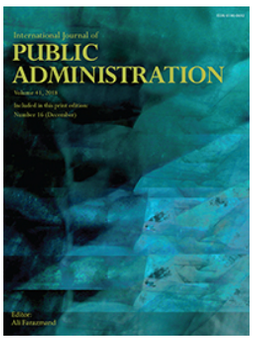

International Journal of Public Administration

ISSN: 0190-0692 (Print) 1532-4265 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/lpad20

Public Resource Allocation through Grassroots Democratic Institutions: Evidence from Assam, India

Subodh Chandra Das & Gurudas Das

To cite this article: Subodh Chandra Das & Gurudas Das (2018) Public Resource Allocation through Grassroots Democratic Institutions: Evidence from Assam, India, International Journal of Public Administration, 41:16, 1325-1337, DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2017.1387918

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1387918

Published online: 20 Oct 2017.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 238

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=lpad20

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
2018, VOL. 41, NO. 16, 1325–1337
https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1387918

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

Public Resource Allocation through Grassroots Democratic Institutions: Evidence from Assam, India

Subodh Chandra Das and Gurudas Das

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology Silchar, Assam, Silchar, India

ABSTRACT

The success of democratic institutions at the grassroots level in allocating public benefits to the target groups depends on people's political participation. Applying logistic regression, ordinary least squares (OLS), and the Heckman model based on a data set collected from 30 panchayats from three districts of Assam (India), this article addresses three questions: (a) who participates? (b) who gets the public benefits? and (c) whether participants get more benefits. The results suggest no overwhelming elite capture and clientalization, and contributes to the current debate on the association between democracy and development by way of establishing that democracy at the grassroots does, indeed, deliver.

KEYWORDS

Grassroots democracy; decentralization; resource allocation; participation; clientalization

Introduction

Democracy at the grassroots_being closer to the people and monitored by themselves—is expected to deliver development better by way of amplifying their voice in policy making, which helps in disciplining the providers of public goods, resulting in the efficient distribution of benefits of public welfare schemes and programs (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2000, 2006; Besley, Pande, & Rao, 2005; Blair, 2000; Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2000; Crook & James, 2000; Galasso and Ravallion, 2005; Wang & Yang, 2007). However, the local self-government, the lowest of the three tiers of governance (central, state, and local) usually found in most of the federal democratic structures across the countries, has received the least attention in spite of its overwhelming importance in delivering development to the people (Fossas & Velasco, 2005; Lazar & Seal, 2005; Libonati, 2005; Pernthaler & Gamper, 2005; Saunders, 2005; Steytler, 2005; Toritto, 2005). It was only during the 1990s that a rethinking has dawned as to why democracies have failed to usher distributional equality where the vast majority has been marginalized while only a small segment of elites could prosper (Bardhan, 1996; Gosh, 1992; Lipton & Ravallion, 1993). This has led to a wave of efforts toward the decentralization of democratic institutions in order to deepen the democracy at the grassroots across countries like Brazil (1988), Ghana (1992), Indonesia (1999), South Africa (1996), Bolivia (1994), and also India, where the local self-government, known as *panchayati raj*, acquired constitutional status through the 73rd Amendment Act 1992 (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2005; Blair, 2000; Faguet, 2003; Green, 2005; World Bank, 2000).

> The strengthening of grassroots democratic institutions has produced mixed results by way of improving the delivery system and resource allocation in favor of the economically underprivileged in some countries, while further deteriorating them in some others. For example, in Bolivia, democratization at the grassroots made the government more responsive by redirecting public investment to areas of greatest need by shifting them from economic production and infrastructure to social services and human capital formation, and resources were rebalanced in favor of poorer districts (Faguet, 2003). On the other hand, in Indonesia, the distribution of resources has become more unequal across regions and has increased corruption after the introduction of these institutions (Green, 2005). Participation differential at the grassroots appears to hold the key behind the success or failure of a democratic system in delivering results at the local level. Whereas in Bolivia, the inclusion of people's participation directly in the local governance process via oversight committees made it accountable, resulting in good governance (Faguet, 2003), the absence of the same in Indonesia has led to poor accountability, mistrust among stakeholders, and widespread corruption (Green, 2005).

The same also appears to hold good in case of India, where the poor and underprivileged sections in rural areas were found to have been integrated to a significant extent with the *panchayati raj* system and could reap significant benefits by their participation in some states like West Bengal,

CONTACT Subodh Chandra Das dsubodh30@gmail.com Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology Silchar, Assam, Silchar, India.

© 2017 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu (Bardhan, Mitra, Mookherjee, & Sarkar, 2011; Besley et al., 2005) where democratic practices are vibrant, whereas they have been excluded in states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where wealthy and empowered people dominate the power structure of the local self-governments (Alsop, Krishna, & Sjoblom, 2000; World Bank, 2000).

As the success or failure of a democratic institution in allocating public benefits largely depends on political participation, this article has first sought to answer as to who participates in the political process of forming the local self-government? Second, it seeks to answer whether participation matters for the access to public benefits. Although studies have found lesser participation of women in the political process(Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005) leading to the formation of local self-government, the novelty of our study lies in some findings. (i) The likelihood of women participating both in political campaign and in voting increases with education. In fact, the likelihood of participating in campaign and voting by women increases by 21% and 36%, respectively, with an additional year of education—signifying the tremendous importance of women's education in democracy. (ii) On the contrary, the likelihood of voting decreases among men with additional years of schooling, a phenomenon that has not been adequately studied in the education-and-democracy literature, perhaps signifying a relation between education and cynicism in men. (iii) Although studies (Díaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, & Ruiz-Euler, 2013; Olken, 2010) have mapped some sort of correspondence between public benefits and political participation, this study focuses on the reverse, which is, indeed, scarce in the literature, and finds that participation does matter in accessing public benefits. Our results suggest that the people who have participated in all the three forms of political activities—campaign, vote, and attending the meetings of *Gaon Sabha*—have substantially (19%) higher access to public benefits compared with the others who either participated partially or did not participate.

