

Evolution of Panchayat system in the context of rural life of India

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Abstract

Rural life in India is completed through the panchayat system. According to Professor R. R. Desai, the entire land of the village was actually in the possession of the panchayat. The panchayat was the representative of the village society. Local autonomy is the institutional form of democratic decentralization as a political ideology. One of the means of bringing awareness and mobilization to the rural masses is the panchayat system, which serves as the cornerstone of participatory democracy. However, good governance and local governance are needed to ensure people's participation at the grassroots level and to make the development process people-centered. However, judging from the Indian point of view, the idea of local self-government is very old. Kautilya's Arthashastra in ancient India and Gandhiji's idea of gram panchayat during independence came before us as a form of this local question. As people's participation in local administration increases, so does the government's commitment to public service. Therefore, when the initiative was taken to introduce panchayat system in India through the 73rd amendment to the constitution [1992], then the panchayat system of West Bengal acted as a guide. The panchayat system of West Bengal played a major role in bringing about the tide of development through land reform throughout Bengal in the seventies. The current discussion will focus on how the panchayat system in India continues to influence social life.

Key words: Rural life, Local administration, Panchayat system.

Introduction

Village is a combination of social cohesion and relationships. And while Indian villages are referred to as a self-reliant small republic, in some cases they are dependent on the outside world. In the words of Maine, 'rural society is an organized and autonomous family group who has joint ownership over a certain piece of land. Those who take care of almost everything they need and are free from any kind of external relationship.' [Sukumar Singh, 2010, p. 448] The village is an integral part of the social system in India. Indian civilization is the meeting place of all people. So it is rich in the history of rise and fall of many dynasties, invasion and resistance of foreign peoples. However, the rural society has remained the same in response to this blow. One of the main reasons for this is the existence of Kar Gram Panchayat here. According to Marx, the greatest sign of rural society in India and Asia was the unity of rural society between agriculture and handicrafts. It was governed by an unchanging rule that was governed by a set of

rules. It was governed by the foundations of rural society. [S.C. Dubey, 2016, p. 65]. The word panchayat is derived from panch pradhan. This means adding five people to the responsibilities of an organization. In the Shantiparva of the Mahabharata, there is a reference to Janapada [village Janapada] in the Ramayana of Balmiki. People perform their duties based on religion [S. Rajnesh & S. L. Goel, 2009 p-xiii]. In 1909, the Decentralization Commission stated that [Padma Ramachandran, translated by Santosh Kumar Adhikari, 2001, p.172]

Local self-government and panchayat system

Local governance can be developed when the people of a particular area entrust the management of local governance to their representatives. The features of this system are - [Shakti Mukherjee and Indrani Mukherjee, 2006, p. 104]

- Local authorities
- Specific area and specific people living in that area
- The local authority manages the municipal administration of the area
- Performs public welfare and development oriented work
- Collects revenue for conducting operations
- The local authorities enjoy some independence in the management of the municipal administration in the area.

The main advantage of local administration is that it tries to solve the problem according to the area. As there is communication between the government and the people, as the close relationship between the two develops, the responsibility of the government increases. Through panchayats, people participate in government decisions and on the one hand, as the political consciousness of the people increases, on the other hand, this local government system helps in political socialization. The concept of decentralization is associated with development and the concept of democracy. It can reduce poverty, environmental concerns and local imbalances.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census [ch 11, p-83], the three main areas of regional government are-

- It must have an organizational shape and they must have certain powers that make them aware of their rights and property.
- As agents of the people, the government needs to have certain things that will accept responsibility.
- It speaks of autonomy which speaks of budget making and revenue requirements.

