareness of information needs is being low in some cases to a fault. Consequently assessment needs involves direct questioning of respondents. MoRD (2014, p. 14) specifies at the Panchayat / Municipality level the responsibility of dissemination of information and thereby accessibility to information.

Petkova, Maurer, Henninger, Irwin, Coyle and Hoff (2002) in their study report on the early findings of an innovative way to measuring progress in implementing Principle 10 (known as the "Access Principles") of the Rio Declaration at the national level. They refer to a methodology adopted (2001-2002) across several countries including India in order to assess the performance of their governments under their commitment to the Rio declaration and seeking to promote popular access to information, participation, and ensure justice in decision-making to improve the environment.

In her paper, Singh (2007) discusses on several programmes initiated in India towards the digital access to information and the role of various programmes for pulling down the digital divide. The article highlights the government far reaching policy reforms in agriculture and rural development, emphasizing the reform in the telecom and IT. Some projects like Grameensancharsevak," "GyanDoot," the CARD and e-Seva, etc, undertaken by the government, to reach the rural people are underscored by the author. Besides, the projects the author also discusses on the role of Digital Library Project i.e. National Science Digital Library (NSDL) and VidyaVahini, digital mobile libraries and library networks and CICs etc. in reducing the information gap.

In their paper, Mathur and Ambani (2005) assert the development of rural India through ICTs. They extend an opportunity to the vast majority of humanity settling down the rural areas to wipe out the digital divide that deprive of the access to information resources and services provided by ICT, that is, the way to the next revolution waiting to come about. A survey by Mostak and Hoq (2012) reveals the fact that the effective means of exploiting ICTs achieving the sustainable development is yet to be worked out. The authors put up an outline the role of information could play in socio-economic sector in Bangladesh's rural and far-flung parts. Considering various areas like health, agriculture, education, human rights etc. they indicate that a knowledgeable well informed rural person can access to the information more easily. Islam and Mezbah-ul-Islam (2008) also find that an improved communication system and easy access to information are directly related to the social and economic development of developing countries like Bangladesh.

Chandel and Chouksy (2001), in their case study on the role of information technology in the Panchayat system across Madhya Pradesh deliberate management information system at rural level, and various instruments and equipments useful in setting up information kiosks. That the Panchayat institution plays a very crucial role in getting rural people aware of utility of information dissemination and make people capable of getting right information in time at affordable cost through adoption of new technology are recommended by them.

Chew, Ilavarasan and Levy (2010) in their paper, look into the influence on ICT and telecommunication in particular for advancing economic growth over the countries developing. Their principle finding is the function of women's access to ICT and their motivation to use ICTs in their business activities in rural areas. They consider the impact on the study information and strategy gaps in communication technology in general.

Kumar (2012) in his survey finds the profound potential to result in social transformation at optimum end through enhancement of people's access to information and use of ICT is capable of to make advancement in health service and public education. According to him India's endeavour to make the support of ICT innovative for the community in rural areas, and thus to create ICT opportunities for to keep up and enhance network of computer is the policy government agenda. The paper attempts to probe into the policy on ICT towards the welfare of poor people, based on their participation. Nath (2000b) regards the remoulding of people's access to ICT and the flow of information makes a society move towards re-organisation of societal power relation. The privileged opportunity enjoyed by select individuals and the groups or institutions to gain from information gets freed from the grip of the few mentioned. As a sequel, liberal domain admits of universal access to the people or community irrespective of status.

The paper by Ogbomo and Ogbomo (2008) mainly concerns the rural communities' access to information and ICTs. The scholars find that the respondents, by and large, are unemployed or engaged in low paying jobs and they being illiterate, the ICTs remain inaccessible to them.

Rao (2009) in his research paper lays emphasis on the need of empowerment of far-flung communities in India through extension of their sound access to information and ICTs. He elaborates how the factors put up obstacles on the way of the rural people/tribes' getting free access to ICTs and the benefits offered. The author comes to the conclusion that the reconstruction of the indigent communities into information-gifted societies is the key to freedom from poverty and insurance of the highly hyped sustainable society.

