

CHAPTER- IV

4.1 An Analysis of the study on the role of VCDC in Rural Development under Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri:

Kokrajhar District is the Head Quarter of BTAD. It has eleven Development Blocks namely: Kokrajhar, Dotoma, Debitola, Chapar-Salkocha, Mahamaya, Bilisipara, Golokganj, Gossaigaon and Kuchugaon Development Block. The proposed study area is limited only to the Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri. It is located in the heart of Kokrajhar District, a distance of around 5 Kms from Kokrajhar town. The Block comprises of 6 TCLCC, 36 VCDC and 225 numbers of villages. The geographical area of Block is 107804.26 hector covering 1078.04 sq. Km of forest area. As per 2011 census, the Block has total number of 44250 households, with total population of 219761 among which 51% is male and 49% is female. The Block constitutes with 69% ST (P) population, against 5% SC and 26% others. As per 2001 census, 27% ST, 01% SC and 72% others constitute BPL populations of their respective total populations. The above figures show the prevalent of acute Socio-Economic conditions before 15 years, under Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri.

4.2 Profile of VCDC:

The Village or Rural Panchayat, whatever by the name it was known earlier was existed in Assam since pre British era. Mr. BC Allen, in his District Gazetteer of Kamrup, gave a detail account of the modern local self government of Kamrup District. The existence of the local self government in Assam had its ages old root is quite evident from many historical documents. However, the fact was that such

institution held no legal status prior to the “Local Self Government Act, 1915 was enacted. It was only after this Act, the local self government for the first time was provided legal basis. The failure of this Panchayat led Mr. Bentinck, the then Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup District to constitute a Panchayat body in each inhabited village. However, it also turned futile because of group politics, inherent flaws and disinterestedness of the people. Another, legislation was enacted in 1926 with a provision to provide a single member Panchayat body. Again, this also failed to bring desirable results due to certain inherent weakness. After a series of enactment, the Government of Assam during post independence enacted the Assam Rural Panchayat in 1948 with a view to establish Village Panchayats throughout the plain districts of Assam. This Act introduced two-tier Panchayats at village level and mauza level. The Village Panchayat was called the “Primary Panchayat”, while mauza level was called as “Rural Panchayat”.⁹⁰

Prior to the creation of Autonomous District and Autonomous Council under Sixth Schedule Constitution, Panchayat System had existed throughout plain areas of Assam. Panchayat System ceased to operate in BTAD since 2003, with effect of the Sixth Schedule Constitution. The Memorandum of Settlement clearly laid down that in complies with Art. 322 of the constitution, “Panchayati Raj system in the event ceases to be in force in the Council area and the powers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in such matters shall be vested with the Council.” Again, Paragraph-2 of Sixth Schedule constitution while enunciating the powers of the Governor to make Constitution for District Councils and Regional Councils in sub-paragraph (6) have clearly stated that

⁹⁰Jogendra Kr. Das, Op.Cit. P-27

the District Council may after its first constitution with the approval of the Governor can make rules in the matters relating to- the formation of subordinate local Councils or Boards and their procedure and the conduct of their business.⁹¹ As a matter of fact, since Panchayati Raj system is not applicable in BTAD; in response to this need, it has setup two tier institutions at base in lieu of Panchayats which function in the line of Village Panchayat.

Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), itself is a mechanism of the decentralization of political and economic power under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Council at the apex operates at District level, while Territorial Constituency level Coordination Committee (TCLCC) and Village Council Development Committee (VCDC), were created at the subordinate level with former operating at Block level analogous to Anachalik Panchayat and later at Village level analogous to Village Panchayat. Hence, VCDC is a local government body arranged in BTAD at base. It is a grass-root government in BTAD as an alternative arrangement for Village Panchayat.

VCDC as a local government mechanism is responsible for implementing the development programmes at grass root. VCDC at base has been functioning since 2006, three years later of the inception of BTC in 2003. As per government record Memo. No. BTC/RD (VCDC) dated 19th April 2006, guideline issued for both VCDC and TCLCC under Panchayat & Rural Development Department, BTC, can be formally considered as the base year of their inception. Since then it has been functioning as an ad hoc local government institution in place of Panchayat. However,

⁹¹MoS, Op. Cit. PP- 3, 113

because of absence of statutory status to VCDC, the Council government is often subjected to criticism and allegations from time to time.

Meanwhile, to legalise the VCDC as a statutory local government body, the Council government had passed the legislation called the “Bodoland Council Village Bill” on 18th July 2012. In this regard the BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary, while moving the Bill in the Council Assembly has stated that, “Since the Ministry of Panchayati Raj does not exist in the Sixth Schedule areas, the Centre has now envisages to introduce decentralised governance through this system. He assumed that- this would help to bring all-round development to the people living in the BTAD areas and also assure the people their political rights through election for the village council for free and fair selection of the members.”⁹² Though, it has already been approved by the Government of Assam however, it is yet to receive approval of the Governor.

So far as the constitution for VCDC is concerned, there are a few available prescribed or written by laws for conducting their business. On 19th April 2006, as per the guidelines released from Panchayat and Rural Development Department (P&RD), the following guidelines are to be observed by the VCDC to conduct their business smoothly-

- i) The VCDC must be constituted with permanent inhabitant Revenue/Forest village area,
- ii) The VCDC must have at least three members other than official members,

⁹²www.telegraphindia.com, July 19, 2012,

- iii) One member will be drawn from each revenue village,
- iv) The Chairman of the VCDC will be selected amongst non official members in consensus or opted by the BTC authority,
- v) The tenure of VCDC will be co-terminus with that of BTC council e.g. five years,
- vi) The Chairman or any member will be removed on serious public allegation like moral turpitude and misappropriation of public money in 1/3 majority opinion or out rightly removed by the BTC authority,
- vii) The body of VCDC will assist in rural administration like maintenance and updating of vital statistics, assist in preparation job card and keep safe custody of NREGA records, preparation and updating of BPL list and many other works that may be assigned by the BTC authority in due course of times,
- viii) The committee will sit for discussion in the office of VCDC as many as required as works warrants.⁹³ (Memo. No. BTC/RD (VCDC) 04/2006/19).

