

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA: AN EVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT:

By the general meaning of Panchayat, it can be said that it is a village-level organization that is formed by five or more people who are elected by the people of the village. Panchayats are a prime example of decentralization which has proved to be a tool to develop leadership and decision making capacity at the local level as well as to bring the weaker sections into the mainstream of society and ensure their political participation at the grassroots level which were deprived of pol. participation before India became independent. Panchayati Raj Institutions in India have a long history of development which has gone through many ups and downs. The Panchayati system that we see today is the result of reforms that have been made to it. The Panchayat system that we have today is the result of the imagination that was conceived by the eminent scholars here at the time of India's independence to strengthen the grass root level institution of the country.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj Institutions, Panchayats, Constitution, Self-Government etc.

INTRODUCTION

Article 243 of the amended Constitution provides a definition of Panchayats as “ an institution (by whatever name called) of self-government... for the rural areas”. This was clearly a considerable advance over the constitutional provision in Article 40 (Directive Principles of State Policy) DPSPs which defines panchayats as “units” of self-government, rather than institutions. It is a truth that India lives in its villages because according to the census of 2011, 68.84% per cent of the Indian population lives in villages.

Within the usual classification of decentralization models, the model of India was intended to observe the model of democratic decentralization in which power and funds are conveyed from the higher institutions to the elected bodies at the village level. These power and funds may include the power of decision making, pol. experience and powers to raise revenues. We can divide democratic decentralization into different parts, one side is transferred only funds or revenue-raising powers and on the other side the democratic decentralization transfers administrative or personnel powers from the higher level in the political structure to the lower-level systems. The amendments to the Indian constitution distinctly planned that panchayats should be organizations of self-government throughout which the people would engage in the procedure of planning for economic development and social justice. In terms of leadership, the

panchayat system has made a commendable contribution to the Indian pol. system by leading a large section of the society i.e. women to the mainstream and ensuring the pol. participation of the people belonging to the SC and ST.

The importance of local government has been there since ancient times, even during the reign of the kings, these units of government have been established as per the need. If we look at the political and administrative history of ancient times, it is clear that the existence of these institutions in one form or another has always been present in every age and every state. Not only in ancient times but today in all the democracies of the world there is a network of local bodies and the central and state governments carry out most of the work of local importance to the citizens through these bodies. The independent government had realized that these units of local self-government were the cornerstone of democracy. The third level of governance, which we know as local governance, was not authorized by the constitution until 1993. To clarify the nature of local government, it is important to be aware of the fact that local government is enshrined in the constitution as a state subject in terms of the distribution of powers. This means that all state governments of the Union of India are independent in that they can implement the concept of local governance at the state level. In other words, the state governments can enact the act related to PRIs at the state level on the lines of the central government.

PRIs gained constitutional status through the 73rd amendment. As a result of this amendment, Part 9 was added to the constitution related to PRIs. Panchayats exist in India before the 73rd amendment but did not have constitutional status. Several committees related to panchayats were formed to make their existence effective but the panchayats got their constitutional status only in the 73rd amendment.

The words local government and local self-government sound similar, but there is a difference between these words. According to Prof. Shriram Maheshwari, local self-government originated at a time when the country was under British rule and the people did not have any self-governance power at the central or state level. When the British government decided to associate Indians with local governance, it aimed to provide some degree of self-governance to the people.

But today, when self-governance has been established in the country at both central and state level, local self-government that special context and significance has disappeared. One of the differences between local government and local self-government is that bureaucracy is effective in local government whereas in local self-government the effect of bureaucracy is comparatively negligible. In local government, members of the local field participate only through advisory committees, while in local self-government; members of the locality are elected and participate in the workings of these bodies. Local governance is part of the regular administrative structure of the state government such as various district administration structures, like tehsils level offices and village level panchayat secretary and patwaris. Local self-government includes units of urban governance such as Municipalities and Panchayat Raj Institutions. But nowadays, there is no

difference between and local government and local self-government and the Institutions of Panchayati Raj are also called local government institutions.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To understand to concept of grass-root level political Institution.
2. To study the historical background of PRIs in India.
3. To find out recent initiatives regarding Panchayati Raj Institutions.
4. To study the evolution of Panchayati Raj during Pre-British Period, during British Period and Post-Independence period also.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are mainly two sources for data collection in research field primary sources and secondary sources respectively. The present study is based on secondary source of data which has been gathered from different books, research papers, online sources, newspapers etc. that's why it is analytical in nature. The researcher has visited mainly two libraries Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University Patiala and A.C. Joshi Library, Punjab University Chandigarh for collecting the data.

