

Rural People's Lifestyle Change Through Panchayat Raj System-A Overview

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Abstract:

In the early few years, the Panchayat Raj Institution was under the grip of elite society, who used to control different villages under their muscle and money power. It started changing after the introduction of the 73rd amendment in the year 1992; a special reservation policy i.e. 1/3 reservation policy has been implemented for scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, and OBC (other backward class) candidates. Special provisions of 1/3 reservations policy have also been initiated for women candidates in all tiers' new Panchayat Raj Institution. With the help of this scheme, Govt. of India started dreaming for wonderful rural India in the future. Many social changes have been watching by rural people for the last few years. It has been tried to discuss few structural changes that occurred due to the introduction of the new Panchayat Raj Institution (a village council in India) since 1992. The entire shape has been given of this article with the help of a secondary source followed by necessary analysis.

Key Words:

Introduction, Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, 73rd Amendment Act, conclusion.

Introduction:

Rural development, on the other hand, means an overall development of rural areas in social, economic, political and cultural spheres so that people could lead a pleasant life. It is a broad, inclusive term that takes in its consideration the socio-economic and political development of the rural areas. It includes measures to strengthen the democratic structure of society through the Panchayat Raj Institutions as well as measures to improve the rural infrastructure, improve the income of rural households and delivery systems about education, health, and safety mechanisms.

The rural development programmed proposes to reduce the poverty and unemployment, to improve the health and educational status and to fulfill the basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing of the rural population. For this to realize, Government of India launched some developmental schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Indira AwasYojana (IAY), SampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana (SGRY), PradhanMantri Gram SadakYojana(PMGSY), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), etc. All these schemes are intended to lessen the gap between rural and urban populace which would help ease imbalances and speed up the development process.

The term 'Rural Development' is of focal interest and is widely acclaimed in both the developed and the developing countries of the world. There is however no universally acceptable definition of rural development and the term is used in different ways and vastly divergent contexts. As a concept, it connotes the overall development of rural areas intending to improving the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multi-dimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities - village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all, the human resource in rural areas. As a phenomenon, it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and all.

In the year 1992, the 73rd amendment of the constitution of Panchayat Raj in India played a significant role to commence the process to offer empowerment to the poor. It allowed the eradication of poverty. It also started improving the quality of life of underprivileged society and that makes them self-confident, conscious & powerful. With the introduction of 73 amendments in 1992, a great sign of social change took place, which is as follows : - (i) Maximum amount of social and economic power has been transferred to the rural people to enable them and to establish their future. (ii) The maximum involvement of women representatives in the village has started. (iii) Maximum involvement of SC/ST/OBC has commenced and those increase their capabilities as well as make them understand the grassroots level planning and democratic process. Social advancement is the process of planned

institutional change to bring about a better adjustment between human needs and aspiration on the one hand and social policies and programs on the other.

It is declaring war on poverty, Illiteracy, ignorance, inequality, irrationality & oppression prevalent in society. It aims not merely at the upliftment of the weak, the underprivileged and the disadvantaged people, but improving the quality of life of all citizens. It is privileged of all people to enjoy the benefits of this participation in common efforts. With the introduction of the 73rd amendment of the constitution on the Panchayat Raj System in India, the Panchayat Raj (a village council in India) has been established on a sound footing & has been developed to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to them. The most significant role of Panchayat (a village council in India) in poverty eradication is to help in the process of empowerment of the poor. When a development program involves poor people, it helps them to become self-confident, conscious & powerful. The 73rd amendment of Panchayat Raj gave a nice base to the village people to make them self-reliant and the blueprint of Panchayat Raj has been established on an incredible platform and has also been developed to make them responsible to do their duties in a systematic process. Since then for the first time, one-third of the seats at every stage are reserved for women. Formerly the lower rung of the various social categories exclusively SC, ST, OBC have not found a considerable place in Panchayat. But these changes happened in the system of election, have been mobilizing the people & the response of the community in this matter.

There are three stages of rural development. The first stage includes co-operative village management, rural extension programmed, community development, the abolition of intermediaries, land reforms, democratic decentralization, additional investment in agriculture, irrigation, industry and so on. These development activities were expected to change the rural scenario, divert rural people from agriculture to other occupations and reduce the pressure of the population on agriculture. But there was no spectacular change in the rural economy even though the economy as a whole made some progress. In the second stage, new technology in agriculture was introduced. Production increased but did not improve the economic condition of rural people. From the starting of the Fourth Plan (1969-74), an attempt was made to attack poverty through poverty eradication programmed like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA),

Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Laborers Agency (MFAL) and Drought Prone Area Program (DPAP). In the Fifth Plan (1974-79), the Minimum Needs Programme was introduced to improve the quality of life of the poor.

