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## Public Participation Through Panchayat Raj Institutions In India

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### Abstract:

Local Self Government is one of the fundamental aspects that define Indian society is the 'Panchayat'. To introduce a grass-roots democracy into the village structure that was established in India, this system of rural local self-government was offered. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution transformed the democratic face of Local Self-Government and made it possible to take part in the decision-making process and participate in democratic institutions. These amendments became the foundation for real democracy by providing constitutional rights to the common man to participate in the government process. Article 243D/3 of the Constitution stipulates that there must be a reservation for women and SC and ST populations. Hence, several offices of Panchayat institutions headed by the women as chairpersons, Mukhiya etc. An individual from marginalised communities participates in the policy formations as a result of reservation policies. And the Government of India has made ambitious efforts to decentralize at Panchayat Raj institutions. This provision ensures that women can participate in the governance of Panchayat Raj institutions. At the same time numbers of offices are headed by the SC and ST population.

It is important to understand, that how decentralization can increase the efficacy of local administration? In this study, a wide range of structural and functional concerns relating to Panchayats at the grassroots level have been deconstructed and explored. Panchayat Raj Institutions and their ability to carry out their responsibilities are critical at rural development. The findings show that Panchayat's are not functioning well and that the general public is not at all involved. This paper focuses on the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions, the implementation of reservation, and the challenges of Panchayat Raj Institutions.

**Keywords:** Decentralisation, Accountability, Panchayats, Gram Sabha, Audit etc.

### 1. Introduction:

Democratic decentralization advocates frequently argue that empowering local political organizations and making them more representative of the people will lead to more effective institutions that are more responsive to local concerns and preferences.

However, the lessons learned from experiences around the world have revealed that even the most audacious initiatives at decentralization have been unable to overcome the regional and local features of poverty and inequality. Local development projects are frequently dependent on a government that recognizes and honors the independence of local political institutions.

Article 40 of the Indian Constitution, which specifies that "The states should take steps to organise village Panchayat and provide them with such power and authority as may be necessary to allow them to function as units of self-government," included the Panchayats when India got independence. Because Panchayats are autonomous governing bodies, they have been given increased power and jurisdiction. Committees such as those led by Balvant Ray Mehta in 1957, Ashoka Mehta in 1978, G V K Rao, and L M Singhvi in 1986 recognised that local self-governance was lacking and that it needed to be expanded further. After this happened in 1992, successive administrations implemented the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution, which restored the Panchayat Raj Institution. Since the early 1990s, the two most significant achievements on the policy level have been the implementation of economic reforms and the establishment of Panchayat Raj Institutions, as well as the subsequent strengthening of those institutions. Both of them are going toward the reform process and contributing to making it easier for the general population to obtain services, therefore both of them are extremely important for growth from their respective points of view.

## **2. Scope of the Study:**

Within the scope of this research, a variety of issues concerning Panchayats at the local level have been investigated and analysed. The successful development of villages is heavily reliant on Panchayat Raj Institutions and their efficient operation. Because of this, five states that are better considered in terms of PRI operation were chosen for this study. The structural and functional aspects of the PRIs in these five states were analysed, and the findings of this study were presented at the end. There has been a proper assessment of the following five states: Madhya Pradesh (Maharashtra), Haryana (Gujrat), Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh), and Gujrat (Gujarat). In the preceding sentence, the five states were mentioned. It has been determined how well each of these states performs in various areas, and then those results have been compared to one another. This analysis will offer a clear picture of PRIs in those states in which we have the best administration, and it will also highlight the faults of our PRI system overall. This is the reason why local self-governance is so desperately required in the current situation. In this context following objectives has set for further study.

### **3. Objective of the Study:**

- 1) To study the Panchayat Raj Institutions and Gram Panchayat.
- 2) To analysis the reservation of women in Panchayat Raj institutions.
- 3) To assess the challenges of Panchayat raj Institutions in contemporary India.
- 4) To suggest some reforms for the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

### **4. Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions:**

National Panchayat Raj Day is observed annually on April 24 in India as a means of paying tribute to the day on which political authority was distributed to more localised tiers of government for the first time. This day in 1993 marked the passage of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which paved the path for the implementation of the Panchayat Raj system. The purpose of instituting the Panchayat Raj system was to enable and empower Panchayat Raj institutions that are accountable to the people. The Indian administrative structure is a three-tiered hierarchy, which contributes to the decentralisation of political power.

