

EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT PANCHAYAT RAJ SYSTEM FOR SOCIETY'S GROWTH

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Abstract:

National Panchayat Raj Day is observed each year on 24th April. Panchayati Raj Institutions facilitate a critical part in the socioeconomic development of people at the grassroots level. A number of honors are given to panchayats in several states at this juncture to encourage a competitive spirit among them. With its growing distrust of government and insufficient public participation in policy development and also decision-making, India must improve participatory governance. The study will reveal student opinions on the effectiveness of the current panchayat raj system for societal growth. The research will also shed light on how people can effectively support and participate in any form of governance. This may pave the way for the development of systems to ensure and enhance people's participation in increasing the effectiveness of panchayat raj systems and improving societal growth.

Keywords: *Panchayati Raj Institutions, participative governance, policy development, decision-making.*

Introduction:

Panchayats have existed in some form or another in India for a long time. In the past, village residents would gather to discuss and resolve village issues under the leadership of village elders. The spirit of participatory democracy was evident in this system. Mahatma Gandhi promoted "Gram Swaraj," or the delegation of certain authorities to the villagers.

To be sure, governance at local level in India is in its early stages still. We must encourage the procedure to be more active. Most villages have already seen visible signs of progress in terms of street lighting, village roads, sanitation, water supply, and storm water drainage. While connecting a single village to another is outside the scope of a GP, the GP is in charge of the village's road construction and maintenance. At least in some parts of a village, individuals can now walk without touching mud, and GPs are under force to build roads in the remaining areas. This is accurately how a functioning democracy should be.

Importance of Panchayati Raj Institution

Encourage Democratic Sign

- The PRI system is divided into 3 levels: Gram Panchayats at village level, intermediate-level Block Panchayats or Panchayat Samitis, and district-level Zilla Panchayats.
- The PRI system's scheme promotes citizen cooperation, democratic participation, and decentralisation.

Planning that is Effective and Efficient

- The country's 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been tasked with providing basic services in villages and planning for local economic development.
- The Gram Sabha (GS) discusses the GP's development work plans, known as the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), and the elected representatives carry them out. The development of a GPDP improves the efficiency of public services.

Effective Governance

- 'Participation' and 'Consensus oriented' are 2 significant supports of Noble Governance.
- The goal of this bottom-up method is to replicate the requirements of various participants. For example, GS is a channel for including the less advantaged segments of society and ensuring their participation in village level governance, where they can advocate for their developmental goals.
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Gram Sabha

- Gram Sabha is a statutory body made up of altogether whose ever names are on the voting rolls for the village level panchayat.
- Constitution states, Gram Sabha has such powers and executes such village-level functions as a State's Legislature may provide by law. All eligible voters in the village are eligible to vote in the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha's decisions can't be overturned by any other body except the aforementioned.

Challenges of PRI System

Inadequate Operative Devolution

- Because local government is a state subject under the Constitution, states have discretion in delegating power and authority to panchayats.
- Non-conventional energy sources, Fuel and fodder and rural electrification including electricity distribution, non-formal education, small scale industries including food processing industries, technical training, and vocational education are not devolved in some states.

Inadequate Funding/Grants

- Despite their constitutional authority, local governments face financial challenges in carrying out the various tasks assigned to them.
- Allocations made by State Finance Commissions are also limited in most states.

- Transfers made by State Finance Commissions are also restricted in the majority of states.

Infrastructure difficulties

- Some general practitioners don't have good infrastructure and must share area with schools, anganwadi centres, and other organisations. Some have their own infrastructure but lack basic amenities such as toilets, running water, electricity connection, etc.

Scarcity of support personnel

- In July 2018, "the Standing Committee on Rural Development (Chair: Dr. P Venugopal)" noted a severe shortage of personnel and support staff in panchayats, such as junior engineers, data entry operators, secretaries, and computer operators. This has an influence on how they control and deliver services.

Lack of Coherence among Government Programs

- There is a clear lack of convergence between the Centre and the state governments' various development programmes.
- Diverse rules issued by various subdivisions are cited as a major impediment to activity convergence.

Objectives of the study

The study's major goal is to comprehend how young people view their participation in local governance. The precise objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyse the support and regulations of panchayat raj systems for the development of the society.
- To understand the opinion of the people on the changes that has occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality.
- To analyse the prefer ability of the service delivery by panchayat raj systems.
- To understand the people's opinion on responsibility of government for environmental actions.

Research Methodology

The proposed study used a hybrid methodology that combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to find suitable answers to the research queries in the area of participation. Structured interviews were used in the study to collect quantitative data (via survey) from engineering students in Chennai, who served as the study's population. The samples were collected using a simple random sampling method. The collected data is empirically analysed in conjunction with the goals set.

