

## Research Visit to India: A Summary Report

Original report written in Japanese by Rika Kato,  
with the supervision by Chihiro Saito.  
English summary by Ken Arai.

### 1. Objective

To see what kinds of trainings are provided by the State governments and/or other organisations for elected representatives, civic activists, and public administrators in order to make decentralisation real, and in what ways NGOs are involved in these trainings.

### 2. Dates of visit

18-26 September, 2004

### 3. Places of visit

1) Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)

Mulagunnathukavu P.O., Thrissur - 680 581, Kerala, India

Phone: +91 487 2201312, 2201768, 2201061, 2200244 Fax : +91 487 2201312

Professor P. Lakshamnan Phone: 9847684430 [kila@sancharnet.in](mailto:kila@sancharnet.in) /  
[palakil@rediffmail.com](mailto:palakil@rediffmail.com)

2) Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development (ANSSIRD)

Lalita Mahal Road, Mysore 570 011

Phone: +91 821 2522902-908, 98863 50511 [maheshksanjeeva@hotmail.com](mailto:maheshksanjeeva@hotmail.com)

Ms. Anita Kaul, Director General

Mr. H.S. Ashokanand, Additional Director phone: 2522903 Fax:2413565 Res:2413565

Mr. S. Mahesh Kumar, Programme Producer

3) SEARCH (NGO)

219/26, 6th Main, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore

phone: 91-080-6344226, 6635361 fax: 91-080-6635361

search1@blr.vsnl.net.in [f.stephen@vsnl.com](mailto:f.stephen@vsnl.com) [www.developmentschool.org](http://www.developmentschool.org)

Mr.F.Stephen, Executive Director, SEARCH

Ms.MALINI EDEN, Director - Strategic Alliance

#### 4. Report

##### 1) Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)

- KILA offers seminars and workshops on local self-governance and development.
- It has been expected to contribute to the training of local elected representatives and local government officials, who are to take new and important responsibilities at the frontline of decentralisation after the amendment of state law in 1994.
- The trainings are mainly for the local government officers and local elected representatives in Kerala State region, but KILA also provides training opportunities for NGOs as well as trainees from overseas.
- Empowerment of women: The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments provide that 1/3 of the council seats is to be reserved for female representatives, and this led KILA to offer training programmes for women. At KILA, the participants to such programmes are increasingly mixtures of female representatives, male representatives and local government officers, for it turned out to be more efficient to train male and female together in order to make women more self-responsible. The training is not to support women but is based on KILA's contention that women will be empowered by being informed with their discretion and given a place to speak up.
- Relationship with NGOs: There is no NGO directly related to KILA. While some NGOs are effectively contributing to the development of community, people tend to see NGOs as rather dubious. However, NGOs will increasingly be playing important roles in the future development activities.
- Transferring of government officers to localities: When the power and financial resources were devolved to localities, state government officers too were transferred to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) 1) the transferred officers are under pressure both from the state government and PRIs 2) their salary is still paid for by the state government, and it means that the state retains significant power over the localities.
- The future: Decentralisation has been institutionalised in Kerala. In spite of the declining enthusiasm, people now recognise that decentralisation means: 1) that PRIs have more discretionary authority; 2) that they will have more financial resources; 3) that they have autonomy in development planning; 4) that they have more chance to succeed than to fail, and; 5) more transparency. It is unlikely that people will allow the government to recentralise the power that has been devolved to localities.

## 2) Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development (ANSSIRD)

- Since its establishment in 1989, SIRD has been offering trainings for elected representatives of PRIs as well as officers working for these institutions.
- On an average, ANSSIRD offer 40-50 trainings / year, and the number of participants to each training is about 20-25. 'Face to face' trainings include: trainers training; computer; water and sewage; poverty alleviation; e-governance; decentralisation and development; financial management; capacity building for NGOs; gender. 'Satellite trainings' are also on offer for such as the elected representatives of Zilla/Taluk panchayat, the elected representatives and officials of village panchayat.
- In 2002 they introduced a distance learning system (satellite communication – SATCOM), utilising telephone network and interactive video system, which connect the ANSSIRD training centre and the various points in the state. This is a state government's response to the decline of local self-governance. ANSSIRD began to make far-reaching changes to its entire approach, system and curriculum of training.
- Karnataka and Kerala are relatively advanced states in terms of decentralisation, though the progress and the ways in pursuing this are quite different. In any case, both states aim to firmly establish local self-governance within which local elected representatives play a central role.
- As in Kerala, transferring of the state government officers to PRIs has been in progress in Karnataka. Yet, unlike the case of Kerala, the officers here do not seem to be facing dilemma of the double rule.
- The collaborations with NGOs are, though mostly government-led, quite active, e.g. in planning and implementation of training programmes etc.
- *Training through Satellite Communication (SATCOM)*

