



## **Good governance and Panchayati Raj Institution**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discussed about the Rationale of Good governance in present era of Globalization at Grass root level. It discuss about the Rural India and 73rd Amendment act of 1992 and how Panchayati raj Institutions and the need of transparency and accountability through good governance. For the upliftment of rural village there is an esurience of delivering better service by using information technology and giving better quality of life at grass roots. For this there is need to strengthen democracy through good governance. The issue of governance at the forefront of the development agenda and states “good governance is one of most crucial factor for development”. Governance is wider than government which ensures the responsibility and accountability of various commjunity i.e. government, the civil society and the corporate sector.

**Keywords:** PRI, participation, accountability, budget, governance

### **Introduction**

In today’s world there are a number of problems that need to be met with, like, Divisive tendencies, extremism, unemployment, regionalism, illiteracy, corruption and nepotism, etc. To combat them there is need for empowerment of people and participative development. For this, Good governance is necessary for participatory development in present situation.

The idea of good governance rests on the perception of giving, of serving and of doing well to the people, or solving their problems and making their lives more livable, satisfying and enjoyable. The essential prerequisites for quality governance are that the system should be good and go well with their needs. Good governance must be democratic, participatory, transparent and accountable.

The issue of good governance is more decisive. From the point of view that at the grassroots’ level, democratic decisions taken by the elected bodies at local level should be more valuable. In India for over centuries, Panchayat have been an intimate part of the Indian culture. Panchayat system is one of the most unique democratic institution.

After independence, there were made a lot of effort to strength the institutions of local self-governance. But participation of people at local level was not so good, it takes it into serious reflection.

After the seventy-one years of independence, a plethora of schemes and massive investment in rural sector, the rural scenario remained underdeveloped with no infrastructure and basic amenities like road, water, electricity, school, hospital and opportunities for employment. Why this so on? Due to lack of good governance and participation of people at local level (PRI, s) was so negligible.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act was not make a pressure on the masses and not to increasing recognition that the institutional initiatives of the preceding decades. Rural

poverty was still much too large and thus the existing structure of government needed to be reformed. It was a political drive to see PRIs as a solution to the governmental crises.

The main object of The Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs) was to achieve the democratic decentralization to accelerate socio-economic development and social justice. The enactments of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act and the subsequent state – wise Panchayat Raj Acts in India have brought to frontline the significance of proletariat democratic processes. This change in the Indian political system is the result of a growing conviction that big government cannot achieve growth and development in a society without people's direct participation and initiative. Contextually and theoretically too, the new PRI system has been created as a model of self-governance. The objective of decentralization are to execute and implement schemes and programs to meet the local needs to mobilize people, to channelize their energies towards socio-economic reconstruction and to involve them in all the activities of the communities through the new institutions

### **Concept of good Governance**

These days good governance is receiving considerable attention. It is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic frame worked. To Jefferies, good governance is equivalent to purposive and development-oriented administration committed to improve quality of life of the masses. The World Bank has allied good governance with capacity building and the exercise of political power needed for efficient and effective management of concrete national programs, whether the political system is democratic or not. In the words of Minocha, "It implies high level of organizational effectiveness. It also relates to the capacity of the Centre of power and administrative system of cope with the emerging challenges of the society. It refers to adoption of new values of governance to establish greater efficiency,

legitimacy and credibility of the system.” In simple terms, good governance can be considered as citizen-friendly, citizen-caring and a responsive administration.

### **Rationale of good governance in Panchayati raj institutions**

Good governance is an essential ingredient for socio-economic development of the country. The concept of governance is simple “The way those with power use that power”. It centers around the responsibility of government and governing bodies to meet the needs of the masses as opposed to select groups in society. It is seen as a set of values, policies and institutions through which the society manages economic, political as well as social process at different levels. The issue of good governance in recent time, emerged at the forefront of the agenda for sustainable human development. According to the UNDP policy, Governance for sustainable human development, the concept relates to the quality of relationship between the government and the citizens whom it serves and protects. It is a fuzzy concept. According to World Bank’s document 1992 governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the Management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. Any government to rule effectively and in a citizen-friendly manner has to ensure good governance. Governance has emerged as one of crucial issue in the country. We can plan, Mobilize investment, train personnel, raise financial resources, induct the modern technologies and set for ourselves the goals for economic development, equity, social justice and better quality of life for all. Good governance should demonstrate the capacity to usher in decentralization of powers that would prevent the sense of alienation among the elected representatives. It would promote welfare state in its true connotations where in people would be looked after by government as part and parcel of government machinery. It demands transparent administration by letting both not only decision making criterion and programmes drawn up open to the public but also by involving them. A good governance is epitomized by and can be secured by sound, responsive and competent administration, respect to basic human rights and values, strengthen democratic, institutional as well as structural frame work to ensure accountability and transparency. Governance needs to be citizen-oriented, citizen-centric, and citizen-friendly. In order to being new developments in the system, it is much called for the governance system to include the required kind of changes, keeping in mind the need of the day. The government is primarily an information processing system, analyzing and interpreting data and making decisions based on them. We need to recognize that the goals of modern government are much more than economic efficiency. The need and demand for good governance has increased with the rapid expansion of the economy and the growing awareness and assertion of rights by an increasingly educated population, Accountable, Participatory Good governance is critical for ensuring social inclusion, only through Panchayats which are Constitutionally mandated local democratic institutions, can ensure public, people participation and accountability. State governments regarding devolving more programmes and activities to Panchayats is that Panchayat have poor capacity and will not able to deliver, because of the weakness in terms of administrative and technical capacity with in Panchayats

leads to low capacity, inadequate devolution, disempowered institutions. Developing strong panchayati raj institutions it is essential to improve good governance and delivery of services which involves redistribution of power, institution building and development process that improve accountability to the people. Development is looked upon as holistic in nature, which creates an environment to foster a long, healthy, creative life among people and make the governance process which are locally relevant, democratic, participative and responsive.