Composition of VCDC:

It is a known fact that VCDC Chairman and other members are not elected through electoral process. They are nominated by the Council government from within the supporter of ruling political party. The VCDC Chairman and other members are nominated by BTC authority for five years term. The members can hold the post as

⁹³Memo. No. BTC/RD (VCDC) 04/2006/19

long as they enjoy the mercy of the BTC authority unless terminated on the ground of serious public allegations.

VCDC ideally prefers to form consisting of 14 nominated members including a Chairperson (One); 2 (two) women members; 1 (One) SC member (1 reserved where SC population is least) however, as per condition members from SC community may be increased; 3 (three) farmer members; 1 (One) BPL member; 1 (One) Social Worker and 5 (five) general members. These, nominated members are assisted by the government employee designated as Member Secretary, whose designation is Junior Engineer (JE). The JE generally assist them in preparation and formulation of plans and policies in matter relating to estimation of projects related to government schemes means to be floored for development of rural areas. Again, there is no prescribed criterion about the numbers of population it requires to constitute a VCDC, but fairly most number of VCDC have a population of around 3000 to 7000, with few VCDC covering large areas exceeding more than ten to fourteen thousand population. There are also VCDC with a few numbers of villages with either less than or just over thousand population.

Though, several guidelines are set for the VCDC to conduct smooth functioning, however, these guidelines are often overlooked on many occasions thereby arousing irregularities in smooth functioning of VCDC.

4.3 Role of VCDC in Rural Development:

VCDC is equivalent to the Gram Panchayat. The planning and execution of any programmes are undertaken by the VCDC. It plays a crucial role in implementing

the development schemes in the villages. It is responsible to look after the rural development activities.

In 2011, the government had conducted Socio-Economic and Caste Census Data throughout India to identify the household living under BPL. The Central Government in January 2017 had accepted the recommendations to use SECC to identify the eligible beneficiaries. And, using SECC reports VCDC identify such beneficiaries. It finalise the priority list as well as select the list of annual beneficiaries. It arranges the public meeting for selection of beneficiaries from amongst the BPL or the poor household. It has a task to identify the areas of problem and core issues prevalent within its ambit. Accordingly, it has a task to set an area of priorities that needs urgent address.

Another, vital responsibility of the VCDC is to mobilise people from villages. It has to ensure the maximum participation of the people in Gram Shaba. The Central Government and the State Government takes number of programmes and schemes for the welfare of rural areas. These programmes are implemented through the VCDC and other functionaries at the local level. It is their duty to educate the public about various poverty alleviation programmes and other government schemes. The success of such schemes and programmes largely relay on their effective implementation. As for instance, the rural housing schemes initiated by the Government under IAY, PMGY-GA and others, VCDC is not only responsible to select the beneficiaries but also it is their responsibility to facilitate the beneficiaries with required construction materials at reasonable rate and other materials like masons etc. It has to ensure that such

constructions are completed on time. It can also form coordinating committees for different activities under IAY and other schemes to look after the work undertaken.

VCDC also plays a decisive role in the execution of schemes like MGNREGA, BRGF, financial and other resources it receives from the State and Central Finance Commission grants etc. The preparation of Job card and keeping all such records relating to the Job Card issuance are to be maintained by the VCDC. Under MGNREGA programmes, the funds allocations are basically done through the numbers of Job Card holders in a village and under such schemes VCDC plays a deciding role in organising the work forces under employment guarantee schemes as well as in management and appropriation of funds in various activities. It has the main task of convergence the schemes by using resources granted under MGNREGA, BRGF and other financial aids for the development of rural areas. Under NSAP schemes, it has to identify the pension beneficiaries and the beneficiaries for other financial support under scheme means for old aged, widows, disabled person etc. Though, VCDC has no power to levy taxes but it may mobilise relief for natural calamities; it can organise voluntary labours; act into the matters relating to the encroachment of public property; maintain the records and statistics of villages as well as of village dwellers. They also have to make plans and prepare blueprints for village development. They also help in making social audits. However, the licensing authority of VCDC is somewhat limited to issue NOC only. It doesn't enjoy a free hand to permit for setting a big and medium establishment within its areas. However, it can be an active mechanism in promoting the developmental activities in the field of agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, poultry farming and dairy farming; and other

activities pertinent to generation of self employment by forming Self Help Group for women and Cooperative Societies at village level. It can play a significant role by providing such SHG with necessary capital supports and grants from government in promoting the activities like Village Khadi industries, Craft industries and Small Cottage industries for unemployed women and youths. It can promote weaving, production of Eri silk and Muga Silk and other craft activities for rural artesian to help them in earning their livelihood. It can arrange and organise several skill development programmes and vocational training for the unemployed youth and help them to start up their own business and other activities in the line of collective farming activities in agriculture, sericulture, pisci-culture, piggery etc. Besides, it also maintains the village roads, drains, culverts, rural water supply, rural electrifications and look after the needs of the village primary educational institutions, public health and family welfare, women and child development welfare etc; and it can also supervise the public distribution system means for welfare of the poor. It has also the responsibility to maintain and develop play grounds and public parks along with maintaining the community assets.

