
Plethora Committee let To Born Local Administration

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Abstract

The Panchayati Raj, as suggested by Mehta Committee, was first implemented in the state of Rajasthan. It was an irony of fate that the state of Rajasthan which experienced feudal rule throughout the medieval period was first to implement the Panchayati Raj. The experiment was further taken over by Andhra Pradesh and other states. The Mehta Committee suggested a three-tier structure for Panchayati Raj. These tiers could be altered vis-à-vis the needs of the state. The bottom tier consisted of Gram Sabha which was constituted on the basis of population size. Sometimes it included a big village but generally two or three villages on the strength of their population size constituted a Gram Sabha. This was the lowest rung of panchayati Raj. The second tier was coterminous with the tehsil or taluka, and at the apex level was the district. The three-tier structure thus consisted of the elected non-officials who implemented the programmes of development on the technical and bureaucratic guidance of the officials.

Keywords: Beginning, Prosperity, Fertility, Popularity, Durable Development, Technical Organization, Absolute Changes.

Introduction

The pattern of Panchayati Raj thus developed the coordination between the officials and the non-officials.

The report of the ministry of community development stated in 1964-65 that younger and better leadership was emerging through panchayat raj institutions and there was fairly a high degree of satisfaction among the people with the working of the panchayats.

Till the mid sixties, panchayat raj system flourished in India. But, there was decline in panchayat raj institution after the mid sixties. Though, theoretically, the decisions had to be taken by the non-officials at all three tiers of panchayati raj, the officials become the major decision makers. The non-officials being illiterate and uneducated could not wield their power. And, what is worse the panchayat samiti which implemented the development programmes at the tehsil level, cornered most of the benefits for the high castes and big peasants. The poor segments of society remained neglected as before. The apex tier at the district level did not have any power of implementation. It also failed to bring coordination among the three tiers. The three-tier pattern of Panchayati Raj as recommended began to crumble down, and a new pattern evolved on the basis

of the recommendations made by Ashok Mehta Committee.

Ashok Mehta Committee

Ashok Mehta, an economist, headed over a committee to suggest changes in the pattern of Panchayati Raj recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. In 1977, the Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a fundamental change in the Panchayati Raj system. It asked for transformation of the panchayat from an implementing agency to a political institution.

The committee suggested two tier system of Panchayat Raj. consisting of Zilla parishads at the district level and Mandal Panchayats at the grassroot level as against the three tier system suggested by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. The committee recommended constitutional protection to the Panchayati Raj Institutions and further decentralization of power at all levels.

A noteworthy feature of the report is that it recommended regular election to these bodies and open participation of political parties.

The Ashok Mehta Committee suggested

- Reservation of seats for the weaker sections.
- Two seats for women
- Adequate financial resources for the panchayats
- Requirement of constitutional sanction
- To extend people's participation in development activities.

Due to the fall of the Janata government, the Ashok Mehta Committee recommendations were not implemented. Few states including Karnataka formulated new legislation on the basis of the recommendations of this committee. Both the committees overlooked the importance of panchayats as units of self-government.

During 1980's, two important committees were appointed to look into local governments: GVK Rao Committee in 1985 and Dr.L.M.Singhvi Committee in 1986. The GVK Rao committee recommended the revival of Panchayati Raj Institutions in such a way that greater responsibility of planning, implementation, and monitoring of rural development programmes could be assigned to them. L.M.Singhvi Committee recommended that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be constitutionally recognized and protected. New chapter in the constitution should be provided to define their powers and functions and free and fair election to be conducted through the election commission. Committee recommended for the appointment of finance commission and all the rural programmes are entrusted to the Panchayati Raj Institutions by amending schedule VII of the constitution¹.

73rd Amendment Act 1992

Following these circumstances, Rajiv Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India, introduced the 64th Amendment bill on local government on the 15th May, 1989 in the Parliament, but it failed to get the required support. A second attempt was made in September 1990 to pass the bill in the

¹ Sanghvi. L.M. (1986), *Report of the Committee of Revitalization of Panchyati Raj Institutions Chairman*, Government of India, Delhi.

Parliament. The bill however was not even taken up for consideration. In September 1991, a fresh bill on panchayat Raj was introduced by the Congress government under P.V. Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister. It was passed in 1992 as the 73rd Amendment Act 1992 with minor modifications and came into force on 24th April 1993.

The present Panchayati Raj differs from the Balwant Rai pattern in two respects. First, the earlier Panchayati Raj was not a political institution but only an implementing body. In this pattern there was no role of political parties. Elections to panchayat bodies were held on individual basis. The candidates contesting for elections were nominated by the political parties. The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act allows political parties to enter into election fray. In other words, elections to Panchayati Raj today are contested on party basis.

Second, the present Panchayati Raj is not an implementing body to the development programmes. It is a decision making body and rules over the governance of the village. One very conspicuous aspect of the present Panchayati Raj is that it empowers women and weaker sections of village in the wielding of power. The members of weaker sections including women are given representation by a fixed quota fixed by the constitution. In other words, membership to Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is reserved vis-à-vis the members of the weaker sections. The Panchayati Raj thus has empowered women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The present Panchayat Raj is constituted as an amendment to the constitution of India. It is, therefore, the central Act which is adopted by all the states of the union. Some important features of the Act are given below.