The principles of the Panchayat system are: [ch-2, p-36] [According to RP Josie in 1999]

- Empowering the people
- Power is about people's participation

- Laying the foundation of democracy from below
- Creating collective awareness among the people
- Starting from village meeting in Gram Sabha
- The bureaucracy is not through elected representatives
- Provide a sense of participation
- Bring change through power distribution
- Learning through action and teaching through demonstration
- Planning through public awareness
- Perform actions through collaboration
- To create awareness among people about their own condition
- Build a relationship of humble attitude and trust
- To provide leadership to meet the goals of the people
- Awareness building, not coercion
- Participate not just order
- Not just governance but representation
- Not just liberation but realizing their potential
- Change not follow
- Creating a solidarity mentality

Panchayat system in ancient India

In ancient India, in the Magadha and Maurya eras, the heads of the rural society were elected by all the members of the society, whose positions were approved by the state functionaries. Morals were in the Sultanate era. They managed the rural society. During the Mughal period, these village chiefs were considered as royal servants. There are two types of panchayat system in the village, Jat Panchayat and Gram Panchayat [SC Dubey, 2016, p. 6]. It was through these two panchayats that the system of rural governance in India was governed. In many cases, if the population of one caste is less in a village, they can join the caste panchayat of the next village. The heads of each caste panchayat join the gram panchayat. The gram panchayat discusses the issues related to the values of the whole village and issues related to the problems of more than two caste groups. The panchayat system affects the whole life of the village. Administrative and judicial work is entrusted to the Panchayat.

The various scriptures of ancient India, such as the Vedas and the Upanishads, depict the type of village life in which the main responsibility and duty of the king of traditional India was to establish and maintain justice. At this time Raj Dharma is to serve the people and Seti is the absolute religion of Raja.

In Kautilya's Arthashastra, Raja is an employee of the state, whose main duty lies in the welfare of the people. [R.C. Pradhan & S. K. Joseph, v-15, n-2, p-53] The location of the village in the administrative center. In the early Vedic period there were four types of councils called Sabha-Samiti-Bidhata-Gana. The village was the main center of the political unit when some changes took place in the Vedic age. Here the consent of the people was one of the aspects of running the administration. [R.C. Pradhan & S. K. Joseph, v-15, n-2, p-53]. According to religion, people controlled their way of life. Here the king's reliance was on revenue collection, the rest of the power was given to the people. The bottom line is to follow the approach here. The village panchayat system is identified as a symbol of people's sovereignty. Kautilya mentions about the autonomy of the village. Kautilya discusses the administration of his village [ch-11, p-83] in his Arthashastra, at a time when the administrative system of the village was much more cohesive. Here he mentions his position as Adhakra [Principal], Sankhya [Accountant] Anakitsankhya [Anikitsaka Veterinarian] Jam Krimika [Village Courier] chikitsak [Physician]. Their role in the system of governance was important.

Panchayat system in British India

The fall of the Mughal Empire in India and the establishment of British rule had a profound effect on contemporary rural life. The British government believed in centralized governance. Therefore, the rural local self-government system can no longer survive. Village society and governance gradually became extinct. In order to establish their dominance in the ancient village society especially in Bengal and Bihar, the British adopted two methods [Sukumar Singh, 2010, p. 462] - 1] New system of land revenue. 2] Introduction of currency instead of crops and commodities as land revenue. As a result, rural society disintegrated and local government system was dismantled and centralized governance system was established. As a result, the rural autonomy that helped the rural society to survive in the Manu literature also fell apart at this time. However, in some cases, autonomy is mentioned in some places for the benefit of the government. Similarly, in British India, Lord Mayo introduced the system of local autonomy in 1870. In Bengal, an artificial body was set up by passing the Chowkidari Act, the number of members of which was to be chosen by a magistrate. In this case, it is necessary to mention another proposal, then Ripon's proposal on local autonomy in 1882. However, the first law on local autonomy in British India was introduced in 1885, known as the Bengal Local Autonomy Act. The law is governed by a three-tiered body, the District Board, the Local Board and the Union Board. Besides, the Bengal Autonomy Act of 1909, the Parliamentary Acts of 1917 and 1936 are worth mentioning. Gandhi spoke of the greatest good for all [Buddhadev Bhattacharya, 1969] or Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya Gandhiji [Shivaji Pratim Basu, 2001, p-198] spoke of the socio-political liberation without which the development of moral and spiritual strength is not possible. In an agrarian country like India, he thought that it would be possible to achieve all through the self-governing rural masses governed by panchayats. He believed that in India's innumerable

