Village Secretariat System and Effectiveness of Delivery Mechanism of Welfare Schemes in Andhra Pradesh: A Study with reference to SPS Nellore District

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Abstract-Shri.Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister after resuming his office he introduced a new welfare scheme which is called Navarathanalu. There are nine different welfare schemes to the poor and middle-class section of the state has given these benefits. However, for effective delivery of the welfare schemes to all the deserved people he has established a new system of mechanism which is called Village Secretrate/Ward System (Grama/ Ward Sachivalayam. This study has taken an opportunity to know the effectiveness of the delivery system mechanism

ABOUT VILLAGE/ WARD SECRETARIAT SYSTEM

Grama Sachivalyam also known as Village secretariats are secretariats setup in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh to decentralize the administration by making services and welfare services of all government departments available at one place. Andhra Pradesh was the first state in India to launch *Village Secretariats.* Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed Village Volunteers to deliver services. It was launched on Gandhi Jayanti since the scheme was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *Grama Swarajya* that promotes villages becoming self-sufficient, autonomous entities

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Establishment of Village Secretariats was one of the promises made by Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during his Praja Sankalpa Yatra. Village Secretariat was first launched on 2 October 2019 on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti. As of October 2021, 15,004 Village/Ward Secretariats had been established with 2,54,832 volunteers to served around 3.2 crore people, including home delivery of pensions and monthly provisions.

THE VILLAGE SECRETARIAT FUNCTION

The major aim of the Village Secretariat system which was interduced by the government of Andhra Pradesh is for effective mechanism in delivery of various services at door step of the people. It is a strong and workable channel for implementation of NAVARATHNALU wchih is the main agenda of the new government. A mechanism for Transparency and accountability in delivery of government services to the citizens of the AP and also it is a unit of convergence among departments for providing services at village level.

The office of Gram Panchayat will be termed as "Village Secretariat". All the Village Secretariat Functionaries are the employees of the Local Government and are responsible to the Gram Panchayat. The Village Secretariat Functionaries shall attend the office daily (apart from field visits), duly following office timings i.e. 10.00AM to 5.30PM and they shall plan their day to day activities in a meticulous way to fulfill the administration as well as field work. If necessary, they shall plan the filed visits in such a way (early morning/ late evening) keeping in view the importance of the responsibility/duty/task and also availability of the beneficiaries/ target group at household/ community level.

The prime duty of the Village Secretariat Functionaries is to provide various Government/ other services at the doorsteps of Citizens and ensure effective delivery of Navarathnalu. The Panchayat Secretary of each Village Secretariat shall function as the Secretary/convener to the Village Secretariat. However, the functional assistants shall cross check and verify the sector wise needs/ beneficiaries/ problems of the households identified by the Village Volunteers. The Panchayat Secretary & functional assistants shall aid & assist Gram Panchayat in

performing its functions, while preserving the autonomy of Gram Panchayats.

The Functional Assistants of line departments will function as per the job chart provided by their respective line departments and report to Gram Panchayat. All the Village Secretariat Functionaries should maintain a diary of work done every day to be reviewed by the Village Secretariat Authorities /Mandal/District Authorities, and the functional assistants of Village Secretariat shall participate in Gram Panchayat meetings and Gram Sabhas to enable convergence of their functioning at Gram Panchayat level.

Village secretariats shall assist in preparation of Gram Panchayat Development plans for Five years on the subjects delegated to them from time to time, as per the prescribed procedure. The functionaries of the village secretariat shall prepare integrated annual plans using the PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) techniques, duly capturing the felt needs & aspirations of the people, as per the prescribed procedure. The village secretariat shall endeavor to provide services pertaining to the subjects delegated to them from time to time, as per well-defined citizen charter, being accountable to Gram Panchayats.

The Village Secretariat shall function according to prescribed business rules and office procedures. These business rules, office procedures and record maintenance systems will be notified separately. All the Village Secretariat Functional Assistants in coordination and with convergence shall ensure the implementation of following enactments in the Local Government area Protection of Government/ Gram Panchayat Properties Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1956 Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 Weights and Measures Act, 1976. Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 WALTA Act 2004 Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 Liquor Policy of Andhra Pradesh.