In 1957, a committee was established with Balwantraji Mehta serving as its chairman. The recommendations of this committee played a significant role in the development of the Panchayat Raj system, which is still in use today. After completing its study, the committee made its recommendation, which was for a three-tiered system. Gram Panchayat, Mandal Parishad or Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad are all included in this category. Gram Panchayat is the governing body at the village level. Mandal Parishad and Zila Parishad are the governing bodies at the block and district levels, respectively. As of right now, the system of Panchayat Raj has been implemented in almost all of India's states and Union Territories, except a handful. These are the states of Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, in addition to the territory of Delhi, which is a Union Territory.

The Constitution of India recognises the Panchayats as "Institutions of self-government," which is one of its primary functions. As of the beginning of the year 2019, India is home to a total of 2,53,163 Gram Panchayats, in addition to 630 Zilla Panchayats and 6614 Panchayat Samiti. The purpose of the system is to serve as institution of the local government, as well as to implement schemes and formulate plans for the social justice and economic development of rural areas. This is the overall goal of the system. Both directly elected representatives, who make up the Gram Panchayat, and indirectly elected representatives, who make up the Zila Parishad, make up the system as a whole.

The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution were both approved by Parliament in December of 1992. Local self-government was made possible across India's rural and urban areas as a result of these modifications. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 went into effect on April 24, 1993, and the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 took effect on June 1, 1993. Both of these acts were enacted in 1992. The Constitution was expanded to include two new sections as a result of these revisions; specifically, the 73rd Amendment added Part IX, which was titled "The Panchayats," and the 74th Amendment added Part IXA, which was titled "The Municipalities." After India had been a republic for 43 years, the local bodies known as 'Panchayats' and 'Municipalities' were included in the Constitution as part of Part IX and IXA, respectively. Highlights of the Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth Amendment Acts to the Constitution both Panchayats and Municipal Governments will function as "institutions of self-government."

## **5. Reservation and Public Participation:**

The term "Panchayat," which translates to "Local Government," is included in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution as a state topic. Therefore, all subjects of Panchayats, such as the representation of women in Panchayat systems, are governed by the Panchayat Raj Acts and norms of the individual state, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. However, the government has been actively supporting to increased participation of women in the operation of Panchayats through active participation in the meetings of the Gram Sabha to prepare Gram Panchayat Development Plans and various initiatives that are being implemented by the Panchayats. This Ministry has also issued advisories to the States to facilitate the holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings before Gram Sabha meetings, to enhance the presence and participation of women in Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings, to allocate Panchayat funds for activities that are focused on women, and to combat the evils of women trafficking, female foeticide, and child marriage, among other things.

Local governments, often known as Panchayats, are recognised as state subject under the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution. Gram Panchayats often have a few seats set aside for members of the SC, ST, and women's communities. Article 243D, clause 3 of the Constitution stipulates that there must be a reservation of one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election and the number of offices of Panchayat chairpersons for female candidates. This provision ensures that women can participate in the governance of Panchayat Raj institutions.

Gram Panchayat is the most important body of rural local self-government. It serves as an executive committee of the Gram Sabha and is also commonly known as the

village Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat is the third and final level of the organisation that is known as the Panchayat Raj Institutions. The total number of members of the gram Panchayat differs from one village to the next and is mostly dependent on the population of that village. The number of members, also known as Panches, can range anywhere from 5 to 9, and the Gram Sabha is responsible for electing them through a process known as direct elections. The individual who is in charge of all of the Panches is known as the President or the Sarpanch.

## **6. Constitutional Provisions:**

Article 243D, clause 3 of the Constitution stipulates that there must be a reservation of one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election and the number of offices of Panchayat chairpersons for female candidates. This provision ensures that women can participate in the governance of Panchayat Raj institutions. According to the Ministry, a total of twenty states, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, have included provisions in their respective State Panchayat Raj Acts. The state government of Haryana intends to introduce a bill in the year 2020 that will give a 50:50 reservation in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) for male and female candidates, as well as rotate the seats between male and female members at the end of each term. As stated above, the offices of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village and other levels shall be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and women by Article 243D, clause (4). However, the Legislature of a State may provide that the number of Chairpersons in the Panchayats reserved for SCs and STs at each level in any Stat.

