

Function of Panchyati Raj in societal insertion: A General Study

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Abstract: Panchayats are the backbone of the Indian villages since the start of the recorded history. The three decades of nineteen fifties to nineteen eighties saw phases of revival governance with heavy social and political costs for the rural areas. The passing of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in December 1992 is considered by many as a milestone in the history of Social Inclusion. The Union cupboard of the govt. of Bharat, on 27 August 2009, approved 50% reservation for women in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions). Inclusion of the marginalized groups in Panchyati Raj has been a serious problem in Democratic decentralization. Inclusion in this context means the inclusion of the marginalized sections - women, Dalit and tribal's in Panchyati Raj governance. In the context of social inclusion training centers develop special training modules and plans for reserved position representatives for better inclusion. Rural Development policies relating to every asset distribution and every allocation of resources should also be formulated from the SC, ST and women's perspective too. The PRIs today face the biggest challenge in the face of traditional social structure of the village. The emergence of new crop of leaders through reservations is finding problems of social acceptability. Education especially elementary education must be made compulsory for ensuring equal participation of SC, ST and women in all walks of life. Till date people have developed an attitude that government would provide everything and people have to receive the same. Now the role has been reversed. People have to govern on the peoples programmes. Therefore the new system envisages a new task of building the capacity of the leaders and the people.

Keywords: function, social, insertion, general study etc

Panchayats are the backbone of the Indian villages since the start of the recorded history. The genesis of the system of Panchayati Raj can be traced back to the vision of Mahatma

Gandhi, who advocated the revival of the traditional Panchayats so that Gram Swaraj which had been an integral part of the social system of India, could become a reality. The Panchayat was for him an instrument which would foster peoples' participation in the governance of the country. In independent India, the directive principals of state policy in Article 40 of the Constitution exhorted the states to take steps to organize village Panchayat and endow them with such powers and authority as is also necessary to change them to perform as units of self government. The three decades of nineteen fifties to nineteen eighties saw phases of revival governance with heavy social and political costs for the rural areas. The Patchy progress of development initiatives, lack of people's participation and support led to realization of the need to deepen democracy and develop inclusive and capable institutions of local governance.

Balwantrai Mehta Commission Report recommended a „three-tier“ system of Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs), viz. the popularly electoral village council (gram panchayat) because the village level basic unit. Block (block is the larger sub unit of a district) council (or panchayatsaphithi) at the Block level, and the district council (or the Zilla Parishad) at the district level. Introduction of PRIs was hailed as one of the most important political initiatives in India

In 1977 government appointed a Committee with Ashok Mehta as chairman and was entrusted with the task of enquiring into the causes to blame for the poor performance of Panchayati dominion establishments. It was conjointly asked to counsel measures to strengthen Panchayati dominion establishments. constitutional protection to the Panchayati dominion establishments and more decentralization of power the least bit levels. The Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) Suggested:

- Reservation of seats for the weaker sections
- Two seats for women
- Adequate financial resources for the panchayats
- Requirement of Constitutional sanctions
- To extend people's participation in developmental activities.

The passing of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in December 1992 is considered by many as a milestone in the history of Social Inclusion. 73rd Amendment 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchyati Raj Institutions.

It put emphasis on regular elections, financial resource generation; three- tier PRIs, more effective Gram Sabhas, reservation to SC, ST, and Women. Moreover, the system of reservations has been implemented in three tier Panchayati raj system.

The Core Features of the 73rd Amendment are

- To extend people's participation in developmental activities
- To provide reservation of seats for SC, ST and women.

The decision-making powers of panchayati raj bodies are extensive and the list includes farming, land reform, ecological restoration, rural industries etc. They make local development plans. The panchayati raj bodies are empowered to take decision on 29 clearly defined subjects, all concerning their day-day lives.

