PANCHAYATHI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

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DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION

Democratic decentralisation is the process of sharing of the administrative powers to the people's hand and viz versa. As notable transfer of power to the people at grass root leve l by creating responsible village panchayaths to the grama sabha, regular elections , suffi cient representations to weaker sections of the society such as SC and ST and women in theese bodies.

73rd Amendment Act initiated the promotion of democratic decenralisation in India thro ugh the introduction of meaningful PR bodies in the country.

In short it is the share of administrative power between government and it's citizen and viz versa

Decentralised governance

Decentralization—the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations an d/or the private sector is a complex and multifaceted concept. It embraces a variety of concepts. Different types of decentralization shows different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success.

Administrative decentralization

Administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of governance. It is the transfer of responsibility for the planning, financing and management of public functio ns from the central government or regional governments and its agencies to local govern ments, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area-wide, regional or func tional authorities. The three major forms of administrative decentralization—deconcentration, delegation, and devolution—each have different characteristics.

Delegation

Delegation is a more extensive form of decentralization. Through delegation central gov ernments transfer responsibility for decision-making and administration of publifunctio ns to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it. Governments delegate responsibilities when they create public enterprises or corporations, housing authorities, transportation authorities, specia l service districts, semi-autonomous school districts, regional development corporations, or special project implementation units. Usually these organizations have a great deal o f discretion in decision-making. They may be exempted from constraints on regular civi l service personnel and may be able to charge users directly for services.

Delegation

Delegation is the transfer of managerial responsibility for a specifically defined function
Devolution
Devolution is an administrative type of decentralisation. When governments devolve functions, they transfer authority for decision-making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. Devolution usually transfers responsibilities for services to local governments that elect their own elected functionaries and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions. In a devolved system, local governments have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions.

Deconcentration
Deconcentration is the transfer of power to an administrative unit of the central government, usually a field or regional office. With deconcentration, local officials are not elected.

Local governance
Local governance is governing at the local level viewed broadly to include not only the machinery of government, but also the community at-large and its interaction with local authorities.

Democratic local governance
Democratic local governance is, in turn, local governance carried out in a responsive, participatory, accountable, and increasingly effective (i.e., democratic) fashion and local governments gain the authority, resources, and skills; make responsive choices with citizen input; and operate effectively and accountably.

Panchayat Raj System
Democratic Decentralization:

The world “democracy” is derived from the Greek roots – ‘cracy’ meaning ‘rule of’ and ‘demos’ meaning ‘the people. It is governance of the people, by the people, for the people. The emphasis is on the ‘people ‘as distinct from ‘offer’. Rule by majority is, no doubt, an important feature of this system of governance; but the more important ingredient is rule by consultation … consultation between the people’s representatives on one hand, and consultation with key officers on the other. It is, in essence, a pooling of the intelligence and the experience of all concerned administration. As corollary it also implies and even enjoins on them an implicit acceptance of the decisions taken by
‘Decentralization’ means devolution of central authority among local units close to the areas served. Where authority devolves by this process on people’s institutions, it is democratic decentralization. The team headed by Balwantrai Mehta (1956) recommended ‘democratic decentralization’. According to this committee to delegate the powers, responsibility and resources for planning and execution of the development programme to people’s institutions. As per the recommendations of the committee it was aimed to secure the maximum participation of the rural people in their own development programmes. The committee was of the opinion that one of the major reasons for the failure of the the community development programme which are implemented after India’s independence was the apathy and the non-participation of the people in the developmental programme.

The study team recommended a basic pattern of democratic decentralization with the Gram panchayat (Village Council) at the village level, the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and the Zilla Parishad (district council) at the district level. The Gram panchayat is at the bottom of the Panchayat Raj System and the Zilla Parishad is at the apex. The Panchayat Samiti constitutes the middle tier of this three-tier new set up of rural administration.

The study team’s recommendations as approved by the National Development Council were communicated by the Center to the State for implementation. In the middle of 1958 the State of Madras had started as an experimental measure a pilot block of democratic decentralization in her own way as early as 1957. The experiences of this block were there Andhra State started in July 1958, twenty pilot blocks more or less on the same lines as recommended by the study team, one in every district of Andhra. Inspired by these experiences the State of Rajasthan become the pioneer to bring the whole of Rajasthan under democratic decentralization on October 2, 1959. On Nov, 1, 1959, Andhra Pradesh state introduced this scheme of democratic decentralization. In the entire state, then it was adopted by Mysore, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Assam, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Now all the state of India has introduced the system with minor variations so as to make it suitable to their own conditions and requirements.

**GOVERNANCE MEANING AND STRUCTURE**

The word governance is derived from the Greek verb (kuberno) which means to steer and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. It then passed on to Latin and then on to many languages.

As a process, governance may operate in an organization of any size.
Governance is the act of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of management or leadership processes. These processes and systems are typically administered by a government. When discussing governance in particular institutions, the quality of governance within the institutions is often compared to a standard of good governance. To distinguish the term governance from government: "governance" is what a "government" does. It might be a geo-political government (nation-state), a corporate government (business entity), a socio-political government (tribe, family etc.), or any number of different kinds of government, but governance is the physical exercise of management power and policy, while government is the instrument (usually collective) that does it. The term government is also used more abstractly as a synonym for governance, as in the Canadian motto, "Peace, Order and Good Government." Perhaps the moral and natural purpose of governance consists of assuring, on behalf of those governed, a worthy pattern of good while avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad. The ideal purpose, obviously, would assure a perfect pattern of good with no bad. A government, comprises a set of inter-related positions that govern and that use or exercise power, particularly coercive power.

A good government, following this line of thought, could consist of a set of inter-related positions exercising coercive power that assures, on behalf of those governed, a worthwhile pattern of good results while avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad circumstances, by making decisions that define expectations, grant power, and verify performance. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Project on Local Governance for Latin America: Governance has been defined as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision (legality). It has also been used to describe the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" (legitimacy). And it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means (participation).

**Fair governance**

A fair governance implies that mechanisms function in a way that allows the executives (the "agents") to respect the rights and interests of the stakeholders (the "principals"), in a spirit of democracy.

**Participatory governance**

Participatory governance focuses on deepening democratic engagement through the
participation of citizens in the processes of governance with the state. The idea is that citizens should play a more direct roles in public decision-making or at least engage more deeply with political issues. Government officials should also be responsive to this kind of engagement. In practice, Participatory Governance can supplement the roles of citizens as voters or as watchdogs through more direct forms of involvement.

Structure and Major Functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India

Though the basic structure of the PRIs is identical across the states of India, it is described via different nomenclatures in different states. Panchayats in every state has its own characteristics and even election procedures to these institutions are at variance.

A District Panchayat or Zilla Parishad is co-terminus with the district. Each district has one Zilla Parishad.

Similarly Block Panchayats or Panchayat Samitis are co-terminus with blocks of the said district.

A Block may have several villages within it, but Gram Panchayats are not necessarily co-terminus with each village. Depending on the size of population (as a matter of fact, number of voters) a Gram is defined under the law with a specific geographical area, which may consist of a single village or a cluster of adjoining villages.

Members of Panchayats:
A. Zilla Panchayat:
Each block Panchayat under a ZP elects one/two/three members directly (depending on number of voters within it). Presidents of all the Block Panchayats are also ex-officio members of the ZP. In some states the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Member of Parliament (MP) of the district/constituency are also ex-officio members.

B. Block Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti:
Each GP under a Block Panchayat elects one/two/three members directly to the Block Panchayat. GP pradhans are ex-officio members of the Block Panchayats.

C. Gram Panchayat:
A Gram as defined under the Act (meaning a village or a cluster of villages) is divided into a minimum of five constituencies (again depending on the number of voters the Gram is having). From each of these constituencies one member is elected. Body of these elected members is called the Gram Panchayat. Size of the GPs varies widely from state to state. In states like West Bengal, Kerala etc. a GP has about 20000 people on an
average, while in many other states it is around 3000 only.

