

Infrastructure Development through Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural Areas

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Abstract:

The panchayat, or rural local self-government entity, is India's last tier of multi-order federalism. Panchayats are governed by a subnational authority, namely the state government, which is responsible for nurturing and developing them. The National Government has decided to delegate the implementation of different central and state financial programmes to Panchayats. Rural development programmes implemented via Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) have resulted in a significant improvement in India's rural infrastructure development. In numerous aspects of rural development, India has achieved great progress. With an integrated strategy to improve the quality of life of rural poor and guaranteeing effective people's engagement, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs are working to bring about fast sustainable development and socio-economic transformation in rural India. People at all levels must be involved in any infrastructure development plan. The panchayati raj institution must be revitalized in order to achieve this. The panchayati raj institution may be seen as a catalyst for participatory planning and execution of different development programmes, particularly at the grassroots level. The current research examines the importance of panchayati raj in India's infrastructure development.

Keywords: PRIs, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, 73rd Amendment Act, Infrastructure Development.

Introduction: -

Although the word "panchayat" means "five," it is not confined to this number. Many castes in cities and villages have also their own panchayats, which deal with commercial, social, and religious issues common to the caste." It's called a Panchayat in India, which literally translates to an assembly of five people. Elderly nominees were gradually given holy authority and judicial and executive responsibilities over time. They were the hubs of government and the guardians of social peace in these rural areas. In India, evidence reveals that village groups have been self-governed for a long time. Their origins may be traced all the way back to the Rig Veda, which was composed about 1200 BCE. Today's India's panchayats have inherited just a little amount from the rural society's native local institutions that predominated in India throughout the mediaeval era. Politics and religion have both had a role in the development of urban areas. As the political, economic, administrative, and military operations of governments intensified, the headquarters of governments, an urban region situated in important locations, grew in size.

After the enactment of Panchayati Raj Act coupled with the incorporation of 73rd and 74th Amendments in the constitution paved the way for Panchayats to take decisions at grass root level. It has been recently

determined by the Government that Panchayats would be responsible for implementing different central financial initiatives. Rural local bodies received constitutional status, powers and functions were allocated, financial provisions were made, regular elections were ensured and reservations of seats were made for the SCs and STs, women and weaker sections to ensure their participation in the political process at all levels in 1992 as part of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution. In order to guarantee the effectiveness of their role in decision-making, this amendment has also established reservations for chairs of all levels of local bodies (Government of India, 2011). Constitutional Amendment 74 in 1992, which aspired to create municipal institutions that would behave like governments at all levels, was another significant step forward in this regard. There were also provisions for the establishment of State Finance Commissions and the holding of elections within them. Both rural and urban regions of India have these organizations. Due to its connection to the community, the panchayat is the closest to direct democracy in the Indian federal structure, unlike the representative democracy of the union and the states. Faith in democracy and the ability of the common man in rural areas to thrive under a healthy state environment is a fundamental part of panchayat.. If a common man seems to be apathetic to the high economic growth, it is because he lacks access to the mainstream national development and does not have equal possibilities to engage in activities for his own advancement. An important part of a panchayat's mission is to help its members become more self-sufficient by organizing them in a continuous process of self-improvement. These include 'citizen involvement in politics' on one hand, as well as 'service delivery' of local public goods such as drinkable water and sanitation. To achieve this, the panchayat's primary goal is to balance the twin values of "citizen participation" and "service delivery," the fundamental goals of decentralized democracy, as laid out in the Balvant Mehta Study Team's Report and the subsequent 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India, respectively. Citizens may be expected to participate in the provision of services under the new amendment. "Removal of numerous causes of un freedom: poverty as well tyranny, inadequate economic possibilities as well as systematic social suffering, neglect of public amenities as well as intolerance or over-activity of repressive regimes"

Review of Literature: -

The most critical part of any research project is the literature review. As a measure of the current output in a specific field of study, it is arranged in a way that helps to enhance current research methods. It is the primary goal of a literature review to get an understanding of the current state of knowledge and research in a certain field. A survey of the literature on panchayatiraj's role in socioeconomic development at the grassroots level in India is presented here.

In the words of Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sinha. 2017 a journal on Capacity Building of Panchayati Raj Institutions, in order to operate the good governance and efficient function for the development of all elements of panchayati raj institutions, the central government to maintain and improve rural development in India.

Vaishnav and Dhiva, Vaishnavi (2018) Local self-role governments in environmental protection, And to sum it all up, democratic local self-government is a cutting-edge form of administration. Villagers, state governments, non-officials who run local bodies, and corruption-free governing authorities are some of the channels and entities via which information about public good and welfare may be delivered to the villagers under the Panchayati Raj system.

Basavaraj S. Benni, the professor (2017) Panchayati Raj Institutions: A Research Project As a result of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), this research concludes and

emphasises the significance of women's involvement, which indicates the improvement of tribal villages and also new programmes SHGs as a result of this have eliminated poverty.