## **7. Reservation in Panchayat Raj Institutions:**

In every Panchayat, there is a provision for the reservation of seats for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and the number of reserved seats accords with the percentage of each group's population in the Panchayat region. At every level of the Panchayat, there must be at least one-third of the total number of seats reserved specifically for women, as well as at least one-third of the total number of chairperson positions reserved specifically for women. The power to decide whether or not seats should be reserved for members of backward classes at any level of Panchayat or in the position of the chairperson has been delegated to the legislatures of the individual states.

It was believed that allocating a certain number of seats in the Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs) specifically for female candidates would increase women's political awareness, boost their self-confidence, and encourage their participation in the

region's efforts to address social and economic issues. More than 15 lakh women have been promoted to positions of authority in India's local administration as a direct result of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, which proved to be a catalyst for this change. These amendments, among other things, transferred the power batons to the general populace at the Panchayat level and reserved one-third of the seats and key posts within the Panchayat for women. In addition,

Further, under clause (4) of Article 243D of the Constitution, the offices of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall be reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes, members of the Scheduled Tribes, and women in such a way as the legislature of a State may, by law, provide; provided, however, that the number of offices of Chairpersons reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the PanCertain details regarding the representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions, such as "the total number of women who hold the position of Sarpanch in the country," "the total number of Sarpanch posts which are occupied by a member from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe," "the total number of Scheduled Caste members on non-reserved seats in Gram Panchayats," "the number of Gram Panchayats where more than one-third Panchayat council leaders are women.

#### **8. Women in Panchayat Raj Institutions:**

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India made it possible for women to enter politics by reserving 33 percent of positions at all levels of the Panchayat, which are the village, block, and district levels in each state of the country. This was done to close the representational gap that existed between the sexes. In addition to this, 21 states, including Odisha, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh, have provided women with a 50% reservation in the Panchayat Raj Institutions in their respective states (Banoth, Hari 2020). According to data from the year 2020, there were 1.3 million women actively participating in Panchayat, making up 44.2 percent of the total representatives. The initiative was beneficial to states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh which already had favorable social conditions for women, high literacy rates, and high rates of female involvement in the labor sector. Nevertheless, in states that have a poor performance in these measures, notably northern states like UP, the results aggravated the gender issues even further (Pai 1998). Reservation has catalysed change in the position of women. However, one unintended consequence of this policy is that women are now used by male family members as "proxies," which is a role that was not previously held by women. The women participate in the elections, but they are merely utilised as sham representatives; the men in their families are the ones who have the real authority (Chaudhuri, Sud 2015).

In addition to the aforementioned alterations, these revisions made it obligatory for all states to hold elections for Gram Panchayats and municipal councils, and they gave these governing bodies the authority to participate in activities that contribute to the community's overall growth. West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and Telangana have all increased their reservation benchmarks for women in their PRIs to 50 percent as of this moment. The fact that states like Karnataka have more than fifty percent female representation in PRIs is illustrative of the fact that an increasing number of women are now emerging triumphant in wards that were not originally allotted for them.

There is a connection that may be made between the topic at hand and the Theory of Public Choice. It shines a bright light on the politician's basic goals, which are, in this instance, rather obliquely, garnering the support of the people and obtaining power. There is also a play on the rational ignorance of the voters, which points to their concerns with the maximisation of their own benefits as their primary goal. There is only a passing awareness of the fact that the Pradhani herself is not the one carrying out the duties of the position. Therefore, there is just one requirement, and that is to vote for women legislators who come from influential families.

The reservation policy's goal is undermined by the practise of women acting on behalf of other women, which in turn leads to increased discrimination and the exclusion of women from decision-making and public affairs. In light of this, the policy may seem suitable on paper, but in reality, it has not led to very significant shifts in the way things are done. There is a distinction between formal power and practical power, as one of the articles puts it so succinctly: "the presence of women is not necessarily synonymous with their involvement." The women hold the power in theory, but they are unable to use it in practice. The men keep their powers in a roundabout way and are the ones in charge of the work, which leads to an amplification of the issue of gender inequality (Banoth 2020).

It is common practice to blame women's marginalisation in political life on their lack of self-assurance, necessary skills, and networks, all of which contribute to their exclusion from the political mainstream. Because women already have a restricted ability to make decisions at home, it is argued that they are unable to make judgments that affect their communities (Singh 2021). Their actions are routinely questioned, and they are not supported by the party's male members, because the political system is mainly dominated by men, even though they are acting in their roles. Women in the position of Pradhan confront the common challenge of having their demeanor misinterpreted. Other factors, such as illiteracy, the heavy load of family chores, and a

lack of communal support contributed to their failure to exert power, which led to the menfolk removing them from their positions of authority (Dak, Purohit 2008).

