

Panchayati Raj: Economic & Social Justice in Rural India

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Abstract: *The Pattern of Panchayati Raj is a South Asian political system mainly found in India and Its apart Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. It is the ancient system of local self government in the Indian sub-continent. Panchayati Raj is a tool of good Governance and Social Justice at grass-root-level.*

Keywords: *Panchayatraj, Sub-Continent, Local Bodies, Constitutional Amendment, Reservation, Devolution, Local Self Governance. Grass root Level.*

Good governance is a critical factor in Indian context as majority of the population of our country lives in the rural areas. It is a challenging task to percolate the decision making in different layers of administration so that the benefit of development reaches the ultimate needy, living in each and every corner of this vast country and Social Justice is concerned mainly with allocation of benefits, goods and services as well as burden among the members of society, particularly in scarce situation. Therefore, the term social justice, implies a reordering of social life in such a manner that the material and moral benefits of social effort are not cornered by a tiny privileged class but accrue to the masses to ensure the uplift of the lower, weaker and underprivileged sections. Liberty, equality and fraternity. The British Rule had a pronounced and a profound political impact on India. Various political policies followed by the British led to the rapid transformation of India's rule in to a colonial ruling whose nature and structure were determined by needs of British Crown. One of the important aspects of British ruling policies was capture to political powers from Indians. But after Independence and after development of democracy Indian Government Introduced panchayati Raj System in India to form as self-Government and its goal was find to social Justice and good governance with Self-Government System. Panchayat Raj is a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic unit of administrations. Panchayats as defined in the Constitution can exist only when they are constituted as per the provisions of articles 243 B and 243C. Developing a Strong Panchayati Raj system, essential to improve governance and delivery of services, involves redistribution of power, institution building and development of processes that improve accountability to the people. It requires planned and strategic interventions tied to specified deliverables on the part of States to enable them to stay committed to strengthening Panchayats and elected local bodies.

After the independence, the 33 percent reservation for women in panchayats was achieved through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment during the regime of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao in 1992, though it was Rajiv Gandhi who first mooted the idea of empowering women at the grass roots. The Amendment Act of 1992 contains provision for devolution of powers and responsibilities to the panchayats both for the preparation of economic development plans and social justice, as well as for implementation in relation to 29 subjects listed in the eleventh schedule of the constitution. The panchayats receive funds from three sources:

A-Local body grants, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission

B-Funds for implementation of centrally sponsored schemes

C-Funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions: The main source of income of the panchayat samiti is grants-in-aid and loans from the State Government. Finally we can say that the amendment act 1992 give us to provision for develop a strong Local Self Governance.

Ever since Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi came to the helmo affairs in the country he repeatedly stressed the importance of Panchayati Raj. He formed his views on the subject by under-taking whirl wind tours of rural India to familiarize himself with the realities of rural life, by holding frequent workshops of District magistrates all over the country, and thus assessing their views and understanding their difficulties.

Indian democracy has reached the stage where the full participation of the people brooks no further delay. Those who decry Panchayati Raj as an election stunt are only those whose feudal interest will be overthrown by the power reaching the people. The late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said, "We trust the people. We have faith in the people. It is the people who must determine their own destinies and the destiny of the nation. To the people of India let use sure maximum democracy and maximum devolution of power.

Hence, the Community Development Program me was launched in October, 1952 with a view to seek people's participation and involvement in the task of rural development. Under this programmer, the administration at the district and the lower levels was re organized and Panchayati Raj was integrally connected

with it both in its programmatic connect and organizational evolution. But the programme failed in its mission without any agency at the legal level to assume responsibility, represent entire community and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmes.

In January 1957 the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was appointed to study the failure and the Committee came to the conclusion that the movement failed because it could not arouse local interests. Following these commendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Panchayati Raj was introduced in various states in different patterns and Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first states to adopt the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj. Thus, they established the Zilla Parishad or District Council at the district level, Panchayat Samiti at block level and Village Panchayats at the village level to give practical shape to goal of decentralized administration and decision making by people themselves through the local self-government of Panchayati Raj system at the grass-root-level.

On April 23, 1994 the task of granting constitutional status to Panchayati Raj system has been completed with the states, enacting legislation to bring has been completed with the state enacting legislation to bring their existing Panchayat at Act in conformity with the provisions of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992. This marks a historic transition of political power to the grass –roots level. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has introduced a new PR system throughout the country. The primary goal has been to proceed with decentralization, dispersal and re distribution of power .It seeks to give responsibility to the Panchayats to make them the true decision-making centers with local power. It is not able that the Panchayats are the primary institutions of democracy where people from village, block and district could participate. Devolution of power has to start here and this is also where people at local levels get into the mainstream of development as well as public affairs. The Panchayats, especially the 'gram Sabah', make the concept of 'direct democracy'.

However, Panchayati Raj System cannot be called as a real Decentralization of powers and authority since; it only takes away certain powers of states and gives them in turn to Panchayats. In fact, it is atookto bypass the State Governments. That is why it came under criticism and got no support from State Government. Therefore, to make Panchyat Raj Successful, real land reforms are needed. The development of rural people is of utmost importance to improve the condition of weaker sections in India.

Nowadays Panchayati Raj is sufferings due to lack of basic reforms in socio-economic structure. With the creation of Panchayati Raj, various filthy and divisive processes have percolated to the village level. If all such minus points of Panchayati Raj are taken care, we will see that its merits may out number its drawbacks. Desire of self - governance assumes greater significance in rural population. The relevance of Panchayati Rajis being appreciated because of growing individualism and desire of self –rule and its role among the rural masses at all levels on account of increased awareness and spread of quality education.

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