EVOLUTION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

By the way, bodies of local government have existed in India since ancient period but the development of ordinary local government bodies is divided into three periods,

1. Pre – British Period
2. British Period
3. Post – Independence Period

1. PRE – BRITISH PERIOD

Since the past, panchayats, which are considered to be the most popular units of rural local administration, are very old institutions that were themselves capable units of local governance in the past. Due to this panchayat system in ancient times, every rural society was a small state in itself and it had very well tied the people of India to the thread of unity. There is also mention of the existing urban administration in ancient India. This ancient structure of village democracy later took place of panchayats (assembly of 5 persons) to keep on eyes on the affairs of village with police and judicial powers.

Magasthenese who visited the court of Chandra Gupta in 303 B.C., describes the system of villages as classifying village self - contained and self – governed. Kautiliya in his work Arthashashtra has discussed in

detail about the pattern of village government. During the time of Kautiliya, the village headman was known as Gramik and appointed by the king.

This shows that in ancient India, like today, local government was divided into urban and rural areas. Both types of the local administrative system were operated separately. In the Vedic era, when cities had no special place, rural governance was considered more important. The VP which was organized by the people of the village performed administrative and judicial functions. Manusanhita also discusses the relationship between the king and the village and Kautilya's Arathshashtra proves that the state had minimal interference in rural life. To facilitate governance in the Mauryan period, the provinces were divided as follows:

1. Janapada
2. Sthanik
3. Dronmukh
4. Swarvatik
5. Sangram
6. Village

The district or the head of the district was called local and the office of the village was known as Gramik. The office of five or ten villagers was called Gop. In the Mauryan period, Chandragupta Maurya adopted the policy of decentralization of governance by introducing an autonomous system of governance. The head of the Janapada was Samaharta and was responsible for revenue estimation assisted by local leaders called Sthanik and Gopa. In this period, the largest office of the city was called Nagarika. It operated the administration of the city with the help of Gopa and Sthanik. Even after the Mauryan period, the outline of local governance remained as prevalent in the Gupta era.

After this, the importance of Gram Panchayats in the Rajput period decreased somewhat. Rajput feudal lords not only gave less importance to local government but they also kept trying to get rid of control from the central government. Turning the pages of the Mughal history of Indian rule, it appears that local governance existed in the country even in this period. During the Mughal period, the administration of the city was run by an officer called Kotwal. This Kotwal had paramount power in police-related matters. He was responsible for maintaining peace and order in the area, detecting crimes, eradicating social evils and executing similar local matters. Village governance in this period was the smallest unit in the area of rural local administration which was managed by panchayats. Among the three important officers of the village. Muqaddam or Mukhiya took care of the village, settled fights with the help of the Chaudhary panchayats and recovered the Patwari revenue. Each village also had a watchman for security.

In this period, the subject of local administration is found in Abul Fazal's Ain – e – Akbari. In Ain – e – Akbari, it is said about the city life and its offices that the officer appointed to the post of Kotwal should be experienced, skilled, thoughtful and clever. First time in the Indian administration, throughout the Mughal period, some changes took place. In the past, the panchayats were financially independent. They uplift their own sources of income and taxation was simple. The Jagirdari system introduced the organization of Malguzars (middleman) which resulted by the changing of social, economic and political system of village society.

2. BRITISH PERIOD

Good details about British local rule are available. It is the opinion of the scholars that although local governance has existed in India in some form from the time immediately till date, however, its systematic emergence took place under British rule. The task of giving elected forms to the units of local governance, giving it wide powers of taxation and developing it as a school of democracy has been done in the British era itself. There has also been some western influence on the local governance system developed during this period. In this period, more attention was paid to the development of institutions of rural local administration as well as urban local governance. The beginning of local governance can be traced back to 1687 when the Madras Municipal Corporation was established. In this way the local rule developed in the British period, today is almost 300 years old.