4.4 An Analysis on the role of VCDC in Rural Development under Kokrajhar Development Block:

The study was conducted in six VCDC under Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri. Keeping in mind the three main aspects- Social, Economic and Political, the questionnaire was carefully designed to find out the variables or indicators of rural development. And, for the purpose 150 respondents were interviewed. The evaluation is made based on the data acquired from field survey which was conducted in the

month of January & February-2017. In the following table, name of villages and the number of samples collected from VCDC wise are indicated:

Table: 4.4.1 List of VCDC, villages, and nos. of sample collected:

VCDC	Name of Villages	No. of Samples or No. of Respondent s Interviewed	Total No. of Households
Debargaon	Rangalikhata-I	40	110
Kalugaon-Subaijar	Aitugaon	20	71
Karigaon Serfang	Mwnswrgaon	20	58
Simbargaon	Simbargaon	25	73
Tinali Chariali	Laoripara	20	64
Titaguri	Bhotgaon	25	76

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

4.5 Critical Evaluation on the role of VCDC in Socio-Economic Development

Keeping in mind the popular hypothesis that, local-self government not only empower the people politically but socially and economically as well. In this direction, a quantitative study was conducted to measure the popular hypothesis through respondent's perspective. The following tables below are an attempt to analyze critically to evaluate the role of VCDC in Socio-Economic Development.

4.5.1: An Analysis of Monthly Income of the Household:

In the table, 4.5.1 the financial or economic conditions of the household under the respective VCDC were shown. The household were grouped into five categories in accordance with their monthly income. It was found that the lowest income group earning below three thousands constitute 17%, against the highest income group earning above fifteen thousand which form 11%. Again, the highest number of household earning in between three to six thousand per month constitutes 36%. The majority of the household from this group are marginal farmers. The lowest income

group with 17% are daily wagers. The economic conditions of this lowest income group are very miserable. Household with middle-income group shares 24% and 12% respectively. These groups are either a lower division employee in government service or a small trader.

Table: 4.5.1: Figure showing Monthly Income of the Household

VCDC	Monthly Income of the Household (In Rupees Thousands)				
	Below 3000	Below 6000	Below 10000	Below 15000	Above 15000
Debargaon	5	12	11	7	5
Kalugaon	2	7	6	2	3
Karigaon	4	8	4	2	2
Simbargaon	6	12	4	1	2
Tinali	3	6	5	3	3
Titaguri	5	9	6	3	2
Total	25	54	36	18	17
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	17	36	24	12	11

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

From, the above table, it can be quantitatively evaluate that in each village under respective VCDCs the lower income group and the lower-middle income group constitute the larger part of rural population. The figures indicate that the larger portion of rural population is still living under economic conditions and poverty.

4.5.2: An Assessment on the Household of Landless, Households with Land Holding & Types of Houses:

In the table 4.5.2, the landless household, household with land holding and their types of houses are evaluated. The landless household under the VCDC constitute 23%. Majority of this household are daily wagers; few are marginal farmers.

In case of land holding, 39% household possess land below 5 bhigas; while, respective household with 46% and 20% have land possession of below 10 bhigas and above 10 bhigas respectively. The majority of marginal farmers constitutes from those of 39% with very few marginal farmer holding around 10 bhigas land. While only 20% household possess above 10 bhigas and majority of them are share cropper.

Table: 4.5.2: Figure showing Landless Household, Households with Land Holding & Types of Houses:

VCDC	Land-less House Hold (R x 100/105)	Household with Land Holding (In Bhiga) (H/H = 106)			Types of House		
		Below 5	Below 10	10 Above	Pucca	Pucca-Katcha	Kutchha -Mud House
Debargaon	7	12	12	9	11	26	3
Kalugaon	4	4	9	5	4	11	5
Karigaon	6	6	7	1	3	11	6
Simbargaon	7	7	9	2	5	12	8
Tinali	5	3	4	2	6	12	2
Titaguri	6	9	8	2	4	13	8
Total	35	41	49	21	33	85	32
Total in %	23	39	46	20	22	57	21

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 16th Feb 2017)

The types of house, the villagers are living in is still somewhat pity. It is clearly visible from the fact that a considerably high with 21% of the household still lives in a Kutchha-Mud house. While the 22% household lives in properly built Pucca house; the majority with 57% household either have Pucca-Kutchha or the semi Pucca-Kutchha houses. Most of these household are living a traditional way of life.

4.5.3: Educational and Occupational Profile of the Household:

The table 4.5.3 shows the literacy rate, their occupations and other allied agricultural activities like farming of live stock. Though live stock is not a major occupation but almost every house are engaged in such farming. Education has been problem of this region. As a matter of fact illiteracy constitute majority with around 55%. Majority households in the village of each VCDC are cultivators which form around 49%, whereas, the daily wagers, industrial labourers, and other occupations like small traders and service constitute 15%, 5%, and 28% respectively.

Table: 4.5.3: Figure showing Education, Occupation and Live Stock

VCDC	Education		Occupation				Live Stock (Domestic & Business) Nos. of House Hold engaged in farming activities.		
	Liter ate	Illite rate	Cultiva tor	Daily Wager	Industrial worker	Others& Service	Pig	Cow	Others (Goat & Poultry)
Debargaon	18	22	18	4	4	14	36	25	36
Kalugaon	15	5	9	3	0	8	19	16	20
Karigaon	6	14	8	5	2	4	16	7	18
Simbargaon	7	18	15	5	-	5	22	14	23
Tinali	12	8	9	2	3	6	11	7	14
Titaguri	9	16	15	4	1	5	13	13	19
Total	67	83	74	23	7	42	117	82	130
Total in % (Respondents x100/150)	45	55	49	15	5	28	78	55	87