D. Gram Sabha:
In most of the states, each constituency of the members of the Gram Panchayat is called the Gram Sabha and all the voters of the same constituency are members of this body. However, in some states this is called Ward Sabha/Palli Sabha etc. In West Bengal it is called Gram Sansad (village parliament). Gram Sabha in West Bengal has a different meaning. Here all the voters of the Gram Panchayat as a whole constitute the Gram Sabha. Under the Constitution there can be only three tiers of the Panchayat. The Gram Sabha is not a tier of the PR system. It does not have any executive function and operates as a recommending body only. Gram Sabhas hold meetings normally 2 to 4 times a year, but can meet as and when necessary. In some states dates of these meetings are fixed (Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat etc.) while in others dates are fixed by the Gram Panchayats. Issues to be discussed in the meetings can be wide ranging but the essential agenda should include: Annual Action Plan and Budget, Annual Accounts and Annual report of the GP, selection of beneficiaries for different social service programmes (Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Pension Schemes etc.), identification of schemes for preparation of Annual Plan for development programmes (e.g. MGNREGS) of GP, consideration of the Audit reports, analyses of GP’s performance etc.

The diagram at the end of the note demonstrates the typical structure of the rural local governance system in India, taking the example of West Bengal.

Functioning of Panchayats
As per the Constitution, Panchayats in their respective areas would prepare plans for economic development and social justice and also execute them. To facilitate this, states are supposed to devolve functions to Panchayats (29 subjects as mandated) and also make funds available for doing these (as per State Finance Commission’s recommendations). The functions of Panchayats are divided among different Committees (as ministries are formed in state and union governments), which are called Standing Committees/Sthayee Samitis/Upa Samitis etc. One of the members remains in charge of each of such committees while the over-a
NB-I: All the Panchayat Samitis within the geographical limit of a district come under the said District Panchayat or Zilla Parishad.

NB-II: All the Gram Panchayats within the geographical limit of Panchayat Samiti come under it. Panchayat Samiti and Development Block is co-Terminus.

NB-III: A Gram Panchayat will have at least five and maximum of 30 members. Each member has a specified area and voters (constituency) that he represents which is called Gram Sansad (village parliament).

GUS: Gram Unnayan Samiti (village development committee) is a small committee constituted by Gram Sansad and chaired by the elected GP member of the same Gram Sansad. Its function is to help the GP prepare village level plan execute them through social mobilization etc.
MODULE 2
CONCEPT AND EVOLUTION OF PANCHAYATHI RAJ

Republic of India

Part of the series
Politics and Government
of India
Union Government
Constitution of India
Fundamental rights
Executive:
President
Vice President
Prime Minister
Cabinet of India
Parliament:
Rajya Sabha
Lok Sabha
The Chairman
The Speaker

**Judiciary:**
Supreme Court of India
Chief Justice of India
High Courts
District Courts

**Elections**
Election Commission:
Chief Election Commissioner
Political parties
National parties
State parties

**National coalitions:**
Left Front
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)
United Progressive Alliance (UPA)
Local and state govt.
Governor
Vidhan Sabha
Vidhan Parishad

**Panchayat**
Gram panchayat
Panchayat samiti
Zilla Parishad

**Panchayati Raj (Rule of Village Committee)**
Panchayati Raj system is a three-tier system in the state with elected bodies at the Village, Taluk and District levels. It ensures greater participation of people and more effective implementation of rural development programmes. There will be a Grama Panchayat for a village or group of villages, a Taluk level and the Zilla Panchayat at the district level.
India has a chequered history of panchayati raj starting from a self-sufficient and self-governing village communities that survived the rise and fall of empires in the past to the modern legalized institutions of governance at the third tier provided with Constitutional support.

**Early history**

During the time of the Rig-Veda (1700 BC), evidences suggest that self-governing village bodies called 'sabhas' existed. With the passage of time, these bodies became panchayats (council of five persons). Panchayats were functional institutions of grassroots governance in almost every village. The Village Panchayat or elected council had large powers, both executive and judicial. Land was distributed by this panchayat which also collected taxes out of the produce and paid the government's share on behalf of the village. Above a number of these village councils there was a larger panchayat or council to supervise and interfere if necessary.[1] Casteism and feudalistic system of governance under Mughal rule in the medieval period slowly eroded the self-government in villages. A new class of feudal chiefs and revenue collectors (zamindars) emerged between the ruler and the people. And, so began the stagnation and decline of self-government in villages.

During the British rule, the autonomy of panchayats gradually declined with the establishment of local civil and criminal courts, revenue and police organisations, the increase in communications, the growth of individualism and the operation of the individual Ryotwari (landholder-wise) system as against the Mahalwari or village tenure system.

**During British rule**

The panchayat had never been the priority of the British rulers. The rulers were interested in the creation of 'controlled' local bodies, which could help them in their trading interests by collecting taxes for them. When the colonial administration came under severe financial pressure after the 1857 uprising, the remedy sought was decentralisation in terms of transferring responsibility for road and public works to local bodies. However, the thrust of this 'compelled' decentralisation was with respect to municipal administration...

The panchayat was destroyed by the East India Company when it was granted the office of Diwan in 1765 by the Mughal Emperor as part of reparation after his defeat at Buxar. As Diwan the Company took two decisions. The first was that it abolished the village land record office and created a company official called Patwari. The Patwari became the official record keeper for a number of villages. The second was the creation of the office of magistrate and the abolition of village police. The magistrate carried out policing functions through the Darogha who had always been a state functionary under the Faujdar. The primary purpose of these measures was the collection of land revenue by fiat. The depredations of the Patwari and the Darogha are part of our folklore and it led to the worst famine in Bengal. The effects of the famine lingered right to the end of the 18th century. These two measures completely disempowered the village community.
and destroyed the panchayat. After 1857 the British tried to restore the panchayat by giving it powers to try minor offences and to resolve village disputes. But these measures never restored the lost powers of the village community.

"From 1870 that Viceroy Lord Mayo's Resolution (for decentralisation of power to bring about administrative efficiency in meeting people's demand and to add to the finances of colonial regime) gave the needed impetus to the development of local institutions. It was a landmark in the evolution of colonial policy towards local government. The real benchmarking of the government policy on decentralisation can, however, be attributed to Lord Ripon who, in his famous resolution on local self-government on May 18, 1882, recognised the twin considerations of local government: (i) administrative efficiency and (ii) political education.

The Ripon Resolution, which focused on towns, provided for local bodies consisting of a large majority of elected non-official members and presided over by a non-official chairperson. This resolution met with resistance from colonial administrators. The progress of local self-government was tardy with only half-hearted steps taken in setting up municipal bodies. Rural decentralisation remained a neglected area of administrative reform.

The Royal Commission on Decentralisation (1907) under the chairmanship of C.E.H. Hobhouse recognised the importance of panchayats at the village level. The commission recommended that "it is most desirable, alike in the interests of decentralisation and in order to associate the people with the local tasks of administration, that an attempt should be made to constitute and develop village panchayats for the administration of local village affairs". But, the Montague-Chemford reforms (1919) brought local self-government as a provincial transferred subject, under the domain of Indian ministers in the provinces. Due to organisational and fiscal constraints, the reform was unable to make panchayat institutions truly democratic and vibrant. However, the most significant development of this period was the establishment of village panchayats in a number of provinces, that were no longer mere ad hoc judicial tribunal, but representative institutions symbolising the corporate character of the village and having a wide jurisdiction in respect of civic matters.

By 1925, eight provinces had passed panchayat acts and by 1926, six native states had also passed panchayat laws.

The provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act, 1935, marked the evolution of panchayats in India. Popularly elected governments in provinces enacted legislations to further democratising institutions of local self-government. But the system of responsible government at the grassroots level was least responsible. D.P. Mishra, the then minister for local self-government under the Government of India Act of 1935 in Central Provinces was of the view that 'the working of our local bodies... in our province and perhaps in the whole country presents a tragic picture... 'Inefficiency' and 'local body' have become synonymous terms... .'
In spite of various committees such as the Royal Commission on Decentralization (1907), the report of Montague and Chemsford on constitutional reform (1919), the Government of India Resolution (1918), etc., a hierarchical administrative structure based on supervision and control evolved. The administrator became the focal point of rural governance. The British were not concerned with decentralised democracy but were aiming for colonial objectives.

