



### “A STUDY OF PANCHAYATRAJ IN MAHARASHTRA”

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#### ABSTRACT

*In India, the Panchayati Raj generally refers to the system introduced by the constitutional amendment in 1992, although it is based upon the traditional panchayat system of South Asia. The modern Panchayati Raj and its Gram Panchayats are not to be confused with the extra-constitutional Khap Panchayats (or Caste Panchayats) found in northern India. The Panchayati Raj system was formalized in 1992, following a study conducted by a number of Indian committees on various ways of implementing more decentralized administration.*

**KEYWORDS :** modern Panchayati Raj , foundation of India's political system.

#### INTRODUCTION :

Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayati Raj as the foundation of India's political system, as a decentralized form of government in which each village would be responsible for its own affairs. The

term for such a vision was Gram Swaraj ("village self-governance"). Instead, India developed a highly centralized form of government.[4] However, this has been moderated by the delegation of several administrative functions to the local level, empowering elected gram panchayats. There are significant differences between the traditional Panchayati Raj system, which was envisioned by Gandhi, and the system formalized in India in 1992.

In India, the Panchayati Raj now functions as a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of local administration. The system has three levels: Gram Panchayat (village level), Mandal Parishad or Block Samiti or Panchayat Samiti (block level), and Zila Parishad (district level). It was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To know the history of Local Self Government in Maharashtra
2. To take review of Panchayatraj in Maharashtra.
3. To understand the Role of Panchayatraj in Rural Development

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based upon secondary sources of the data which is collected by the researcher from various books, research papers, news, articles, newspapers and various websites especially from wikipedia.

#### HISTORY OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT:

In the history of Panchayati Raj, in India, on 24 April 1993, the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions. This act was extended to Panchayats in the tribal areas of eight states, namely: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and

Rajasthan beginning on 24 December 1996. Currently, the Panchayati Raj system exists in all states except Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, and in all Union Territories except Delhi.

Local govt. in Maharashtra State follows the general structure of Local Governance in India and is broadly classified into two categories: Urban Local Governance and Rural Local Governance. Local self-government, to borrow a phrase from Sydney Webb, is "as old as the hills". This can be more true of India than any other country of the world. There is sufficient evidence to establish the fact that the institution of local self-government is almost pre-historic, and the conception of local self-government is indigenous to the Indian soil. Municipal governments have flourished in India since times immemorial. While empires rose and fell, village panchayats which formed an integral part of the national life, helped to preserve democratic traditions in social, cultural, economic and political life, survived the onslaughts of centuries of political upheavals and saved Indian society from disintegration. The existence of local bodies in ancient India is a positive proof of the inherent genius of our people to manage local affairs efficiently and on a decentralised basis. The decentralisation of power in the kingdoms of the Maurya and the Gupta period was unique. Such devolution of power was unknown to the western world until modern times. The local governments at different levels, performing many functions, though not very democratic, were sufficiently autonomous.

#### **VARIOUS COMMITTEES ON PANCHAYATI RAJ:**

1. Balwant Rai Mehta: established 1957
2. V.T. Krishnamachari: 1960
3. Takhatmal Jain Study Group: 1966
4. Ashok Mehta Committee: 1978
5. G.V.K. Rao Committee: 1985
6. Dr. L.M. Singhvi Committee: 1986
7. P. K. Thoongan committee: 1988

#### **RECOMMENDATION OF BALWANT RAI MEHTA COMMITTEE:**

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, headed by MP Balwantrai Mehta, was a committee appointed by the Government of India in January 1957 to examine the work of the Community Development Programme (1952) and the National Extension Service (1953), to suggest measures to improve their work. The committee's recommendation of the committee by NDC in January 1958, and this set the stage for the launching of Panchayati Raj Institutions throughout the country. The committee recommended the establishment of the scheme of 'democratic decentralization', which finally came to be known as Panchayati Raj.

This led to the establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj system: Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level.

The Panchayat Raj system was first adopted by the state of Rajasthan in Nagaur district on 2nd Oct 1959. The second state was Andhra Pradesh, while Maharashtra was the Ninth state. State governments during the 1950s and 60s adopted this system as laws were passed to establish panchayats in various states. It also found backing in the Indian Constitution, with the 73rd amendment in 1992 to accommodate the idea. 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, and the ability to levy and collect appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

The Act aims to provide a three-tier systems of Panchayati Raj for all states having a population of over 2 million, to hold Panchayat elections regularly every five years, to provide seats reserved for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women; to appoint a State Finance Commission to make recommendations regarding the financial powers of the Panchayats and to constitute a District Planning Committee, to prepare a development plan draft for the district.