All the Village Secretariat Functionaries shall take follow up action on the grievances received under 'Spandana' and other grievances at GP level. 18. All the Village Secretariat Functionaries shall ensure the implementation of AP Panchayat Raj Act, 1994. All

the Village Secretariat Functionaries shall be available in the office on every "Monday" as it is a headquarters day. The performance of the Functional Assistants shall be reviewed periodically by the Mandal/district level officers concerned and periodically submit the performance appraisal reports. The Functional Assistants shall converge their functioning with Village Secretariats keeping proper linkages with other departments, to act as a single unit of administration. Organic links must be established among various Departments and institutions. The Functional Assistants shall apply for the Casual leave/ Medical leave to the Sarpanch through Panchayat Secretary of the Village Secretariat.

The Functional Assistants shall be responsible to their regular Supervisory Officers of the concerned line Departments in technical aspects. In the event of transfer/ suspension/ removal/ dismissal/ retirement or proceeding on leave other than casual leave, the functional assistants shall hand over all the accounts, registers, records and the like to the person duly appointed by the competent authority or authorized to take charge on his/her behalf. Each Functional assistant shall maintain and be the custodians of the department specific records. They shall submit the records to the Gram Panchayat as well as to the respective departments for verification/ Inspection/ Audit on intimation or request. All the Village Secretariat Functionaries shall attend any other work (which may not be related to their department) as entrusted by the competent authorities/ Gram Panchayat. All the Village Secretariat Functionaries shall accompany the higher authorities concerned during the field inspections.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DESIGN:

Review of Literature:

T. Ramya (2014)[1] made an in his paper studied the "Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development in general and a tribal village of a backward district in Arunachal Pradesh concluded that PRIs are to improve the rural infrastructure, improve income of rural households and delivery systems pertaining to education, health & safety mechanisms.

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[1] Tame Ramya, "Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Rural Development: The Study of a Tribal Village in Arunachal Pradesh,

Modern Research Studies: An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. I. No.3, December 2014, pp. 25-29.

Rituraj Neog (2014) [2] considered that the Gram Panchayat is to be an effective mechanism for the development of rural areas as well as for the up gradation of rural population. Under the study area, the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat of Amguri Development block provides various schems for rural upliftment, such as Pradahan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) etc. but these schemes are still unable to uplift the village with present rate of growing population. At the same time, various schemes for the upliftment of rural population, such as National Rural Employment Guarantee act (NREGA), National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Beneficiaries scheme and Annapurna Scheme are able to cover only a small mass of population.

Nagaraja S. et.al. (2014) [3] in their paper examines the role of tribal women in rural development process through Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), a case study in Karnataka. This paper concludes that active participation of Tribal women changed scenario of the rural area and solved the rural problems.

Kausik K. Bhadra (2014) [4] in his study is based on two-pronged approach – one examines financial and physical issues in MGNREGA across Gram Panchayats in Jhargram block during the period 2012-14 it has become an important policy. It highlighted that the government fund is not being optimally utilized as this program has continuously been experiencing underutilization of the funds since its inception in all the states.

Firdoos Ahmad Sheikh (2014) [5] in his paper analyzed the implementation of NREGA in the Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts might not only raise the livelihood of the people in the two districts but also the employment opportunity created through NREGA would gradually overcome the problem of drug abuse and check the migration of rural youth to towns. The NREGA as noted has transformed the Panchayats into implementing agencies, not the consulting agency. The findings of the study underline the importance of strengthening the local Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs) which can act as an effective delivery mechanism because it will ensure people's participation in the scheme.

Atulan Guha (2014) [6] argues that the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat are being undermined by the state government. The failure to evolve financial devolution to fund the PRIs is making them financially dependent on the state government. Further, the Samras Gram Yojana, which encourages consensus candidates without elections plays into the hands of traditional dominant castes' power.

RESEARCH GAP

After review of literature, it is came to known that the similar system of the delivery mechanism of welfare and development schemes at village level were done with support of Panchyath Raj Institutions. However, the Village/Ward Sachivalyama is the new concept and new mechanism in the history of Indian Panchayath Raj System. Therefore, the researcher has identified that there is no studies on the Village /Ward Secretariat System and its mechanism on the delivery of welfare schemes to the people of Andhra Pradesh.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Andhra Pradesh is one of the states which are effectively implementing the Panchayat Raj System in India. In Andhra Pradesh, SPS Nellore district is one of the 123 districts where a good number of developmental activities have been carried out at the Panchayat level. Recently the government of Andhra Pradesh has introduced a new Village Secretary system into the existing Panchayat Raj System. Therefore, in this context there is necessity to examine

[2] Rituraj Neog, Panchayat and Rural Development A Case study of Amguri under Siva sager district, Assam, India, International Journal of Advanced Research (2014), Volume 2, Issue 1, pp.228-232.