In their research paper the authors, Sey and Fellows (2009) attempt to poise the impact of people's access to information and ICTs. They assert the significant role of information as the resource inputted in socio-economic development mechanism. Given the resource constraint, the mode of sharing access is welcome in the developing countries quite necessary. The impetus of people's access to information downstream shows the mixed perception. The model of public access, they consider, is not up to the mark because of its impact being different trace out measurably.

Issa, Omopupa and Salman (2012) in their article set the objective of identifying the rural peoples' need of information and point out the way of meeting them. They find that the development in agrarian sector is the key to the national progress. The article elaborates the significance of the role information and ICTs play in this direction. They focus on the establishment of the community information centres across the countryside of Nigeria. They advocate the free access to information to this effect.

Kamba (2009b), judging the access to information services in Africa which is quite scattered. He regards people's access to varied sort of information has been considerably difficult. He finds that this development leaves a divide between the urban educated and the illiterate deprived of means of becoming literate; the communities inhabiting across the rural areas far off the townships suffer from information poverty and thus they remain economically backward. He comes to the conclusion that extension of information to those people throw setting up innovative information centre will empower the rural folks and make them encounter the knowledge-based global economy. He observes that information is a very potential factor that is an agent of a holistic development.

A study carried out by Matega (2012) deals with the rural communities' access to and capability of using information across the rural inhabitants of Morogoro region in Tanzania. The study tends to find out the needs of information and its usage and determine the agents exerting their influence those people's choosing the right information sources. He recommends that the information providers should adapt the package of information to the appropriate need.

Nath (2001) contends that there should be no distinction between the beneficiaries in respect of sex; ICTs extend benefits to people all irrespective of identity of an individual or group in terms of sex. The author lays down the caveat that it need not be subject to any degree of reservation for or against this sort of identity. He rather argues for the measure ensuring the wider scope of benefits accruing to women king as this section of population is on the wrong foot in view of empowerment and hindrances faced by this segment of polity.

Beer (2004), in his research paper proves the way the community access to information gets marginalised in. he reflects such marginalisation is bound to make the peripheral communities feel doubly segregated. He considers the liberal access to information can ward off the negative impact of belonging to and working in these helpless communities. The case studies on four remote communities in Shetland and Western Isles of Scotland each point out a strong correlation between the geographical peripherality and deprivation of the access to information.

Hazra (2012) observes how information can modify the whole development picture in a rural set up. Strengthening the Information-base of rural Communities is necessary for entire development of rural areas. Hazra (2012) finds "ICT

initiatives may be designed to provide support to local governance as well as to react to the queries generated by local needs of the rural communities. As rural poor are often unaware of their rights, entitlements and the availability of various government schemes and extension services, ICT can also improve their access to the information they need. It has the potential to ensure improved provision of short-term information required by the rural poor for effective livelihood strategies" Hazra (2012, p.10).

Mollah, Niti (2013) in her study on rural library as community information science found that rural library and other public libraries may be developed as community information centres provided they are given infrastructure support with proper manning. As of now the state of public libraries in Murshidabad cannot be developed as CICs.

Kapoor, Sindhi and Khosla (2011) emphasize on the importance of information in our development and agree to the fact that information is power and power is information. According to them with no information there can be no development. They also state that information is acute into rural India as well, because without its existence there, one cannot imagine development of the entire country. They claim that ICT has emerged as an efficient catalyst in the development of any society and is a major driving force in the growth of rural economies and found that with the changing patterns of Rural Market, the role of ICT has increased from providing only the Networks to set-up the basis of updated technological programs in the rural area. They believe that ICTs are effective tools in the development of rural India. As the rural natives are less knowledgeable than their city counterparts, technological advancement is essential for every nook and corner of India.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- a) To Examine the Role of PRI to disseminate information on NSAP among the beneficiaries and prospecting beneficiaries.
- b) To evaluate the role of PRI to disseminate information on NSAP among the beneficiaries and prospecting beneficiaries in Murshidabad.
- c) To examine how far elected representatives influence the information dissemination to favour some and unfavour others.
- d) To evaluate perception of the beneficiaries on role of PRI to disseminate information on NSAP.