Study area and data

The present study is based on the data collected from 30 *Gram Panchayats* (GP) from three districts of Assam, the easternmost state of India, and together constituting southern Assam, popularly known as the Barak Valley. In fact, Assam has a multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multireligious social base. The democratic system of governance holds its 3-crore population over a geographical spread of 30,285 sq miles. Despite having primordial loyalty-based discontents, the democratic tradition is quite strong in Assam with a long history of self-governance, which was further strengthened by the implementation of the Assam Panchayat Act 1994, premised on the 73rd Amendment Act 1992. Currently, 25 out of the 34 districts of Assam, with 85% of the state's population, fall under the purview of the *panchayat raj* system, whereas the rest of the seven districts, predominantly inhabited by different tribal groups, are administrated by the institution of autonomous district council created under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution and two districts are under metropolitan. As 86% of the population in Assam live in rural areas (Census, 2011) and about 40% of them live below the poverty line, various welfare schemes targeted at the rural poor are being implemented through the *panchayati raj* institution (PRI). Thus, successful operation of the institution of the village panchayat is a *sine qua non* for the well-being of the rural people. Hence, it is imperative to investigate the linkages between participation in local self-governance and access to public provisioning, which has been attempted in this study. The present study is based on a primary survey, for which data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 450 households, selected using the multistage cluster sampling technique, across 30 *Gaon Panchayats* from three districts of southern Assam during the periods November 2014 and June 2015. The details of the population and the sample are provided in Table 1.

As the districts are divided into blocks, adoption of an arbitrary criterion of roughly one block out of five has resulted in the random selection of three blocks from Cachar, two blocks from Karimganj, and one block from Hailakandi. A random selection of five GPs from each block, one ward from each GP, and 15 households from each ward led to a total sample size of 450.

Table 1. Population and sample.

	Total		Cachar		Karimganj		Hailakandi	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
No. of Blocks	22	6	15	3	7	2	5	1
No. of GPs	259	30	163	15	96	10	62	5
No. of Wards	2590	30	1630	15	960	10	620	5
No. of Households*	590664	450	347264	225	243400	150	131852	75

Source: Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Govt. Of Assam; Census of India 2011
*Calculated by using standard household size, i.e., 5 by NSSO.

Table 2. Sample characteristics.

Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage
Women	7.33	Having IAY house	19.11
Access to media	59.55	Campaigned	37.11
Landless	57.11	Cast vote	92.66
Durable goods	42.88	Attended GS	31.11
Belongs to SC	26.66	Variables	Mean
General caste	43.11	Age	43.92
Having BPL card	44.44	Years of Education	7.75
Having Job Card	55.33	Family size	5.48

Source: Field survey, November 2014 to June 2015

The descriptive statistics of the sample (Table 2) show a gender bias, with only 7.33% of the respondents being women. This built-in bias is mainly due to the fact that heads of the households, who are predominantly male, were chosen as the respondents. The mean age of the respondents, mostly heading the nuclear families, was around 44 years, and who usually got married in their mid-twenties. As the scope for higher education is hardly available in villages, the mean years of education for the sample stands at eight, signifying the fact that most of the respondents completed at least the upper primary level. About 60% of the respondents have access to media, where the electronic form is more popular than its print counterparts. Although a majority of the sample households are landless (57%), 32.66% were having marginal holding, 8.89% had small holding, and 1% had semi-medium holding, indicating the economically depressed nature of the study area. About 60% of the respondents reported farming to be their main occupation, while the rest 40% reported nonfarm activities as the principal source of livelihood, signifying the predominance of agriculture as the main source of income.

Instead of money income, which is often difficult to arrive at due to the self-sufficient nature of the rural households, following Besley et al. (2005) and Kumar (2007), we used the availability of consumer durables, which is used to capture the broad economic status of the respondents; it revealed that 43% of the households were better off as they had at least one of the consumer durables like a color television, a refrigerator, or a motorized vehicle. However, although 44% of the respondents had BPL (Below Poverty Line) cards, 55% possessed job cards and 19% had a house under Indira Awas Yojana (IAY).

As far as social identity is concerned, 72% of the respondents belonged to the Hindu community and the rest 28% were Muslims. Furthermore, the Hindus are divided into three caste groups: general caste or forward caste, other backward classes (OBC), and scheduled castes (SC). In the cast matrix, Muslims are generally included in the general caste albeit a small section also belongs to OBC. In our sample, 44% of the respondents belong to the general caste, 29% belong to OBC, and the rest 27% belong to SC, indicating the coexistence of caste heterogeneity in rural Assam. Regarding political participation, 93% of the respondents reported having cast their votes in the panchayat election, which is almost at par with the polling behavior of other Indian states like Madhya Pradesh (2005), Rajasthan (2005), and West Bengal (2003), where rural poll participation was 95% (Bardhan et al., 2011; Krishna, 2006). However, effective participation by way of campaign (37%) and attendance in Gaon Sabha (31%) is not as enthusiastic as it is in the case of voting.

Model specification

(i) Antecedents of political participation

Peoples' participation in the political process, which is viewed as a means to an end and an end in itself, makes the democratic institutions vibrant and helps them adopt a pro-people agenda of governance (Dreze & Sen, 2002). Participation by itself fosters qualities such as tolerance, endurance, articulation, etc., which are essential for the effective functioning of the democratic system. At the same time, the development of these qualities enables individuals to participate in future events. Thus, participation sets in motion a circular causal process—the more the individual citizen participates, the better he/she is able to do so (Pateman, 1970). Such participation strengthens social harmony, community spirit, and political stability (Kulipossa, 2004), helps in the acceptance of democratic principles and attitudes (Galston, 2001), increases individuals' perceived sense of external political efficacy (Finkel, 1985, 1987), perceived voting power, trust, and confidence in the government (Victoria, 2012), and enhances 'procedural utility' (Shapiro & Winters, 2008). Participation is also viewed as a solution to the problem of exclusion of the marginalized groups in a hierarchical social structure (Bhattacharya & Jairath, 2012).

Besides these intrinsic values, the higher the participation at the grassroots level is, the more is the likelihood that public resources would be properly spent (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005). As the governments formulate social welfare programs in response to the citizenry's expression of their demands and preferences through conventional channels of participation, voter participation has a significant influence on the introduction and expansion of such programs (Hicks & Swank, 1992; Schneider & Ingraham, 1984). Furthermore, participation contributes significantly to overall project outcome, effectiveness, and equality of accessing the facilities (Khwaja, 2004; Narayan, 1995). The greater the representation of women in the democratic institutions, the lower is the level of corruption

(Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti, 2001). However, in general, corruption has a negative relationship with peoples' political participation (Hooghe & Quintelier, 2013; Olsson, 2014). Hence, in the development literature, participation *per se* is considered an important indicator for the health and resilience of democratic institutions (Dreze & Sen, 2002). By proxy, participation stands for development, as it reduces the chances of public resources being misused and misappropriated and expands human capabilities. Despite its immense importance, people's political participation varies across individuals, households, communities, and locations. The literature on political behavior is replete with efforts made by scholars in order to identify the factors that influence people's political participation (Bardhan et al., 2011; Basely et al 2005; Powel, 1986). Age (Gaviria, Panizza, & Wallack, 2003; Powel, 1986), gender (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005; Gaviria et al., 2003; World Bank, 2000), education (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005; Krishna, 2006; World Bank, 2000), access to information (Krishna, 2006; World Bank, 2000), land ownership (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005; Kumar, 2007; World Bank, 2000), economic condition (wealthy or poor) (Besley et al., 2005; Kumar, 2007), caste identity (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005; World Bank, 2000), village literacy rate, proportion of SC, and reservation of the post of president of village panchayat by gender or caste (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley, Pande, Rahman, & Rao, 2004, 2005; Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2000) all have a significant influence on people's political participation.

