

# **ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The term 'Panchayat' truly implies council of five. The standard of the Panchayat is 'Panch Parameshwar' which implies God talking through the five. The National Planning Commission appeared in March 1950 with the object of building up a Welfare State through democratically arranged social and economic development of the individuals. It was understood that social and economic justice couldn't be accomplished without the development of rural territories and rural network since over 80% of the individuals lived in the town. Subsequently the development of rural zones and rural network was given accentuation by the Planning Commission.

Panchayats have been the foundation of the Indian towns since the start of written history. Mahatma Gandhi in 1946 had suitably commented that the Indian independence must start at the base and each town should be a republic or Panchayat having powers. Gandhi's dream has been converted into reality with the presentation of the three-level Panchayati Raj system to guarantee individuals' participation in rural development.

## **EVOLUTION AND FUNCTIONING OF PRIS:**

Panchayats are India's ancient autonomous democratic institutions. Description of panchayats is found in the ancient Indian text "Rigveda" in the form of "Sabhas" and "Samities". Panchayat literally means assembly (yat) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the village community. The philosophy of Panchayat Raj is deeply steeped in tradition and culture of rural India. It is by no means a new concept. Panchayat Raj provided a system of self-governance at the village level. Panchayat Raj Institutions is the grass root unit of self-

government. It has been declared as the vehicle of socio-economic transformation in rural India. Effective and meaningful functioning of these bodies would depend on active involvement contribution and participation of its citizens, both male and female.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS IN ENACTMENT OF PRIS:**

After the independence from the British rule the importance of panchayat was laid by our constitution makers. Article 40 of Directive Principle of State Policy in the constitution of India states: “the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government”. After years, several committees were formed to reform the existing state of affairs of the village society; the recommendations made were regarded as a vehicle for fulfilling the demands of the people. The committees are:

- Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, 1957
- Ashok Mehta committee, 1977
- GVK Rao Committee, 1985
- LM Singhvi Committee, 1986

Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first to adopt panchayati raj institution in 1959.

Two amendments were passed by the parliament to make panchayati raj system as local self-governmental institutions. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 added part 9 to the constitution which contains article 243 to 243 0 and also added eleventh scheduled. This amendment provided a shape to Article 40 which directs states to give power to local government to organize village panchayats and the power of decision making. The act provided the direct elections at village level to choose their local leader and mandates all the states to adopt the system. This act has transformed the whole democracy of India.

### **OBJECTIVES OF PRIS:**

1. Assistance to the economically weaker sections of the community.
2. Cohesion and cooperative self-help in the community.
3. Development of cooperative institutions.
4. Development of local resources including the utilization of manpower.
5. Production in agriculture as the highest priority in planning.
6. Progressive dispersal of authority and initiative both vertically and horizontally with special emphasis on the role of voluntary organizations.
7. Promotion of rural industries.
8. Understanding and harmony between the people's representatives and people servants through comprehensive training/education and a clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities.

### **MAIN FUNCTIONS OF PRIS:**

1. Preparation of Annual Plans for the development of the village Panchayat area.
2. Preparation Annual Budget of Village Panchayat.
3. Mobilization of relief in natural calamities.
4. Removal of encroachments on public properties.
5. Organizing voluntary labours and contribution for community works.
6. Maintenance of essential statistics of villages.
7. Such other development works as may be entrusted.
8. Service or developmental function, such as promotion of education, health, agriculture, etc.
9. Representative function, where the main role is to voice and represent the opinion;
10. Regulatory and administrative functions, which consists of regulating the conduct of individuals and institutions and also collection of taxes.

### **CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Rural development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of the rural people. It is a comprehensive and multi-dimensional concept and

encompasses the development of Agriculture and allied activities, Village and cottage industries and crafts, Socio-economic infrastructure, Community services and facilities and Human resources development in rural areas Rural development is a phenomenon is the end result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. Rural development is a strategy is designed to improve the economic and social wellbeing of a specific group of people – the rural poor. Rural development as a discipline is multi-disciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agricultural social behavioural, engineering and management sciences.