The Reverend Dr. Ravindranath N. Kadam (2017) Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Institutions in India: Structure and Function The Rigveda, an ancient Indian book, describes panchayats in the form of "Sabhas" and "Samities." An assembly of five wise and respected elders selected and recognised by their rural community is known as a panchayat. However, the PRI's efficient and meaningful running of these bodies would rely on the active engagement and participation of its residents, both male and female alike. The importance of such institutions in rural development cannot be overstated.

Report on Strengthening Capability for Panchayati Raj Institutions Managing Road Maintenance in Rural India (2016), this capacity was further increased by the engagement of the locally based private construction sector. It has been shown that engineers and administrators in the area are capable of providing some instruction. Everything that was supposed to be produced physically was, and is, done ahead of time. The building and renovation of 600 kilometres of rural roads, markets, and other infrastructure was finished well within the initial budget projections in 1998 after work began. In addition, 988 culverts and 98 minor bridges were built as part of the road building.

Decentralization and development in India: an essay by Florin Shelomith Soans and Shripathi Kalluraya P. (2015) it is generally acknowledged in India that decentralization contributes to the growth of India's gross domestic product (GDP). Functions to be carried out by each of the 29 subjects listed in the constitution, powers granted by state governments, and an amendment to this Act to allow Panchayats to levy, collect, and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls, and fees are all examples of devolution of responsibilities to Panchayat Raj Institutions. State Account Service officers might be employed at the District and Mandal levels to draught and audit Panchayats' yearly plans. Trained officers should be assigned to Gram Sabha's Social Audit.

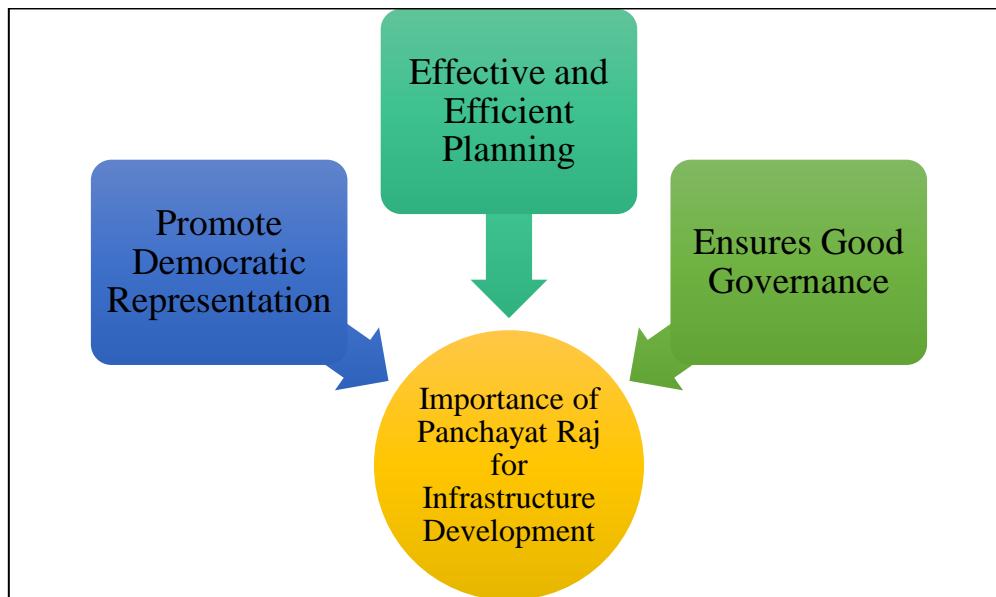
Accounting software and technical assistance and supervision are required fiscal responsibility regime and the Indian government to help states, according to Durga Kalyan G (2014), an essay on Accounting and Audit System in Panchayati Raj Institutions in India.

Objective & Methodology of Paper: -

This paper's primary goal is to examine the function of Panchayat raj institutions in rural development or infrastructure projects in rural areas and to discuss the problems of Panchayat raj institutions in implementing infrastructure development programmes. The present paper based on theoretical literatures about the Panchayat raj institutions. The secondary data is collected from Panchayati Raj websites, District Panchayat websites, Magazines, Books, and Journals etc.

Importance of Panchayat Raj for Infrastructure Development in India: -

Most people think of rural development as an interconnected set of activities that encompasses not only agricultural development but also the establishment or improvement of social overhead facilities and infrastructure, such as educational institutions and health care facilities as well as transportation infrastructure and public utilities like water supply systems and food distribution systems. Rural development's major goal is to improve the quality of life for rural populations, especially those who are poorer and more vulnerable. It was the intention of the Panchayat Raj Institutions to achieve democratic decentralization so that local people might take the initiative and be involved in development efforts. The term "development" embraces all aspects of human existence.