The present study intends to examine the influence of individual characteristics (I) like age, gender, years of education, and access to information; household characteristics (H) like ownership of land, economic condition, and family size; community characteristics (C) like caste identity; and village-level characteristics (V) like literacy rate, proportion of SC, reservation of the post of president of village panchayat by gender or caste on people's political participation. Three indicators, i.e., attending Gram Shabha (GS) meeting, participating in election campaign, and casting vote in panchayat election, have been considered for assessing one's political participation. Each of these three activities has been used as a dummy and assigned the value '1' if yes and '0' otherwise, and used as dependent variables. Considering their binary nature, we have adopted the following Logit specification:

$$Ln\left(\frac{Pi}{1-Pi}\right) = \beta_1 + \beta_2 I_i + \beta_3 H_i + \beta_4 C_i + \beta_5 V_i \quad (1)$$

where Pi = probability of household *i* participating in village council meeting, election campaign, and voting. I, H, C, and V are the vectors of individual, household, community, and village-level characteristics, respectively.

(ii) Linkages between political participation and accrual of benefits from welfare schemes

Does political participation enhance the possibility of benefiting from public welfare schemes? Alternatively, do the beneficiaries of public welfare schemes participate more in the local political process? It has been hypothesized that as electoral democracy is essentially a promoter of patron–client relationship, a positive association between the accrual of benefits from the welfare programs and political participation is likely to be observed, particularly at the grassroots level (Robinson & Verdier, 2013). The present study intends to examine this relationship in the context of one of the states in India, viz. Assam, taking a cue from Baez, Camacho, Conover, and Zárate (2012), Manacorda, Miguel, and Vigorito (2011), and Pop-Eleches and Pop-Eleches (2012), who studied similar associations in the context of antipoverty programs in Colombia, Uruguay, and Romania, respectively. Three centrally sponsored antipoverty programs—Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), IAY, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which are being implemented through the PRI—have been considered for the evaluation of this patron–client relationship. TPDS, launched in 1997, a building block of India's antipoverty initiatives, is an income-based program that classifies households into two categories, namely above poverty line (APL) and BPL. Holders of BPL card, besides having access to goods supplied through PDS at subsidized rates, can also be easily identified for benefits from any other targeted antipoverty programs. IAY, launched in 1985, a flagship social welfare program, is designed to provide housing for the rural BPL poor, with a built-in bias in favor of the marginalized groups (SC and Scheduled Tribes). MGNREGA, introduced in 2005, is the first rights-based antipoverty measure to ensure employment availability of at least 100 days in a year for every rural poor. Possession of each of these three public benefits—BPL card under TDPS, housing under IAY, and job card under MGNREGA—has been used as a dummy and assigned the value '1' if yes and '0' otherwise. The following logit specification is used to examine the pattern of public benefits distribution.

$$Ln\left(\frac{Pi}{1-Pi}\right) = \beta_1 + \beta_2 I_i + \beta_3 H_i + \beta_4 C_i \quad (2)$$

where P_i is the probability of household *i* receiving a public benefit. I, H, and C are the vectors of individual, household, and community characteristics, respectively. The results of equations 1 and 2 are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. Does political participation yield

any dividend? To comprehend this question, we made an attempt to trace the linkages between political participation and access to public benefits. Two indices—participation index (ParIndex) and access to public benefit index (APBIndex)—have been constructed using multiple correspondence analyses (MCA) following Howe, Hargreaves, and Huttly (2008). Both ParIndex and the public benefit index are developed from three types of participation as well as the public benefit schemes already mentioned. As all the variables used for developing the indices are binary in nature, MCA is used for calculating weights rather than principal component analysis (PCA) (Howe et al., 2008).

We have regressed 'logAPBIndex' on campaign (model 1); GS (model 2); vote (model 3); campaign, GS, and vote (model 4); and 'logParIndex' (model 5). In each case, we have also added other controls. The results are presented in Table 5. However, there is a possibility of selection bias associated with the fact that the participants and nonparticipants may differ in unobservable characteristics (such as skill, intelligence, etc.). If the unobservable characteristics are correlated with both the dependent variable (access to public benefits) and a regressor (political participation), then the coefficient of that variable will be biased and inconsistent (Miyata, Minot, & Hu, 2009). To correct for selection bias, we have estimated the treatment effect model (also called the Heckman selection-Correction model), which provides an unbiased and consistent estimate of the parameters. In the first stage of the Heckman model, a probit regression, in which the dependent variables—campaign, attendance in GS, and voting—are binary (zero [0] or one [1] type of response), has been used. The second stage of the model uses the ordinary least squares (OLS) method for estimating the impact of political participation on public benefits. The access to public benefits index has been used as the dependent variable in the second stage. The first-stage model is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 women + \alpha_2 age + \alpha_3 education \\ + \alpha_4 media + \alpha_5 landless + \alpha_6 durables \\ + \alpha_7 family\ size + \alpha_8 SC + \alpha_9 Literacy\ Rate \\ + \alpha_{10} SC\ reserved + \alpha_{11} women\ reserved + \mathbf{U_i} \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Z_i is equal to 1 if the respondent has participated, and 0 otherwise.

After estimating equation (3), using a bivariate probit model, an inverse of the mills ratio (IMR) is computed for each observation and is included as an independent variable in the second-stage model. The second-stage model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 education + \beta_2 landless + \beta_3 durables \\ + \beta_4 Family\ Size + \beta_5 SCs + \beta_6 Literacy\ rate \\ + \beta_7 SC\ reserved + \beta_8 women\ reserved \\ + \beta_9 IMR + U_i \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Access to public benefits Y_i is hypothesized to be affected by household's participation in PRI and β_i's are the estimation parameters. IMR is the expected value of the residuals from the first stage that is truncated in the second stage. The results are presented in Table 6.