1. Agriculture including agricultural extension 2. Land improvement, reforms, consolidation and conservation three. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development four. Animal farming, agriculture and poultry five. Fisheries half-dozen. Social biology and farm biology seven. Minor forest produces 8. Small scale industries as well as process industries nine. Khadi, village and house industries thirteen ten. Rural housing eleven. Drinking water twelve. Fuel and fodder thirteen. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways 14. Rural electrification including distribution 15. Conventional sources of energy 16. Poverty alleviation programme 17. Education including primary and secondary schools 18. Technical training and vocational education 19. Adult and non-formal education 20. Libraries 21. Cultural affairs 22. Markets and fairs 23. Health and sanitation including public health centres and dispensaries 24. Family welfare 25. Women and child development 26. Social welfare including welfare of handicapped and mentally retarded.

The Union cupboard of the govt. of Bharat, on 27 August 2009, approved 50% reservation for women in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions). The Indian states which have already implemented 50% reservation for women in PRIs are Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

As of 25 November 2011, the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tripura also reserve 50% of their posts for women. The whole ideology behind passing the 73 rd amendment to Constitution was to create an effective third tier government and ensure social justice. Panchayat establishment's are the vehicles of political direction of individuals at the grass root level for shaping their own destiny. A vast majority of

individuals live at the grass root level within the rural and remote areas with none bit of recent day. A large section of such underprivileged folks belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and alternative Backward casts as additionally ladies normally at the grass root level.

Inclusion of the marginalized groups in Panchyati Raj has been a serious problem in Democratic decentralization. Inclusion in this context means the inclusion of the marginalized sections - women, Dalit and tribal's in Panchyati Raj governance. Women, Dalit and tribal have suffered social and economic marginalization for a long time and therefore are considered for affirmative action. Particularly in the rural setting, the socio- economic hierarchies are inter-related. Social Inclusion is a process. That is to mention, inclusion has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. Inclusion is bothered with the identification and removal of barriers. Consequently, it involves aggregation, collating and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is regarding victimization proof of assorted sorts to stimulate creativeness and problem-solving. Social Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all in PRI Functioning. Social Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of society who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. This indicates the ethical responsibility to make sure that those teams that ar statistically most "at risk" ar fastidiously monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the PRI system.

Reservation of elected positions in PRIs has been supported on the grounds that it will equalize power differentials between historically privileged and under-privileged castes, as well as between men and women. Critics of this policy allege that efficiency and performance have suffered as a result of reservations.

With regard to ST Communities, the single biggest problem they are facing is the non-sensitive, on-humanitarian way in which central and state forest conservation Acts are being used to oust and displace tribal communities without adequate regard for the integral relationship between the vanvasis and the forests in which, or on the edge of which, they live. It is equally necessary for social inclusion that forest development agencies function under the aegis of the Panchayats in tribal areas in strict accord with the provision of PESA.

Across the board, tribal people (both male and female) participate less than any other group. Reservations for tribal people may be a useful way to counteract the exclusionary trend

over the long term. However, over the short span of 5 years since reservations are enforced no directly visible impact has resulted either in terms of participation rates or distribution of advantages.

Gender could be a key think about determinant who's enclosed in gram punchayet activities. Women participate significantly less than men, and the social factors which limit women's involvement in public affairs, are also reflected in the generally low levels of education and information that prevail among women. The study also noted that the quality of performance of the elected women representatives was largely dependent upon social factors like literacy, education and the tradition of social reform movements in the region. Patriarchal and feudal values constrained the political participation of women and though there were instances where reservations had failed to break the dominance of men over women, the new arrangement had helped in introducing a radical change in perceptions. Almost all the studies including those viewing them initially as proxy namesake members have noted the new recognition, identity, respect, confidence and aspiration levels of the women who have entered panchayats. Even those who had initially entered panchayat elections due to persuasion/pressure of family members, acquired skills and confidence to perform their new role.

It would be good to give the following Suggestions for the role of PRI in social inclusion. Training is considered to be an integral part of any institution, which is involved in the development process. Training of SC,ST and women access to information is essentially urgent for realization of SC,ST and women's involvement in Panchayat politics and decision making. It will impart knowledge, skills and attitude to understand respective powers, functions and responsibilities. The majority of the PRI representatives were not trained in India. They are functioning without information on PRI Acts, Rule, Regulations and functions. The training for panchayat members should be organized in regular intervals at district/block level. The training of panchayat representatives and awareness campaign for gram sabha members is essential for social inclusion in PRI.