Salient features enumerated were

1. Panchayats shall be constituted in every state at the village, intermediate and districts levels. At intermediate level population should exceed 20 lakhs.
2. All the seats in a Panchayat shall be filled by persons chosen directly through the elections from the territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area.
3. The legislature of state may, by law, provide for the representation of chairperson of the panchayats at various levels district, intermediate and village. The chairpersons may or may not be chosen directly from election from territorial constituencies. They shall have right to vote in panchayat meetings.
4. There shall be proportionate representation according to the total population of Panchayat area reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. One-third of the total number of seats shall be preserved for women. The office of the chairperson shall also be likewise be reserved.
5. Term of each panchayat shall be 5 years unless it is dissolved earlier. This will apply to Panchayats constituted before the 73rd amendment act.
6. The legislature of a state may, by law, endow the panchayats with the power to prepare plans for economic development and authorize them to levy, collect appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees and the power to provide for grants-in-aid from the consolidated fund of the state.

7. The panchayats will receive adequate funds for carrying out their plans. Grants from state government will constitute an important source of funding but state government is also expected to assign the revenue of certain taxes to the panchayats. In some cases, panchayat will also be permitted to collect and retain revenue it raises.
8. The governor shall appoint a state election commissioner whose tenure and service conditions will be decided by the state legislature. The state election commissioner will be responsible for the preparation of the electoral rolls and for the conduct of all elections.
9. The provisions mentioned above shall apply to union territories as well. The administrators shall be empowered in the same manner as the governors of the % state.
10. None of the afore-mentioned provisions would be applicable to scheduled and tribal areas, to the hills area of Manipur, to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, to the district of Darjeeling in west Bengal to the Darjeeling Gorkha hill council.
11. Finally, the 73rd Amendment Act provides for the addition of Eleventh Schedule-Article 243 G. This includes 29 areas like agriculture, land improvement, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, women and child development, etc.

Madhya Pradesh was the first state in the country to comply with the spirit and letter of the act. Presently, there are 2.20 lakhs village Panchayats, 5500 samities and 375 zila perishads. These institutions have been granted statutory authority in many states for raising funds through taxation, cess, land and fairs.

Article 243 G of the XI Schedule includes the following activities.

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension.
 2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
 3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development.
 4. Animal husbandry and poultry
 5. Fisheries
 6. Social forestry and farm forestry
 7. Small-scale industries, including food processing industries
 8. Khadi, village and cottage industries
 9. Rural housing
 10. Drinking water
 11. Fuel and Fodder
 12. Roads, culverts, bridges, waterways and other means of communication.
 13. Rural electrification including distribution of electricity
 14. Non conventional energy sources.
 15. Poverty elevation programme
 16. Education, including primary and secondary schools
 17. Technical training and vocation education
 18. Adult and non-formal education
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19. Libraries
20. Cultural activities
21. Market and fairs
22. Health and family sanitation including hospital, primary health centers
23. dispensaries
24. family welfare
25. Women and child development
26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded. Welfare of the weaker sections and particular, of the schedule cast and scheduled tribes.
27. Public distribution system.

Village panchayats act as an agent of development at the basic level. Indian society consists of a population in which majority of the people are living in the villages. The development of the people at the village level will help the nation to build a strong nation. Besides, agriculture is the main occupation of the Indian nation and hence any type of change taking place in agricultural population will make tremendous progress in agricultural production. Hence, the economy of the nation will be strengthened.

The present study makes an attempt to analyse the role of village panchayats in rural development.

Objectives of the present study

The main aim of the present study is to analyse the role of village panchayats in rural development:

The following are the objectives of the present study:

1. To study the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To understand the various facilities provided by village panchayats in terms of housing, sanitation, health, education, economy and social welfare.
3. To analyse the socio-economic and demographic factors responsible for hindrance in getting the various facilities.
4. To identify the problems faced by the respondents in getting the benefits of various schemes.
5. To measure the satisfactory level of the respondents about the basic amenities in the villages.
6. To study the problems faced by the president and ward members in the implementation of the scheme and in conducting grama sabha.

Significance of the Study

Unless services such as housing drinking water, irrigation, transportation and marketing facilities, credit, fertilizers, health services, etc. reach the farmers, the objectives of rural development can hardly be fulfilled. Hence, there is a need to study the various facilities available in the villages.

There are certain social, economic and demographic factors which make difference in the attainment of facilities in the villages. This study makes an attempt to analyse the various factors responsible for hindrance to rural development. This will be helpful in removing the barriers to rural development.

As it has been noted in the introductory chapter, India is the nation where many development programmes are implemented. But there are some problems in these programmes to reach the people. Hence, there is an imperative need to analyse the problems faced by the people in getting the benefits of the schemes. This will be helpful to remove the barriers which are responsible for the hindrance of the programme.

Conclusion.

The studies on rural development should not only concentrate on the beneficiaries but also on the administrative community which face lot of problems in the implementation of the scheme. Hence, it will be helpful to solve the problems faced by the administrators in the implementation of the various schemes.

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