[3] Nagaraja S. and Pallavi S Kusugal, Role of Tribal Women in Rural Development Through Panchayat Raj Institutions, Indian Journal Of Applied Research, Vol. 4,No.3, March 2014, pp. 465-466.

[4] Kausik K. Bhadra, Jayeeta Bhadra and Subhadip Mukherjee, "Financial Constraints and Governance Challenges in MGNREGA across Gram Panchayats in Jhargram : Towards some

Explanations", Journal of Studies in Dynamics and Change (JSDC),Vol. 1, No. 3, July 2014, pp.148-165.

[5] Firdoos Ahmad Sheikh, "Panchayat Raj system and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [NREGA]: Role and Relationship", IRC's International Journal of Multi Disciplinary in Social and Management Studies, Vol. 2, No.3, July- September 2014.

[6] Atulan Guha, "Undermining Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat", Economic & Political Weekly, Vol .XLIX ,No. 22, May 31, 2014, pp.21-22.

the impact and effectiveness of the new system of Panchayat on the developmental aspects. SPS Nellore district comprises of five revenue divisions and 46 mandals for administrative purpose. This study is considers only one mandal and selected equally from all the revenue divisions randomly.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to know the Village Secretariat System and Effectiveness of Delivery Mechanism of Welfare Schemes in Andhra Pradesh: A Study with reference to SPS Nellore District

Source of Data:
The study is required both primary and secondary data. The secondary data is collected from the sources such as certain empirical studies related to Panchayat Raj

System and Rural Development, research reports, research articles and publications, books and regulations published by the government of India and Andhra Pradesh.

The primary data is collected from the selected respondents by using the techniques of data collection such as interview schedule and personal interview. A structured five point scale questionnaire is prepared for each select respondent separately for the collection of primary data with relevant to the objectives of the study.

Sample Design:
The present study mainly relies up on primary data collection from the respondents who are drawn from the different villages of the selected mandals. Also the researcher has picking up the sample units that is villages randomly. See the Table-3.1 for sampling framework.

Table-1Sampling Framework

Name of the study unit	Total Number of Units	Selected sample units	Remarks
Revenue divisions	5	01	
Mandals	46	01	Random selection
Grama Panchayat	940	05	Random selection

As the above table shows that the SPS Nellore district has been divided into five revenue divisions. Each revenue division consists different mandals, further each manadal has divided as Panchayat for effective administration at gross root level. From all five revenue division there are 46 mandals, and from all these mandals there are 940 Grama Panchayat. In this, for the convince of the research, the researcher has selected 15 mandals randomly, and from each selected mandal equally four Grama Panchayat are selected as

a sampling unit of this study. See the Table-3.2 for the distribution of sample.

Sampling size:
The research study will not complete without selection of the respondents. This study is planning to collect the opinion of the close associate of the administration of the Grama Panchayat and also the public respectively. See the Table-3.3, which shows the sampling selection from the identified Grama Panchayat

Table-.2: Sample Distribution

Division	Mandal	No.of GP selected	Respondents (from selected GPs)				Total Sample
			Public	Public reps	Village Secretariat employees		
Kavali	Dagadarthi	2	20	5	10		35
Nellore	Indukurpet	2	20	5	10		35
	Sydapuram	2	20	5	10		35
	Doravarisatram	2	20	5	10		35
	Vinjamuru	2	20	5	10		35
		10	100	25	50		75

Table-.3: Sample selection from selected units

Responded Group	Selected sample size	Methodology of selection
Public	100	Stratified random

Public reps	25	Stratified random
Village Secretariat employees	50	Stratified random
Total	175	

Data Analysis tools: Statistical tools like Averages, Mean and Mode has been applied and also Chi-Square Test to verify the accuraracy level of opinion to arrive he hypothesis.

Limitation of the study:

There is no single study on Panchayat Raj Institutions in Andhra Pradesh with reference to Village Secretariat System in over to understand the magnitude of the problem, cause and sequences of the problem. Therefore, these issues are beyond the confines of the study, which is limited to the new village secretariat system in the Andhra Pradesh.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study is expositing the opinion of the public on the Grama Sachivalayams in the selected region of the Andhra Pradesh. The study deals with different aspects of the Grama Schaivlyams and its effective functioning towards delivery of the various services and welfare schemes implementation by the government. Being a new system, as usual there may be numb er hurdles in the smooth processing of the activities. However, the researcher trying to highlight the functions of Grama Sachivalyams and also the opinion of the public regarding the performance of the system. Let's see the output of the data and interpretation of the selected objectives of the study.