During the British period, the local government system proceeded through two distinct phases. The first phase is related to the arrival of the British rule and continued till the Constitutional Reforms of 1919 and the second phase from 1919 to the termination of the British rule.

FIRST PHASE

In the first phase, the arrival of the British regime saw the slow vanishing of the self-contained village local government system and the beginning of local governance as the direct forecast of the British rule. They used this structure to expand their own rule. As a result of this, the viewpoint of the people changed. People felt to lose belief in the old age structure of local government. Other circumstances too had changed. Direct taxes provide a way to indirect taxation. The revolt of 1857 uprising appears to have been instrumental in creating the conditions for the adoption of Lord Mayo's resolution on local self-government, which revived the traditional VP system in Bengal, the context of imperial financial burdens and burdens in the wake of the Mutiny and the demand for a comprehensive political philosophy that includes the transfer of authority from the imperial level to the local representatives with legal, administrative and financial implications.

LORD MAYO'S RESOLUTION (1870)

In the resolution in 1870, Lord Mayo said that local interest and care are compulsory for success in the management of funds for education, medical and local public works. Although the first local authority in

India was established by the British rule in 1687 and the District Collector was commissioned the first-class position in local administration by the court of Directors of the East India Company as early as 1786. Not until 1870 do we find the Bengal Chowkidari Act, which referred Panchayats. However, these panchayats should be nominated members and be established by the District Magistrate in villages, thus the panchayats can raise and collect local taxes to pay the chowkidars or guards or employed by the panchayat in the village. Lord Mayo's resolution of 1870 was linked to the development of local self-government and the decentralization of power and finances of the central government and the provinces. In 1870 the viceroy Lord Mayo also received a resolution in his council for decentralization of power to increase administrative efficiency in fulfilling the requirement of the population and finances to stock up.

LORD RIPON'S RESOLUTION (1882)

The 1880 report of the Famine Commission, which pointed to the lack of institutionalized local bodies as the main obstacle to the provision of relief supplies to the affected people, further reinforced the demand for the delegation of power to local bodies self – administration. It provided for comprehensive nationwide geo – administrative principle for the local self-governing institutions. Lord Ripon's government sent circulars to the provincial governments on the issue of local self – government, to seek public opinion. The subjects of the circular became the basis for the Resolution of the Government of India (1882). The local bodies' act of 1885 came into force. This was the basis for the creation of autonomous local institutions, but they had a large number of nominated members down to the village level.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON DECENTRALIZATION

Lord Ripon was tolerant in his attitude towards the problem of local self-government. He thought that the local self-government institutions would function as the instruments of political education and popular education. Another important step in this direction was the report of the Royal Commission on Decentralization established in 1907. It presented its report in 1909. The commission recommended that for effective decentralization it might be desirable to connect people to local duties and village affairs through the VP.

The commission advocated that it is highly sensible, both in the interests of decentralization and to associate people with local tasks of administration, that any attempt to be made to constitute villages panchayats for the administration of local village matters. Both the recommendations carried in Ripon Resolution those made by the Royal Commission on decentralization were not executed and remained on paper only.

1909 LAHORE RESOLUTION

In 1909 the 24th session of the Congress took place at Lahore. It passed a resolution calling on the government to take early steps to elect local bodies from the village of panchayat up on papers.

SECOND PHASE

During the second phase, several reforms were introduced, largely due to the Montague – Chelmsford reforms of 1919 brought under the control of Indian ministers in the provinces. The idea was to make the local bodies' representative with the control of the population. These included the Bengal Villages Self – Government Act of 1919, Madras, Bombay and united provinces Village Panchayat Act of 1920, Bihar and Orissa Village Act Administration, Assam rural self–government of 1926 and Punjab Act of 1935, etc.

Despite the fact that the popular government in the provinces presided by the Congress vacated the office following the declaration of Second World War in 1939, the situation as regards local government institutions abided unchanged till August 1947, when the country accomplished independence. Even nevertheless the British government was not interested in the village autonomy, they were enforced to do so, in order to continue their ruling in India and furthermore to meet financial necessities.

