

PANCHAYATI SYSTEM IN INDIA: DEVELOPMENT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

The effectiveness of the administrative functions of a country is determined by the dimensions of how active the administrative activities are at the lower level. In India, the system of Panchayati Raj was made to progress this dynamic, because the effectiveness of the central government or state government working to solve the rural problems was very low, hence, to empower the rural areas and make them self-reliant. Strong Panchayats were created so that the village people could solve their problems on their own. Although the villages have become strong and prosperous due to the development of Panchayats, they have not achieved all the goals for which they were created. The main reason for this is that Panchayats were not given the right to make laws on all the subjects given to them. Many states have not even transferred them to all. Panchayats do not have their own sources of financial resources. These are all contemporary challenges whose analytical study has been presented in this research paper.

Keywords: Panchayati System, Rural Development, Local Government, Rural Administration, Inclusive Development

INTRODUCTION

The concept of local self-government in India is very old. In the Vedic era, a strong form of local self-governance can be seen; the administrative system of the village was run through them. In the Panchayat meetings, decisions were taken unanimously and all the villagers accepted the decisions of the Panchayats (Dutta, & Fischer, 2021). Mahatma Gandhi was also in favor of strengthening the Panchayati system. He believed that villages should be self-reliant not only in the administrative system but also economically. Panchayati systems started being given importance in Indian democracy after independence, for which different types of models started being adopted (Narain, 1968). Special provisions were also made in the five-year plans for rural development. Gandhiji's ideology regarding the Panchayati Raj system was that Gram Panchayats should be made strong and self-reliant so that the entire administrative activities at the village level are conducted by them only. This is the reason why the makers of the Indian Constitution had added separate provisions for this. So that local self-governance can be strengthened.

India is the world's largest democratic country in which, according to the Election Commission's 2019 list, approximately 90 crore voters are registered. According to the 'Rural Connection Network', there are 239000 Gram Panchayats across the country, which is a subject of the State List mentioned in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. The responsibility of their management, financial system, election, and structural arrangements depends on the state government. India's governance system works at three levels. In which the third level is local self-government (Panchayati system). There were provisions related to this in Part 4 Article 40 of the Indian Constitution which was not an enforceable process. The states were not in favor of giving constitutional status to the Panchayat systems, calling it a violation of the federal system (Das, 2022). This was the reason why Rajiv Gandhi's 64th Amendment (1989) and V.P. Singh's constitutional effort (1 June 1990) failed. Panchayats were given constitutional status by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 and 1993, in which Narasimha Rao ji had made tireless efforts. The responsibility of conducting their elections rests with the State Election Commission, which is provided for by Article 243 (K) of the Indian Constitution. Some states have announced their election because of the Constitution. Their tenure has been kept at 5 years, which is provided for by Article 243 (E) of the Indian Constitution, but the purpose for which the concept of Panchayati systems has been implemented is It seems helpless in achieving its original objective. In this, all the candidates wait for the government order and also start preparations at their convenience. The conversation starts between the voters and the candidates but the dialogue does not start, because the process of dialogue often remains empty in the elections (Kumar, & Singh, 2022). Neither the voter nor the candidate is in a state of dialogue. Big leaders of political parties also come to these elections to enumerate their achievements. The voter is also happy to hear it and later the leader also says 'Zindabad' because he has forgotten that our local problems are due to loan money. What are the commission, housing commission, road, and water problems? Education and health become God's issues in these elections.

The voters have forgotten the status of primary schools and all other local works and the head is also appointed

by someone who has no connection with them at all. In these elections, the objective and work experience of the candidates are not even asked, the reason for which is lack of awareness or lack of education. Every year, various types of financial assistance are provided by the state government and the central government for rural development, but people are not able to get their benefits. The main reason for this is that all those policies which are implemented are not re-evaluated. For this, there is a need for inclusive thinking in the village. When inclusive thinking develops at all levels of Panchayats, only then will a strong Panchayati governance system develop (Hanumanthappa, 2017).

PANCHAYATI SYSTEM INDIA

Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is a system of rural local self-government in India. Through which the rural governance system operates. Local self-government is the empowerment of bodies elected by local people to manage local affairs. After which the administrative activities of the entire Gram Panchayat are conducted through them. To establish democracy at the grassroots level, the Panchayati Raj institution was given constitutional status through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, of 1992 and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country (Thirupathi, 2021). Local self-government has been prevalent in India since the Vedic era. Ancient period, Gram Panchayats are mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra. Kautilya has presented the structure of the entire administrative system of the village in his Arthashastra. Like at that time the city was called 'Pur' and its head was 'Nagrik'. All such local bodies were free from any royal interference and operated the rural system independently. Even in the Maurya and post-Maurya period, the village was headed by a Council of Elders. With the help of this council, representatives of local self-government played an important role in rural life. This system continued even in the Gupta period, although there were some changes in nomenclature; During this period the district officer was known as Vishyapati and the head of the village was known as Gramapati. Thus, in ancient India there existed a well-established system of local governance that operated on the basis of a set framework of traditions and customs. They also had meetings from time to time through which important decisions were taken (Shankar, 2017).