1. Existence of Village Secretariat system: Existence of Village Secretariat system which was introduced by the AP government is studied through this research and analyzed the opinion about the same among the selected respondents and interpreted the data from the following table.

Table..1: Opinion on Existence of Village Secretariat system

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.63	1.10	3.664	0.012
Public Representatives	3.61	1.18		
GS Employees	3.26	1.17		
Total	3.60	1.45		

Source: Calculated data.

*Significant at 5%.

H_01: *There is no significant difference among the selected respondents with respect to emergence of the Village/Ward secretariat system.*

From the Table.1 it is observed that the mean values of the opinion on existence of the Village Secretariat system is defers. However, the public respondent's mean value is highest than other respondents that is 3.63 followed by public representatives at 3.61. At the same time, the table also reveals that the significant value 0.012. It is less than the standard significant value 0.05. Therefore, the Null-Hypothesis H_01 is rejected. That means, there is significant difference about the existence of the Village Secretariat system among the selected respondents.

2. Is it Devolution of PRI: Is it the devolution of Panchyath Raj Institute? The answer for this question represented in the table.

Table.2: Opinion on Devolution of PRI

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.00	1.46	3.854	0.020
Public Representatives	3.50	1.24		
GS Employees	3.43	0.71		
Total	3.31	1.11		

Source: Calculated data

*Significant at 5%.

H_02: *There is no significant difference among the opinion of the respondents on the devolution of PRI.*

From the Table.2 it is observed that the mean value of the opinion on respondents are quite similar and the highest mean that is 3.50 Public Representatives followed by Staff of the Grama sachivalyam at 3.43. At the same time, the table also reveals that the significant value 0.02. It is less than the standard

significant value 0.05. Therefore, the Null-Hypothesis H_02 is rejected. That means there is a significant difference about the opinion of devolution of PRI.

3. Health Care Development: one of the main objectives the Grama Sachivalyam are to provide good healthcare facilities to the village people, regarding this aspects the researcher collected the opinion of the respondents presented in the table.

Table.3: Health Care Development

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.93	1.10		
Public Representatives	3.81	1.18		
GS Employees	3.66	1.17	2.664	0.062
Total	3.85	1.45		

Source: Calculated data.   *Significant at 5%.

H_0 (1-3): *There is no significant difference among the respondents about the healthcare facilities provided by the Grama Sachivalyamas.*

The Table.4 that the means value of public respondents and public representatives are 3.93 and 3.81 respectively. The table also shows that the significance value as 0.062, which is more than the accepted value of 0.05. Therefore, the null-hypothesis is accepted. That means there is no significant difference among the respondents about the healthcare development under the jurisdiction of Grama Sachivalayams.

4. Agriculture and allied support: India is the villages county , all the villages produces the verities of agriculture produces and marketing them in the market p[lance. The government of Andhra Pradesh with pursuance of the minister of agriculture provides various facilities, input subsidies, marketing support, agro loans and financial supports. To deliver these faculties to the farmers, the Grama Sachivalyams are playing very key role. Regarding this the researcher asked the opinion of the selected respondents and interpreting these data in the following table.

Table.4: Agriculture and allied support

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.30	1.46		
Public Representatives	3.50	1.24		
GS Employees	3.43	0.71	1.154	0.120
Total	3.31	1.12		

Source: Calculated data   *Significant at 5%.

H_0 4: *There is no significant difference among the respondents opinion on Agriculture and allied support given by the Grama Sachivalyam*

The Table.4 shows the satisfactory opinion of the respondents on Agriculture and allied support. Both the condition the mean value is 3.50 and 3.43 respectively. It is also found from the table that the significance value is 0.12, which is more than the accepted significance level 0.05. Therefore, it is inference that the null-hypothesis H_04 is accepted. That means there is no significant difference among the respondents on Agriculture and allied support delivered by Grama Sachivalyam.

5. Welfare and Infrastructure: The opinion about the services provided among the selected respondents with respects to Grama Sachivalyam is presented in the following paragraphs.