4. THE STUDY AREA:

The present study is carried in Murshidabad in west Bengal. The district is having 26 C D Blocks out of which four C D Blocks have been chosen using appropriate sampling technique (details of sampling technique has been discussed in methodology). Two Gram Panchayats have been selected from each sampled C D Block and one Mouza (villages) from each sampled G P have been selected for conducting survey. Thus 8 mouzas (villages) in Murshidabad district form the base of study of the problem under investigation.

5. METHODOLOGY:

5.1 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

The respondents have been selected following multi-stage Random sampling in which four C. D. Blocks are selected randomly out of total 26 C. D. Blocks in Murshidabad district in the first stage. In the second stage two Gram Panchayats (GP) area have been selected randomly from each selected C D Block numbering $2 \times 2 = 4$ GPs out of total GPs in the respective selected C. D. Blocks. In the third stage one inhabited village (mouza) has been selected randomly from each selected GP numbering $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ villages out of total villages (mouza) in the selected GPs. In the fourth stage 25 respondents have been selected randomly from each village (mouza) that has been already selected. Thus total $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 10 = 80$ respondents have been administered with pre-designed schedule (questionnaire). In each stage simple random sampling is followed to select the entity. Peoples' representatives and executives have been interviewed to have understanding of the modus operandi of dissemination of information to the beneficiaries that is actually practiced in the field. For selection of sample beneficiaries for survey Systematic Random Sampling method has been adopted in which every second beneficiary has been selected. In the event of absence of the sample respondent even on second visit, a replacement by the next in the sequence has been taken.

Table-1: Distribution of sample Mouzas in their respective GP and C D Blocks

Administrative regions/units					No. of samples for survey
District	Regions	Blocks	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	Beneficiary
Murshidabad	Rarh	Farakka	NayanSukh (GP I)	Kuli (58)	10
			Arjunpur (GP II)	Arjunpur (96)	10
		Bharatpur-II	Salar (GP I)	Salar (102)	10
			Talibpur(GP II)	Bara Baidyapur (136)	10
	Bagri	Hariharpara	Dharampur (GP I)	Dharampur (46)	10
			Khidirpur (GP II)	Jamalpur (18)	10
		Bhagabangola-II	Nasipur (GP I)	Kharibona (66)	10
			Akheriganj (GP I)	Debaipur (114)	10
Total	2	4	8	Eight Mouzas	80

Source: Prepared by the researcher for the purpose of the present research work.

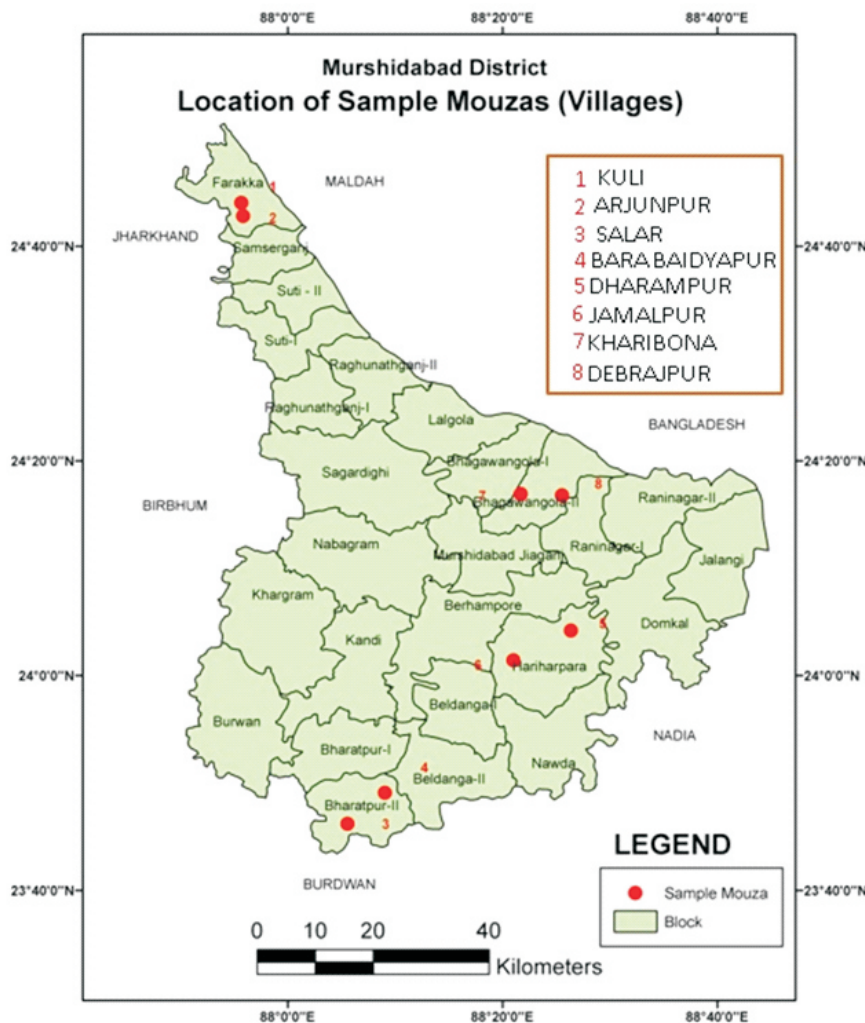
Map-1: Location of Murshidabad in West Bengal