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

Household engaged in daily wager is considerably high with 15% against, the persons engaged in the industrial work is relatively very few. The earning of daily

wager in per day is very less. Rather their income or their daily wages depend on the work they earn or employed. Their earning is not certain for every day. Their earning and wage depend on the nature and the availability of the works. The industrial and manual workers absorbed in big industries are very less since only few industries in recent year has been set up in the adjacent areas of Kokrajhar Development Block. The study revealed that a handful of workers are absorbed in the NTPC industry for manual works. The household engaged in the government services and the other activities like trading, small vendor etc. constitute 28%. Other than that, almost all the household in the villages are engaged in the live stock farming like pig, cattle, poultry, and others. Though, none of them are farming for large scale commercial purpose; yet such farming occasionally supports them with capital help during their urgent needs in time of financial crisis. Although, live stock farming is not a primary source of income yet it contributes a considerable capital support to the rural household. It can clearly be affirmed that both agricultural and other allied non-agricultural farming constitute the rural economy. In this connection, VCDC has taken less significant role; rather the role of VCDC in this matter is more or less passive. Notwithstanding, VCDC can play a significant role to encourage the poor villagers to take up live stock farming for large commercial purpose as well as for their main source of income.

4.5.4: Types of Cultivators, Irrigation Facilities & Mode of Cultivation:

The cultivators are grouped into three categories: marginal farmer, tenant cultivators and the share cropper. The marginal farmers constitute 29%, while the tenant cultivators and share cropper constitute 42% and 29% respectively. Most of the

marginal farmer constitutes from those of 39% with few marginal farmers holding around 10 bhisas land. The marginal farmers are economically poor and hold a very little part of cultivation land. Though, this group constitute the majority in cultivation index but they possess very less in terms of land holding. Again, the majority of the marginal farmers are also the tenant cultivators. Due to the less possession of land these farmers have to work as tenant from the share croppers.

Table: 4.5.4: Types of Cultivators, Irrigation Facilities & Mode of Cultivation

VCDC	Cultivators (Total Nos. Of Cultivators = 104) (Respondents x 100/104)			Irrigation Facilities (Cultivators = 104) (Respondents x 100/104)			Mode of Cultivation (Respondents 100/104)	
	Marginal Farmer	Tenant Cultivator	Share Cropper	Good	Bad	Some what Ok	Traditional	Modern
Debargaon	9	9	8	4	12	11	31	1
Kalugaon	4	5	7	2	9	5	14	2
Karigaon	4	8	2	0	8	4	14	-
Simbargaon	5	10	4	2	10	5	18	1
Tinali	3	6	6	-	3	6	13	2
Titaguri	5	6	3	-	5	6	14	-
Total	30	44	30	8	47	37	24	6
Total %	29	42	29	8	44	35	85	4

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

The majority of the share croppers are categorically the group with descent economic background. Most of the households of share cropper are either engaged in lower grade government service or in activities like small trading. Since, the agricultural farming is the backbone of rural economy; it is highly desirable that the

agricultural productivity is raised so as to improve the economic conditions of the village household. Since, the rise of agricultural production depend upon numerous factors like developed irrigation systems, cannel, high yielding seeds and other like methods of scientific farming. In this connection VCDC being a local government can play a major role in developing irrigation system. In adverse, the irrigation facilities in certain areas are not encouraging. Majority of the cultivators with 44% feels that the irrigation facilities in the areas are poor. The majority of the farmer in the villages under Debargaon VCDC, Kalugaon VCDC, Karigaon Serfang VCDC and Simbargaon VCDC in particular are unhappy with the existing irrigation facilities. Most of the farmers of Debargaon and Kalugaon VCDC possess cultivation land near by the river bank. Arguably, despite of bestowed with such natural advantage no irrigation cannel has been built in the areas of these villages. Despite of having a good numbers of tributaries flowing across the country side the irrigation facilities remain either poor or even in-exist in few a villages. As a result, the farmers have to relay largely on the monsoon for their cultivation. Moreover, the cultivators have to say that because of the lack of proper irrigation system and absence of available modern means of cultivation tools they engage in farming not more than once in a year. Besides, the farmers also thrown the lights on vital issues that- the area though receives a good amount of rain every year during monsoon but no such initiatives to harvest the rain water for the use in irrigation has been developed or built. Again, the majority of the cultivators with 85% use traditional methods of cultivation and agriculture farming and cropping. Most of the poor and marginal farmers can't afford the modern tools like tractor, pumping set, threshers etc. in farming except a few handful farmers which constitute barely 4%.

It is quite clear from the above evaluation that the role of VCDC in developing the irrigation facilities and providing the necessary requisites, modern tools, capital support, technical support and skill training to the farmers has been very marginal or barely productive.

4.5.5: An Analysis on the Economic Status of Household:

In the table 4.5.5, the economic status of the household are examined. The study revealed that each village under study have a high numbers of BPL families. The average percentage of the BPL household in the VCDC is as high as 63%, against 37% APL household, while the Job Card Holder constitutes 59%.