The Panchayats receive funds from three sources:

1. Local body grants, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission Funds for implementation of centrally sponsored schemes
2. Funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions

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The following methods are involved in Digital Payment System

### **Panchayatraj in Maharashtra:**

Panchayatraj in Maharashtra also in India are classified in to three categories:

1. Block Level Panchayat
2. District Level Panchayat
3. Village Level Panchayat

#### **1. Block Level Panchayat:**

A Panchayat Samiti (block panchayat) is a local government body at the tehsil level. This body works for the villages of the tehsil that together are called a "development block". The Panchayat Samiti is the link between the Gram Panchayat and the district administration. Just as the tehsil goes by other names in various parts of India, notably mandal and taluka, there are a number of variations in nomenclature for the block panchayat. For example, it is known as Mandal Praja Parishad in Andhra Pradesh, Taluka Panchayat in Gujarat and Karnataka, and Panchayat Samiti in Maharashtra. In general, the block panchayat has the same form as the gram panchayat but at a higher level.

Membership in the block panchayat is mostly ex-official; it is composed of: all of the Sarpanchas (gram panchayat chairmen) in the Panchayat Samiti area, the MPs and MLAs of the area, the sub-district officer (SDO) of the subdivision, co-opt members (representatives of the SC/ST and women), associate members (a farmer from the area, a representative of the cooperative societies and one from marketing services), and some elected members.

The Panchayat Samiti is elected for a term of five years and is headed by a chairman and a deputy chairman.

#### **2. District Level Panchayat:**

The governing of the advance system at the district level in Panchayat Raj is also popularly known as Zila Parishad. The chief of administration is an officer of the IAS cadre. and chief officer of the Panchayat raj for the district level.

The membership varies from 40 to 60 and usually comprises- Deputy Commissioner of the District. Presidents of all Panchayat Samitis in the district, and heads of all Government Departments in the district; members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies in the district; a representative of each cooperative society ;some women and Scheduled Caste members if not adequately represented; and co-opted members having extraordinary experience and achievements in public service.

#### **3. Village Level Panchayat:**

A gram panchayat is a village level administrative body, with a Sarpanch as its elected head. The members of the gram panchayat are elected for a period of five years by the members of Gram Sabha

### **ROLE OF PANCHAYATRAJ IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Panchayats have been the backbone of the Indian villages since the beginning of the recorded history. Mahatma Gandhi in 1946 had aptly remarked that the Indian independence must begin at the bottom and every village ought to be a Republic or panchayat having powers. Gandhiji's dream has been translated into reality with the introduction of the three - tier. Panchayati Raj system to enlist people's participation in rural reconstruction in the 21st century village panchayats in india will be in the forefront of rural development towards this end, panchayats are to be given more powers finance and training panchayats growth, social development and facilitate good governance as well as sound micro - economic management.

The realization that people's participation is crucial for successful implementation of programmes like CD and NES was brought to sharp focus through the report of the team for the study of community projects and National Extension Service by Balvantrai Rai Mehta (1957). The committee observed that one of the least successful aspects of CD and NES work is its attempt to evoke popular initiative and recommended democratic decentralization.

The word 'Democracy' is derived from the green roots 'demos' Meaning the people and 'krato' meaning authority i. e. in democracy all authority originates from the people. Decentralization means distribution of functions and powers from a central authority to regional & local authorities democratic decentralization in the present context means that the government which has derived its authority from the people redistribute it to some extent to the people for decision and action at the local level. This is popularly known as PANCHAYATI RAJ in India. The policy of democratic decentralization envisages. 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 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. The role of such institutions is so vital in the rural development. Panchayats have been the backbone of the Indian villages since the beginning of recorded history. Gandhiji, the father of the nation, in 1946 had aptly remarked that the Indian Independence must begin at the bottom and every village ought to be a Republic or Panchayat having powers. Gandhiji's dream has been translated into reality with the introduction of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system to ensure people's participation in rural reconstruction.

### CONCLUSION:

Overall development of country is the main objective of Indian government since its independence. In the earlier Plans the main thrust for development was laid on Agriculture, Industry, Communication, Education, Health and Allied sectors but soon it was realized that the all-round development of the country is possible only through the development of rural India. Keeping this in view, Panchayati Raj Institutions have been introduced under the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India in 1992. The future of the country really depends upon effective Panchayati Raj and people's participation or co-operation. It is the only effective instrument which can put speed and substance in our planning process and ensure the most effective use of the country's resources for productivity. In that lies the future of both democracy and development of the economy as well as of the people. In the years to come, Panchayati Raj will be a catalytic agent of integrated development of tribal mass in rural areas.

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