Thus required number of respondents has been arrived. Similarly for selection of sample non-beneficiary respondents the procedure has been little difficult. The list of BPL has been collected from the Public Distribution System MR

dealer (Ration Shop). Then the beneficiaries have been taken out of the list. The remaining entries have been given fresh serial number and then System Random sampling has been adopted to select sample respondents. Every third entry in the list has been selected as sample respondent in the category of non-beneficiary. In the event of absence of the sample respondent even on second visit, a replacement by the next in the sequence has been taken. For selection of survey of implanting agencies, elected GP member, elected Pradhan, Panchayat secretary, Job assistant and any other salaried person involved in Panchayat office have been surveyed.

Map-2: Map showing the sample villages in Murshidabad for survey



5.2 QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS:

Data thus collected from the field have been statistically analysed using suitable statistical tools such as different measures of descriptive statistics namely mean, median, mean deviation, standard deviation etc. Relation between the variables, both dependent and independent variables, has been ascertained using correlation coefficient and regression analysis. The dependent variable is quantum of information regarding the selected schemes and the independent variable are nearness to the peoples’ representative, physical distance from the source of information, level of educational attainment of the respondents. Suitable scale has been designed to convert variable in numerical forms so that they can be used in regression and correlation analysis. Similarly, the test of significance have been conducted using critical points of Standard Normal Distribution Values i.e. T (tau) values. Sample size being large (400), test of significance of the correlation coefficients Actual T (tau) values have been calculated using the formula:

$$T = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

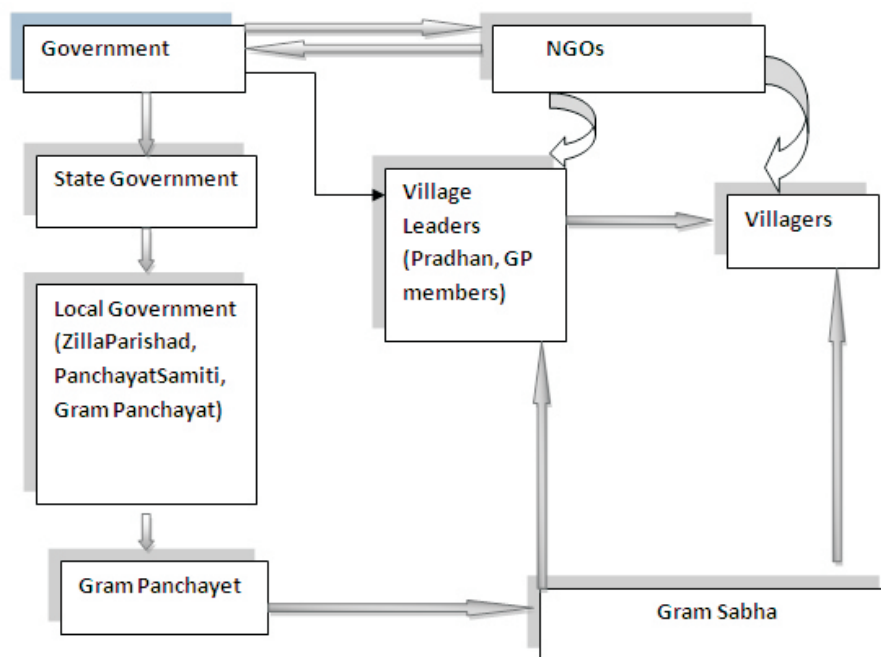
Where, T (tau) = computed value, r = correlation coefficient (here modulus of r has to be taken) and n = sample size.