Table: 4.5.5: List BPL, APL, Job Card Holders, Beneficiaries & Economic Status of N/H 2014-17

VCDC	BPL H/H	APL H/H	Job Card Holder	Beneficiaries Under BPL Scheme		Economic Status of H/H in (last five years) 2014-17		
				Rice	Other	Better	Same	Worse
Debargaon	26	14	29	26	26	15	16	5
Kalugaon	9	11	8	9	9	7	13	0
Karigaon	14	6	10	14	14	2	12	6
Simbargaon	17	8	15	17	17	7	13	5
Tinali	13	7	13	13	13	8	10	2
Titaguri	15	9	13	15	15	3	17	5
Total	94	56	88	94	94	42	81	23
Total %	63	37	59	63	63	28	54	15

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

The study revealed that BPL household are beneficiaries of government schemes under various poverty alleviation programmes like rice and other food stuff under NFS. Besides, the Central Government, the State Government and the Council

also distribute essential commodity and tools like bicycle, mosquito net, filters, sewing machine, blankets etc. from time to time. The government also make a distribution of high yielding seeds, fertilizers, spray machine to the farmers. VCDC in this matter select the beneficiaries; however, their role in selection is often met with allegation of bias by the villagers. So far as the question in connection to their economic improvement was concerned, 28% of the household feels that their economic condition in recent years has improved; while the majority with 54% feels their economic condition is same. On the other end, the economic condition of 15% is degrading instead. Further the economic disparity in this region is quite high in terms or compare to state and national index. In this connection, the economic conditions of the household have witnessed not much progress over the years though little improvement is visible in housing or the physical achievements of houses built under government schemes yet, the standard of living still remain vitally unsolved questions. As such the improvement of economic conditions of the poor villagers appears an uphill task for the local government like VCDC.

4.5.6: Determinants of Modest Economic Background of the Household:

In present day, the high consumption level and the affording of a modern means of luxury and comfort like car, automobiles, bikes, LPG, TV etc. are considered to be a determinant of economic growth and progress. These are the variables of advanced modern societies. In this direction, economic background of a family is intended to be determined. The household affording such facilities are somewhat considered to be a family with decent economic background.

Table: 4.5.6 Types of Vehicle, LPG, TV

VCDC	Types of Vehicle				LPG	TV
	Car	Other Automobile	Motorcycle	Bicycle		
Debargaon	1	2	12	24	36	38
Kalugaon	4	-	8	7	16	18
Karigaon	-	-	2	14	14	16
Simbargaon	2	1	10	18	19	17
Tinali	1	2	4	13	14	15
Titaguri	-	1	3	12	10	14
Total	8	6	39	88	109	118
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	5	4	26	59	73	79

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

In this connection it was found that only 5%, 4%, and 26% household under all the VCDC possess respective vehicles like car, other automobiles and motorcycles. Majority of the rural population uses bicycle as their means of transport. Again, 73% and 79% household respectively had able to afford of using like LPG and TV. It is quite convincing to see the rising numbers of household affording LPG in recent years.

4.6 Critical Evaluation on the role of VCDC in Political Empowerment:

VCDC being a local government assume vital role in educating people politically. As a local government institution it has a great responsibility to empower the local people by ensuring their active political participation at base. It is their supreme responsibility to involve the common people in the decision making process of the government at local level. The following table below attempts to evaluate the role of VCDC in political empowerment of the common people.

4.6.1: Account of women & other caste representation in VCDC:

Since, it is a known fact that the members of VCDC are not elected by the peoples; the opinions of the respondents were taken in matters of holding election for the VCDC members. In this regard the overwhelming 81% of respondent have shown its favour for election for selecting VCDC members.

Table: 4.6.1: VCDC elections, Representation of women and other caste

VCDC	Elections for VCDC			Women Representation in VCDC			Representation of Other Caste in VCDC (Respondent-30)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Debargaon	30	5	5	15	19	6	-	-	-
Kalugaon	14	3	3	7	7	6	-	-	-
Krigaon	16	2	2	8	11	1	-	-	-
Simbargaon	24	-	1	9	15	1	3	2	1
Tinali	18	1	1	9	7	4	2	5	2
Titaguri	20	2	3	7	12	6	5	10	-
Total	122	13	15	55	71	24	10	17	3
Total in % Respondents x 100/150	81	9	10	37	47	16	33	57	10

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

On the other hand 9% of the respondent favoured nomination of VCDC members from amongst the best qualified. Some of them had to say that holding too many elections is waste of money and there is always a risk of sheer violence between the parties and the opponents. However, 10% of the respondents are seen neither supporting nor against election. In case of women representation in VCDC only 37%

think that women are getting enough representation in VCDC. It is a matter of praiseworthy that Debargaon VCDC and Simbargaon VCDC have a women chairperson along with 3 and 2 other women members respectively. However, the majority of 47% think that women are not getting due share in the VCDC body. Though, women are appointed as Chairperson in these villages but most of the people think that they are appointed in the name sake only because despite of having the women Chairperson it was found that the male members are actively playing more dominant role in making decisions. As such women remain over-powered by the male members in most political decision. Nevertheless, it is a noble step towards empowering women through induction in VCDC. So far as the representation of other caste is concern 33% is satisfied with their representation in the VCDC, while majority of 57% think that their caste are not getting due representation in the VCDC.

4.6.2 Level of Transparency and Accountability:

Table 4.6.2 shows the accountability and transparency level of the VCDC. The accountability and transparency is the main characteristic features of democratic state and democratic institutions. In this connection the accountability index of VCDC stands quite low with 27% whereas, 58% of the people believe that VCDC is not accountable towards people. On the other hand 15% of the people are aware of it. In matter of transparency level VCDC stands even lower as only 16% of the people think that VCDC is somewhat maintaining transparency towards people whereas, the majority with 71% doesn't think VCDC is maintaining transparency. Further, the study also revealed that VCDC doesn't held Gram Sabha regularly. The majority of

people with 47% have to say that VCDC doesn't convene meeting or Gram Sabha within regular 6 months; whereas only a handful of 13% have to say that VCDC organise Gram Sabha within 6 months or schedule period.