The Indian National Congress from the 1920s to 1947, emphasized the issue of all-India Swaraj, and organized movements for Independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The task of preparing any sort of blueprint for the local level was neglected as a result. There was no consensus among the top leaders regarding the status and role to be assigned to the institution of rural local self-government; rather there were divergent views on the subject. On the one end Gandhi favoured Village Swaraj and strengthening the village panchayat to the fullest extent and on the other end, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar opposed this idea. He believed that the village represented regressive India, a source of oppression. The model state hence had to build safeguards against such social oppression and the only way it could be done was through the adoption of the parliamentary model of politics During the drafting of the Constitution of India, Panchayati Raj Institutions were placed in the non-justiciable part of the Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy, as Article 40. The Article read 'the State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government'. However, no worthwhile legislation was enacted either at the national or state level to implement it.

In the four decades since the adoption of the Constitution, panchayat raj institutions have travelled from the non-justiciable part of the Constitution to one where, through a separate amendment, a whole new status has been added to their history

**Post-independence period**

Panchayat raj had to go through various stages. The First Five Year Plan failed to bring about active participation and involvement of the people in the Plan processes, which included Plan formulation implementation and monitoring. The Second Five Year Plan attempted to cover the entire countryside with National Extensive Service Blocks through the institutions of Block Development Officers, Assistant Development Officers, Village Level Workers, in addition to nominated representatives of village panchayats of that area and some other popular organisations like co-operative societies. But the plan failed to satisfactorily accomplish decentralisation. Hence, committees were constituted by various authorities to advise the Centre on different aspects of decentralisation.

**BALWANT RAI MEHTA COMMITTEE (1957)**

In 1957, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee studied the Community Development Projects and the National Extension Service and assessed the extent to which the movement had
succeeded in utilising local initiatives and in creating institutions to ensure continuity in the process of improving economic and social conditions in rural areas. The Committee held that community development would only be deep and enduring when the community was involved in the planning, decision-making and implementation process. The suggestions were for as follows:

- the PRIs are capable of planning for themselves with the resources available to them,
- district planning should take care of the urban-rural continuum,
- representation of SCs and STs in the election to PRIs on the basis of their population,
- four-year term of PRIs,
- participation of political parties in elections,
- any financial devolution should be committed to accepting that much of the developmental functions at the district level would be played by the panchayats.

The states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal passed new legislation based on this report. However, the flux in politics at the state level did not allow these institutions to develop their own political dynamics.

G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985)
The G.V.K. Rao Committee was appointed to once again look at various aspects of PRIs. The Committee was of the opinion that a total view of rural development must be taken in which PRIs must play a central role in handling people's problems. It recommended the following:

- PRIs have to be activated and provided with all the required support to become effective organisations,
- PRIs at district level and below should be assigned the work of planning, implementation and monitoring of rural development programmes, and
- the block development office should be the spinal cord of the rural development process.

L.M. Singhvi Committee (1986)
L.M. Singhvi Committee studied panchayatiraj. The Gram Sabha was considered as the base of a decentralised democracy, and PRIs viewed as institutions of self-governance which would actually facilitate the participation of the people in the process of planning and development. It recommended:

- local self-government should be constitutionally recognised, protected and preserved by the inclusion of new chapter in the Constitution,
- non-involvement of political parties in Panchayat elections.

The suggestion of giving panchayats constitutional status was opposed by the Sarkaria Commission, but the idea, however, gained momentum in the late 1980s especially because of the endorsement by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who introduced the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in 1989. The 64th Amendment Bill was prepared and introduced in the lower house of Parliament. But it got defeated in the Rajya Sabha as non-convincing. He lost the general elections too. In 1989, the National
Front introduced the 74th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which could not become an Act because of the dissolution of the Ninth Lok Sabha. All these various suggestions and recommendations and means of strengthening PRIs were considered while formulating the new Constitutional Amendment Act.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act

The idea that produced the 73rd Amendment was not a response to pressure from the grassroots, but to an increasing recognition that the institutional initiatives of the preceding decade had not delivered, that the extent of rural poverty was still much too large and thus the existing structure of government needed to be reformed. It is interesting to note that this idea evolved from the Centre and the state governments. It was a political drive to see PRIs as a solution to the governmental crises that India was experiencing. The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act, passed in 1992 by the Narasimha Rao government, came into force on April 24, 1993. It was meant to provide constitutional sanction to establish "democracy at the grassroots level as it is at the state level or national level". Its main features are as follows.

- The Gram Sabha or village assembly as a deliberative body to decentralised governance has been envisaged as the foundation of the Panchayati Raj System.
- A uniform three-tier structure of panchayats at village (Gram Panchayat — GP), intermediate or block (Panchayat Samiti — PS) and district (Zilla Parishad — ZP) levels.
- All the seats in a panchayat at every level are to be filled by elections from respective territorial constituencies.
- Not less than one-third of the total seats for membership as well as office of chairpersons of each tier have to be reserved for women. Reservation for weaker castes and tribes (SCs and STs) have to be provided at all levels in proportion to their population in the panchayats.
- To supervise, direct and control the regular and smooth elections to panchayats, a State Election Commission has to be constituted in every State and UT.
- The Act has ensured constitution of a State Finance Commission in every State/UT, for every five years, to suggest measures to strengthen finances of PRIs.
- To promote bottom-up-planning, the District Planning Committee (DPC) in every district has been accorded constitutional status.

An indicative list of 29 items has been given in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. Panchayats are expected to play an effective role in planning and implementation of works related to these 29 items.

Present scenario

At present, there are about 3 million elected representatives at all levels of the panchayats, one-third of which are women. These members represent more than 2.4 lakh Gram Panchayats, about 6,000 intermediate level tiers and more than 500 district panchayats. Spread over the length and breadth of the country, the new panchayats cover about 96 per cent of India's more than 5.8 lakh villages and nearly 99.6 per cent of rural
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population. This is the largest experiment in decentralisation of governance in the history of humanity. The Constitution visualises panchayats as institutions of self-governance. However, giving due consideration to the federal structure of our polity, most of the financial powers and authorities to be endowed on panchayats have been left at the discretion of concerned state legislatures. Consequently, the powers and functions vested in PRIs vary from state to state. These provisions combine representative and direct democracy into a synergy and are expected to result in an extension and deepening of democracy in India. Hence, panchayats have journeyed from an institution within the culture of India to attain constitutional status.

MODULE 3
THE FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYATHI RAJ INSTITUTIONS
- Structure, functions and powers at each level, revenue sources, committees in village level panchayath raj bodies, Grama Sabha (including Mahila Grama Sabha), its role and importance, community participation in governance.

The panchayat raj is a South Asian political system mainly in [India], Pakistan, and Nepal. It is actually the oldest system of local government in the Indian subcontinent. The word "panchayat" literally means "assembly" (ayat) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community. However, there are different forms of assemblies. Traditionally, these assemblies settled disputes between individuals and villages. Modern Indian government has decentralized several
administrative functions to the local level, empowering elected gram panchayats. Gram panchayats are not to be confused with the unelected khap panchayats (or caste panchayats) found in some parts of India.

**Panchayat raj**

Panchayat Raj is a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of administration. It has 3 levels: Gram (village, though it can comprise more than one village), Janpad (block) and Zilla (district).

The term "panchayat raj" is relatively new, having originated during the British administration[citation needed]. Raj literally means "governance or government". Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayati Raj, a decentralized form of Government where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system. The term for such a vision was Gram Swaraj ("village self-governance").

This system was adopted by state governments during the 1950s and 60s, as laws were passed to establish panchayats in various states. It also found backing in the Indian Constitution, with the 73rd amendment in 1992 to accommodate the idea. The Amendment Act of 1992 contains provision for devolution of powers and responsibilities to the panchayats both for the preparation of economic development plans and social justice, as well as for implementation in relation to 29 subjects listed in the eleventh schedule of the Constitution. The panchayats receive funds from three sources:

- Local body grants, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission
- Funds for implementation of centrally sponsored schemes
- Funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions

In the history of Panchayati Raj in India, on 24 April 1993, the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions. This act was extended to Panchayats in the tribal areas of eight states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan starting 24 December 1996. Currently, the Panchayati Raj system exists in all the states except Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, and in all Union Territories except Delhi. The Act aims to provide a 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all States having a population of over 2 million, to hold Panchayat elections regularly every 5 years, to provide seats reservations for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women; to appoint a State Finance Commission to make recommendations as regards to the financial powers of the Panchayats and to constitute a District Planning Committee to prepare a development plan draft for the district. The 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj consists:

**Village-level Panchayats**
Block-level Panchayats

District-level Panchayats.