## **9. Social Auditing:**

Compliance of Panchayats with the RTI concerning transparency, accountability, and efficiency, and enhancing the governance of the local self-government by assuring the engagement of the people in decision-making processes.

### **9.1 Social Audit of Gram Sabha:**

A major platform for improving people's engagement in development programs, decentralising planning, and empowering grassroots democracy was created by the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution. Members of the Gram Sabha must be at least 18 years old and comprise the entirety of the village's adult population. As required by the Panchayat Raj Act of the respective state, there is one Gram Sabha for every revenue village and Panchayat. In accordance with the State act, the GP Pradhan, the Sarpanch, or any other senior member of the village Quorum (both general and women) serves as the chairperson of the Gram Sabha. Gram Sabhas need to be held at least once every three months as per the law, and four in a year.

The Social Audit Gram Sabha is an optional extra meeting that is not included in the total of the six required Gram Sabhas. According to Section 17 of the MGNREG Act, the Social Audit Gram Sabha is required to be held. Wage seekers have the primary opportunity to have their views heard, make requests, and validate the findings of the social audit during the Social Audit Gram Sabha.

### **9.2 Notification of the Social Audit:**

The public needs to be informed in advance of the date of the Social Audit Gram Sabha. During door-to-door verifications, this is something that can be done. On the bulletin board in the general practitioner's office, the date of the Social Audit Gram Sabha needs to be posted. In addition, notices regarding the Social Audit Gram Sabha must be displayed on posters in public areas and making announcements in various locations within the village utilising a microphone or other communication methods.

### **9.3 Venue and Participation: Social Audit Gram Sabha:**

The Social Audit Gram Sabha must be held in a setting that is unbiased and easily accessible to every single resident of the community (with a special emphasis on the workers and members from marginalised groups). The forum should be open to participation from anyone interested, including elected representatives, members of the media, representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs), and officials in charge



of implementation from the line department, Block, and District. Because the Sarpanch of the GP is a member of the implementing agency, he or she should not serve as the chairperson of the Social Audit Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha members should be able to reach an agreement on the day of the Social Audit Gram Sabha about who should serve as Gram Sabha's presiding officer. This individual should not be involved in politics and should enjoy widespread esteem.

The administration of the district is responsible for selecting and appointing an impartial observer. The impartial observer is required to be a member of the government. It is the responsibility of the district administration to guarantee that there is a microphone and a banner at the event, so that the proceedings may be heard in their entirety by all of those who are present. In addition to that, a video recording of the Social Audit Gram Sabha ought to be carried out.

#### **9.4 Social Audit Unit:**

According to the MGNREGA, each state is required to establish a Social Audit Unit (SAU) that will operate independently from the body that is responsible for the implementation of the MGNREGA in that state. Under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, the SAU can become officially recognised as a society. The SAU is required to have a full-time Director in charge, and this individual should have at least 15 years of experience working in the social sector to advocate for the rights of the general public. The key persons in the SAU included SAU Director, Social Development Specialist/Consultant, State Resource Persons and thematic experts, District Resource Persons (DRPs), Block Resource Persons (BRPs), and Village Resource Persons (VRPs). The term "Social Auditors" refers to professionals who are involved in both the conduct of social audits as well as the facilitation of these audits. The Social Audit Unit is responsible for the identification and placement of Social Audit resource-persons (RPs), who serve as facilitators for the Social Audit process. They could be referred to as State Resource Persons, District Resource Persons, Block Resource Persons, or Village Resource Persons (VRPs).

#### **10. E-PANCHAYATS:**

In 2006, as part of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), the Indian government had the intention of implementing new technology in grammePanchayats around the country to make their operations more effective. As a part of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP), the e-Panchayat mission was initiated by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj in the year 2018, to accomplish the aforementioned goal. The project addresses all areas of Gram Panchayats, including planning, monitoring, implementation, budgeting, accounting, social auditing, and the supply of civil services, such as the issue of certificates, licenses, and other similar documents.

The efficient operation of Panchayats is one of the primary goals of the e-Panchayat mission, which aims to achieve this by making full use of various forms of information and communication technology (ICT). These local institutions of public welfare must make the most efficient use possible of the technology resources that are at their disposal, especially as the government works toward the goal of creating a digitally inclusive society.