Table.5: Welfare and Infrastructure

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.51	1.17		
Public Representatives	3.75	1.27		
GS Employees	3.63	1.00	3.111	0.026
Total	4.94	1.10		

Source: Calculated data.   *Significant at 5%.

H_0 5: *There is no significant difference among the respondents on Welfare and Infrastructure arrangement by village secretariat.*

From the Table.5, it is observed that the mean value 3.75 and 3.63 represents the first two highest satisfied respondents are public respondents and Grams Sachivayala employees respectively. The table shows that the significant value is 0.026, which is less than the standard significant value 0.05. Therefore, it is inference that the null-hypothesis H_0 5 is rejected, that means, there is no significant difference among

respondents regarding the delivery of the welfare and infrastructure development activities.

6. Poverty Alleviation Prgrammes: Grama Sachivayam one of the major function is to eradicate the poverty in the rural areas. For that various program initiated by the government. In this regard the Grama Sachivayams are monitoring the execution of those poverty alleviation activities. The opinion of the respondents with this is presented in the following table.

Table.6: Poverty Alleviation Prgrammes:

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.72	1.06		
Public Representatives	3.71	1.08		
GS Employees	3.70	1.15	1.681	0.980
Total	3.71	1.10		

Source: Calculated data

H_0 6: *There is no significant difference among the respondents on poverty alleviation programmes initiated by the grama sachivalyams*

The Table.6 shows that the opinion respondents on poverty alleviation prgrammes. The mean value 3.72 and 3.71 represents at public and public representatives are satisfied with the respond to this attribute. It is also found that the significant value is 0.98; it is 99% probability over the 5% significant level. Therefore, the null-hypothesis H_0 6 is accepted

*Significant at 5%.

and it is inference that there is no significance difference in the opinion of respondents on the poverty alleviation programmes.

7. Housing Programmes: House to all is the slogan of the Indian government. The State Government also initiating it to provide the house to every poor people in the rural and urban areas. The opinion of the respondents on the porgramme is presented in the following table.

Table.7: Housing Programmes

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	4.00	0.89		
Public Representatives	3.93	0.91		
GS Employees	3.37	1.18	3.111	0.050
Total	3.77	1.02		

Source: Calculated data

$H_0$7: *There is no significant difference among the respondents about the housing porgramme initiated by the grama sachivalyams.*

It is observed from the Table.7 that the mean value 4.00 and 3.93 represents that public and public representatives are satisfied with the housing porgramme attribute respectively. The significant value 0.050 is also greater than the standard value of

*Significant at 5%.

0.05. That means, the null-hypothesis $H_0$7 is accepted. It is inference that there is no significant difference about the opinion of the respondents on the housing programs initiated by the grama sachivalyams.

8. Administrative Services: administrative facilities and support to the public is taken up by the Grama Sachivalyams. The opinion of the respondents regarding this is as follows.

Table.8: Administrative Services

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.93	0.89		

Public Representatives	3.84	0.91	3.111	0.250
GS Employees	3.37	1.18		
Total	3.77	1.02		

Source: Calculated data   *Significant at 5%.

H$_0$8: *There is no significant difference among respondents opinion about the administrative services provided by the grams sachivalyams.*

It is observed from the Table.8 that the mean value 3.93 and 3.84 represents the public and public representatives are satisfied with the administrative services provided respectively. The significant value 0.250 is also greater than the normal value of 0.05. That means, the null-hypothesis H$_0$ 8 is accepted. It is inference that there is no significant difference among the respondents about the administrative services provided by the grama sachivalyam.

9. Voluntary and Supporting Services: The aim motives of the Grama Sachivalyams are the delivery system of various services to the public. Regarding this the opinion of the respondents are as follows.

Table.9: Voluntary and Supporting Services

Name of the Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	'f'	Significance
Public respondents	3.71	1.15	0.70	0.55
Public Representatives	3.67	1.24		
GS Employees	3.52	0.99		
Total	4.85	1.11		

Source: Calculated data.   *Significant at 5%.

H$_0$ 9: *There is no significant difference among the respondents about the voluntary and supporting services of the grams Sachivalyam*

From the Table.9 it shows that the mean values 3.71 and 3.66 at public and public representatives opinion level about the voluntary and supporting services is good. Regarding the significance of the ANOVA one-way F test is 0.55. It is more than the standard significant level 0.05. Therefore, the null-hypothesis H$_0$9 is accepted. That means, there is no significant difference among the respondents with respect to the voluntary and supporting services by the grama sachivalyams.

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