Powers and responsibilities are delegated to panchayats at the appropriate level:

- Preparation of the economic development plan and social justice plan.
- Implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice in relation to 29 subjects given in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

**Block panchayata**

A block panchayat (panchayat samiti) is a local government body at the tehsil or taluka level in India. This body works for the villages of the tehsil or taluka that together are called a Development Block. The panchayat samiti is the link between the gram panchayat and the district administration. There are a number of variations of this institution in different states. It is known as Mandal Praja Parishad in Andhra Pradesh, Taluka panchayat in Gujarat, Mandal Panchayat in Karnataka, Panchayat Samiti in Maharashtra etc. In general, the block panchayat is a form of the Panchayati raj but at a higher level.

**Constitution**

The constitution is composed of ex-official members (all sarpanchas of the panchayat samiti area, the MPs and MLAs of the area and the SDO of the subdivision), co-opt members (representatives of SC/ST and women), associate members (a farmer of the area, a representative of the cooperative societies and one of the marketing services), and some elected members.

The samiti is elected for 5 years and is headed by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman.

**Departments**

The common departments in the Samiti are as follows:

- General administration
- Finance
- Public work
- Agriculture
- Health
- Education
- Social welfare
- Information technology, and others.

There is an officer for every department. A government appointed Block Development Officer (BDO) is the executive officer to the Samiti and the chief of its administration.

**Functions**

- Implementation schemes for the development of agriculture.
Establishment of primary health centres and primary schools.
Supply of drinking water, drainage, and construction/repair of roads.
Development of cottage and small-scale industries, and the opening of cooperative societies.
Establishment of youth organisations.

**Sources of income**
The main source of income of the panchayat samiti are grants-in-aid and loans from the State Government.

**District level panchayat**
The governing system at district level in Panchayat Raj is also popularly known as "Jila Parishad". Chief of administration is an officer from IAS cadre.

**Functions:**
Provide essential services and facilities to the rural population
Supply improved seeds to farmers. Inform them of new farming techniques
Set up and run schools and libraries in the rural areas
Start Primary Health Centers and hospitals in villages. Start vaccination drives against epidemics
Execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashramshallas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for them
Encourage entrepreneurs to start small-scale industries and implement rural employment schemes
Construct bridges, roads & other public facilities and their maintenance
Provide employment

**Sources of Income:**
Taxes on water, pilgrimage, markets, etc.
Fixed grant from the State Government in proportion with the land revenue and money for works and schemes assigned to the Parishad.

**Reservation for women in PRIs in India**
The Union Cabinet of the Government of India, 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, Ut terakhand and Himachal Pradesh. As of 25 November 2011, the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharastra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tripura also reserve 50% of their posts for women.

**Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayats**
According to the Constitution, Panchayats should be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. It, thus, requires all state governments to revitalize local representative institutions. Powers and responsibilities are delegated to Panchayats at the appropriate level:

- Preparation of plan for economic development and social justice.
- Implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice in relation to 29 subjects given in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.
- Help in the devolution of governmental responsibilities, especially that of finances to local authorities.

Social welfare responsibilities of the Panchayats include the maintenance of burning and burial grounds, recording statistics of births and deaths, establishment of child welfare and maternity centres, control of cattle pounds, propagation of family planning and promotion of agricultural activities. The development activities include the construction of roads, public buildings, wells, tanks and schools. They also promote small cottage industries and take care of minor irrigation works. Many government schemes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) are monitored by members of the panchayat. The main income of the Panchayat is from tax levied on property, profession, animals, vehicles, cess on land revenue and rentals. Resources are further increased by the grants received through the Zilla Panchayat. It is also considered compulsory for Panchayat offices to put up boards outside their offices, listing the break up of funds received, and utilisation of the financial aid received. This exercise was taken up to ensure that people at the grass root level should have the ‘right to information’ – opening all functioning to the public eye. People had the right to scrutinise allocation of money. And ask reasons for decisions that were taken for the welfare and development activities of the village.

Nyaya Panchayats have been constituted in some states. They possess the authority to hear some petty, civil and criminal cases. They can impose fines but cannot award a sentence. These village courts have often been successful in bringing about an agreement amongst contending parties. They have been particularly effective in punishing men who harass women for dowry and perpetrate violence against them.

**Village level Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayat**

It is called a Panchayat at the village level. It is a local body working for the good of the village. The number of members usually ranges from 7 to 31; occasionally, groups are larger, but they never have fewer than 7 members.

The block-level institution is called the Panchayat Samiti. The district-level institution is
Intermediate level Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayat

Panchayat samiti is a local government body at the tehsil or Taluka level in India. It works for the villages of the Tehsil or Taluka that together are called a Development Block. The Panchayat Samiti is the link between the Gram Panchayat and the district administration. There are a number of variations of this institution in various states. It is known as Mandal Praja Parishad in Andhra Pradesh, Taluka panchayat in Gujarat, Mandal Panchayat in Karnataka, etc. In general it's a kind of Panchayati raj at higher level.

Constitution

It is composed of ex-officio members (all sarpanchas of the panchayat samiti area, the MPs and MLAs of the area and the SDO of the subdivision), coopted members (representatives of SC/ST and women), associate members (a farmer of the area, a representative of the cooperative societies and one of the marketing services) and some elected members.

The samiti is elected for 5 years and is headed by the chairman and the deputy chairman.

Departments in the Samiti are as follows:

1. General administration
2. Finance
3. Public works
4. Agriculture
5. Health
6. Education
7. Social welfare
8. Information Technology and others.

There is an officer for every department. A government appointed block development officer is the executive officer to the samiti and the chief of its administration the department of

Functions

1. Implement schemes for the development of agriculture.
2. Establishment of primary health centres and primary schools.

4. Development of cottage and small-scale industries and opening of cooperative societies.

5. Establishment of youth organisations. Provide essential services and facilities to the rural population and the planning and execution of the development programmes for the district.


4. Start Primary Health Centers and hospitals in villages. Start mobile hospitals for hamlets, vaccination drives against epidemics and family welfare campaigns.

5. Construct bridges and roads.

6. Execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashrams alas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for scheduled caste students. District level Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayat

In the district level of the panchayati raj system you have the "zilla perished". It looks after the administration of the rural area of the district and its office is located at the district headquarters. The Hindi word Paris had means Council and Zilla Perished translates to District Council. It is headed by the "District Collector" or the "District Magistrate" or the "Deputy Commissioner". It is the link between the state government and the panchayat samiti (local self government at the block level)

Constitution

Members of the Zilla Perishad are elected from the district on the basis of adult franchise for a term of five years. Zilla Perishad has minimum of 50 and maximum of 75 members. There are seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and women.

The Chairmen of all the Panchayat Samitis form the members of Zilla Perishad. The Parishad is headed by a President and a Vice-President. Execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashrams alas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for scheduled caste students.

7. Encourage entrepreneurs to start small-scale industries like cottage industries, handicraft, agriculture produce processing mills, dairy farms, etc. implement rural employment schemes.

8. They construct roads, schools, & public properties. And they take care of the public properties.
9. They even supply work for the poor people. (Tribes, scheduled caste, lower caste)

Sources of Income

1. Taxes on water, pilgrimage, markets, etc.

2. Fixed grant from the State Government in proportion with the land revenue and money for works and schemes assigned to the Panchayats. Plan Finance Commission:

The Eleventh Finance Commission recommended Rs. 1600 crores per annum for rural local bodies. Out of total grants, an amount of Rs. 197.06 crores was earmarked for development of data base on the finance of the Panchayats and an amount of Rs. 98.61 crores for maintenance of accounts of Panchayats as the first charge on these grants. The Commission also recommended that in cases where elected local bodies are not in place, the Central Government should hold the grants for local bodies in trust on a non-lapsable basis during 2000-05 and that the Central Government would withhold a part of the recommended grants in case of such bodies to whom functions and responsibilities have not been devolved. Besides, the Commission recommended that Audit of accounts of the local bodies should be entrusted to the C&AG who may get it done through his own staff or by engaging outside agencies on payment of remuneration fixed by him and an amount of half-per cent of the total expenditure incurred by the local bodies should be placed with the C&AG for this purpose, and the report of the C&AG relating to audit of accounts of the Panchayats should be placed before a Committee of the State Legislature constituted on the same lines as the Public Accounts Committee. The Ministry of Finance releases Grants recommended by the Eleventh Finance Commission to execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashrams alaas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for scheduled caste students.