However, these statutory panchayats balanced only a limited number of villages and had, overall, a limited number of functions. These laws were aimed at dealing only with the affair of the village and its development. The local self–government even had the power to examine smaller cases. But these bodies were not democratic because most of their members were not elected but were nominated by the government, they were given few powers and their financial assets were also limited.

Although a large number of acts established panchayats in the village were passed in the last decades of the British rule but the situation remained more or less the same until India got independence.

POST – INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Throughout the fight for freedom the Indian National Congress recognized the panchayats as institutions of the people. Local self–government was seen as the true voice of democracy. The panchayats of villages were central to the ideological structure of the Indian National Movement. Most of our leaders, mainly Mahatma Gandhi, favored the concept of Gram Swaraj.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CDP)

As part of the strategy for socio-economic and cultural transformation in rural areas, a massive CDP was launched across the country in 1952, which was inspired by Albert Mayer's Etawah Project experiments in Uttar Pradesh in 1948 and S. Dev's Nilokheri Project in Punjab (now in Haryana) in 1950. The CDP was launched nationwide in 1952.

1. The objectives of this CDP were to increase employment and production through the application of scientific methods in agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry, fishing etc.

2. The establishment of subsidiary and artisan industries.

3. Self–help and self–sufficiency and the greatest possible extension of the principle of cooperation.

After the project of Community Development was launched, those at the forefront realized that without a village level agency, that could represent the entire community, presume responsibility and provide the leadership necessary to implement programs development, no real progress could be made in rural development. The recommendations in the report of the team for the study of the Community Projects and National Extension Services, headed by Balwant Rai Mehta(1957), that public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies. It gave a boost to the prevailing sentiments throughout the country.

The committee’s recommendations under the Balwant Rai Mehta thereafter visualized a role for the panchayats as agencies for development and participation. In addition to being involved in the planning for themselves, they were meant to be the agencies through which to seek people’s participation in the running and implementation of development programs, often designed at the national and state levels. The main recommendation of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was that,

- (a) A three-tier system of Panchayati raj should be created from village to district level linkages. The planned institutions were ZP at the district level, Panchayat Samiti (the most important planning and administrative unit) and GP at the village level.
- (b) There must be a genuine transfer of power from states to these institutions.
- (c) All schemes developed at these levels should be channeled through these PRIs.
- (d) The higher level body Zila Parishad (ZP) would play an advisory role.

Rajasthan was the first state to establish the Panchayati Raj System in 1959, followed by Andhra Pradesh and from then on practically the whole country followed the same. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described panchayats as the ‘foundation of democracy in India’. He believed that the progress of our country was linked to the progress in our villages. From 1950 – 1964, the government led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was keen to decentralize state authority and establish panchayats in villages.

Although the committee had recommended that the main decision–making body should be Panchayat Samiti (PS), the PRIs that emerged had variations from state to state, Maharashtra and Gujarat (which already had a development process administration that was already underway and was based on district and a tradition of active district development) used the PS at the level of the block (or intermediate) as an institution designed to create new modes of development effort. However, the district body (apex) in Rajasthan, although mainly advisory, was still stronger than, in say, Madras. Several states adopted one-two, or three-tier models of PR according to their convenience.

The ARC in its report 1967, inquired into the question of planning at the district level. Subsequently the Planning Commission provided a set of comprehensive guidelines for preparation of district plans. These guidelines also envisaged preparation of a perspective plan accompanied with medium-term and annual plans.

Another committee, chaired by Ashok Mehta, dealt with how democratic decentralization works. It designated the period 1959 – 1964 as a period of corrosion of PRIs and the period 1969 – 1977 as the period of non – performance. Therefore, it has been suggested that the PRIs should be reconstructed, strengthened and revitalized as an organic and integral part of our democratic process, and given appropriate constitutional status and recognition.

According to the report of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1959, almost all states had passed laws to establish panchayats. The Ashok Mehta Committee 1978, had emphasized the need for strengthen the PRIs.

The committee recommended among the other proposals, the open participation of political parties with PRIs elections contested by pol. parties' bases. The Ashok Mehta Committee report also took the approach that panchayat should also be viewed as political institutions rather than mere development organizations and recommended amending the constitution to reflect the role of Panchayati Raj.