### **10.1 Objectives of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project**

To facilitate the computerization of gram Panchayats, the e-Panchayat program's primary objective is to provide rural areas of India with access to the most recent information available online. To achieve this objective, the e-Panchayat MMP is working toward the goal of automating the internal workflow procedures of about 2.45 lakh Panchayats located throughout India. This will cover over 30 lakh elected members in addition to several lakh officials of the PRI. ICT is going to be used for the following purposes as part of the government's e-Panchayat Mission: Panchayats are currently undergoing automation of their internal processing processes and enhancing how services are provided to individuals, building up the capabilities of the members and officers of the Panchayat.

### **10.2 Benefits of e-Panchayat mission:**

All of the data and information about gram Panchayat can be easily accessed through the use of the internet in a state in which the Gram Panchayat has been successful in fully adopting the e Panchayat modus operandi. Residents of places like Andhra Pradesh and Goa, two of the states in which the e Panchayat program has been partially rolled out, are now able to take advantage of certain online services. These services include the issue of birth and death certificates, property tax, pension benefits, subsidy benefits, e-health care, e-learning, and e-agricultural extension services, among others. Most popular and sponsored schemes are Makes Permanent Sales Center, Shyama Prasad MukherjiRurban Mission, National biogas and fertilizer management program, Mahalaxmi Better Exhibition, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Kaushalya Vikas Yojana, Prime Minister Housing scheme-Gramin, Mahila Kisan Empowerment Program, Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission, Prime Minister Gram SadakYojana, National Gram SwarajYojana, Social-economic, and Caste Survey, Self-Training Institutions (R-SETI) regarding all operations.

### **11. Challenges Faced by Panchayat Raj Institutions:**

The performance of the Panchayat Raj Institutions has not been satisfying and has not been up to the level that was envisaged, even after they were given constitutional status and protection under the 73rd Amendment Act (1992). Numerous factors contributed

to this less than ideal performance, especially concerns regarding functionaries as a whole, lack of infrastructure, lack of trained Human Resources at the Gram Panchayat level, and most of the officials preferred to stay at the District place or city level. Another challenge is non-accountability, even though personnel at the Gram Panchayat level provide essential services such as education, health, and the development of livelihoods, in the majority of cases, this personnel is not accountable to the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha. One of the most important problems is that there is not enough convergence of activity both horizontally and vertically. In addition, vertical integration is not guaranteed because employees can be appointed to their positions under a variety of departments and programs, each of which has its unique responsibilities. There is insufficient oversight to determine whether or not the pre-existing guidelines are being broken. If elected functionaries in Panchayats lack administrative experience, there is a significant likelihood that employees will be dependent on them. This dependence can lead to the situation being exploited by staff or to collaboration between elected functionaries and officials.

There is a large amount of diversity between states in terms of involvement, including requirements and methods of recruitment, length of service, pay and benefits, travel allowances, and other circumstances for similar cadres. Again there are variances in remuneration under several schemes that are operating at the rural level, and this variation drives employees to migrate from one state to another and sometimes from one plan to another. For instance, the daily remuneration provided by MGNREGA in the state of Haryana is 309 rupees, whereas, in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, it is less than 200 rupees.

There is no standard for the minimum qualification required of elected or non-elected members. Obstacles that face elected women representatives, although women are elected representatives in Panchayat Raj Institutions, they continue to encounter several obstacles such as the lack of leadership skills, because they do not possess any leadership skills, it is difficult to assert their beliefs or even freely express them. It was stated not too long ago that 77 percent of women working in Panchayat Raj Institutions are under the impression that they are unable to readily influence things on the ground. Even after being elected, the majority of the work in the Panchayats is completed by the women's husbands under the 'SarpanchPati System'. Another matter that gives rise to cause for concern is the widespread lack of female representatives at meetings of the Panchayat, which is caused by the discouraging attitudes of members of the family.

A concern relating to monetary matters is that the Local Self Governments are unable to generate adequate funds. Due to low local revenue generation, PRI depends on the State Government. As the Economic Survey, 2017-18 pointed out, there is a Low Equilibrium Trap, which implies that the local bodies appear to be not collecting

revenues from taxes to the extent that they can. This means that the economy as a whole is in a state of low equilibrium. This is primarily because the majority of State Governments have not delegated sufficient revenue authority to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Even though the States have given the taxation authorities, their collection is poor because locals are reluctant to pay taxes even though the States have given them such powers. As a result, they continue to be reliant on financial devolution. Due to a lack of willingness to take out loans from financial institutions, the majority of Gram Panchayats are unable to effectively decide and execute long-term plans for the development. This is even though they have been given the authority to access loans for the development of public infrastructure and the delivery of public services. On the other hand, there are some 'Functional Issues' faced by the PRI. Such as unscientific assignment of responsibilities to various tiers of Governments. The roles and responsibilities of local governments continue to be poorly defined as a result of the very little actual devolution of functions and authorities by the States to Panchayat Raj Institutions in some States.