Democracy is based on the basic assumption that at every level of governance, people should participate more and more in governance tasks and take the responsibility of governing themselves. In other words, Panchayati Raj is the only suitable scheme for rural India. Panchayats are the backbone of our national life. In which all the qualities of a republic are found. The significance of democracy lies in decentralization (Ratra, & Dahiya, 2022). If powers are decentralized, public participation will increase and local problems will be solved at the local level. Local people not only have knowledge of the problems around them, they will also be able to solve them well. The 73rd amendment in the Indian Constitution is a meaningful effort in this direction. But it was run like a government program, and as a result, the scheme could not attract the public. Therefore, in 1957, the Balwant Rai Mehta Study Group was formed. Mehta Committee presented a plan of democratic decentralization to increase public participation. This plan was inaugurated by Pt. Nehru on 2 October 1959 in the Nagaur district of Rajasthan (Narain, 1968).

In the present era, administrative complexities have increased so much that it is not possible to carry out administrative work in one place. Decentralization: Power and responsibility are divided on such a basis that headquarters and regional units get an easy opportunity to work as coordinated units. We automatically get rid of the defects that we find in the central system. The newly formed state of Chhattisgarh came into existence as the 26th state on November 01, 2000, with immense possibilities of development as the Panchayati Raj system is more effective due to being in the category of backward states. However, due to the Naxalite problem and the egoistic tendencies of the bureaucrats, the Panchayati Raj system did not achieve as much success as it should have. In 1985, Dr. S. V.K. The committee appointed under the chairmanship of Rao recommended creating a basis for policy planning and program implementation and conducting regular elections in Panchayati Raj institutions. In 1987, the committee appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. Lakshmi Lal Sindhvi to review the Panchayati Raj institutions and suggest measures for their improvement recommended providing more financial resources to the Gram Panchayats to make them self-reliant. In May 1989, the 64th Amendment Bill was presented for consideration in the Lok Sabha by the Rajiv Gandhi government to remove the inadequacies of the prevailing political system, which could have been passed, but today the external plight and slowness of all other institutions and political parties associated with the system, it is also found in Panchayats. Only the vested interest power brokers, hungry for power, and the anarchic and unruly spoons of politicians are active (Lakshmi, 2016,). For this reason, at the time of the Panchayat elections, fighting, murder, looting, and all the other tactics that happened on the occasion of other big parties related to power started coming to the fore. It is only the capable and strong gangsters who intimidate the common villagers and get elected as Panch, Sarpanch, etc. Among the elected representatives, those who have more majority, themselves consume even the pasture lands and Gram Panchayat lands. In the name of justice, crocodile and wolf get justice. Even today, Panchayats are falling prey to tactics and hooliganism. Therefore, to maintain this system we have to overcome these problems. So that the rural people and the Panchayat of villages can achieve their objectives by developing them (Hirway, 1989).

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CHALLENGES

In Panchayat systems, planning work fails due to a lack of qualified administrators and experts. During the five-year plans, experts and administrators came into administration but they could not get the place they should have. Hence, they feel disappointed and dejected and at the same time, their work morale keeps falling and they leave the place of work and start working at other places. It is known that whatever financial assistance is provided, its full implementation does not mean rural development (Jabeen, 2017). For this, there is a lack of special types of administrators and representatives. Even if by chance an efficient administrator or expert tries to do developmental work with his honesty, dedication, and hard work, then due to political and high command pressures, he cannot do the developmental work even if he wants to, which leads to day-by-day problems (Hirway, 1989). The shortage of administrators and experts is increasing day by day. All the members who are appointed work only on the instructions of the Sarpanch. Due to lack of education in villages, people do not use the right to information so that they can get information about all the works and schemes. All these are contemporary challenges of rural development whose solution can lead to the creation of strong tribunals.

CONCLUSION

Today, Panchayati Raj systems have been formed in almost the entire country, but in the actual situation, self-dependence has not been seen as much as was dreamed at the time of its implementation. The provision of reservation has been made in Panchayat systems under Article 243 A (D,y), but neither women nor the lower classes are able to take full benefit of it, because even today, due to many prejudiced tendencies, voting in rural areas is not possible. It is done. Only when the Panchayati system becomes strong and self-reliant, India's democracy will become stronger. The process of reform can start in the rural areas only. Women become Sarpanch but they do not run the administration (Jabeen, 2017). The administration is run by their husbands. A person from the SC-ST category becomes Sarpanch but the administration is run by some rich people. This is the reason that to date the Panchayat system has not been completely self-reliant and could not realize the dreams for which it has been organized. In such a situation, the government should make efforts to make Panchayati Raj self-reliant and the biggest step in this effort can be education. Without education, awareness is not possible and all this will be possible only when citizens and voters are aware (Kumar,& Singh, 2022).

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