Apart from the above quantitative methods adopted for the present study, a new a more contemporary statistical technique has been adopted for analysis of perception of the beneficiary of NSAP schemes. RIDIT analysis is considered to be one of the most suitable methods for perception analysis.

6. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AS IT HAPPENS NOW:

Panda, Debadutta Kumar and Mohanty, Jasmine (2007) observe “Sometimes the villager gets information directly from government and non-government organizations but this happens in barely ten percent of cases. Also this process is limited to higher class and higher caste rich villagers. In this model the villagers get reliable information but the transaction cost involved in this model is pretty high” Panda, Debadutta Kumar and Mohanty, Jasmine (2007, p. 3).

Fig.1: Flow information in Rural Area as it Happens



Adopted from: Panda, Debadutta Kumar and Mohanty, Jasmine (2007). Power of information in the Indian rural set up – an analysis. International Journal of Rural Studies (IJRS) vol. 14 no. 1, pp. 1-5 Accessed from www.ivcs.org.uk/IJRS on 30/03/2016.

7. ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION:

As part of dissemination of information PRI is supposed to generate awareness. One of the main tasks for attaining the objective of the schemes of NSAP is awareness generation among the people about eligibility, scale of assistance and the procedure to be followed for obtaining benefits. District, Block/Intermediate and Village level panchayats and urban local governments are to play a proactive vital role in creating awareness among the people. States are to ensure wide and continuous publicity about the entitlement under the schemes of NSAP and the procedure for claiming them through posters, leaflets, banners, brochures, miking, media (print and electronic) and other means.

The primary data related to information dissemination for implementation of NSAP portrays a picture that is not very encouraging. It has been observed during the interactions with the actual beneficiaries that they had hardly dependency on the information available from the implementing agency. It's noteworthy and relevant to mention here that the perception of the beneficiaries regarding the 'perceived delay' that may have caused to get the necessary sanction for the benefit has no understanding. Therefore, the benefits that they should have got for quite a long period before actually it

happened has not worried them much. As a matter of fact the overwhelming majority of the beneficiary respondents say that it's the mercy of the Panchayat Pradhan and Gram Panchayat member that they have the benefit.

So far the potential beneficiaries are concerned many of them find it irrelevant to have information as the allotment depends on the discretionary power of the elected representative at the different tiers. And precisely this is the point on which it has become easier for the implementing agency to chose may be less deserving leaving behind more deserved one. There are ample evidences found from the field visits and interviewing of the potential beneficiaries that the implementing agencies i.e. the elected representatives in collaboration with the government officials information has been suppressed, conveniently and partially disseminated and sometimes misinterpreted. Table-2 Shows the percentage of respondents having satisfactory level on access to information.

Table-2: Break-up of Respondents Expressing Different Levels of Satisfaction on access to information

Satisfaction level	No. of Respondents	Per cent of respondent
Highly satisfactory	6	7.5
Sufficiently satisfactory	14	17.5
Satisfactory	18	22.5
Nearly satisfactory	36	45.0
Dissatisfactory	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

Source: Based on primary survey by the researcher during 2015-16.

7.1 ACCESS TO INFORMATION THROUGH DIFFERENT SOURCES OF PRI:

The Panchayats / Municipalities are responsible for implementing the schemes in district and for Dissemination of information about the NSAP and maintaining the procedures for obtaining benefits under it. In this task, local bodies are supposed to encourage and involve the cooperation of voluntary organisations. The Gram Panchayat/ Municipalities are to play an active role in the identification of beneficiaries under the schemes. Panchayati Raj Institutions at Panchayat and District level get involved in the implementation of the schemes. The Gram Panchayats/Municipalities play an active role in the identification of the beneficiaries under the schemes. Apart from the disbursal of benefits through the accounts of the beneficiary in Banks or in post office savings banks or through postal money order, the assistance under the schemes may also be disbursed in public meetings such as Gram Sabha meetings in rural areas and in neighbourhood/mohalla Committees in Urban areas. The Panchayats and Municipalities may also be involved in monitoring and in following up delays in sanctions and disbursement.