rural societies, only if the decentralization of earthly political power could be done almost completely, then the ideal would always be established. By Gram Swaraj he speaks of a complete republic. Gandhiji said that "the more power the panchayats have the better for the common man" [Government of Kerala, 1988, p. 3]. [Padma Ram Chandran, translated by Santosh Kumar Adhikari, 2001] But Ambedkar did not say anything about Panchayat Raj as the father of Indian Constitution. According to him, "local customs are caves of ignorance and narrow-mindedness" [Government of Kerala, 1988, p. 259]. Which does not play an important role in any of the affairs of the country? Therefore, the Panchayat system was not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of Independent India.

Panchayat system in Independent India

The Panchayat system was not recognized as such in the Constitution of Independent India, it was enshrined in the Guidelines. Later, a collective development project was started in 1952 to strengthen the panchayat system with the objective of diversifying the rural economy and expanding production and employment. The central government set up the Balwant Roy Mehta Committee to look into the implementation of the autonomy program. In 1956, Balwant Roy Mehta submitted the report of the committee. In view of this program, it was recommended to establish a three-tier structure for proper autonomy and the National Development Council could adopt the recommendation in 1956 and the panchayat system has been in existence since 1959. But it is seen that there are a lot of states where no issue related to panchayat system has been worked out. Therefore, in 1993, according to the 73rd amendment to the constitution, the panchayat system was made constitutional. The ninth part of the constitution, by incorporating the panchayat system, paved the way for the establishment of democratic rights of the common man at the grassroots level. The issues that are important to ensure the participation of all people, men and women are [Mr. Karan Maswaha, v-2, i-9] -

According to section 243 [d], at the panchayat level, 1/3 of the seats are reserved for women and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Elections are made compulsory every five years as per section 243 [e].

All matters relating to elections are mentioned in accordance with Section 243 [K].

In independent India many committees were formed centering on the panchayat system. Recommendations of Balwant Roy Mehta Committee, Ashok Mehta Committee, GVK Rao Committee, L M. Singhvi Committee are significant in this regard. Attempts are made to make the panchayat system effective keeping in view the recommendations of these committees. In fact, the local system of governance is just a stepping stone for the formation of integrated village infrastructure. The federal structure is present in independent India. According to the structure of the United States of India, in addition to the central and state governments, there are also local governments. At the grassroots level

there is an independent self-governing system of government. India has a three-tier panchayat system. In West Bengal, the people of the area are employed in the decision-making process through the three levels of Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat. According to the 1973 law, elections for three-tier panchayats are held every five years. Later, the Panchayat system served as a guide to other states.

Conclusion

In fact, since ancient times in India, there has been an unofficial system of controlling rural life. There were five chiefs to control rural disputes. In the Indian context, the panchayat system is a stage where developmental power can be exercised at a very low level through the active participation of the people. Because it is not necessary to take only development program. What is needed is the spontaneous participation of the people of the village in the development work of the panchayat. Therefore, the people of the village have to take initiative to implement the plan for the village. That is why electronic gram panchayats are being formed to provide efficient, transparent panchayat services. In order to implement rural development, it has to be linked with rural life. They need to understand that the people of the village can organize themselves and work for development. In some cases, development programs can be undertaken by the panchayat using its own resources. Only then will awareness come in the rural life through the hands of the panchayat and a healthy developed society will be formed. Bringing the responsibility of leadership at every level of the panchayat system. Former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee, referring to the implementation of the work is said to be the most important. [S. Rajnesh & S.L. Goel, 2009, p-XV] So an attempt to activate local administration can be seen through the establishment of good governance in panchayats. However, the positive impact on the life of the Gram Panchayat and the society will be relevant only when the government services are readily available to the common man and the system of governance is people-centered. Only then will the words of Pandit Nehru be realized - 'The basis of a genuine democratic system is the system of local autonomy.

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