In the context of social inclusion training centers develop special training modules and plans for reserved position representatives for better inclusion. Establishing a system to monitor the effect of these various measures on the level of inclusion of reserved position voters and representatives in activities associated with the gram panchayat.

The attitude of bureaucrats towards elected panchayat representatives needs to be changed as partners working for development. A successful training is dependent on the type of strategy and the nature and characteristics of the target group. In this view bureaucrats should be trained as per social inclusion philosophy.

The Gram Sabha is the heart of Panchayati Raj system. Gram Sabha belongs equally to everyone the rich and poor, male and female, educated and illiterate, irrespective of any caste or religion. They are all equal members to the Gram Sabha with equal rights and responsibilities sitting together, discussing issues and taking decisions. Some research finding shows that the SC, ST, and Women member's participations are very low. Gram Sabha is the foundation of Social inclusion so members should be trained for functioning and participation in Gram Sabha Meeting.

Community participation is the stone of the concept of Social inclusion. The Balwant Rai Mehta committee remarked that Panchayati Raj would act as the representative of the village and ensure the development of the village as well as participation of villagers in developments activities. The representative of SC, ST, and Women participation should be in the planning, implementation and monitoring of panchayati raj system. Community participation will be empower SC, ST, and Women to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food clothing etc. The state governments should invest in capacity building of the SC, ST and women Panchayats enabling them to participate in planning process at the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samitilevel. People have to assess their requirement and chalk out schemes and programmes according to their needs. They should be people s programmes and government has to participate in the programmes by facilitating the people to carry out their programmes on their own. Hence development works could be allowed to be done with the involvement of the people.

The PRIs today face the biggest challenge in the face of traditional social structure of the village. The emergence of new crop of leaders through reservations is finding problems of social acceptability. The vested interests are trying to create cleavages between the caste leaders and the elected leaders. In this view leadership quality should be develop and motivate in SC, ST, and Women PRI representative. The executive should give a positive support to this forum in order to check against any sabotage or clashes.

The functioning of PRIs could be successful only if the structure is strong and enduring, particularly at gram panchayat level, which is the major source of people's power which would

induce accountability in the system. The emergence of modern leadership, representation from weaker sections and citizen consciousness are also found to successfully battle the vested interest of traditional rural social structure. Once the political system attuned to people's needs and aspirations is built up from below, the objective of social inclusion in rural area will be realised with greater speed and reliability.

Decentralization is not simply decentralization of expenditure; it can include decentralization of resource mobilization. A major aspect of lack of SC, ST, and women's development has been the very inadequate infrastructural development. In this Context especially for the SC, ST, and Women specific development institutions which requires the intervention of both the State and Central Government. The simultaneous significance of decentralization, good- governance and coordination ensures SC, ST, and women's participation in institutional politics and decision making process. The legislative framework provided by the 73 rd Amendment could be made operational only through genuine political will and motivation to implement these laws. Traditionally Panchayati Raj has been looked at as an institution meant for providing services and facilities. But in the new context it is meant for not only services and facilities but also growth with equity.

Rural Development policies relating to every asset distribution and every allocation of resources should also be formulated from the SC, ST and women's perspective too. The protective discriminatory practices of the state build powerful arguments for SC, ST and women's rights enabling to bring a balance in social power equations. It would enable the SC, ST, and Women candidate take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves and empower SC, ST, and Women to fight against every form of discrimination.

Education especially elementary education must be made compulsory for ensuring equal participation of SC, ST and women in all walks of life. Training programmes on health education, small savings, developing skills etc., may be arranged by government and non-governmental organizations for SC, ST and women to realize their responsibilities and to develop character and personality. It would give economic power to the SC, ST, and Women and there by enable them to contribute their quota to the economic growth of the nation.

A long –term and lasting solution has to be sought through education. Mass awareness about social problems and programmes available for ameliorating them would strengthen grass- roots democracy and yield desired results. Till date people have developed an attitude that government would provide everything and people have to receive the same. Now the role has

SP Publications

International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)

An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal

www.ijoes.in

Vol-1, Issue-3, 2019

ISSN: [2581-8333](#)

been reversed. People have to govern on the peoples programmes. Therefore the new system envisages a new task of building the capacity of the leaders and the people.

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