Results and discussion

Who participates in election campaign?

The logistic regression results from equation 1 are presented in Table 3. Column 2 shows that (*a la* Bardhan et al. (2011)) women are less likely to participate in election campaign compared to their male counterparts, perhaps due to the fact that they are tied up with household chores and have to dedicate more time as caregivers and hence, unlike males, are less mobile and hardly play any role in rural collective life. However, an interaction between women and education shows that the likelihood of women's participation in election campaign increases with years of education. It might be due to the fact that educated women are more empowered and face lesser obstacles in coming out for election campaign.

Respondents having access to media (print or electronic) are found to have higher odds in favor of campaigning, indicating the fact that better awareness leads to higher political participation. As participation in election campaign requires an individual's personal political commitment, the household, community, and GP-level characteristics are found to be statistically insignificant. Similar is the case for education, which is not found to be statistically significant, although some studies like that of Bardhan et al. (2011) have found education to be positively and significantly associated with participation in election campaign in West Bengal. It might be recalled that conventional wisdom suggests that education increases civic skills and political knowledge, which acts as a causal mechanism inducing political participation. However, the preadult socialization model (Kam & Palmer, 2008; Mondak & Halperin, 2008) suggests that education works as a proxy for other variables like family, socioeconomic status, political socialization in the home environment, and personal characteristics such as cognitive ability, etc.; however, the relative education model (Aars and

Table 3. Logistic regression results of Equation 1.

Variables	Campaign Main effect	Campaign Interaction	Vote Main effect	Vote Interaction	GS Main effect	GS Interaction
Individual Characteristics						
Women	−.8519447 * .4508338	−2.5114*** .902633	−.9457841 .6353811	−3.2117*** 1.034824	.6002133 .3934493	−.4244724 .7408944
Age	−.0052415 .0086066	−.005152 .0086698	.0231767 .0159324	.0224176 .0164361	.0244833** .0097782	.02487** .0099024
Education	.0109221 .0329136	.0139072 .0368163	−.0439976 .0595033	−.1228089* .0665263	.036904 .0354257	.0427359 .0359272
Access to media	.5842353** .2501996	.5977601** .25377	.8434236 ** .3739692	.9200737** .3864253	1.2356*** .2691153	1.243*** .2730888
Household Characteristics						
Landless	−.3150368 .2129509	−.3390625 .2144499	−.953003* .5129697	−1.004798** .49508	−.1683993 .2178191	−.1832732 .2235496
Durables	−.1330321 .2549575	−.1627298 .2570399	−.0283094 .4431832	.0372618 .4444392	−.4092179 .2578539	−.4092701 .2613242
Family size	−.0561569 .0501596	−.0567144 .0507991	−.0823308 .1013014	−.0953629 .0978853	−.0654906 .0536238	−.0539031 .0550432
Community Characteristics						
Scheduled Caste	.1682892 .2783201	.6386156 .4957886	.5588902 .5025463	−1.073829 .9473328	−.474431* .2848777	−.2844257 .3269076
Other Backward Class	.2085956 .2466445	.187086 .2503213	−.801307 .5015191	−1.033666** .4998067	−.1909665 .2505493	−.1777946 .254419
GP characteristics						
Fraction of SCs in GP (Census, 2011)	.0018275 .005368	.0017427 .0053913	−.0224773** .0087821	−.0228912** .0090012		
GP Literacy rate (Census, 2011)	.0229237 .0149868	.023601 .0149675	−.0040871 .0232892	−.0132421 .022416		
Education*women		.2156925* .1163422		.361062*** .1345252		
Education SCs		−.035872 .0540785		.0982159 .1108326		
PRSC						.158539 .3930609
PRSC*SCs						−.9363204 .6584183
PRW						−.062536 .2373893
PRW*Women						1.45775* .882809
Constant	−1.619324 1.159932	−1.87052 1.207969	2.991038 1.975855	5.230015** 2.062877	−2.224748 .6419386	−2.3362*** .6693375
No. of obs	450	450	450	450	450	450
Wald chi^2	20.96**	26.78**	37.94***	48.23***	41.93***	52.90***
Hosmer–Lemeshow chi^2	7.12 (p = .52)	8.89 (P = .35)	6.61 (P = .58)	5.62 (P = .69)	11.99 (p = .15)	11.44(P = .17)

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data. Note: *significant at 10% level, **significant at 5% level, and *** significant at 1% level. Robust Standard Errors are given with the respective coef (B) in the parenthesis

Table 4. Logistic regression results from Equation 2.

Variables	BPL	Job Card	House
Individual Characteristics			
Women	−.0886374 (.4092539)	.2755281 (.4827707)	−.048962 (.5334123)
Age	.0074288 (.010022)	.0022957 (.0103491)	.0238256* (.0122636)
Education	−.0708595** (.0341483)	−.1138895*** (.035450)	−.0764762* (.0414082)
Access to media	.4894531* (.2688564)	.6907932** (.2740185)	.3384418 (.3036527)
Household Characteristics			
Landless	.913066*** (.2379164)	.6907932 (.2740185)	.5741348* (.309712)
Durables	−1.49384*** (.2712294)	−1.768145*** (.267475)	−.627736* (.350539)
Family size	.0801655 (.0523559)	.1072023** (.0502331)	−.0442124 (.0620918)
Community Characteristics			
Scheduled Caste	.6254587** (.2856778)	−.2677675 (.2923264)	.9149849*** (.3357672)
Other Backward Class	.9651857*** (.2755164)	−.0598711 (.2754637)	−.221791 (.3436503)
Village-level Characteristics			
GP Literacy Rate	.0307074* (.0172485)	.0326892** (.0163665)	.0744953*** (.0200243)
GP President SC	.6398666* (.3421773)	1.55364*** (.3989779)	.0625344 (.3755237)
Constant	−3.244616** (1.283734)	−1.583035 (1.278984)	−7.165549*** (1.56810)
No. of obs	450	450	450
Wald chi^2 (11)	88.59***	84.01***	42.78***
Hosmer–Lemeshow chi^2 (8)	7.23	10.75	3.72

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data. Note: * significant at 10% level, ** significant at 5% level, and *** significant at 1% level. Robust Standard Errors are given with the respective coef (B) in the parenthesis