Data Collection

The information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. A structured interview schedule was developed to capture people's socioeconomic status, perspectives, opportunities, challenges, nature of participation, and potential for advocacy. According to the questionnaire, 290 samples were collected to meet the study's objectives. Secondary sources,

such as articles, government reports, books, internet, and others, aided in better understanding the people's participation in local governance.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, it was confirmed with research respondents and cleaned up. Following that, the data from the survey, focus groups, and interviews was coded. According to the study's objectives, relevant software such as Excel, SPSS and others were used to enter both qualitative and quantitative data into computers. The study's objectives were met by conducting data analysis.

Demographic profile of the respondents

- Majority of the respondents were from urban localities (60%) and the remaining is from rural localities (40%).
- Out of the 290 respondents who participated in this survey, it was found that 59% were male participants and 40% were female participants in the study.
- It can be inferred that most of the respondents are undergraduate students (68.3%) and the remaining respondents are postgraduate students (31.7%).

Support and regulations for the development of the society

- 72% of the respondents have an opinion that regulations and support by upper level government is effective modes of governance for the improvement of the society.
- Some of the respondents (23%) have an opinion that single purpose authorities are effective modes of governance for the improvement of the society.
- 68% of the respondents have an opinion that a multi-purpose governance body for the urban crowd is effective modes of governance for the development of the society.
- Least respondents (14%) have an opinion that Inter-municipal cooperation and contracts is effective modes of governance for the development of the society.

The changes that have occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality are defined thus.

- Almost 74% have a neutral opinion (Neither positive change nor negative change) about the cost saving as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality.
- The majority of the respondents (65%) have a positive opinion about the Strategic capacity of the local assembly cost saving as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality.
- 72% have a negative opinion about the Strategic capacity of the local assembly as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality.
- 63% of the respondents have a neutral opinion (Neither positive change nor negative change) about the costs transparency as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organization of the municipality.
- 81% of the respondents have a positive opinion (Neither positive change nor negative change) about Quality of municipal services as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organization of the municipality.
- 76.5% have a neutral opinion (Neither positive change nor negative change) about General adaptive capacity of the organisation as a change that has occurred in the last decade in the organization of the municipality.

The form of service delivery is most preferred to the following tasks:

- 76.77% said that the public sector is most preferred of service delivery for the public transport.
- 68% of respondents said that the private sector is most preferred of service delivery for the maintenance of school buildings.
- 67% said that the Public Private sector is most preferred of service delivery for Waste management.
- 73% of respondents said that the Public sector is most preferred of service delivery for energy supply.
- 83% of respondents said that the Public sector is most preferred of service delivery for Water supply and sewage.
- 78% said that the Public private partnership sector is most preferred of service delivery for hospitals.
- 69% said that the Public private partnership sector is most preferred of service delivery for care homes for the elderly.

Government responsible for environmental actions

- 81% of the respondents strongly agree that the Local governments have the primary responsibility for promoting environmental awareness among the mass crowd.
- 71% of the respondents strongly agree that Lower population densities allow offering better environmental quality.
- 73% of the respondents strongly agree that Excessive land consumption is a big problem in this area.
- 68% of the respondents have a neutral opinion that High population densities help to foster community and social connections.

Discussion

From the analysis it is inferred that support given by the upper level government, single or special purpose authorities, multipurpose government bodies, inter municipal contracts and cooperation are the effective modes of governance for the development of the society. Many have neutral opinion on the changes that have occurred in the last decade in the organisation of the municipality. Public sector is the most preferred of the service delivery by panchayat raj systems. They also feel that government is responsible for environmental actions and promoting environmental awareness.

Conclusion

With its rapid urbanisation, India must improve urban governance. Public participation in India is difficult due to the country's multifaceted socioeconomic and political context, as well as power inequities and a lack of facts for civic decision-making. The time has come for purposeful democracy innovations in India. Growing participation awareness, combined with dissatisfaction with present involvement methods and governance, can deliver productive ground for the growth of deliberative democracy.

As seen in Kerala and rural Maharashtra, Universities or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with public trust can act as a self-governing third party to encourage and facilitate public deliberations. In addition, the inductively derived process flow for adjoined organic and

convinced deliberative democratic partaking facilitated by a self-governing third party can be used as a starting point for future efforts. Maintaining good governance in India, on the other hand, will be difficult. A grassroots movement will be required to not only advocate for, but also help implement, governance transformation in Indian cities. Advocacy at several levels will be required to encourage and support governments in implementing deliberative democracy processes, to strengthen organic participation skills and willingness, and to advance an effective independent third-party to promote, oversee, and monitor deliberative democracy processes.

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