

A study on State leadership issues in Panchayat Raj Institution

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ABSTRACT

Panchayat Raj Institutions are oldest unorganized institutions of Indian culture with embedded power house on Panchayat Coupal. Now they are registered under different acts enforced time to time by Union and State Governments and Panchayat Gharof Gram Panchayat became power forts in groups of villages, at Janpad head quarter and at District Panchayat Building.

Bharat (India) became independent on 15 August 1947. After 46 years of independence, Panchayat Raj Institutions got birth in the book of constitution by 73rd amendment designated as New Panchayat Raj Act. It was integrated approach for entire nation with flexibility of tier at state level. Large states opted three tier system while small one two tier. In three tier system first is Gram Panchayat constituted by population of group of villages, Janpad Panchayat at Janpad level and District Panchayat at District head quarter level. Two tier means Gram Panchayat at group of village level while District Panchayat at District level. In both the system State level Panchayat is absent. Means administrative bodies of grass root democratic system is without state leadership. While in case of other grass root level institution like cooperatives, Apex Institute like Apex level State organization like State Cooperative Bank or State Cooperative Union accorded place, with proper legal provisions. Looking in to the importance of Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development, present situation is exhibiting differential treatment.

Through this research paper, establishment of Choukhamba Panchayat Raj (four tier structure) is advocated. It will fulfill the need of state level Panchayat leadership.

Key Words

Leadership, Panchayat, Integrated Panchayat Raj, Empowerment, Democratic Decentralization, Rural Development, Constitution

INTRODUCTION

Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) are grass root level Institutions since ancient era. It is supposed to be nursery of leadership, cultural and social development and democratic decentralization process. Indian religious literature having references of existence of Panchayat system. Shri Ram charitmanas, authored by GoswamiTulsi Das having references of its existence. King Dashrath je having a thought for coronation ceremony of his eldest son & crown prince Shri Ram. He says - "Jo Panchahun Mat lagenika, karahinharshihinya Ram hinTeeka." (If Panch means office bearer of Panchayat Raj Institutions feel appropriate, then coronation ceremony of Crown Prince Shri Ram can be executed happily). It indicates presence of Panchayat system during RaghuvanshMonarchy.

The Panchayat Raj system was much influential and powerful during dynasty era. AlguChoudhri and JummanShekh are light pillars of Panchayat Raj System as mentioned in very famous novel of MunshiPremchand's "Godan". But in British colonial era, the entire Panchayat Raj System derailed. The sole objective of colonial rulers was to exploit Bharat (India) and inhabitants of Bharat (Indians). Good governance, strengthening and enriching democratic institutions was not at all part of British rulers. That's why colonial rulers intentionally destroyed traditional Indian institutions like Panchayat.

The worrier of freedom of expression and speech Raja Ram Mohan Roy pointed out this anomaly and wrote very strong editorial in his newspaper"SanwadKoumidi". He demanded reestablishment of Panchayat Raj tradition in Indian villages. This reference again explains the importance of panchayat Raj Institutions in Bharat.

India got Independence on 15 August 1947. Our constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949 (constitution Day) and enforced on 26th January 1950. It has two important ingredients. Part A Fundamental rights and part B Directive Principles. Part B indicates the development of Panchayat Raj in the country.

Our Father of the Nation, great editor and first investigative Rural Journalist (known for Famous Champaranmovement) Mahatma Gandhi always emphasized on "Gram Swarajya." Mahatma Gandhi designated Panchayat Ghar (House) as democratically decentralized power house of rural peoples.

Following Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts, First Prime Minister of India Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated Panchayat Raj system of independent India from Nagour (Rajasthan) in September

1957. After reorganization of states on language basis, near about all the provinces started work on establishment of Panchayat Raj system as important unit of rural development and democratic decentralization. But approaches were not uniform and integrated in nature. Election of Panchayat were not held at proper tenure and time. Power and duties were also not well defined. Delegation of power to Panchayat Raj institutions was always in controversy. Overlapping of power of Member of Parliament (MP), Member of legislative Assembly (MLA) creating obstacles in democratic decentralization. In Madhya Pradesh Arjun Singh's Government took strong step to regularize elections of long superseded Panchayat Raj Institutions and delegation of powers of 29 departments to Panchayat Raj Institutions. After review of media reports regarding status of delegation of powers, Chief Minister Arjun Singh found that situation is not up to the mark. This was the example of one of the progressive state.

Looking in to status, Then Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi concentrated his all efforts for the democratic decentralization and development of Panchayat Raj Institutions. He traced the root cause for weak Panchayat Raj approach. It was constitutional lacuna. Rajeev Gandhi decided to accord "constitutional body" status to Panchayat Raj institutions along with local self government (urban bodies like Municipal Corporation and Municipalities). He started special countrywide awareness drive for integrated Panchayat Raj provision in constitution. It was the time when newspapers published special supplements and research reports on this issues. Unfortunately his dream could not landed on ground in his life time. Then P V Narsimha Rao became Prime Minister of India. He carried forward dream of Integrated Panchayat Raj system in the country, after globalizing Indian economy. Union government in year 1992 proposed the 73rd constitutional amendment draft bill in the parliament. Bill passed out in both the houses. After approval of more than half number of states assembly, then President of India Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma approved the passed bill on 20 April 1993. It was notified in extra ordinary Union Gazette on 24th April 1993 and enforced from same date. Then integrated Panchayat Raj System enforced and the day is celebrated as "Panchayat Raj Diwas."