It is fundamentally a state activity that involves the creation and implementation of policy by the government for the benefit of society. Rural development, on the other hand, refers to the total development of rural regions in terms of social, economic, political, and cultural aspects so that people may have a more comfortable existence. As a wide, all-encompassing word, rural socioeconomic and political development is included by the term "rural growth." Through the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the democratic framework of society is strengthened, and the rural infrastructure, household income, and service delivery systems for education, health, and safety are all improved as part of the package.

- **Promote Democratic Representation:** As a result of the three levels of Panchayati Raj Institutions, collaboration among people, involvement in the democratic process and decentralisation are all increased via the Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat levels of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- **Effective and Efficient Planning:** Gram Panchayats (GPs) in India have been tasked with the responsibility of providing basic services to the communities and developing a local economic strategy. It is the Gram Sabhas' goal to make public services more efficient via the creation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- **Ensures Good Governance:** In order to provide good governance, two pillars must be present: consensus-oriented and participation-oriented. Institutions like the Panchayati Raj assist maintain both of these cornerstones of good governance.

Many nations throughout the globe, both developed and developing, are interested in the phrase "Rural Development." There is, however, no commonly accepted definition of rural development, and the phrase is used in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. As a concept, it implies the development of rural regions as a whole with the goal of raising the standard of living for rural residents. In this sense, it is a broad and multi-dimensional term that incorporates the development of agricultural and related activities, such as village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services, and above all, the human resource in rural regions. Various physical, technical, economic, socio-cultural and

institutional aspects all combine to produce it as a phenomena. As a strategy, it aims to enhance the economic and social well-being of a particular group of people, the rural poor. It is an interdisciplinary field, bringing together agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering, and management disciplines in a unique way.

Strategies Proposed for Strengthening Capacity of the Panchayat Raj Institutions:-

The following are the essential components of the solutions offered for enhancing the PRIs' ability to manage rural India's infrastructure development:

- (i) Functions
- (ii) Funds
- (iii) Functionaries
- (iv) Implementation

In India, rural development has mostly been a government-supported process rather than a people-driven one. A suitable institutional framework is essential for the formulation and implementation of rural development projects. The formation of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India addressed this issue. Furthermore, the PRIs, as self-governing entities, guarantee that rural development programmes may be developed and implemented with the input and cooperation of local residents. As a result, the PRIs have been given the job of fostering rural development in India. This focus on the country's social, economic and planning policies since its independence has helped to create an acceptable rural, economic and social infrastructure and to support overall development. Our country's planning strategy gave top importance to agriculture and rural development. The first five-year plan's provisions had a significant impact on the rural economy. The first five-year plan said that "growth of agriculture, based on the use of manpower resources in the countryside and the greatest use of local resources, holds a key to the fast development of the nation"

Challenges Faced By Panchayati Raj Institutions:-

Even after the 73rd Amendment Act (1992) conferred constitutional standing and protection, the performance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions has not been acceptable or up to the desired level. There are a number of causes for this sub-optimal performance, including the following:

- **Non-accountability-** In most situations, despite the fact that Gram Panchayat workers provide essential services like education, health, and income production to the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha members, they are not responsible to them.
- **Integration-** Gram Panchayats have a major challenge because of a lack of horizontal and vertical coordination in their efforts. Vertical integration is further hampered by the fact that separate departments and programmes are responsible for appointing them to particular roles.
- **Poor Oversight-** Checking for Rules Violations Has Been Difficult Due To Inadequate Monitoring. It is possible for elected officials in Panchayats who lack administrative skills to be used by their staff or colluding with authorities to take advantage of the situation.
- **Variation across states-** In terms of involvement, there is wide diversity among states in terms of qualifications and methods of recruiting as well as in terms of length, pay and benefits for comparable cadres, and so on.
- **Variation in Remuneration:** There are variations in remuneration under different schemes functioning at the rural level which leads to the migration of employees from one State to another;

sometimes from one scheme to another. For example, the daily payment under MGNREGA in Haryana is Rs. 309 whereas, in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh, it is less than Rs. 200.

- **No Standard Minimum Qualification** for elected and non-elected members.

Conclusion: -

The Panchayat Raj Institutions' execution of rural development programmes has resulted in a dramatic improvement in the infrastructure of rural India. There have been ramifications for people's social and political lives as a result of rural development programmes being implemented. These programmes have had a positive impact on the village's economic standing. RGGVY also supplied power to the newly constructed dwellings, indicating that the study village's infrastructure has progressed over time. There can be no genuine gain in terms of village infrastructure development via local government unless the functions of Panchayat Raj Institutions are strengthened. The central government has numerous policies and plans in place to help with infrastructure development in the future years, but none of them will be successful unless the individuals tasked with carrying them out are aware of the concerns and obstacles they face. Accordingly, the research given here discusses PRIs' significance as well as the difficulties they encounter.

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