Table 5. OLS regression results.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	lnAPBIndex	lnAPBIndex	lnAPBIndex	lnAPBIndex	lnAPBIndex
Education	−.0073147*** (.0021959)	−.0073692*** (.0021771)	−.0066927*** (.0022302)	−.00751*** (.0022363)	−.00729*** (.0022155)
Landless	.0474358** (.0170315)	.0444571*** (.0168948)	.0477849*** (.0172534)	.052053*** (.0170676)	.0518007*** (.0171588)
Durables	−.1470041*** (.0197739)	−.1466513*** .0196352	−.1498084*** (.0198693)	−.14785*** (.019825)	−.148848*** (.0197844)
Family size	.0073217** (.0035713)	.0074646** (.0035049)	.0071277** (.0034247)	.0079693** (.0034389)	.0077932** (.0034307)
Scheduled Caste	.0011527 (.0184356)	.0072805 (.0185476)	.0043807 (.0186993)	.0053672 (.0186236)	.0046329 (.0185164)
GP literacy Rate	.0021185* (.0011674)	.0022553* (.0011677)	.0023711** (.0011746)	.0021811** (.00116)	.0022136* (.0011543)
GP President SC	.073712*** (.0240357)	.0778567*** (.0239727)	.0751947*** (.0244942)	.0762724*** (.0243555)	.0759538*** (.0243094)
GP President Women	−.0009158 (.016515)	−.0009561 (.0166377)	−.0039068 (.0167089)	−.0033532 (.0165613)	−.003688 (.016515)
Campaign	**.0494493*** (.015964)**			**.0334784** (.0166423)**	
GS		**.0452386*** (.0164717)**		**.035136** (.0165406)**	
Vote			**.1019971*** (.0338141)**	**.0845951** (.0349624)**	
lnParIndex					**.1991021*** (.0488016)**
Constant	4.227742*** (.0773521)	4.222085*** (.0779706)	4.133024*** (.0871174)	4.135784*** (.0867638)	3.359295*** (.2314823)
Number of obs = 450	F = 27.10*** R^2 = 0.3069	F = 24.34*** R^2 = 0.3035	F = 26.81*** R^2 = 0.3104	F = 25.17*** R^2 = 0.3255	F = 29.93 R^2 = 0.3236

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data. Note: * significant at 10% level, ** significant at 5% level, and *** significant at 1% level. Robust Standard Errors are given with the respective coef (B) in the parenthesis.

Christensen, 2013) considers that it is the social status and not the education received that increases political participation (Persson, 2015). These alternative explanations seem to be credible as the interaction between education and access to media is found to be statistically significant at the 10% level, which indicates that without access to media, there is no significant difference in the participation in election campaign between people with higher and lower education, but the likelihood of participation in election campaign increases with education among people who have accessed media. This suggests that education per se is not the cause of participation in political campaign; instead the relationship between them is rather indirect. As far as the participation of SCs in political campaign is concerned, it is not found to be statistically significant; however, Bardhan et al. (2011) found it to be positively linked with participation in election campaign in West Bengal, which seems obvious due to the higher political awareness among the downtrodden there compared with those in Assam.

Who votes in panchayat election?

Similar to participation in election campaign, respondents having access to media are more likely to cast their votes (Table 3, column 4).

On the contrary, landless households are less likely to cast their votes compared with landholders. This result corroborates with the findings of a World Bank (2000) study. This might be due to the fact that most of the landless households do not have a stable source of livelihood as employment opportunities in villages are limited and villagers have to migrate outside in search of work and hence are not available at the time of election. Unlike Bardhan et al. (2011), in this study,

Table 6. Results of the Heckman model.

	Campaign (model 1)		GS (model 2)		Vote (model 3)	
	1st stage Campaign	2nd stage APBIndex	1st Stage GS	2nd stage APBIndex	1st Stage vote	2nd stage APBIndex
Individual Characteristics						
Women	−.3296938 (.2761659)		.2575986 (.2412986)		−.5353542 (.4639269)	
Age	.0006707 (.0051716)		.0147867*** (.0054322)		.0116753 (.0081145)	
Education	.0095524 (.0193843)	−.0092517*** (.0026001)	.0219559 (.0204886)	−.0090898*** .0023232	−.031868 (.0295882)	−.00660*** .0023209
Access to Media	.4535225*** (.1279983)		.7521534*** (.1482362)		.5224407*** (.1771234)	
Household Characteristics						
Landless	−.1887968 (.1332578)	.0665366*** (.0218123)	−.0715701 (.133749)	.0509832*** .0176845	−.4416985* (.2590768)	.052629** .0220734
Durables	−.1040235 (.1558104)	−.1435634*** (.0232504)	−.2710166* (.1585049)	−.142834*** .0208589	.0753908 (.2067082)	−.15145*** .0202325
Family Size	−.0344879 (.0297819)	.0093278** (.0042731)	−.0397252 (.0310448)	.0095036** .0037131	−.0485615 (.0477809)	.0074343** .0034917
Community Characteristics						
Scheduled Caste	.1746012 (.1471236)	−.0081146 (.0206966)	−.2035137 (.1636789)	.0180221 .0202812	−.0094503 (.2601157)	.0050092 .0190608
Village-level Characteristics						
GP Literacy Rate	.0108501 (.0092889)	.0013904 (.0013128)	.0070315 (.0096208)	.0020756* .0012237	.0021575 (.0122908)	
GP President SC	.1015147 (.1707089)	.0682805** (.026799)	−.0777006 (.1810541)	.0857956*** .0240918	.0382998 (.2605923)	
PRW	.0585865 (.1316766)	−.0007014 (.0184656)	.0264163 (.1399833)	−.0009033 .0177697	.2667013 (.240569)	
Campaign		**.2319318*** (.0848564)**				
GS				**.1796023*** .0499396**		
Vote						.1914242 .2596704
Constant	−1.147946* (.6650953)	4.201839*** (.0875303)	−1.86288*** (.70804)	4.184434*** .0823117	1.240565 (.9782155)	4.043824*** .2746271
No. of obs	450	450	450	450	450	450
Wald chi^2 (8)	210.60***		222.34***		225.01***	
(rho = 0): chi^2 (1) = 3.47 Prob > chi^2 = 0.0626			5.40 Prob > chi^2 = 0.0201		0.36 Prob > chi^2 = 0.5509	

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data. Note: * significant at 10% level, ** significant at 5% level, and *** significant at 1% level. Robust Standard Errors are given with the respective coef (B) in the parenthesis.

no statistically significant difference was observed across communities in casting vote.

However, the likelihood of voter turnout decreases with the rise in percentage of SC in GPs. The average trend in voting behavior in Assam—64.1% for SC and 69.53% for all seats in the 2009 Lok Sabha election (ECI, 2014)—lends support to this finding as well. It might be due to the lesser intensity of political competition.