Table: 4.6.2: Accountability & Transparency

VCDC	Accountability Level of VCDC			Transparency Level Of VCDC			Held Gram Shaba Regularly (3-6 months)			Do you Participate in Gram Shaba		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Rarely	Every time	Some time	Rarely
Debargaon	15	19	6	8	26	6	5	16	19	14	16	10
Kalugaon	6	12	2	4	14	2	3	9	8	3	11	6
Krigaon	3	15	2	1	17	2	0	16	4	5	11	4
Simbargaon	4	17	4	3	19	3	3	13	9	6	12	7
Tinali	8	9	3	5	12	3	6	5	9	5	8	7
Titaguri	5	15	5	3	19	3	3	12	10	6	15	3
Total	41	87	22	24	108	19	20	71	59	39	74	37
Total %	27	58	15	16	71	13	13	47	39	26	49	25

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

While 39% have to say that VCDC rarely convene Gram Sabha within the 6 months or schedule period. So far as the participation of the people is concern only 26% are regular attendee of VCDC meeting; whereas, the people attending sometimes (not regular attendees) in VCDC organised Gram Sabha constitutes dully a majority of 49%. On the other hand, 25% of the people attend Gram Sabha rarely or occasionally. The level of participation is somewhat alarming from democratic perspective. Hence, VCDC in this matter needs urgent think-tank to redress their weakness and flaws to stimulate peoples to participate in Gram Sabha.

4.6.3- Level of Political Participation and Political Empowerment:

Keeping in mind the popular believed that local self government empower the people politically through their involvement in the governing process, the respondent were enquired about the role of VCDC in empowering the people politically. The political climate is quite unpredictable since a notably 71% of the respondents believed that VCDC is somewhat empowering the rural population politically.

Table: 4.6.3 Peoples Participation and Political Empowerment

VCDC	Political Empowerment Through VCDC			Participation of Common People in VCDC			Women Participation in VCDC		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Debargaon	35	3	2	30	9	1	31	3	6
Kalugaon	16	2	2	13	4	3	12	2	6
Karigaon	14	4	2	10	7	3	12	8	-
Simbargaon	13	10	2	14	10	1	12	11	2
Tinali	16	1	3	14	3	3	12	5	3
Titaguri	13	8	4	18	7	-	12	9	3
Total	107	28	15	99	40	11	92	38	20
Total in % Respondents x 100/150	71	19	10	66	27	7	61	25	13

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

However, 19% of the respondents don't find VCDC empowering the common people politically. The index of participation of common people in VCDC is somewhat low with 66% only, while 27% find that VCDC has failed to ensure the participation of the common people in their working process. In case of women's participation in VCDC the index is even lower with barely measuring 61%

participation whereas, 25% find that VCDC has failed to ensure women's active participation in the decision making process of VCDC. In a democracy wide mass participation is highly desirable. In this case the figure of people's participation in VCDC is not convincing although, the majority of 71% finds VCDC empowering people politically.

4.7 Critical Evaluation on the Achievements & Failures of VCDC:

Based on the role of VCDC in socio-economic development, political empowerment and the role of VCDC in implementation and execution of various government schemes; and considering both weakness and strength of VCDC the overall achievements and failures of VCDC is attempted to evaluate. The following table below is the perspective of the respondent and based on that the achievements and failures of VCDC are attempted to measure.

4.7.1 Assessment on the State of Rural Infrastructure:

In the table 4.7.1, the state of rural road infrastructure, medical sub-centre facilities, rural electrification, school facilities and drinking water facilities are evaluated. While in a visit to the villages it has been found that most of the villages have a good road linking with the PWD road and sub- high way. However, in a few villages under Titaguri VCDC, Simbargaon VCDC and Karigaon VCDC the road conditions was found with minor damage or deteriorating conditions with pot holes and breaks. The 75% of the rural population have expressed their satisfaction with the existing rural roads. As per medical sub-centre is concerned, the household were questioned about the facilities and services like medicine, attendance of nurse, medical staff, locations of the sub-centre within the radius of 3 km and so on. The study

revealed that 63% are not satisfied with the existing facilities and services provided by the sub-centres. The rural areas under studied have achieved cent percent electrification. Though, the majority of 84% consumers are satisfied with the supply of electricity with lesser 16% not fully satisfied due to irregularity and abrupt power cut for long hours.

Table: 4.7.1 Conditions of Rural Infrastructure

VCDC	Conditions of Rural Road Infrastructure		Medical Sub-Centre Facilities (Within 1-3 Km)		Electrification		School (LP within 1 km) (ME within 2-3 Km)		Drinking Water Facilities (Tube Well)	
									Filtered	Unfiltered
	Good	Bad	Some what Good	Bad	Good	Bad	Good	Bad		
Debargaon	28	2	23	17	36	4	33	7	11	29
Kalugaon	16	4	3	17	16	4	14	6	3	17
Karigaon	14	6	4	16	17	3	11	9	2	18
Simbargaon	17	8	8	17	19	6	16	9	5	20
Tinali	17	3	9	11	17	3	13	7	6	14
Titaguri	11	14	9	16	21	4	18	7	5	20
Total	113	37	56	94	126	24	105	45	32	118
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	75	25	37	63	84	16	70	30	21	79

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

So far as the infrastructure of lower primary and middle primary school infrastructure is concern 70% are satisfied with the existing conditions of these schools. The study revealed that all the villages have a lower primary school within 1 km radius as well as middle primary school within the radius of 3 km. The study also revealed that 100% household uses tube well for drinking water. The people don't

have a complaint about availability and scarcity of clean drinking water. They feel that drinking water in this region is hygiene enough to consume. The rural household with around 79% consume water without filter while only 21% uses purified water for consumption.

4.7.2: Level of Implementation of Government Schemes:

Since, the BPL household constitute majority with 63%, (Table:4.5.5) the implementation of various government schemes like total sanitation programmes and housing under IAY, MGNREGA and NSAP means for BPL households were evaluated.