The formation of Parallel Bodies: In many cases, parallel bodies are established to ostensibly facilitate more rapid implementation and a higher level of responsibility. Nevertheless, there is scant evidence to suggest that such parallel groups have been successful in avoiding the ills that include partisan politics, the sharing of spoils, corruption, and elite capture. Parallel entities invade the legitimate space of Panchayat Raj Institutions, which in turn demoralises the institutions as a result of their greater resource endowments. For instance, in some regions of the country, Khap Panchayats serve as a parallel organisation, and in most cases, they intrude into the responsibilities that are traditionally assigned to Panchayat Raj Institutions.

The politicisation of Panchayat Raj Institutions even though Panchayat Raj Institutions are considered to be Government Institutions, the political parties that are currently in power in the state is hesitant to give them autonomy. Instead, they use these institutions as the organisational arms of their party, which leads to frequent interventions in the day-to-day operations of these institutions as well as the politicisation of appointments.

## **12. Suggestions:**

It is possible to put into practise the recommendations made in the sixth report of the second Administrative Reform Commission (ARC) in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. It was recommended in the 2nd ARC that there had to be a distinct demarcation of the functions performed by each level of the government. In addition, it has advised that state governments should encourage local authorities to outsource specific services to public or private organisations, as

may be appropriate, by providing enabling rules and support. This recommendation was made in the report. Genuine fiscal federalism, in which fiscal autonomy is paired with fiscal accountability, may offer a solution to this problem in the long run. In addition to this, the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Schemes (MPLADS) budget has the potential to be employed productively.

Training should be provided to the members of the Panchayats, which involves the skills and resources of a variety of training institutes that are specialised in their respective subject matters. It is possible to accomplish this by forming a network of institutions that are concerned with a variety of topics, such as general management, financial management, rural development, and catastrophe management.

Audit committees can be established at the district level by state governments to exert oversight over the veracity of financial information, the sufficiency of internal controls, compliance with applicable legislation, and other such matters.

Local communities have the ability to produce Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in response to certain circumstances, such as when there is a demand for new infrastructure and the community is willing to pay for it.

Establishing fair rates for taxes and fees, enhancing the effectiveness of collection, and broadening the scope of financing options are some of the measures that can be taken to assure the continued growth of revenues throughout time.

In addition, having access to debt capital markets may prove to be a workable alternative for locating sources of finance, allowing these parties to carry out planned infrastructure development. To have access to debt, particularly long-term loans, local authorities need to make significant strides toward improving their overall administrative and technical capacities.

### **13. Conclusion:**

There is a great importance of the Local Self Government in the modern States because it reduced the burden of the State and Central Government and provides necessary governance by taking care of local services and handling grassroots issues at the same level, hence are become an essential part of the democracy. These institutions impart training to the citizens in the running of the government. Moreover, democracy is made real in local self-government. The Panchayat Raj system is a significant structure that plays an essential role in the development of rural areas and the management of all facets of rural life. The democratic decentralisation system provides the villages of India with the support necessary to function effectively as communities. In India, the system of Panchayat Raj institutions plays a significant role in bringing governance to

a level that is more accessible to the general population. Its goal is to implement plans for the village's agricultural and health care systems, as well as to assure the village's overall growth and development. In addition to that, it inspires prospective business owners to initiate operations on a modest scale. The portion of society that is economically more disadvantaged receives support as a result. The most effective way to resolve local administrative issues is through the use of government agencies because these organisations are the most easily equipped with the information and experience necessary to affect these issues. Because of the large population of the country, the state and central governments were unable to effectively manage the affairs of the individual municipalities. The Panchayat Raj system enables for more effective government across the country, although it needs significant additional expansion and upgrading. It moves India one step closer to being able to be classified as a fully democratic nation. India needs to improve its Panchayat Raj system since it takes into account local concerns and makes for a more responsive government. The participation of women and the person from SCs and STs must be increased if Panchayat governance and operational capabilities are to be improved. The Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act must be put into effect in such a way that maximizes efficiency so that the Act's goals can be realized.

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