

Role of Panchayat Raj Institution

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Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India

PRI was constitutionalized through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to build democracy at the grass roots level and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country.

British India Period:

- It is only from the year 1870 that India saw the dawn of representative local institutions.
- The famous Mayo's resolution of 1870 gave impetus to the development of local institutions by enlarging their powers and responsibilities.
- The year 1870, introduced the concept of elected representatives, in urban municipalities.
- The revolt of 1857 had put the imperial finances under considerable strain and it was found necessary to finance local service out of local taxation. Therefore it was out of fiscal compulsion that Lord Mayo's resolution on decentralization came to be adopted.
- Lord Rippon in 1882 provided the much needed democratic framework to these institutions.
 - All boards (then existing) were mandated to have a two-thirds majority of non-officials who had to be elected and the chairman of these bodies had to be from among the elected non-officials.
 - This is considered to be the Magna Carta of local democracy in India.
- Royal Commission on centralisation in 1907 under the Chairmanship of C.E.H. Hobhouse, Commission recognized the importance of panchayats at the village level.

- Montagu Chelmsford reforms of 1919 transferred the subject of local government to the domain of the provinces.
- However, by 1925, eight provinces had passed the Panchayat Acts and by 1926, six native States had also passed panchayat laws

Post-Independence Period:

- After the Constitution came into force, Article 40 made a mention of panchayats and Article 246 empowers the state legislature to legislate with respect to any subject relating to local self-government.
- In 1957, the National Development Council constituted a committee headed by Balwant Rai Mehta to look into the working of community development programme.
 - the committee suggested a three-tier PRIs, namely, Grama Panchayats (GPs) at the village level, Panchayat Samiti (PSs) at the block level, and Zilla Parishad (ZPs) at the district level.
 - As a result of this scheme of democratic decentralization was launched in Rajasthan on October 2, 1959. In Andhra Pradesh, the scheme was introduced on 1st November, 1959.
- The appointment of the Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977 did bring new thinking in the concepts and practice of the Panchayat Raj.
 - The committee recommended a two-tier Panchayat Raj institutional structure consisting of Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat.
- The most important among them are the Hanumantha Rao Committee (1983), G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985), L.M.Singhvi Committee (1986) and the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations (1988), P.K. Thungan Committee (1989) and Harlal Singh Kharras Committee (1990).
- The G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985) recommended making the “district” as the basic unit of planning and also

holding regular elections while the L.M.Singhvi committee recommended providing more financial resources and constitutional status to the panchayats to strengthen them.

- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. Through these amendments local self-governance was introduced in rural and urban India.

Salient Features of the Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendments

- These amendments added two new parts to the Constitution, namely, added Part IX titled "The Panchayats" (added by 73rd Amendment) and Part IXA titled "The Municipalities" (added by 74th Amendment).
- Basic units of democratic system-Gram Sabhas (villages) and Ward Committees (Municipalities) comprising all the adult members registered as voters.
- Three-tier system of panchayats at village, intermediate block/taluk/mandal and district levels except in States with population is below 20 lakhs (Article 243B).
 - Seats at all levels to be filled by direct elections Article 243C (2).
 - Seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the chairpersons of the Panchayats at all levels also shall be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population.
 - One-third of the total number of seats to be reserved for women.
 - One third of the seats reserved for SCs and STs are reserved for women.
 - One-third offices of chairpersons at all levels reserved for women (Article 243D).
- Uniform five year term and elections to constitute new bodies to be completed before the expiry of the term.
- In the event of dissolution, elections compulsorily within six months (Article 243E).
- Independent Election Commission in each State for superintendence, direction and control of the electoral rolls (Article 243K).
 - Panchayats to prepare plans for economic development and social justice in respect of subjects as devolved by law to the various levels of Panchayats including the subjects as illustrated in Eleventh Schedule (Article 243G).
- 74th Amendment provides for a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by Panchayats and Municipalities (Article 243ZD).
 - Budgetary allocation from State Governments, share of revenue of certain taxes, collection and retention of the revenue it raises, Central Government programmes and grants, Union Finance Commission grants (Article 243H).
 - Establish a Finance Commission in each State to determine the principles on the basis of which adequate financial resources would be ensured for panchayats and municipalities (Article 243I).
 - The Eleventh Scheduled of the Constitution places as many as 29 functions within the purview of the Panchayati Raj bodies.

Role of PRIs In Implementation Social Sector Scheme

- Rural development has been massively a government supported process rather than the people-led process in India.
- To formulate and implement rural development programmes an appropriate institutional structure is required. This need was met by the establishment of Panchayat Raj Institution (PRIs) in India.
- Further, the PRIs, being local self-governing bodies ensure the opportunity for people's participation and involvement in the formulation and implementation of rural development programmes.
- Thus, the PRIs are entrusted with the task of promoting rural development in India Rural development is generally conceived as a multi-sectoral activity which includes, besides agricultural development, rural industries, the establishment or improvement of social overhead facilities or infrastructure, such as schools, clinics, roads, communication, water supply, markets, welfare sources, improved nutrition, literacy, adult education etc.
- The primary objective of rural development is to enrich the quality of the rural masses, particularly the poorer and the weaker sections.
- The implementation of democratic decentralization through the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) was meant to give an opportunity for local initiative and participation in developmental activities.

Why do we need Panchayati Raj Institutions in Mega Social Sector Scheme?

- To recognize the need of the development sector.
- Better implementation of Government Policies.
- Management of local resources.
- Cultural and religious Importance.
- Maximum participation of beneficiaries through Gram

Sabha.

- Efficient Development Administration at grass root level.
- Bottom up Approach in Policy making and implementation.

Role of PRIs in implementation Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme:

- This is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- The Primary objective of the Act is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work(Kurukshetra, April 2002).
- Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of works to be undertaken, the order in which each work is to be triggered, site selection etc., are all to be made in open assemblies of the Gram Sabhas (GS) and ratified by the Gram Panchayats. Works that are inserted at Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad (ZP) level have to be approved and assigned a priority by the Gram Sabha before administrative approval can be given. The gram sabha may accept, amend or reject them.
- Gram Sabha recommends works that are undertaken and least 50 percent mustv executed by PRIs.
- In this way the PRI's play a vital role in implementing the MGNREGA and its decision making process which helps in rural development.

Role of PRIs in Implementation Jal Jeevan Mission:

Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Mission was announced in August 2019.
- **The chief objective** of the Mission is to provide piped water supply (Har Ghar Jal) to all rural and urban households by 2024.
- **Aim of Mission** to create local infrastructure for rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse in agriculture.

- Following spirit 73 CAA under JJM, local village community, and Gram Panchayat involved in planning, implementation and management of the water supply system to achieve drinking water security.