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Topic of Research: The Role of Social Audit in Strengthening the Gram Sabha: A Study of Rewa, Bhopal and Jhabua Districts in Madhya Pradesh

Abstract

The chapter 1 provides the background of the research study undertaken. It also presents the general research design, meaning, features, and definition of social audit, chronological origin of the social audit in India and the World. It also dealt in the details the Philosophical and Conceptual Framework of the Social Audit and at last the Methodological Foundation of the Social Audit is also dealt with in this chapter. The chapter 2 explores the social audit in the context of civil society, public sphere and participation. Generally, when people come out of the house and gather in a public place like panchayat Bhavan for a public purpose, then the public sphere is formed on it, similarly, the people of the Gram Sabha show interest in the work of Panchayat with civic responsibility, then there is a glimpse of the civil society, in the same way, when the people of the civil society do active participation in the works of the panchayat or do social audit, then the participation is clearly visible there. The chapter 3rd discussed about the Audit and Accountability Mechanism in India, mainly the historical analysis of the Audit and Accountability Mechanism from ancient India till modern India. Social audit, audit and accountability institutions in modern India and their functioning and constitutional position are also discussed. Apart from this, the constitutional status of social audit has also been discussed. Chapter 4th discussed about the history of Local Government and Social Audit in the context of Madhya Pradesh. It traces the roots of local government to former Central Province & Berar (Madhya Pradesh). It also discussed the constitutional development which took place after independence and its development since then. Chapter 5th is dedicated to fieldwork in consonance with the objectives of the research. In the last chapter of the present study, the research objectives were analyzed in cognizance with the data collected. It was evident from the conclusion that the hypotheses of the study were not proved. The

chapter also provided some suggestions for the betterment of social audit in Madhya Pradesh in particular and India in general.

Finding of the Study:

This study aimed at understanding how the social audit working in 3 districts of Madhya Pradesh. The findings and recommendations from the study are listed below which can be applicable all over India in general and Madhya Pradesh in particular.

- ❖ The researcher asked about half a dozen questions related to the people's participation in the gram panchayats. The public's response to these questions was very disappointing. About 60 percent respondent gave negative answers to the questions asked on the people's participation, reflecting a sad state of affairs.
- ❖ Around the 50 percent respondent believed that social audit is unable to curb the corruption in Panchayats and MGNREGA. Contrary to government claims the performance of Social Audit at the ground level is in poor state.
- ❖ More than 50 percent people believed that social audit is not helpful in social inclusion. Based on the questions asked, it was concluded that the Social Audit was not able to raise awareness among the Disadvantage Section of the Society. It can also be concluded that it is not helpful in providing basic facilities to the deprived sections of the society.
- ❖ In context of Public Sphere, the Social Audit appears to be losing the ground as it is unable to create the suitable conditions for Public Sphere at the level of Gram Panchayat.
- ❖ In the research it was found that Social Audit is unable to utilize the benefits of Civil Society and the blame for this goes on the colonial mindset of the bureaucracy which despises the involvement of Civil Society, especially in the context of Social Audit.
- ❖ People's Participation is a pre-condition of the social audit. It is difficult to imagine a social audit without public participation. But during the fieldwork, it was found that this participation is limited only on the paper, and at the grassroots level, the participation is at alarmingly low levels due to several reasons.