The three tier system of Panchayati Raj spread all over the country works as the public institutions and represents the governments, union and state. At remote village level, the gram panchayats – the lowest structure under the panchayat system are the popular democratic body mandated to execute the schemes and programmes the governments set forth for the welfare and the development of the rural areas where the major cross-section of country's population inhabits. The UNESCO public library manifesto 1994 being accorded, we must agree to the statement of the fact that the panchayat system is the most compatible to realise the UNESCO mandate.

An attempt was made to find out the sources of information that reaches up to the beneficiaries. From the published sources and other sources of information it was decided that the beneficiaries may access information from the following sources. During field visit it was found that the beneficiaries accessed information regarding NSAP schemes from the Govt. officers, MP/MLA/ZP/Pradhan etc., GP Officers, GP members, GP secretary, Institutions, Unions/Associations/Councils, Public library, Neighbours, Friends, Relatives/acquaintance, Religious heads, Social workers, Village headman (Mondal), Anganwari workers, ICDS/ASHA workers, SHG members, Mass media and miscellaneous sources.

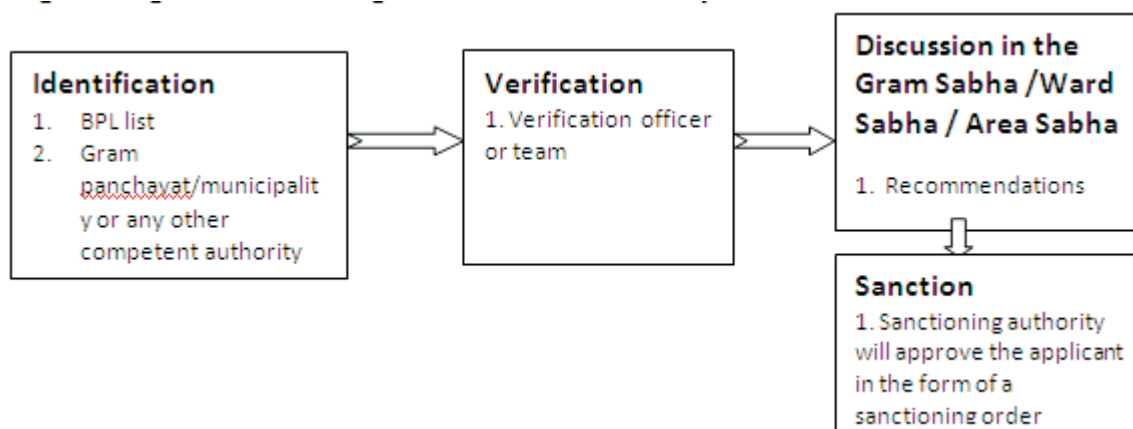
a)Officers in GP Office: One of the access points of information regarding implementation of NSAP is govt. officers of different level. Though there are govt. officers from national level to Panchayat level involved in dissemination of information through district and Panchayat Samity level to Gram Panchayat level, yet it's the Panchayat level officers who are in the fore front related to make information available to the beneficiaries and desiring beneficiaries. In practice the govt. officers are, most of the cases of less useful regarding making information accessible to the beneficiaries. It's found during the field work that apart from the panchayat secretary there is hardly any impact of govt. officers on dissemination of information. The formal role of panchayat secretary could be found during the field work. Among all the panchayats numbering 8 (eight) that were surveyed it was the panchayat secretaries who played some role related to disseminate information among the beneficiaries and desiring beneficiaries.

b)MP/MLA/ZP/Pradhan etc.: The functionaries in this category are not much effectively take part in the dissemination of information. It was found during the course of field work that if the elected representative is a relative or a close acquaintance of the beneficiary, which is found to be in case of only few, then the incumbent has been actually got benefit of availing information. In all other cases the desiring beneficiaries had hardly access to the elected representative of this level and thus there is no possibility of getting any information from the representative.