Table: 4.7.2: Toilet & Sanitation, IAY, MGNREGA, NSAP.

VCDC	Toilet and Sanitation facilities		Government Housing Beneficiaries under IAY (BPL H/H= 94)	MGNREGA	NSAP
	BPL	APL			
Debargaon	12	14	23	22	
Kalugaon	6	11	10	8	2
Karigaon	7	6	10	16	2
Simbargaon	9	8	15	17	1
Tinali	6	7	11	13	1
Titaguri	6	9	11	14	2
Total	46	55	80	90	8
Total %	49	100	85	60	5

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

The BPL household having proper toilet and sanitation facilities constitute only 49% and 85% from amongst the BPL household have already been benefited with housing under IAY programme. Under, total sanitation programme only 49%

household has been covered till date. Again, 60% household of the BPL family have been benefited with short term employment programmes for various government grants under MGNREGA in recent past. However, the respondents have argued that government schemes for short term employment guarantee have drastically reduced in recent years. Under NSAP programme 5% household has been receiving old aged pension however, no widow has received financial assistance or support till now under such programme nor VCDC have taken initiatives to recommendation for such benefits.

4.7.3: Level of Implementation and Achievements of Developmental Schemes:

Table 4.7.3 show the level of satisfaction of people in their implementation of various government schemes and overall achievements of its key objectives like constructions and maintenance of public property and so on. While the majority with 59% feels that government schemes are not being properly implemented within time frame. The construction works like road, culvert, and the housing construction under IAY are not completed within stipulated time frame. The index indicating somewhat satisfied is displeasingly low with 27%, whereas 14%, are not aware of it. In case of achievements of its key objectives VCDC stands with 33% only, where as 44% feels that VCDC has failed to ensures its key objectives. On the other end, 18% don't have idea. Again, the respondents were asked about their satisfaction on role of VCDC in rural development where the majority of respondent with 49% expressed their unsatisfactory with the role of VCDC in rural development; whereas 35% have expressed in somewhat satisfied.

Table 4.7.3 Show the level of Implementation and Achievements

VCDC	Implementation of Government Scheme (Level of Quality & Time of Completion)			Level of Achievement of its key objectives (Construction & maintenance of public property)			Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction of Respondent in the role of VCDC in Rural Development		
	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know
Debargaon	11	23	6	13	18	9	14	17	9
Kalugaon	5	11	4	8	10	2	10	9	3
Krigaon	4	15	1	5	13	2	2	13	5
Simbargaon	6	15	4	7	11	7	9	15	1
Tinali	7	10	3	8	9	3	9	6	5
Titaguri	7	15	3	8	13	4	8	13	4
Total	40	89	21	49	66	27	52	73	27
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	27	59	14	33	44	18	35	49	18

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

On the other hand, 18% of the respondents are either not aware or not clear about the role of VCDC in Rural Development. It was quite discouraging to know the fact that most of the poor public are neither aware of the government schemes nor the role of the VCDC in executing these schemes.

4.7.4: An Assessment on the leadership qualities of VCDC members:

The good leadership assumes an important place in any institutions. The success and failure of any organization or institutions largely depends on the quality leadership. While the effectiveness of the VCDC members are concerned only 39%

feels that VCDC chairman are rendering public service in a competent manner; whereas the majority of 48% feels that VCDC chairman are incompetent and the rest 18% are either don't know the chairman or they are not aware of their work proficiency.

Table: 4.7.4 Respondents rating on Proficiency of VCDC

VCDC	Proficiency of VCDC members (Liked/Disliked by Respondent)						Is VCDC successful in addressing local issues/ problems?		
	Chairman			Other Member			Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know
	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know			
Debargaon	14	18	8	14	16	10	15	11	14
Kalugaon	11	8	1	9	7	4	9	6	5
Krigaon	5	13	2	5	13	2	4	13	3
Simbargaon	7	13	5	5	17	3	6	11	8
Tinali	11	4	5	7	8	5	8	6	6
Titaguri	10	9	6	7	11	7	7	13	5
Total	58	65	27	47	72	31	49	60	41
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	39	43	18	31	48	21	33	40	27

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

So far as the working of other VCDC members is concern their proficiency stands at 31%; while majority with 48% certified them incompetent and 21% are either, doesn't know the members and their work as well. Again, the success rate of

VCDC in addressing the existing local issues are tried to measured through people's perspective. In this case, a relatively small section of people with 33% feels VCDC is somewhat successful in addressing the concern local issues. These issues are mostly the development programmes of rural infrastructure like rural road, culvert, proper selection of beneficiaries, and proper implementation of government schemes related to poverty alleviation and rural development in general. While the majority of 40% feels that VCDC has failed to address the local issues. On the other hand, 27% of the respondents don't have a clue about how far VCDC is successful in addressing the local needs as well as the problems of the villages.

4.7.5 Respondents view on Corruption:

VCDC is assigned with task to select the beneficiaries. While making selection it has to ensure that poor household are benefited the government schemes means for their development. In case of selection of beneficiaries the majority of 55% believed that the members of VCDC are not genuine. Majority of the respondents alleged that the members of VCDC practice favouritism and select only those supporters of a particular political party and their near and dear one for government benefits. The members are not fair in the selection of beneficiaries. While only 25% feels that government benefits are given to the right and deserving persons. Again, VCDC has been alleged for indulging in rampant corruption time and again since its inception. And, so far as the corruption is concern fairly large majority 75% believed that VCDC members are corrupt. The majority of member involves in the corrupt practice like-accepting briberies, demand shares out of benefits from the poor beneficiaries.