Unlike Bardhan et al. (2011), gender was found to have played no significant role. However, an interaction between women and education indicates the likelihood of a higher turnout of educated women voters and a lesser turnout of educated men voters (Table 3, columns 4 and 5). This contrasting gender-centric behavior might be due to the supposition that whereas education makes women more socially responsible, it makes men somewhat indifferent and cynic.

Who attends Gram Sabha (village assembly)?

Attendance in GS is critical for the successful functioning of panchayats. Our results, similar to those of Bardhan et al. (2011), suggest the likelihood of participation of the elderly people in Gram Sabhas (Table 3 column 5). Unlike Bardhan et al. (2011) and Besley et al. (2005), no significant gender difference in the likelihood of attending GS was observed. However, an interaction between women and GP president's position reserved for women showed that women are more likely to attend GS. The likelihood of attending GS is higher among respondents who have access to media, corroborating the findings by World Bank (2000) and Krishna (2006). Contrary to Besley et al. (2005), who found that landless households are more likely and the wealthy are less likely to attend GS, the results of the model do not show any difference in the likelihood of attending GS across household characteristics, as suggested by Krishna (2006). In contradistinction with Besley et al. (2005), the results of this study suggest that SCs are less likely to attend GS compared with the forward class, perhaps due to their relative backwardness in Assam compared with their counterparts in the South Indian states, where Basely et al. conducted their study.

Does political participation have anything to do with access to public benefits? Bardhan et al. (2011) found no significant association between the way the household voted and the way public benefits are distributed. The association of public benefits distribution with attendance in political meetings and campaigns is found to be complex, having a positive bias in favor of those attending meetings and against those participating in campaigns in villages with low Gram Sabha attendance rates. These biases lose their significance with the rise in attendance in Gram Sabha, signifying reduced clientelism. Taking a cue from Bardhan et al. (2011), the relationship between political participation and access/accrual of benefits from centrally sponsored schemes is reviewed in this study.

Who gets public benefits?

Three centrally sponsored facilities, namely BPL card under PDS, job card under MGNREGA, and house under IAY, have been considered for examining the relationship between political participation and access/accrual of public benefits. Results from logistic regression (Table 4) show that the disadvantaged people like the less educated, landless, SCs, and OBCs are more likely to obtain the BPL cards. The literature on the working of democracy at the grassroots also supports the findings of the study that the less educated (Besley et al., 2005), landless (Bardhan et al., 2011; Besley et al., 2005), and SCs (Besley et al., 2005) are likely to be benefited more from the allotment of BPL cards. The logistic regression results also suggest that larger families are also more likely to obtain a BPL card (Table 4, column 2). Access to media, which is a significant determinant of political participation, is also statistically significant, indicating the connection between political participation and access to BPL cards. The likelihood of obtaining a BPL card increases with the GP literacy rate. Similarly, the likelihood of obtaining a BPL card is more where the GP president's position is reserved for the SCs. However, more educated, wealthy, and forward castes are less likely to obtain BPL cards.

Unlike BPL cards, landless families are not specifically targeted in the case of job card allocation, although village-level characteristics like GP literacy rate and GP president reserved for SC, household characteristics like family size, and individual characteristics like less educated and access to media are found to be statistically significant. In case of the distribution of houses, the aged, landless, and SC are more likely to receive it, while the educated and wealthy are less likely to get a house. The likelihood of getting a house increases with the GP literacy rate (Table 4, column 4). Results of the study, thus, indicate that the benefits of the three centrally sponsored schemes are, by and large, reaching those who have been targeted. Economically, socially, and educationally disadvantaged people are more likely to be benefited compared with their advanced counterparts. However, the interrelationship between political participation and accrual/access to public benefits could not yet be ascertained, which will be attempted in the next section.

Linkages between political participation and access to public benefits

The OLS regression results presented in Table 5 indicate a positive relationship between political participation in the grassroots democratic institutions and the access to public benefits.

Model 1 shows that holding all else constant, participants in election campaign are likely to receive around 5% more benefits than their nonparticipant counterparts. Similarly, model 2 hints at 4% more public benefits compared to those who attend GS. Model 3 shows that keeping all else constant, casting votes is likely to enhance public benefits by around 10% more than those who did not cast their vote. The relationship also remains robust while all the three participation variables are used in model 4. Model 5 also confirms this positive relationship between 'logAPBIndex' and 'logParIndex'. However, to correct for sample selection bias, the Heckman model is estimated and the results are presented in Table 6.

Model 1 in Table 6 shows a large and significant chi-square statistic (210.60, $p = .000$) and a significant LR test (3.47, $p = 0.06$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that rho is zero is rejected, indicating the existence of selection bias justifying the use of the Heckman model to obtain an unbiased estimate of the effect of participating in campaign on access to public benefits. The second stage of model 1 shows that, holding all else constant, campaign is statistically significant at the 1% level, indicating its positive association with access to public benefits. To be precise, campaign participants are likely to receive 23% more public benefits than nonparticipants. Similarly, model 2 also qualifies (chi-square statistic 222.34, $p = .00$; LR test 5.40, $p = 0.02$) for the use of the Heckman model. It shows that GS participants are likely to access 17% more public benefits than those who do not participate.

However, model 3 is redundant as the LR test is not significant and hence the OLS regression result (Table 5 model 3) is unbiased and consistent. The correction for selection bias substantially changed the impact of political participation in the form of campaign and GS attendance on access to public benefits from 0.049 and 0.045 to 0.23 and 0.17, respectively. It is important to note that the pro-power political activists, those who have participated in all the three forms—campaign, vote, and meeting of GS—have substantially higher access to public benefits (0.19) compared with the ordinary citizens, who participated partially.

Conclusion

Decentralization of the democratic process, for the efficient allocation of public benefits to reduce poverty, has produced mixed results. In some cases, like in Bolivia, it has improved resource allocation, whereas in others it has worsened the situation, such as in Indonesia. As the success or failure of a democratic process in allocating public benefits largely depends on political participation, this article has sought to answer as to who participates, and whether participation matters for access to public benefits.

The results of the study show that 'access to media' plays a crucial role in all the three forms of political participation at the grassroots. This perhaps happens due to the psychological and motivational influence of media upon its users. Thus, widening the media access is likely to enlarge the base of democracy and make it more vibrant. Being the fourth pillar of democracy, media not only mediates between the ruler and the ruled (Panday, 2009), but also plays a crucial role in engaging people (Dahlgren, 2009) politically in a participatory democratic system of governance. A strong market ecosystem is required to guarantee the relative independence of media, which takes on the state, in a democracy.