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PRIS:**

Panchayat Raj Institutions are involved actively in fulfilling the most cherished goal of development with social justice bringing the aspirations of the Indian people for their participation in the development process of the country. A clear-cut role for Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development has been envisaged subsequent to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Government of India and the state Governments have been increasingly seeking the assistance of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the implementation of various schemes as well as poverty alleviation programmes. Of these the following development programmes of the Government of India and the state governments have invariably sought a meaningful involvement of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. A specific role has been carved out for them in the context of the eleventh schedule and the Five-Year Plans. The following programmes are implemented through the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Samagra Awas Yojana (SAY), Trial Area Development Programme (TADP), Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and many others. Panchayat Raj Institutions are involved in rural development through their participation in planning and execution at the village level. Gram Sabha which is an integral part of the Panchayat system is being empowered to involve all the people in the decentralized planning. Even though, funds and sanctioning power may still be at different level but when the question comes for execution of programmes, there is no alternative but to involve. The Panchayat Raj Institutions at the village level. There is no substitute to local governance for meeting the needs of the local population. The 73rd and the

74th constitutional amendments recognized that necessity. The lowest tier of the local government namely the Gram Panchayat is directly in contact with the citizen and can be taken to task in the Gram Sabha and by other means. It is responsible for a number of functions ranging from simple civil functions to complex development planning. But it could carry out these functions only when adequate powers and resources are devolved on it.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES:**

A brief analysis of the following major rural development programmes implemented through Panchayat Raj Institutions has been provided here.

1. **Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), 1999** This single self-employment programme of Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana was launched on 1-04- 1999. This program has been conceived to overcome the weaknesses of earlier schemes of Integrated Rural Development Programme and allied programmes TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA and Ganga Kalyan Yojana. Subsidy is given to the enterprises under this scheme SGSY is financed on 75:25 cost sharing basis between the centre and the states. SGSY is implemented by the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) through Panchayat Samitis. The implementation of SGSY calls for integration of various agencies like DRDAs banks, Panchayat Raj Institutions, NGO etc.
2. **Sampoorna Grameena Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), 2001** This programme was launched by merging the ongoing schemes – Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) on 25th September 2001. The objective of the programme is to provide additional wage employment in rural areas as also food security alongside the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure in the rural areas.
3. **Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) (1985-86)** The programme was started in 1985-86 during the Ninth Plan. It aims at providing “Housing for all” and facilitates construction of 20 lakh additional dwelling units of which 13 lakh dwelling units were to be constructed in rural areas. Panchayati Raj Institutions have an important role in the identification of the beneficiaries under IAY. Beneficiaries will be selected from the Permanent IAY Waitlists prepared on the basis of BPL lists in order of seniority in the list. The Gram

Panahcyats may draw out the shelterless families from the BPL list. Selection by the Gram Sabha is final.

4. **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), 2000** The Yojana was launched in 2000 to cover one crore poor families. The schemes envisaged providing food grains to BPL families at a highly subsidised rate of Rs. 2 per kg for wheat and Rs. 3 per kg for rice. The AAY scheme was expanded in 2003-04 by adding another 50-lakh household from among BPL families and further to cover 2.5 crore households.
5. **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), 2000** This is a hundred per cent centrally sponsored scheme launched on 25th December 2000. The primary objective of PMGSY was to provide connectivity to all un-connected habitations in the rural areas having a population of more than 500 persons. Under Bharat Nirman goal has been set to provide connectivity to all habitations with population of more than 1000 in the plain area.
6. **Nirmal Grama Yojana (1999)** The Government of Karnataka has launched a massive campaign in the name of “Nirmal Grama Yojana” on 2nd October 1995 for improvement of sanitary conditions as a part of socio-economic development of rural areas. The Government has been implementing the scheme in cooperation with Panchayat Raj Institutions and nongovernment organizations.
7. **National Social Assistance Programme (MSAP), 1995** This programme initiated by the Central Government aims at providing social assistance benefit to poor households in the case of old age, death of primary bread winner and maternity. The main features of the three components of NSAP are:
  - National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS),
  - National Family Benefit Scheme (BFBS) and
  - National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS).
8. **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** National Rural Livelihood Mission advocates creation of formal mechanisms for mutually beneficial working relationship, consultations and sharing of resources between Panchayats and institutions of the poor.  
Ex: SHGs
9. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2009** The programme was launched on 2nd February 2006. It envisages securing the livelihood of people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of employment in a

financial year to rural households. MGNREGA marks a paradigm shift from all earlier and existing wage employment programmes because it is an Act and not just a scheme. It provides legal guarantee to work. MGNREGA provides a powerful, legal entitlement and opportunity to realise the objectives of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution. The Act formally declares the Panchayats at the three levels as principal authorities for planning and implementation of the Schemes made under this Act and this provision is backed up by substantial guaranteed resources.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The root cause of the problems will be truly addressed if the people of that nation comes close to its representatives and build trust among each other, similarly in every village democracy, the local needs is only fulfilled when the local government comes more closer to its people and act as a guardian and responsible representative in order to build trust and faith among its people, so every nation can march towards progress and prosperity.

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