c)GP members: G.P. members are found to be one of the most effective agents of dissemination of information related to the NSAP. Since the GP members have direct interaction with the people of the area and in most of the cases the member also live amongst the people from where beneficiaries to be identified, the information related to NSAP are quite effectively disseminated through the panchayat members. However, point remains whether G P member wants to disseminate information universally or selectively. Among the 200 beneficiaries as high as 160 i.e. 80 per cent responded that they got information from the elected Gram Panchayat members, whereas 30 i.e. 15 per cent others got information from the close relatives and closed acquaintances. It was also found during the survey that Gram Panchayat members generally make field visit i.e. door to door visit of the desirable households and desirable individual who could be considered as a potential beneficiary. Though in a few cases it was reported that there is partiality regarding dissemination of information to the desirable beneficiary. It was reported that those potential beneficiaries who have got closed affinity to the same political party of the elected representative have got better access to information. Thus the role of panchayat elected members in the access to information related to the NSAP is found to be very crucial.

d)GP secretary: During field visit it was found that Panchayat secretary is primarily entrusted with making information related to NSAP available to the beneficiaries as well desired beneficiaries. Panchayat secretaries, in most of the cases, asserted that they are always over loaded with multi-faceted duties. Along with many other duties "we have to disseminate information related to NSAP as well as processing of application related to NSAP too". Yet secretary along with other functionaries of the Gram Panchayat plays a very vital role in making information accessible to the beneficiaries.

Fig. 2: Stages of sanctioning scheme to a beneficiary



8. RESULTS AND MAJOR FINDINGS:

8.1 DISTANCE FROM G P MEMBER AND PANCHAYAT OFFICE AND LEVEL OF INFORMATION:

The variable of physical distance of the prospecting beneficiary from the residence of the GP members and also the Panchayat office was taken as one of the variable that is related to level of information that is available with the respondents. When the average distance of GP member’s residence and that of GP office from the respondent’s residence was taken one variable, the other correlated variable was level of information measured in the scale of three. The 0 being the least or no information, 1 being the low information and 2 being the high level of information were decided for the scale. The respondents having information as well as knowledge about the NSAP schemes were given a score of 3 and having only familiarity with the scheme were given a score of 2. It was assumed that the physical distance of any respondent from these two crucial locations will have direct impact on the information level of the respondents. It was further assumed that the relation between these two variable will be negatively related that means as the distance increases the information level will decrease and vice-versa.

Table-3: Distance (km) from residence of respondent to NSAP activity centres

Distance (km) from residence of respondent to	Distance (km)	
	Beneficiary	Non-beneficiary
BDO (km)	17.1375	17.8
GP Office	4.3650	5.3
Pradhan Residence	2.4300	3.2
GP Member	1.4525	1.8
Bank	3.3250	3.8
Post Office	2.8825	3.1
Average distance in km	6.3185	7.0

Source: Calculated by the author on the basis of data collected from primary survey

It is found from the survey that beneficiaries are having closeness in terms of physical distance as compared to the non-beneficiaries (Table-3). For example distance of the residence of the GP member is 1.5 km in case of beneficiaries as compared to 1.8 km in case of non-beneficiaries. Similarly, the distance of the Panchayat office from the residence of the respondents is found to be more in case of non-beneficiaries (5.3 km) as compared to 4.5 km in case of beneficiaries.

The variables of distance and level of information were correlated to see the impact of distance on level of information. The result of calculation of correlation between the above mentioned variables show a negative correlation of -0.0055 that appears to be very weak. This negative relation confirms that the assumption of inverse relation of distance with level of information is true. But the question remains whether the relationship is statistically significant or not. To ascertain this aspect correlation was tested for two tailed test of significance. The calculated value of t was compared with tabulated value of t. It was found that the calculated value of t is less than both the values of t at confidence level of 99 % and 95 % (Table-4). Thus it can be concluded that the two variables under consideration are not only negatively correlated but also having statistically significant relationship with each other.