Although women in general are less likely to participate in political processes, one of the findings of this study suggests that the possibility of their participation increases with attainment of education. Hence, promoting the cause of female education appears to serve not only the cause of women empowerment (Duflo, 2012; Samarakoon & Parinduri, 2015), but also the vibrancy of democracy (Lutz & Kc, 2011). Thus, enhancement of public expenditure for women's education is likely to strengthen democratic practices. Moreover, besides education, the findings of this study suggest that reservation for women in democratic institutions also encourages their political participation, which is also corroborated by Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001). Since the role of market in promoting women's education is very limited due to lesser labor market returns to education compared with men (Kingdon, 2017; Kingdon & Unni, 2010), the active role of the state is desirable in this regard.

The results of this study suggest that participation does matter. Participants are likely to receive 19% more public benefits compared with their nonparticipant counterparts. Neither any evidences of elite capture nor any overwhelming political clientalization is found in this study. However, an increase in participation, particularly in GS meeting, would have reduced whatever political clientalization is observed in the study. Besides yielding this direct benefit, participation was also found to be an instrument of minimizing anti-poor biases in rural resource allocation (Bardhan et al.,

2011). Thus, the practice of grassroots democracy and the functioning of local self-government need to be modeled around the centrality of participation for making democracy work for the underprivileged and the poor.

References

Aars, J., & Cristensen, D. (2013). *Education and political participation: The impact of the Educational environment*. Annual meeting paper; American Political Science Association (APSA). Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstractid=2300666

Alsop, R. J., Krishna, A., & Sjoblom, D. (2000). *Are gram panchayats inclusive? Report of a study conducted in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh*. Social Development Unit, World Bank, Washington DC. Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.203.2310&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Baez, J. E., Camacho, A., Conover, E., & Zárate, R. A. (2012). *Conditional cash transfers, political participation, and voting behavior*. Policy Research Working Paper 6215, The World Bank. Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network Poverty, Gender and Equity Group. Retrived from http://ftp.iza.org/dp6870.pdf

Bardhan, P. (1996). Efficiency, equity and poverty alleviation: Policy issues in less developed countries. *The Economic Journal*, *106*(438), 1344–1356. doi:10.2307/2235526

Bardhan, P., Mitra, S., Mookherjee, D., & Sarkar, A. (2011). *Political participation, clientelism and targeting of local government programs: Analysis of survey results from rural West Bengal, India*. Discussion Paper 171, Institute of Economic Development (IED), Department of economics, Boston University, USA. Retrived from http://people.bu.edu/dilipm/wkpap/IPDVolumearticle.pdf

Bardhan, P., & Mookherjee, D. (2000). Capture and governance at local and national levels. *American Economic Review*, *90*(2), 135–139. doi:10.1257/aer.90.2.135

Bardhan, P., & Mookherjee, D. (2005). Decentralizing antipoverty program delivery in developing countries. *Journal of Public Economics*, *89*(4), 675–704. doi:10.1016/j.jpubeco.2003.01.001

Bardhan, P., & Mookherjee, D. (2006). Decentralisation and ccountability in infrastructure delivery in developing countries. *The Economic Journal*, *116*, 101–127. Retrived from http://people.bu.edu/dilipm/wkpap/IPDVolumearticle.pdf

Besley, T., Pande, R., Rahman, L., & Rao, V. (2004). *Decentralization in India: A survey of south Indian panchayats*. Working paper, London School of Economics.

Besley, T., Pande, R., & Rao, V. (2005). Participatory democracy in action: Survey evidence from south India. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *3*, 2–3. doi:10.1162/jeea.2005.3.2-3.648

Bhattacharya, N., & Jairath, V. K. (2012). Social movements, 'popular' spaces, and participation: A review. *Sociological Bulletin*, *61*(2), 43–63. doi:10.1177/0038022920120205

Blair, H. (2000). Participation and accountability at the periphery: Democratic local governance in six countries. *World Development*, *28*(1), 21–39. doi:10.1016/S0305-750X(99)00109-6

Díaz-Cayeros, A., Magaloni, B., & Ruiz-Euler, A. (2013). Traditional governance, citizen engagement, and local public goods: Evidence from Mexico. *World Development*, *53*, 80–93. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.008

Census. (2011). *Assam population census data 2011*. Retrieved from http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/assam.html

Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2000). Women as policy-makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India. *Econometrica*, *72*(5), 1409–1443. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0262.2004.00539.x

Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2001). *Women's leadership and policy decisions: Evidence from a nationwide randomized experiment in India*. NBER Working Paper No. 8615, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, UK. Retrieved from https://goo.gl/G4F7d5

Crook, R., & James, M. (2000). *Democratic decentralization*. OED Working Paper Series No. 11, The World Bank, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/2365D3D73FE619D8525697700729143/$file/Demcratc.pdf

Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and political engagement: Citizens, communication, and democracy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Dollar, D., Fisman, R., & Gatti, R. (2001). Are women really the "fairer" sex? Corruption and women in government. *Journal of Economic Behaviour & Organization Economic & Organization*, *46*(4), 423–429. doi:10.1016/S0167-2681(01)00169-X

Dreze, J., & Sen, A. (2002). *India Development and participation*. India: Oxford Publication.

Duflo, E. (2012). Women empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *50*(4), 1051–1079. doi: 10.1257/jel.50.4.1051. Stable URL http://www.jstor.org/stable/23644911. Accessed: 26-05-2017 13:19 UTC.

Election Commission of India (ECI). (2014). *Electoral statistics pocket book 2014*. Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001. Retrived from http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/current/Electoral%20Statisitics%20Pocket%20Book%202014.pdf

Faguet, J. P. (2003). *Decentralization and local government in Bolivia: An overview from the bottom up*. Working Paper No.29 ISSN 1740-5815. Retrieved from https://goo.gl/JpvMDU

Finkel, S. E. (1985). Reciprocal effects of participation and political efficacy: A panel analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, *29*(4), 891–913. doi:10.2307/2111186

Finkel, S. E. (1987). The effects of participation on political efficacy and political support: Evidence from a West German Panel. *The Journal of Politics*, *49*(2), 441–464. doi:10.2307/2131308

Fossas, E., & Velasco, F. (2005). Local government in Spain. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 95–122). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Galasso, E., & Ravallion, M. (2005). Decentralized targeting of an anti- poverty programme. *Journal of Public Economics*, *89*(4), 705–727. doi:10.1016/j.jpubeco.2003.01.002

Galston, W. A. (2001). Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *4*, 217–234. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217

Gaviria, A., Panizza, U., & Wallack, J. S. (2003). *Economic, social and demographic determinants of political participation in Latin America: Evidence from the 1990s*. Working paper, September 2003, Inter-American Development Bank. Retrived from http://www.iadb.org/res/files/Participation_2004_GPS.pdf

Gosh, A. (1992, November 14). Federalism, democracy and decentralisation. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *27*(46), 2453–2455. Retrived from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4399115

Green, K. (2005). *Decentralization and good governance: The case of Indonesia*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. Retrieved from http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/18097/.