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- Preparation of plan for economic development and social justice.
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**Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayats**

According to the Constitution, Panchayats should be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. It, thus, requires all state governments to revitalise local representative institutions. Powers and responsibilities are delegated to Panchayats at the appropriate level:-done through his own staff or by engaging outside
agencies on payment of remuneration fixed by him and an amount of half-per cent of the total expenditure incurred by the local bodies should be placed with the C&AG for this purpose, and the report of the C&AG relating to audit of accounts of the Panchayats should be placed before a Committee of the State Legislature constituted on the same lines as the Public Accounts Committee. The Ministry of Finance releases Grants recommended by the Eleventh Finance Commission.

MODULE 4
PESA (PANCHAYATH EXTENTION IN SCHEDULED AREAS)
1. Context and its emergence and its significance; issues and challenges in its implementation for tribal self rule
2. Role of PRIs in rural & tribal development urban governance

Constitution and the Tribals
In India most of the tribes are collectively identified under Article 342 (1&2) as Scheduled Tribes and right to self determination guaranteed by Part X: The Scheduled and Tribal Areas – Article 244: Administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas.

(1). The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State (other than the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram).
(2). The provisions of the Sixth Schedule shall apply to the administration of the tribal areas in the State of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

The Indian Constitution is supposed to protect tribal interests, especially tribal autonomy and their rights over land, through Fifth and Sixth Schedules. Scheduled Areas of Article 244(1) are notified as per the Fifth Schedule and Tribal Areas of Article 244(2) are notified as per the Sixth Schedule.

Sixth Schedule contains provisions as to the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. This law gives enormous freedoms to the autonomous regions and districts in terms of legislative and executive power. The law notes that each autonomous region shall have its own autonomous Regional Council and every autonomous district its own autonomous District Council.

Indira Gandhi introduced what is called as Tribal Sub-Plan in the planning process, earmarking a portion of funds for tribal development. Only to ensure their share of the Central Plan allocations, the States started the notification of tribal areas again. However, the money seldom reached the tribals.

When Rajiv Gandhi’s successors passed 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution to enact Panchayat and Nagarpalika Bills, they simply forgot that these do not automatically become applicable to Tribal and Scheduled Areas.

Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (or PESA), 1996
Village level democracy became a real prospect for Indians in 1992 with the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, which mandated that resources, responsibility and decision making be passed on from central government to the lowest unit of the governance, the Gram Sabha or the Village Assembly. A three tier structure of local self government was envisaged under this amendment.

Since the laws do not automatically cover the scheduled areas, the PESA Act was enacted on 24 December 1996 to enable Tribal Self Rule in these areas. The Act extended...
The provisions of Panchayats to the tribal areas of nine states that have Fifth Schedule Areas. Most of the North eastern states under Sixth Schedule Areas (where autonomous councils exist) are not covered by PESA, as these states have their own Autonomous councils for governance. The nine states with Fifth Schedule areas are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andhra Pradesh</th>
<th>Chhattisgarh</th>
<th>Gujarat</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
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The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA, 1996)

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA, 1996) was enacted and came into operation on 24 December, 1996.

This Act extends Panchayats to the tribal areas of nine States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan, which intends to enable tribal society to assume control over their own destiny to preserve and conserve their traditional rights over natural resources.

All the State Governments have enacted their State Legislations in pursuance with the PESA, 1996.

However, the State Governments are required to amend all the relevant Acts/Rules to bring them in conformity with the provisions of the PESA, 1996.

Going into the background of it

Village level democracy became a real prospect for India in 1992 with the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, which mandated that resources, responsibility and decision making be passed on from central government to the lowest unit of the governance, the Gram Sabha or the Village Assembly. A three tier structure of local self government was envisaged under this amendment.

Since the laws do not automatically cover the scheduled areas, the PESA Act was in-acted in 1996 to enable Tribal Self Rule in these areas. The Act extended the provisions of Panchayats to the tribal areas of nine states that have Fifth Schedule Areas.

The PESA Act gives radical governance powers to the tribal community and recognizes its traditional community rights over local natural resources. It not only accepts the validity of “customary law, social and religious practices, and traditional management practices of community resources”, but also directs the state governments not to make any law which is inconsistent with these. Accepting a clear-cut role for the community, it gives wide-ranging powers to Gram Sabhas, which had hitherto been denied to them by the law makers of the country.
Gram Sabha are endowed specifically with the following powers:

(i) the power to enforce prohibition or to regulate or restrict the sale and consumption of any intoxicant;
(ii) the ownership of minor forest produce;
(iii) the power to prevent alienation of land in the Scheduled Areas and to take appropriate action to restore any unlawfully alienated land of a Scheduled Tribes;
(iv) the power to manage village markets by whatever name called;
(v) the power to exercise control over money lending to the Scheduled Tribes;
(vi) the power to exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors;
(vii) the power to control over local plans and resources for such plans including tribal sub-plans;

How will PESA help to counter face Naxalism?
The full-fledged implementation of PESA will give Rs 50,000 crore to tribal communities to develop themselves. Nothing would deal a bigger blow to the Maoists than participative development by, for and of the tribal communities. Of the 76 districts highly infected by the Maoists, 32 are PESA districts. Hence, honest implementation of the PESA Act would empower the marginalized tribals so that they can take care of their developmental needs. This would deprive the Naxals of their ground support coming from the misguided and helpless tribals.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE PANCHAYATS (EXTENSION TO THE SCHEDULED AREAS) ACT, 1996 No.40 OF 1996
(24th December, 1996)
An Act to provide for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas.
Be it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

Short title
1. This Act may be called the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

Definition
2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “Scheduled Areas” means the Scheduled Areas as referred to in Clause (1) of Article 244 of the Constitution.

Extension of part IX of the Constitution
3. The provision of Part IX of the Constitution relating to Panchayats are hereby extended to the Scheduled Areas subject to such exceptions and modifications as are provided in section 4.

Exceptions and modifications to part IX of the Constitution
4. Notwithstanding anything contained under Part IX of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State shall not make any law under that Part which is inconsistent with any of the following features, namely:-
(a) a State legislation on the Panchayats that may be made shall be in consonance with the customary law, social and religious practices and traditional management practices of community resources;
(b) a village shall ordinarily consist of a habitation or a group of
habitations or a hamlet or a group of hamlets comprising a
community and managing its affairs in accordance with traditions
and customs;
(c) every village shall have a Gram Sabha consisting of persons whose
names are included in the electoral rolls for the Panchayat at the
village level;
(d) every Gram Sabha shall be competent to safeguard and preserve the
traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity,
community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution;
(e) every Gram Sabha shall approve of the plans, programmes and projects for social
and economic development before such plans, programmes and
projects are taken up for implementation by the Panchayat at the
village level;
ii. be responsible for the identification or selection of
persons as beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation and other
programmes;
(f) every Panchayat at the village level shall be required to obtain from
the Gram Sabha a certification of utilisation of funds by that Panchayat for the plans, pro
grammes and projects referred to in
clause (e);
(g) the reservation of seats in the Scheduled Areas at every Panchayat
shall be in proportion to the population of the communities in that
Panchayat for whom reservation is sought to be given under Part IX
of the Constitution;
Provided that the reservation for the Scheduled Tribes shall not be
less than one-half of the total number of seats;
Provided further that all seats of Chairpersons of Panchayats at all
levels shall be reserved for the Scheduled Tribes;
(h) the State Government may nominate persons belonging to such
Scheduled Tribes as have no representation in the Panchayat at the
intermediate level or the Panchayat at the district level:
Provided that such nomination shall not exceed one-tenth of the
total members to be elected in that Panchayat;
(i) the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be
consulted before making the acquisition of land in the Scheduled
Areas for development projects and before re-settling or
rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled
Areas; the actual planning and implementation of the projects in the
Scheduled Areas shall be coordinated at the State level;
(j) planning and management of minor water bodies in the Scheduled
Areas shall be entrusted to Panchayats at the appropriate level;
(k) the recommendations of the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the
appropriate level shall be made mandatory prior to grant of
prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals in the
Scheduled Areas;
(l) the prior recommendation of the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at
the appropriate level shall be made mandatory for grant of
concession for the exploitation of minor minerals by auction;
(m) while endowing Panchayats in the Scheduled Areas with such powers
and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as
institutions of self-government, a State Legislature shall ensure that
the Panchayats at the appropriate level and the Gram Sabhas are
endowed specifically with—
(i) the power to enforce prohibition or to regulate or restrict the sale and consumption of any intoxicant;
(ii) the ownership of minor forest produce;
(iii) the power to prevent alienation of land in the Scheduled Areas and to take appropriate action to restore any unlawfully alienated land of a Scheduled Tribe;
(iv) the power to manage village markets by whatever name called;
(v) the power to exercise control over money lending to the Scheduled Tribes;
(vi) the power to exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors;
(vii) the power to control over local plans and resources for such plans including tribal ub-plans;
(n) the State Legislations that may endow Panchayats with powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government shall contain safeguards to ensure that Panchayats at the higher level do not assume the powers and authority of any Panchayat at the lower level or of the Gram Sabha;
(o) the State Legislature shall endeavour to follow the pattern of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution while designing the administrative arrangements in the Panchayats at district levels in the Scheduled Areas.