### <Background>

By utilising modern equipments, it connects villages in peripheries and the Institute. The first training series was delivered from November 2002 to June 2003, and 18,207 members from 1,310 village panchayats participated in the sessions. The object of this interaction was to create a ground for the democratic decentralisation through people's participation in local planning. Project formulation itself was grounded in a participatory consultative process.

### <System>

An interactive network connects major training centres in peripheries and the

SATCOM studio at ANSSIRD in Mysore. Training programmes and schedules are prepared by ANSSIRD and delivered to these training centres. The participants can contact the studio by telephone and ask questions / make requests, while the training centres are not directly connected to each other. The system is meant to supplement participatory trainings offered on the ground, but SATCOM sessions give the participants more confidence through talking directly to the officials of the state government.

#### <Training>

'Basic' trainings include: the decentralization of development; history of panchayat raj; constitutional amendment and state panchayat raj act; reservation and rotation of seats; gender; caste; literacy education; gram sabhas (in which all residences of villages participate); the rule for panchayat meetings; budget management, and 'technical' trainings include: child health; drinking water and sanitation; watershed development; the role of panchayats in overall village development; right to information; community participation in village development planning et cetera.

The participation rate has been high – in a training session for village panchayats, for example, about 80% of those listed participated. Participants very actively voiced their views on such issues as decentralisation and delegation of powers, grants and taxation, reservation and rotation of seats, and right to information, and many participants demand transferring of power to village panchayats in these areas. The decentralisation has largely been proceeded in top-down manner in Karnataka, and SATCOM system may be seen as effective in weakening the direct intervention of Zilla and Taluk by providing a means for village panchayats to directly contact the state government.

The SATCOM training seems successful. The trainings, having been effectively combined with on the ground sessions, have led to resolve various problems, and contributed especially to the empowerment of the panchayat members representing women and those discriminated.

#### <Finance>

Financial resources for the SATCOM training come from the Ministry of Rural Development, India, and the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Karnataka. The satellite system has increasingly been used by Ministries etc. and revenues are also generated from these users.

### 3) SEARCH

- An NGO acting with a focus on human centred development and participatory

approaches. It was established in 1975, and is based in Bangalore.

- SEARCH has two missions: to train volunteer sector workers and to mobilise people to work in development projects.
- They have long been offering training for NGOs, the poor, and women, and seeking to empower the participants, especially women.
- SEARCH is working in harmony with the state government, yet seeking effective trainings from a perspective distinct from that of government – e.g. by focusing on a specific village and hearing closely what participants' needs are. The outcomes of such trainings lead to proposals to the state government.
- They do not work with local business, and have no plan to do so in the future either. For they have access to the funding from overseas donors, and the private companies there are not very conscious of such concepts as corporate social responsibility.
- SEARCH has started to conduct a pilot study in order to improve effectiveness of training, and this study explores different types of training programmes from state training institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

- By firmly transferring power, responsibility and information to local elected representatives and local officials who are to be responsible for the activities in each locality, decentralisation is coming to be more effective on the ground.
- However, the extent to which and the time when transfer of power is to be sought vary significantly from place to place. There is a possibility, for example, that if everything were left to localities, the resource would not be distributed to the poor, and government intervention to ensure the minimum standard of life may be preferable.
- Given such, SATCOM training in Karnataka has a favourable potential, in that it makes participatory training possible while at the same time keeping the contact between the centre and localities intact. It will be more effective once the horizontal relations between localities are realised and a network is formed.
- Future challenge include, for both in KILA and ANSSIRD, in what ways evaluation and follow-up of trainings can be established, taking into account their effects on locality as a whole.