Through this integrated Panchayat Raj Act a flexible (three or two tier) system was established in states as per their choice on the basis of geographical conditions and area. Regular elections were became mandatory of Panchayat Raj bodies. Panchayat Raj institutions became constitutional bodies. Right from Ward Panchayat to the Chairman of District Panchayat every office bearer became constitutional representatives.

In Madhya Pradesh, then the government led by Chief Minister Dig Vijay Singh and state became all India first to conduct Panchayat elections on the basis of new Panchayat Raj Act.

Proper reservations and provisions were made in new Panchayat Raj Act. Number of Panch in 30,922 Gram Panchayat increased to 4, 52,507. They became part and parcel of constitutional process. It was historical achievement in people representation system.

Madhya Pradesh was again first state in the country by provisioning 50 percent reservation for women in Panchayat Raj bodies in the leadership of then Chief Minister Shiv Raj Singh Chouhan.

Madhya Pradesh adopted three tier system means Gram Panchayat at village group level, Janpad Panchayat at Block level and District Panchayat at District level. Small states like North Eastern states adopted two tier system means Gram Panchayat at village group level and District Panchayat at District level.

Fourth Tier in Panchayat Raj

Looking in to problems in rural development, state level rural leadership development and state level apex institution in Panchayat Raj like Apex Cooperative Bank and Apex Cooperative Union, Fourth tier in Panchayat Raj like State Panchayat Institution is need of hour. But constitution is silent on this apex state arrangement. Dr Ram Manohar Lohiya, a renowned socialistic leader and parliamentarian floated hypothesis of Chou khambha (four Tier) Panchayat Raj system in the country before decades back. He started weekly news paper named "CHO KHAMBA" as mouth organ of All India Socialist Party. It was edited and published from Indore and regularly updated issues related with State Panchayat system and its merit.

METHODOLOGY

The research issue is exploratory in nature. Discussed with Panchayat Raj representative, thinker, social and cooperative workers and office bearers concerning the theme "State Panchayat Institution". The summary of discussion strengthen the hypothesis of Choukhamba Panchayat Raj system.

RESULT

It is suggested to start discussion in stake holders in Panchayat Raj Institutions for establishment of State Panchayat. It will be necessary to amend Panchayat Raj Act for establishment of State Panchayat Body.

INTERPRITATION

- The state Panchayat Institution will develop strong entity for rural development.
- It will eliminate discrimination in grass root level bodies like cooperative and in Panchayat.
- Cooperative has State level Institutions like Apex Cooperative Bank in every state resultant strong dialogue process with the government and other related bodies like National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Bank (NABARD).
- Presence of State Level body enabled cooperative organization to put up problems and demands in State Level Banking Committee. It helps in mobilizing resources and solving problems.
- At present Panchayat Raj Institutions are developed up to District Level and letter on has no leadership, indifferent from Cooperatives.
- Cooperative organizations for example, having Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) / Large Sized Cooperative Societies (LSS) and in tribal belts Large Sized Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS). Their District level Representation lies in District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCB) and District Central Cooperative Banks having leadership in the form of State Cooperative Banks like Madhya Pradesh State Cooperative Bank.
- If District Panchayat Raj Institutions represented in such state level APEX institutional structure then Panchayat Raj movement will certainly be strengthened.
- In absence of such institutional arrangement, District Panchayat leadership is scattered.
- In absence of State Panchayat Raj Institution, there is a gap of leadership hierarchy to make proper dialogue with the government as present in case of cooperative organizational arrangement.

CONCLUSION

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi set an ambitious target regarding doubling farmers income up to year 2023 and development of size of Indian economy up to 5 trillion US \$ within 5 years.
- All the stake holders have to play significant role in achieving such goals.
- Panchayat Raj Institutions has to extend contribution in these nationally important objectives. If State Panchayat leadership is developed it will certainly be in more efficient position for cooperation in government endeavors.

- Our Prime Minister recently said while inaugurating 107th Indian Science Congress in Bengaluru " New India needs technology as well as logical temperament so that our effort for social and economic development of the individuals is in the right direction."Prime Minister said –" technology had played a decisive role in various schemes and projects of his government.Adhar related benefits, rural electrification, improving sanitation and building houses for poor, among other initiatives were added by modern technology. Next decade would be decisive for rural technology, especially cost effective agriculture and farm to consumer supply chain, where technology will bring significant improvements." Looking in to Prime Minister's statement, in conclusion we can say – State Panchayat Institutions will play significant role in achieving these objectives. It will be established as an effective instrument for social and rural development technology.

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6th International Conference on Research Developments in Arts, Social Science, & Humanities (ASH-2020)

Osmania University Centre for International Program, Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad (India)



18th January 2020

www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN : 978-81-944855-0-6

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