Continuance of existing laws on panchayats:
5. Notwithstanding anything in Part IX of the Constitution with exceptions and modifications made by this Act, any provision of any law relating to Panchayats in force in the Scheduled Areas, immediately before the date on which this Act receives the assent of the President, which is inconsistent with the provisions of Part IX with such exceptions and modifications shall continue to be in force until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority or until the expiration of one year from the date on which this Act receives the assent of the President; Provided that all the Panchayats existing immediately before such date shall continue till the expiration of their duration unless sooner dissolved by a resolution passed to that effect by the Legislative Assembly of that State or, in the case of a State having Legislative Council, by each House of the Legislature of that State.

Rural and tribal development
The Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill 2007 represents a major paradigm shift in the process of acquisition of land. However, this shift will remain incomplete till so long as the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIIs) are not actively associated with the process of land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation at its every stage. The Panchayats have the knowledge domain and they have to be consulted during the stage of survey, the formulation of the rehabilitation plan and its implementation.

There is a wide role for Panchayats in the acquisition and rehabilitation process. The States have endowed the Panchayats with powers and authority under the respective State Panchayati Raj legislations and Panchayats are in a position to shoulder all the responsibilities assigned to them under the Constitution. Panchayati Raj is an inseparable part of our system of governance. Plans for economic development and social justice which are to be implemented at the level of district, block or village should be implemented by the elected Panchayats. It is essential that the Panchayats are fully involved and encouraged to shoulder the responsibilities assigned to them. As Panchayati Raj is a State subject, it is up to the
States to decide the steps that they need to take to devolve powers to the Panchayats. Most of the states are in the process of completing the task of devolution of powers, as per Article 243 G of the Constitution (See Box).

The Government has also enacted the 'Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act' in 1996. It is one of the progressive legislations for the Adivasi regions, providing for self-governance and recognising the traditional rights of indigenous communities over their natural resources. The main rationale behind the Act is to preserve the tribal population from exploitation with an active involvement of the Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha is a body constituted under the provisions of the Constitution and there is no doubt that they would play their part with full responsibility in the rehabilitation process i.e. selection of the place of rehabilitation and examining the facilities, amenities available therein.

As per PESA, the Gram Sabha will be involved in approval of development plans, programmes, land availability and rehabilitation of affected persons, and has given control of land, forest and water in the hands of tribal through the Gram Sabha. The Act entrusts the Gram Sabha with the following:

Section 4.d: Gram Sabha shall safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution.

Section 4.e (i): Gram Sabha shall be responsible for approval of plans, programmes and projects for social and economic development.

Section 4.e (ii): Responsible for the identification or selection of persons as beneficiaries under the development programmes.

Section 4.i: Consultation with Panchayat prior to land acquisition and Rehabilitation & Resettlement activities in the scheduled areas.

Section 4.m(ii): Endows ownership of minor forest produce to Panchayats.

Section 4.m (iii): Ends power to prevent alienation of land in Scheduled areas and to take appropriate action to restore any unlawfully alienated land of STs.

In particular, Section (4) (i) of the PESA Act, 1996 clearly shows that in case of acquisition in the schedule V areas, the provisions of PESA should be strictly adhered to which was enacted to safeguard and preserve traditions and customs of tribal communities and prevent alienation from their homelands.

Once an area is notified as an affected area, a baseline survey at the village level is to be conducted to obtain details of persons likely to be displaced. This information would detail the economic background of the residents of the affected area in terms of landholding, occupation, caste and tribe details and also vulnerability, e.g. disabled, widowed, abandoned, etc and would form the basis for the draft resettlement and rehabilitation scheme or plan. The Gram Sabha should be consulted during the conduct of the baseline survey and the findings ratified by it. This is in keeping with the provisions of section 4 (i) of the PESA Act, 1996 as well as section 4 (e) of the said Act.

There should be provision in the Land Acquisition (Amendment Bill) for the display...
There should be a provision for display of notification for land acquisition in the Gram Panchayats, in the Land Acquisition Amendment Bill. The opinion of the villagers should be sought after the Panchayat has been formulated and explained to them. The following roles can be envisaged for Gram Panchayats:

(i) Social Impact survey will be conducted only after the modalities, substance and the organisation conducting it, has the approval of Gram Sabha.

(ii) The representatives of the Panchayat should be associated with the survey. The Sarpanch should be the member of SIA committee.

(iii) The survey once done, the report should be placed before the Gram Sabha for its approval, before it is implemented.

Social Impact Assessment Study

Chapter II of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007 deals with Social Impact Assessment Study. As the Gram Sabhas and Panchayats are positioned closest to the affected communities; they are in the best position to participate in the Social Impact Assessment Study. Therefore, it should be conducted only after the modalities and contents of the study have been presented to the Gram Sabha. The Chairperson(s) or representative(s) of the Panchayat at the appropriate level should be a member(s) of the Social Impact Assessment Study Team. The result of the study should be placed before the Gram Sabha for discussion.

As per Clause 8 of the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill 2007, the Social Impact Assessment Study shall be carried out in the affected area whenever land is acquired for public purpose involving physical displacement of 400 or more families in plain area or 200 or more families in tribal or hilly or DDP Blocks or areas specified in Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. For the Social Impact Assessment Study and rehabilitation whenever land is acquired for public purpose, specially in rural areas, it is important that the limit of two hundred families in hilly/tribal/scheduled area for the Social Impact Assessment Study should be flexible in the Scheduled Areas since the pattern of habitation in Scheduled Areas is different from plains. Ordinarily, tribal habitation are scattered and would comprise 30-40 households. In areas inhabited by primitive tribes, the number of households will be significantly less. Therefore, for the scheduled areas, the limit of 200 households should be flexible so that the provision becomes applicable even if it were less than the prescribed limit of 200 families.

As per Clause 5(1) of the R&R Bill, the social impact assessment report shall be submitted to the appropriate government for its examination by an independent multi-disciplinary expert group, as may be notified by the appropriate Government.

Tribal Development Plan

A Tribal Development Plan has to be prepared under Section 499(1) of the draft Bill, in case of involuntary displacement of 200 or more Scheduled Tribes families. This is meant to derive the course of action for settlement of Land Rights due but not settled and restoring titles of tribals on alienated land by undertaking a special drive together with land acquisition. However, such plan should also be prepared for displacement of less tha
n 200 Scheduled Tribes families. This Tribal Development
Plan should have the approved of the Gram Sabhas concerned in accordance with Section 4 (m) of the PESA Act, 1996 Gram Sabha.

There is a provision for consultation with the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats in the Fifth Schedule in accordance with the provision of the PESA. This finds some place in R&R Bill but it has not been mentioned in Land Acquisition Bill 2007. This inconsistency will create confusion in implementing the provisions of the Act in true spirit. So a reference to PESA Act is necessary enclosing of Land Acquisition (Amendment Bill). In this regards, land acquisition measures should abide by the Section 4(i) of PESA Act, 1996.

In dissemination of information about the Land Acquisition Act, the role of Gram Sabha cannot be ignored. People should be made aware of their rights with regard to requisition of their land and in this a Forum of Panchayat bodies can play a very important role. The Gram Sabha should be informed by the competent authority of about the villages which will be affected, the purpose of land to be acquired the process to be adopted for land acquisition, the entitlement of affected and other legal matters.