Table-4: Test of significance of correlation coefficient (2 tailed test)

SL No.	Variable (x)	Variable (y)	Correlation Coefficient	Computed value of t	Tabulated critical value of t (at 99 %)	Tabulated critical value of t (95 %)
1	Distance from G P Member and Panchayat Office	Level of Information attained by respondents	-0.0055	0.34776883	0.676	1.653
2	Blood relation with GP member	Scheme sanctioned	0.2014	13.0008696	0.676	1.653

Based on calculation with data collected through survey during 2015 & 2016.

8.2 BLOOD RELATION WITH GP MEMBER AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION TO GET SCHEME SANCTIONED:

It's not only the physical distance of the GP member from the respondents that decides the access to information related to NSAP but also the social and psychological nearness that decides a lot regarding access to information. Viewing this aspect it was decided to probe the access to information of the respondents from the point of view of blood relation of the GP member with the respondents. The aim was to examine whether the respondents with blood relation with the GP members got advantages of access to information to get the schemes sanctioned or not. It was assumed that the respondents with blood relation with the GP member must have got special advantages and thus got the benefit by getting the schemes selected. The relation with the GP member was quantified with 3 point scale of 0 means no relation, 1 means relation is there but no blood relation and 2 relationship exists and that is too blood relation. Whereas the scheme sanctioned or not was quantified by 0 and 1 signifying scheme not sanctioned and scheme sanctioned in favour of a respondent respectively.

It was observed from the survey that overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries are related to the GP member

having blood relation but a very few among the non-beneficiaries were having blood relation with the GP members. The Karl Pearson's correlation was calculated to establish relationship of these variables mentioned above. The calculated value of the correlation is found to be 0.2014 (Table-4) that appears to be weak but positive. But this simple calculation of correlation coefficient may not reveal the entire underlining meaning of the coefficient and thereby the relation between the variables. Therefore, it is necessary to test the significance of the correlation coefficient of two tailed type. After the necessary calculation for the test it is found that the correlation coefficient is not statistically significant at either 99 % level or 95 % level of confidence. Therefore, it cannot be said with confidence that having blood relation of G P member with the prospecting beneficiary has actually and significantly influenced the process of selection of beneficiary. In brief the followings can be enlisted to see the role of PRI to disseminate information on NSAP.

1. When it comes to get the scheme sanctioned, the highest percentage of respondents i.e. 26 per cent received necessary information from the G P member.
2. Apart from distance from the residence of the respondents to the residence of G P member and Panchayat office all other factors considered in this study were found to be positive but statistically insignificant for enhancing level of access to information and getting scheme sanctioned.
3. Though officially it is maintained that the Gram Sabha / Gram Sansad meeting is one of the most useful means of dissemination of information regarding NSAP but it's mostly only on paper that exists. The respondents relied on the information supplied by relatives, friends, neighbours, ASHA/ICDS workers and GP members (26 per cent).
4. The respondents perceived "political biasness" and "lack of publicity" to be most difficult hurdles to overcome the problem of access to information for the prospecting beneficiaries.
5. During survey it was found that as high as 24.00 per cent of the non-beneficiaries considered political biasness and prejudice to be one of the barriers. The same is little low in case of beneficiaries which is 12 per cent of the beneficiaries who considered it to be barrier to disseminate information.
6. Lack of literacy and educational attainment of the respondents deter them from harnessing information from the printed sources such as news paper, banners, leaflets, and posters etc. Similarly, the electronic media such as television and radio, though of some use cannot be fully harnessed as the language used by these channels of dissemination of information are sometimes beyond the understanding of the common respondents.
7. There exists information gap between the groups. But the gap cannot be perceived community in terms of social, cultural and religious but its existence in terms political groups can be found to a great extent.

9. CONCLUSION:

From the present study it comes that though PRI is playing the crucial role in implementation of NSAP schemes but the part related to dissemination of information is not appropriately done at least in the district of Murshidabad. There are several bottlenecks that create flow of information smooth and unhindered all most impossible. Whatever role PRI plays to disseminate information among the prospecting beneficiaries is loaded with biasness and prejudice. Until and unless there is greater involvement of NGOs, community based institutions and associations involved in the process of information dissemination it would be difficult to make the schemes successful.

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Niti Mollah
Research Scholar ,