The main recommendation of the committee was the two-tier system of Panchayati Raj. According to this recommendation, the ZP should be established at the district level as the first point of decentralization. The formation of Mandal Panchayats was designed and connections were also expected between rural and urban areas. A major weakness of the Ashok Mehta Committee is that it ignored the value of Gram Sabha. The weaker sections of the society could get the maximum benefit from the various plans. The committee suggested that there should be an independent agency to run the funds and programs earmarked for the envisaged castes and envisaged tribes and to ensure that the projects designed for them are implemented in some way that the desired influence is not diluted.

Although the committee's recommendations were not accepted by the Union Government due to the change back of the ruling party within it, some of them exerted varying influence over the Panchayati Raj in some states, for example, some years later, (1983 – 1985) Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh remodeled their respective Panchayati Raj system under this influence. In West Bengal also after, their view on the participation of pol. parties in the PR was followed by the state governments.

G. V. K. RAO COMMITTEE AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

One of the committees established under the chairmanship of a senior administrator (G.V.R. Rao) reported in 1985. It recommended an appropriate improvement of the representative character and the ability of people representatives in the PRIs to equip them to play a more active, fair and effective role in promoting

and managing village development and local affairs. ZP had to be given considerable skills to serve as the main institution for planning and managing village development. The committee formed under the chairmanship of the distinguished lawyer (L.M. Singhvi) recommended that the PR be first considered the local self-government institution. It should be reinforced to better serve as one of the cornerstones of the democratic political system in the country.

It acknowledges that bureaucratization has prevented development at the grassroots level, resulting in the Panchayat Raj Institutions being referred to as "grass without roots." As a result, it has made the following important recommendations:

- Zila Parishad is the most important body in the scheme of democratic decentralization.
- Zila Parishad will be the main body for carrying out development programs at the district level.
- The district and the lower levels of the Panchayati Raj system are to be assigned specific planning, implementation, and monitoring of the rural developmental programs.
- The post of District Development Commissioner will be created. He will serve as the chief executive officer of the Zila Parishad.
- Elections to the levels of Panchayati Raj systems should be regular.

L. M. SINGHVI COMMITTEE AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

The committee was established by the Indian government in 1986 with the primary goal of suggesting actions to rejuvenate the Panchayati Raj systems for development and democracy. The following suggestions were made by the committee.

- The committee recommended that the Panchayati Raj system should be constitutionally recognized. It recommended constitutional provisions to recognize free and fair elections for the Panchayati Raj systems.
- The committee recommended the reorganization of the village to make the gram panchayat more effective.
- It recommended that village panchayats should be given more funding for their activities.
- Judicial tribunals will be constituted in every state to adjudicate the election of Panchayati Raj Institutions and other phenomena relating to their functioning.

All of these elements support the claim that panchayats can be highly successful in identifying and resolving local issues, involving villagers in developmental activities, enhancing communication between various political levels, fostering leadership development, and, in other words, supporting the fundamental development of the states without requiring significant structural changes.

In 1989, the union government introduced the Panchayati Raj System, structure and functionally, into the Parliament 64th constitutional amendment bill for the reorganization of PRIs. The bill also provided for a very substantial reserve of seats for SC and ST in proportion to their population and thirteen per cent for women. It envisaged free and fair local elections under the direction of the Election Commissioner of India.

ENACTMENT OF 73RD CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

Rajiv Gandhi presented the 64th amendment bill in Parliament for this purpose. It was approved by Lok Sabha but could not achieve the required two-thirds majority in Rajya Sabha on account of mistrust in the mind of the opposition parties' officials regarding the reasons behind this exercise. Shri P. NarasimhaRao, who became prime minister after 1991, however, managed to obtain the 73rd constitutional amendment enacted in 1992 for constitutionalizing PRIs by building a consensus in its mandate.

Over time, the consensus in favour of the panchayats has increased among all political parties. The government of the national front, which came to power for a short period, introduced a draft related to panchayats on 7 September 1990. Finally, the government of Congress after returning to power introduced a constitutional amendment bill related to panchayats in September 1991. After debate and discussion, it became the constitutional (73rd amendment) act 1992 on 24th April 1993.