According to Clause 9 of the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, the Collector will commence the exercise of updating the land records, categorisation of land and its terms, survey and consistency of Land under acquisition, before the issue of declaration. The PESA Act includes consultation with the Panchayats and Gram Sabhas for verification of land records. Further, the Gram Sabha and the Panchayats at the appropriate level must be fully consulted as per the provisions of Section 4 (i) of the PESA Act prior to the formal land acquisition measures and the authentication of land records must necessarily be the domain of the PRIs for greater transparency and accuracy.

Conclusion

We cannot overlook the fact that being closest to the people, the Panchayats and their elected representatives have the feel of the pulse, the sufferings of the people and local conditions. The effectiveness of providing services through local bodies cannot be overemphasised as they know their real requirements, and are familiar with every nook and corner of the village and, above all, they are answerable to the people. Gram Sabhas can play a very meaningful role in selecting the beneficiaries, prioritising the beneficiaries to ensure gender and equity concerns and also in deciding the appropriate rehabilitation or reconstruction programme that is needed for the communities.

The involvement of Panchayats ensures greater transparency in working and fund utilisation than in execution carried out by central or state agency, many a times. Providing a village level plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation, classifying victims' families and making arrangements for relief packages to reach them, managing temporary camps, and coordinating immediate health and hygiene works at village level. Panchayats should be given powers to decide on technology, cost, location, infrastructure and beneficiary's election; and since they have a role in rural housing, primary health care, water and sanitation in many states, should be given these functions by the coordinating authority. It is mostly agreed that the PRIs can play a significant role in Rehabilitation and resettlement provided they are vested with due authority, and are facilitated to do so through capacity building inputs and necessary institutional support. Adequate resources should be provided to PRIs to build up their capacities and Sensitisation and training of PRI members on related areas will have to be
promoted and capacity for the same should be institutionalised in the existing institutional framework.

Any legislation empowering the Panchayats on land acquisition will make a great difference because if the people at the grassroots are legally empowered to raise objections to land acquisition then there will be a fair chance that the Government may have to fight many stiff legal battles in order to proceed with development projects which would displace the poor and the marginalised from their hearth and homes. For greater transparency and accuracy, the Panchayats at the appropriate level Gram Sabha must be fully consulted as per the provision of section 4(i) of the PESA Act prior to the formal land acquisition. In a mature and responsible administrative system where power is in the hands of the people and their democratically elected local government institutions, relief operations, day-to-day running of civic services, providing medical assistance, etc., could best be done by the local government.

(The author is a Senior Consultant with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. As former finance minister Yashwant Sinha said in a recent interview with Inclusion: "The first generation reforms were initiated by Dr Singh in 1991 while the second generation reforms were initiated by the BJP-led NDA government. But, today the need of the hour is to step on the third generation of reforms even as the government moves beyond the unfinished agenda regarding the earlier reform measures."

But is the time right for stepping up on reforms. The outlook for growth appears to have taken a beating, a slowdown seems inevitable, the overall deficit has ballooned; and farmland loan waiver, inflationary pressures and the rising government salary and wage bill all point to a certain slowdown in the pace of reforms and eventual economic growth. This again raises the question whether the reforms process will again be put on the back burner and if not, what are the types of reforms that are urgently needed to retain the growth momentum, both economically and socially. So then how does the government go about pursuing its agenda for insuring inclusive growth? And what can it achieve given the fact that the next general elections are round the corner?

Here, the general viewpoint that is gaining ground is that the government should use the rest of its term to brainstorm on the next generation of reforms, setting in place an agenda of action for the new government. The list of pending reforms is known to all; after all major economic bills relating to banking, insurance and pension await passage. What the government more importantly has to do is to initiate steps on the third generation reforms, which are an essential element of its aim to ensure inclusive growth.

Key to taking the reforms further in India is reforms at the state level. That undoubtedly will require considerable brainstorming as it not only involves considerable political management but also change management. This should not face the kind of opposition it did in the eighties as today there is an environment and the willingness to reap the benefits of reforms. Today, there is general consensus on many economic issues, notably the need to improve physical infrastructure (to ensure availability of electricity, water and improved roads) as well as social infrastructure (basic health-care and elementary education).

The first phase of reforms, which started in 1991, essentially concentrated on reforms at the Central government level. The second round (though still incomplete) looks at infrastructure, financial and labour reforms. And, these have to be taken to the level of the States and district local bodies. At the same time, the
government must begin to ideate on the third generation of reforms.

Echoes Wajahat Habibullah, the Chief Information Commissioner, "third generation reforms can help to remove every remaining impediment to freedom, including lack of communication, which comes from deficient material facilities, exchange of ideas and flowering of thought based on easy accessibility to knowledge." (See Box above)

So what are the third generation of reforms? The terminology is neither fictitious nor something coined to describe current policy directions. Globally, the IMF, the World Bank, the US Treasury and G7 institutions have spearheaded a movement for reforms on the premise that the: "stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes of the past, while successful in jump-starting economies, have been unable to ensure the quality and sustainability of renewed growth… a broader set of reforms is needed to sustain high-quality growth in a globalised environment and to close the disparity between the rich and poor countries."

At the outset, it must be remembered that a major stumbling block to most development efforts in India is poor decentralised planning and implementation of schemes at the state level. Here, it is important that fund flows from both Central and State governments are linked to devolution of power to the third tier that is the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). This is essential for the success of participatory democracy. Simultaneously, the government must start focusing on capacity building, linking education to employability and skill enhancements. This will also enable the government to ensure that the pending labour reforms receive greater public acceptance.

The first phase of reforms, which started in 1991, essentially concentrated on reforms at the Central government level. The second round (though still incomplete) looks at infrastructure, financial and labour reforms. Now these have to be taken to the level of the States and district local bodies. Almost 40 per cent of our revenue and fiscal deficit are because of poor State finances. A number of reforms are required to improve the delivery system, too, since all social services such as education, health, and so on are delivered at the State level. The State-level reforms are of particular importance to promote regional equity, which is a matter of fundamental significance for a federal polity like India. It has been widely seen that wherever the third generation of reforms have been introduced, these have had the underlying backbone of information and communication technologies, both for bringing in transparency, speed, ease of governance as well as a solution for or taking extension services of the government to the larger public. This is needed all the more in third world countries, where the infrastructure is sorely lacking and the government's reach into the hinterland is limited.

As this issue's cover story highlights, there have been several examples of ICT-based services bridging the gaps of outreach and infrastructure and it is time that the government upscales such success stories. If the third generation reforms are about strengthening delivery systems, then ICT and e-governance efforts have a crucial role to play.

It is not that the government is unaware of the steps needed on the reforms front. As the draft report of the high-level committee on financial sector reforms headed by economist Dr Raghuram Rajan noted that there are deep linkages among different reforms, including broader reforms to monetary and fiscal policies, and recognising these linkages is essential to achieve real progress. The Committee
The Committee had three major conclusions. Firstly, that the country's financial system is not providing adequate services to a majority of retail customers, small and medium-sized enterprises, or large corporations. Government ownership of a majority of the banking system and hindrances to the development of corporate debt and derivatives markets have stunted financial development. This will inevitably become a barrier to high growth, it says.

Second, the financial sector – if properly regulated but unleashed from government strictures that have stifled the development of certain markets and kept others from becoming competitive and efficient – has the potential to generate millions of much-needed jobs and, more important, have an enormous multiplier effect on economic growth. And lastly, financial stability is more important than ever to keep growth from being derailed by shocks hitting the system.

And as a recent Goldman Sachs paper notes, some of the most important reforms that India needs are improved governance; higher basic education levels; a credible fiscal policy and liberalised financial markets. Of these one of the most important and one that is integral to most other reforms, barring the financial sectors reforms, is improving access to and quality of education. Says Sam Pitroda, Chairman of the National Knowledge Commission, India has the potential to become the workforce supplier to the world. Here, education and skills development are critical if India is to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend. Pitroda says it is necessary to scale up the pace of development, both in education and vocational training. "We can no longer look at growth rates of 5-10 percent, a quantum leap is what is required."