Table: 4.7.5 Respondents view on level of corruption

VCDC	VCDC does Favouritism in Selection of Beneficiaries			Corrupt (Previous years- 2013)			Corruption (In Last 3-4 years) (From 2014-17)			
	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Raised	Same	Declined (Some what)	Don't Know
Debargaon	19	12	9	26	3	11	-	7	27	8
Kalugaon	12	3	5	18	2	-	2	4	9	5
Krigaon	13	4	3	17	-	3	3	8	5	4
Simbargaon	18	2	5	25	-	-	3	7	10	5
Tinali	9	7	4	9	6	5	-	3	14	3
Titaguri	11	9	5	17	4	4	-	7	12	6
Total	82	37	31	112	15	23	8	36	75	31
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	55	25	21	75	10	15	5	24	50	21

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

Considering the allegation of high corruption respondents are further enquired whether corruption in recent years has raised or declined; astoundingly 50% of the respondent feels corruption has declined in last 3-4 years, however, 5% feels that corruption has raised instead. On the other hand, the 24% have to say that corruption has neither declined nor raise and 21% of the respondent are not aware of it.

4.7.6: Level of Autonomy, Funds and its Utilization:

Autonomy and funds is vital for performing any task. In particular the suitable autonomy and sufficient funds is required for carrying out the developmental works. The insufficiency of funds and autonomy often stand as hindrance to any task. In this connection the respondents were asked about the autonomy of VCDC and the

sufficiency of funds it receives to carry out rural development. The enquiry revealed that the majority of 66% think that VCDC exercise very less autonomy, while 23% have to say that autonomy is not the hindrance for the effective working of the VCDC. On the other end, 11% are not aware of it.

Table: 4.7.6: Autonomy, Funds and it's Utilization

VCDC	Level of Autonomy of VCDC is Less (Not Sufficient)			Availability of Funds or Funds it receives is Less (Not Sufficient)			Proper Utilisation of Fund & Other Resources		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Good (Some what)	Poor	Don't Know
Debargaon	27	9	4	22	12	6	13	23	4
Kalugaon	16	2	2	17	2	1	8	10	2
Krigaon	12	5	3	8	9	3	5	15	-
Simbargaon	15	10	-	14	8	3	7	16	2
Tinali	15	2	3	17	2	1	7	9	4
Titaguri	14	6	5	15	4	6	7	14	4
Total	99	34	17	93	37	20	47	87	16
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	66	23	11	62	25	13	31	58	11

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

Again, in case of fund it receives 62% feels that it is not sufficient to carry out development functions, while 25% of the respondent feels that VCDC is receiving sufficient fund for village development. On the other end, 13% village folks are not aware of it. It is a known fact that proper utilisation of funds and proper management of human resources can bring all-round development. It has been highly recommended in today's progressive world. In case of proper utilisation of funds and other resources like human resources in the developmental activities only 31% are somewhat satisfied

and the majority of 58% are not satisfied with the allocation and utilisation of the funds as well as in case of proper employment of human resources in developmental activities.

4.7.7 Determining Achievements and Failures of VCDC through People's Perspective:

The respondents were asked "How successful is VCDC as a local government mechanism"? In this connection, 39% of the respondents have expressed somewhat satisfied; whereas, majority of 43% literally think it has failed being a local government mechanism. On the other hand 18% of the respondent doesn't have idea.

Table: 4.7.7 Achievements & Failures Scale

VCDC	How successful is VCDC as a local government mechanism?			If not satisfied. State/Indicate from the following: (A) Inefficient Members (B) Limited Fund (C) Limited Autonomy (D) Corrupt (E) Not Pro Public (F) Non-Democratic (G) No Planning or Blueprint or Roadmap for development (H) Others (No limit in Choosing)							
	Yes (Some what)	No	Don't Know	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Debargaon	14	18	8	6	5	-	29	3	-	5	1
Kalugaon	6	13	1	2	5	2	14	1	-	3	-
Krigaon	9	6	5	3	1	2	17	3	-	4	-
Simbargaon	11	10	4	5	1	5	19	-	2	6	-
Tinali	7	8	5	1	5	2	13	3	-	5	-
Titaguri	12	9	4	5	4	3	19	2	-	4	-
Total	59	64	27	22	21	14	111	12	2	27	1
Total in % (Respondents x 100/150)	39	43	18	15	14	9	74	8	1	18	1

Source: Field Survey (20th Jan- 26th Feb 2017)

Considering, the failure and success of VCDC the respondents were also asked to choose the following reasons given as options in the table. The majority of 74% feels corruption as the primary reason for their dissatisfaction, while 15% are dissatisfied with the inefficacy of members; on the other hand, 14% believed that insufficient funds is also hindrance in the working of VCDC; while 9% believed that VCDC as a local government enjoys very limited autonomy i.e. they don't enjoy free hand in making plans and policies for the village development; on the other hand, 14% believed that insufficient funds is also hindrance in the working of VCDC; while 9% believed that VCDC as a local government enjoys very limited autonomy i.e. they don't enjoy free hand in making plans and policies for the village development; whereas, 8% argued that VCDC members are not pro-public or not accountable towards public i.e. their approach towards public is very poor; while 18% feels that VCDC has failed due to poor planning i.e. no proper blue print or road map for developmental activities and the respective 1% each expressed that non democratic selection process of the members have also hindered in the quality performance as well as the other reasons like greedy nexus among vested interested Block Development Officers and the VCDC members altogether these problems reasons hindered VCDC in effective working for the rural development.

This chapter discussed the role of the VCDC in three major aspects: socio-economic development and political empowerment based on data acquired from the field survey. Based on the above analysis of data the findings would be drawn. And, based on the findings the hypotheses would be tested.