Hicks, A. M., & Swank, D. H. (1992). Politics, institutions, and welfare spending in industrialized democracies, 1960–82. *The American Political Science Review*, *86*(3), 658–674. doi:10.2307/1964129

Hooghe, M., & Quintelier, E. (2013). Political participation in European countries: The effect of authoritarian rule, corruption, lack of good governance and economic downturn. *Comparative European Politics*, *12*(2), 209–232. doi:10.1057/cep.2013.3

Howe, L. D., Hargreaves, J. R., & Huttly, S. R. A. (2008). Issues in the construction of wealth indices for the measurement of socio-economic position in low-income countries. *Emerg Themes Epidemiol*, *5*, 3. doi:10.1186/1742-7622-5-3

Kam, C. D., & Palmer, C. L. (2008). Reconsidering the effects of education on political participation. *The Journal of Politics*, *70*(3), 612–631. doi:10.1017/S0022381608080651

Khwaja, A. I. (2004). Is increasing community participation always a good thing? *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *2*(2–3), 427–436. doi:10.1162/154247604323068113

Kingdon, G. G. (2017). Does the labour market explain lower female schooling in India? *The Journal of Development Studies*, *35*. doi:10.1080/00220389808422554

Kingdon, G. G., & Unni, J. (2010). Education and Women's labour market outcomes in India. *Education Economics*, *9*. doi:10.1080/09645290110056994

Krishna, A. (2006). Poverty and democratic participation reconsidered: Evidence from the local level in India. *Comparative Politics*, *38*(4), 439–458. doi:10.2307/20434011

Kulipossa, F. P. (2004). Decentralisation and democracy in developing countries: An overview. *Development in Practice*, *14*(6), 768–779. doi:10.1080/0961452042000284003

Kumar, N. (2007). Pro -poor targeting and participatory governance: Evidence from central India. Discussion Paper 176, Institute of Economic Development (IED), Department of economics, Boston University, USA. Retrived from http://www.bu.edu/econ/files/2012/11/dp176.pdf

Lazar, H., & Seal, A. (2005). Local government: Still a junior government? The place of municipalities within the Canadian federation. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 27–46). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Libonati, M. E. (2005). State Constitutions and Local Government in the United States. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 11–26). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Lipton, M., & Ravallion, M. (1993). *Poverty and policy*. Working paper, Policy Research Department, The World Bank, WPS 1130. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/885101468766532174/pdf/multi0page.pdf

Lutz, W., & Kc, S. (2011). Global human capital: Integrating education and population. *Science*, *333*(6042), 587–592. doi:10.1126/science.1206964

Manacorda, M., Miguel, E., & Vigorito, A. (2011). Government transfers and political support. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *3*(3), 1–28.

Miyata, S., Minot, N., & Hu, D. (2009). Impact of contract farming on income: Linking small farmers, packers, and supermarkets in China. *World Development*, *37*(11), 1781–1790. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.08.025

Mondak, J. J., & Halperin, K. D. (2008). A framework for the study of personality and political behaviour. *British Journal of Political Science*, *38*(2), 335–362. doi:10.1017/S0007123408000173

Narayan, D. (1995). *The contribution of people's participation: Evidence from 121 rural water supply projects*. ESD Occasional Paper Series 1. World Bank. Retrived from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/274861468767096877/pdf/multi-page.pdf

Olken, B. A. (2010). Direct democracy and local public goods: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia. *American Political Science Review*, *104*(2), 243–267. doi:10.1017/S0003055410000079

Olsson, S. A. (2014). *Corruption and political participation a multilevel analysis*. Working paper series 2014:12 QOG The Quality Of Government Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg. Retrieved from http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/digitalAssets/1502/1502082_2014_12_arkhede-olsson.pdf

Panday, P. K. (2009). Does globalization affect media role in a democratic country? Bangladesh perspective. *Journal Media and Communication Studies*, *1*(2), 033–042. Retrieved from http://www.academicjournals.org/jmcs

Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and democratic theory*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge university press.

Pernthaler, P., & Gamper, A. (2005). Local government in Austria. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 65–82). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Persson, M. (2015). Education and political participation. *British Journal of Political Science*, *45*(3), 689–703. doi:10.1017/S0007123413000409

Pop-Eleches, C., & Pop-Eleches, G. (2012). Targeted overnment spending and political preferences. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *7*(3), 285–320. doi:10.1561/100.00011017

Powell, G. (1986). American voter turnout in comparative perspective. *American Political Science Review*, *80*, 17–43. doi:10.2307/1957082

Robinson, J. A., & Verdier, T. (2013). The political economy of clientelism. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, *115*(2), 260–291. doi:10.1111/sjoe.12010

Samarakoon, S., & Parinduri, R. A. (2015). Does education empower women? Evidence from Indonesia. *World*

Development, *66*, 428–442. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.09.002

Saunders, C. (2005). Constitutional recognition of local government in Australia. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 47–64). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Schneider, S. K., & Ingraham, P. (1984). The impact of political participation on social policy adoption and expansion: A cross-national, longitudinal analysis. *Comparative Politics*, *17*(1), 107. doi:10.2307/421740

Shapiro, R. W., & Winters, M. S. (2008). Political participation and quality of life. Research Department, Working Papers (638), Inter-American Development Bank. Washington, DC.

Steytler, N. (2005). Local government in South Africa: Entrenching decentralisated government. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 183–212). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Toritto, B. C. (2005). Constitutional reform: Local government and the recent changes to intergovernmental relations in Italy. In N. Steytler (Eds.), *The place and role of local government in federal systems* (pp. 149–168). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Victoria, S. (2012). Incentivizing participation increases political information: Evidence from a randomized field experiment. American Political Science Association, annual meeting paper. Retrieved from SSRN https://ssrn.com/abstract=2109000

Wang, S., & Yang, Y. (2007). Grassroots democracy and local governance: Evidence from rural China. *World Development*, *35*(10), 1635–1649. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2006.10.014

World Bank. (2000). *Overview of rural decentralization in India (Volume 1)*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.