In a more philosophical vein, third generation reforms have to be based on pursuing rules of the world economy, realising cooperation and mutual confidence between the state and the citizen. The citizen's confidence is in that the state will provide him with services in the framework of justice, equality and a real interest in assisting him to face life burdens. Moreover, the state's confidence in the citizen is as being a partner, who shoulders the responsibility of assisting it in managing the resources of its public budget and in monitoring its expenditure. State reform is much talked-about, but seldom clearly defined and even more rarely implemented. When it comes to poverty-alleviation, the tendency has been not to reform existing policies and institutions, but to bypass them.

MODULE 5
TYPES OF URBAN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA
Municipal cooperations, municipal council, Mnagar palika
Sources of revenue
Structure, powers, and functions, at each level
Committees and their functions
System of elections to urban local self government
Ward committees and citizen participation
Relation of urban local self government with vbodies of Governance at the state level
Municipal corporations in India are urban local government that works for the development of a city, which has a population of more than one million. The growing population and urbanization in various cities of India were in need of a local governing body that can work for providing necessary community services like health centres, educational institutes and housing and property tax.

They are formed under the Corporations Act of 1835 of Panchayati Raj system which mainly deals in providing essential services in every small town as well as village of a district/city. Their elections are held once in five year and the people choose the candidates. The largest corporations are in the four metropolitan cities of India; Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. These cities not only have a large population, but are also the administrative as well as commercial centres of the country.

Functions

- Water supply
  - Hospitals
  - Roads
  - Street lighting
  - Drainage
  - Solid waste
  - Fire brigades
  - Market places and
  - Records of births and deaths

Municipal governance in India has been in existence since the year 1687 with the formation of Madras Municipal Corporation and then Calcutta and Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1726. In early part of the nineteenth century almost all towns in India had experienced some form of municipal governance. In 1882 the then Viceroy of India, Lord Ripon's resolution of local self-government laid the democratic forms of municipal governance in India.

In 1919, a Government of India act incorporated the need of the resolution and the powers of democratically elected government were formulated. In 1935 another Government of India act brought local government under the purview of the state or provincial government and specific powers were given.

Purpose

The purpose of municipal governance and strategic urban planning in a country is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable local governance framework organised according to a rational structure that promotes responsiveness and accountability; to provide responsive policy guidance and assistance to sub-national entities; to strengthen the legal, fiscal, economic and service delivery functions of municipalities; and to foster greater citizen participation in the governance of local bodies.
History

According to Census of India, 1991, there are 3255 Urban Local Bodies (ULB)s in the country; classified into four major categories of

1. Municipal corporations
2. Municipalities (municipal council, municipal board, municipal committee)
3. Town area committees
4. Notified area committees

The municipal corporations and municipalities are fully representative bodies, while the notified area committees and town area committees are either fully or partially nominated bodies.

As per the Indian Constitution, 74th Amendment Act of 1992, the latter two categories of towns are to be designated as municipalities or nagar panchayats with elected bodies.\footnote{Until the amendments in state municipal legislations, which were mostly made in 1994, municipal authorities were organised on an Latin: ultra vires (beyond the authority) basis and the state governments were free to extend or control the functional sphere through executive decisions without an amendment to the legislative provisions.}

After the 74th Amendment was enacted there are only three categories of urban local bodies:

- Nagar nigam (municipal corporation)
- Nagar palika (municipality)
- Nagar panchayat (city council)

This article provides that there be a Nagar panchayat for transitional areas i.e. an area in transition from rural to urban, a municipality for a smaller urban area and a municipal corporation for a larger urban area. Article 243Q of the 74th Amendment requires that municipal areas shall be declared having regard to the population of the area, the density of population therein, the revenue generated for local administration, the percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities, the economic importance or such other factors as may be specified by the state government by public notification for this purpose.

Among all urban local governments, municipal corporations enjoy a greater degree of fiscal autonomy and functions although the specific fiscal and functional powers vary across the states, these local governments have larger populations, a more diversified economic base, and deal with the state governments directly. On the other hand, municipalities have less autonomy, smaller jurisdictions and have to deal with the state governments through the Directorate of Municipalities or through the collector of a
The municipal bodies of India are vested with a long list of functions delegated to them by the state governments under the municipal legislation. These functions broadly relate to public health, welfare, regulatory functions, public safety, public infrastructure works, and development activities.

Public health includes Water supply, Sewerage and Sanitation, eradication of communicable diseases etc.; welfare includes public facilities such as Education, recreation, etc.; regulatory functions related to prescribing and enforcing Building regulations, encroachments on public land, Birth registration and Death certificate, etc.; public safety includes Fire protection, Street lighting, etc.; public works measures such as construction and maintenance of inner city roads, etc.; and development functions related to Town planning and development of commercial markets. In addition to the legally assigned functions, the sectoral departments of the state government often assign unilaterally, and on an emergency basis, various functions such as Family planning, Nutrition and slum improvement, disease and Epidemic control, etc.

The Twelfth Schedule of Constitution (Article 243 w) provides an illustrative list of eighteen functions, that may be entrusted to the municipalities.[1]

Besides the traditional core functions of municipalities, it also includes development functions like planning for Economic development and Social justice, urban poverty alleviation programs and promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects. However, conformity legislation enacted by the state governments indicate wide variations in this regard. Whereas Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Manipur, Punjab and Rajasthan have included all the functions as enlisted in the Twelfth Schedule in their amended state municipal laws, Andhra Pradesh has not made any changes in the existing list of municipal functions. Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal states have amended their municipal laws to add additional functions in the list of municipal functions as suggested in the twelfth schedule.

There is a lot of difference in the assignment of obligatory and discretionary functions to the municipal bodies among the states. Whereas functions like planning for the social and economic development, urban forestry and protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects are obligatory functions for the municipalities of Maharashtra, in Karnataka these are discretionary functions.

Provision of water supply and sewerage in several states has either been taken over by the state governments or transferred to state agencies. For example in Tamil Nadu,
Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, water supply and sewerage works are being carried out by the state level Public Health Engineering Department or Water Supply and Sewerage Boards, while liability for repayment of loans and maintenance are with the municipalities. Besides these state level agencies, City Improvement Trusts and Urban Development Authorities, like Delhi Development Authority (DDA), have been set up in a number of cities. These agencies usually undertake land acquisition and development works, and take up remunerative projects such as markets and commercial complexes, etc. The Municipal bodies in most cases have been left only with the functions of garbage collection, garbage disposal, street lighting, construction and maintenance of roads, etc.

In terms of fiscal federalism, functions whose benefits largely confine to municipal jurisdictions and may be termed as the essentially municipal functions. Similarly, functions that involve substantial economics of scale or are of national interest may not be assigned to small local bodies. For valid reasons, certain functions of higher authorities are appropriate to be entrusted with the Municipalities – as if under principal-agent contracts and may be called *agency* functions that need to be financed by intergovernmental revenues. Thus instead of continuing the traditional distinction between obligatory and discretionary functions the municipal responsibilities may be grouped into essentially municipal, joint and agency functions.

**Suggested municipal functions**

The suggested functions to municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayats are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essentially Municipal Functions</th>
<th>Municipal Corporation</th>
<th>Municipal Council</th>
<th>nagar panchayat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban planning including town planning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulation of land-use and construction of buildings</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning for economic and social development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roads and bridges</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply domestic, Industrial and commercial purposes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Description</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public health, sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban forestry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventive Health Care</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens, playgrounds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burials and burial grounds, cremations, cremation ghats/grounds and electric crematoria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cattle pounds, prevention of cruelty to animals</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street lighting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulation of slaughter houses and tanneries</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slum improvement and upgradation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and the mentally retarded</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban poverty alleviation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of cultural, education and aesthetic aspects</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Care</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Nagar nigam (municipal corporation)
nagar nigam a.k.a. (Municipal Corporation) in India are state government formed departments that works for the development of a city, which has a population of more than 1 Million. The growing population and urbanisation in various cities of India were in need of a local governing body that can work for providing necessary community services like health centres, educational institutes and housing and property tax.

They are formed under the Corporations Act of 1835 of panchayati raj system which mainly deals in providing essential services in every small town as well as village of a district/city. Their elections are held once in five year and the people choose the candidates. The largest corporations are in the four metropolitan cities of India, namely Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkatta and Chennai. These cities not only have a large population, but are also the administrative as well as commercial centres of the country.

Nagar panchayat (city council)

A nagar panchayat is an urban local body in India comparable to a Municipality.

An urban centre with more than 30,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants is classified as a nagar panchayat.