The 73rd constitutional amendment is a hallmark concerning PRIs and provided constitutional status to panchayats in India. It (73rd constitutional amendment) left no circumspection with the state governments.

With the passage of the 73rd constitutional amendment, the beginning of a new era was dawn in the process of democratic decentralization and strengthening of grassroots institutions. The act no provided only the constitutional status to these local bodies but also endowed power and functions to these bodies. So far, marginalized sections of the society namely, the SC, ST and women had the opportunity to enter into the mainstream of the society by contesting elections.

PANCHAYAT (EXTENSION TO SCHEDULED AREAS) ACT (OR PESA), 1996

The PESA Act was passed on December 24, 1996, to allow Tribal Self Rule in the designated territories since the laws do not automatically cover them. The Act expanded Panchayat provisions to include tribal areas in nine states with Fifth Schedule Areas. Since these states have their own independent councils for government, PESA does not apply to the majority of the Northeastern states under Sixth Schedule Areas. The nine states that have areas on the Fifth Schedule are:

Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra
Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan.

Participatory democracy is made possible by the Panchayat Extension Act for tribal areas under the Fifth Schedule, which essentially transfers power and authority to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas rather than delegation. Every law pertaining to the Panchayat in the Fifth Schedule area must comply with customary law, social and religious customs, and traditional community resource management methods, according to the constitution's provisions and the act's composition.

Provisions under PESA include the following:

1. Gram sabha at the para, majra and tola levels

2. Gram sabha to protect the traditions, beliefs and culture of the tribal communities
3. Local disputes to be resolved by the gram sabha
4. Gram sabha to manage and protect common properties based on their traditional systems of management and protection
5. The administration to seek permission from the gram sabha in case of land acquisition.
6. Gram sabha to have the rights over minor forest produce; powers to restore land to the tribals; and control over money-lending to tribals, tribal welfare activities by social organizations and local plans and sub-plans for the development of tribal areas and communities
7. Gram sabha to have the control over local markets and melas
8. Gram sabha to have rights to control the distillation, prohibition and manufacture of liquor.
9. District panchayats to have rights and powers similar to the district panchayats falling under Sixth Schedule.

Therefore, acknowledging the indigenous tribal political structures of self-governance would be the proper or harmonious interpretation of PESA. This conclusion also follows because the PESA must be read in conjunction with the Fifth Schedule, which addresses the Scheduled Tribes of the Fifth Schedule Areas, and because the Bhuria Committee's recommendations served as the foundation for the PESA's formulation.

The ministry had tabled the constitutional bill (Eighty – Seventh Amendment) 1999 in Parliament on 17th December 1999, to amend sections 243(2) and (5) of the constitution to allow the legislative assemblies of the state to decide on the method for the election of members and chairpersons of panchayats at the intermediate and district level. It was decided to hold wide consultations with all political parties and the government of states on the bill.

Therefore, the comments of all chief ministers of the states were requested on behalf of this. A meeting of officials of all pol. parties in Parliament was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of India on 19 May 2001 to seek the consent of all pol. representatives to the Eighty – Seventh bill in the consultation (Amendment 1999).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF SECOND ARC (2007) REPORT

Based on a review study of the report of the second ARC, between 21st of August 2005 to October 2007, the sixth report, which relates to the local governance, the ARC has issued recommendations to improve the organization and functioning of PRIs through certain changes in the organizational structure as well as by facilitating the process of decentralization and devolution of functions, officials and finances rational to the PRIs. It made some recommendations about the PRIs of which one is related to reservation tenure as to overcome the current one-term reservation problem seats should be reserved for a minimum of two years if

the single-member constituency system is maintained in practice or the current multi-member constituency system through the multi-member system through the system for members to be replaced.

IN TODAY'S SCENARIO

In January 2009, the Ministry of PR reviewed the memorandum for the expenditure finance committee for the centrally sponsored scheme on e-governance for PRIs emphasized the need for e-governance to enhance the capacity of the PRIs as autonomous institutions.

In XI five year plan (2007 – 2012), special attempts have been made to bring the IT (Information Technology) revolution to the bases of grassroots. The plan emphasized the development of software for Panchayats to develop the capacity of public relations leaders, a community of PR leaders would be organized through the Internet.

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