### **Accountability and transparency**

In a democratic set-up, accountability is inevitable at all levels. Control over administration at the grass-root level is essential prerequisite for its success. In Panchayati Raj, mechanism of Gram Sabha not only makes administration accountable to the people but also expresses the will and aspirations of the people to be fulfilled by the Gram Panchayat administration. "The transparency, which is the sine-quantum of Gram Sabha, ensures a check in arbitrariness in decision-making and fine tune the administration of the Gram Panchayats to the needs of the community at large". This power will make the Panchayats think twice before taking any arbitrary or biased decisions by-passing the established norms or by manipulating the norms or records. But, in practice, it is observed that the resolutions of the Gram Sabha depend on the will of the Gram Panchayat. Influential sections dominate the proceedings of the Gram Sabha and the vigilance committees cannot effectively watch and supervise the working of Gram Panchayats in most of the states. The Gram Sabhas are not meeting regularly. Not only this, even women voters and elected representatives attend the meeting of lower tiers of PRIs. However, at the upper level they attend the meetings and also take part in decision- making.

A study conducted on transparency in Panchayats in West Bengal has found very low profile of the attendance of the people in the Gram Sabhas and meetings. The main reason for low attendance is that the Panchayats are not interested (mostly) in making people interested in the activities of Panchayats. Less involvement of common masses in the functioning of the local bodies certainly reduces the chances for being transparent in the eyes of the people. There are several examples of embezzlement of funds at Gram Panchayat level by forging LTIs on the muster roles. It has been aptly observed that "in general, the Panchayat members do not maintain close liaison with the people of their constituencies and do not feel interested in making the people aware of their activities". The public view is that these institutions are nothing but extension of the block level government offices. The belongingness of the common people with the Panchayat bodies is very much weakening. It is hoped that effectively of Gram Sabha, changing social relationships and emerging social movement will take care of the success of PRIs and ensure good – governance in the country side.

### **Suggestions**

For this, the foremost thing required is that the ambiguity regarding functions of various bodies of Panchayati raj contained in the XI Scheduled (29 in number) needs to be

done away so as to demarcate clearly the role of each tier to pin down their respective responsibility.

Secondly, the political masters ought to exhibit their will to transfer the powers and functions in the true spirit of the Amendment to achieve the desired objective of democratic decentralization and ultimately, contributing to good governance at the grass-root level. Thirdly considering the fact that the financial viability of any administrative system is the sine-qua-non for its effective functioning, the financial health of PRIs needs to be improved the strengthened. Here, too, the political masters have to show the spirit of magnanimity in making them financially self-sufficient. At the same time, these rural institutions should come up with the strong will power to tap and augment their financial resources shedding their populist approach.

- 1) The functions assigned to the each tier should be well-defined and clear so as to avoid confusion.
- 2) The recommendations of the respective State Finance Commissions relating to sharing of taxes, levies and fees, etc. to improve the fiscal position of PRIs should be honestly accepted and appropriate and timely action there on should be assured to make these bodies self-reliant. On the other hand, the Panchayats should also not hesitate in raising their own resources by following need-based and progressive taxation policies. Thus, financial empowerment is a must for making these bodies real instruments of rural development.
- 3) Special campaign by joint efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies should be launched to generate awareness among the elected representatives of PRIs about different aspects of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act – the powers, functions and responsibilities.
- 4) In view of the fact that women in PRIs are to shoulder greater responsibilities, there emerges the need to organize orientation/training programs for them to change their mindset and prepare them to shoulder responsibilities in decentralized governance. Different training modules are required to be developed for elected women representatives at the district level, block level and enable them to exercise power and responsibilities effectively.
- 5) Training should be made mandatory for both officials and non-officials. The training modules for lower tier should include Panchayat Act, rules, procedure, planning, managing general of rural development schemes and programs, general government working and some knowledge of technical issues related to land – water management. The modules for middle and top tiers should focus on imparting knowledge of the area needs, potentials, resources and resource gaps; knowledge of state and national goals, plans, schemes and resources flow; responsiveness to people's needs and knowledge of their aspirations; knowledge of participatory planning and local mobilization techniques; knowledge of the government's administrative system at district and state level and the market system in the area; planning and project-planning expertise; concept and components of decentralized planning; knowledge of different departments and agencies working at district and block levels; and knowledge about the computers.
- 6) People's right to information and accessibility to the

Panchayats must be ensured making the functioning of PRIs transparent.

- 7) The delivery of goods and services through PRIs should be expedited and there should not be any compromise on the quality aspect. Those who have developed the tendency of adopting corrupt practices or indulging in embezzlements must be brought to book by taking stern action against them. The nexus between the local bureaucracy and the heads of Panchayats for mutual gains should be firmly checked.
- 8) Good governance can be ensured through active and effective participation of the people by imbibing moral values.

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