Since all this did not bring about substantial improvement in rural areas, several radical poverty eradication programmes were introduced in the Sixth Plan (1980-85), which continued during the Seventh Plan (1985-90). But unfortunately, the rural development program failed to involve people in the planning and implementation of programs. It was noticed that the Community Development Programme (CDP) as well as other rural development programs, instead of being people's programs with the government's assistance, were being more and more government programs with varying degrees of people's participation. Panchayat was also found weak and ineffective to mobilize the masses in support of the programs.

Experience of various rural development programs reveals that a mere project approach or a sectorial approach is not adequate to lead to the overall development of the area and distribution of benefits to the local population, particularly the weaker sections of the society. The distribution of unemployment and poverty and the potential for the development of agriculture and related activities vary widely from region to region and also within a region. Different areas in the country are at different levels of development and have varying degrees of potential, depending on local endowments. The efforts will now be to make more area-specific programs and utilize the local endowments for growth, social justice, and full employment. It will, therefore, be necessary to plan for integration of various programs and establish appropriate linkages for optimal utilization of local endowments consistent with the plan objectives, local needs, and environmental balance.

Today, the objective of Panchayat Raj institutions has become multi-dimensional. Panchayat Raj institutions are playing an important role in social, welfare, economic development, and political life. They are also working for modernization and development-oriented village leadership. As a result, the active involvement of people in their programs has increased. The role of Panchayat Raj institutions in various fields in rural development can be described as follows:

A. SOCIAL LIFE

1. Social reforms
2. Spreading education to increase the literacy level,
3. Panchayatis running several programs for child welfare.
4. Providing mid-day meals in schools.
5. To tackle the problem of bonded labor.
6. For the welfare of women, Panchayat is implementing several welfare programs.
7. Implement prohibition of liquor and other intoxicants.
8. Settling of controversies and disputes.

B. PUBLIC WELFARE

1. Improvement in public welfare.
2. Cleanliness - related jobs
3. Transport facilities.
4. Entertainment facilities.
5. Help during natural calamities.
6. Providing fresh water - construction of wells.

C. ECONOMIC LIFE

1. Improvement in agriculture.
2. Irrigational facilities.
3. Development of the village industry.
4. Improving the breeds of animals.
5. Encouraging animal husbandry.
6. Improving the condition of landless labor.
7. Developing co-operative institutions.
8. Development of handicraft and small- scale industry.
9. Areas for fodder, parks, etc.
10. Afforestation.
11. Decide buying and selling.
12. Maintenance of public properties.
13. Ranging markets.

D.POLITICAL LIFE

1. Developing leadership in the village.
2. Political awareness among the people of villages.
3. Promoting peace and security.
4. Helping administration.
5. Providing justice.
6. Explaining the importance of the vote and the right to vote.
7. Educating people about the meaning of citizenship.
8. Training them to solve their problems themselves.
9. Creating awareness among villagers about democracy.
10. To see that leadership has representation from all sections of society.
11. Population census.

Suggestion:

1. Special weight should be given for adult education; particularly for the members of Village Panchayat But as soon as they would come to realize their rights and responsibilities through the light focused by education, they would be more prone to their duty and thus would help to make the change of traditional and social structure.
2. More women organizations are to be introduced in all Villages and that should have a functional connection with P.R.I; Thus women can establish them not only in the Panchayat system but also in the social structures too. And through these organizations, women would be able to bring their voice before the government's attention and can argue for their development and thus would be able to establish themselves as a united force in the society.
3. Provisions are to be made in such a way by which it would be possible to minimize the caste discrimination. As long as the caste discrimination remains in the society, the progress of the society would be in a half. Above all, every one of us is human beings and that is our ultimate identity. So caste discrimination should not only be minimized but should be tried to be abolished for the benefit of Panchayat Raj, as well as to make the society a refreshing one

4. There are many researchers gave their ideas after a thorough investigation about the process of untouchability in many parts of rural area. They affirmed that even after the introduction of the 73rd amendment followed by modified Panchayat Raj in the year 1992, the problems of untouchability either remain unaltered or very negligible changes occurred till now. Still, there are many empirical kinds of research are required to be conducted in the vicinity of untouchability and its remedy.

Conclusion:

Hence, the critical question for India's long term success as a free democratic country is closely linked to the success of its Panchayat in delivering the outcomes for rural development including greater incomes reduction of poverty, access to local public goods services that include sanitation, drinking water, health care, education, safety and security, rural roads, gender empowerment, and green environments.

The Panchayat System in India assumes a very significant role. This system is quite rational practicable and in perfect harmony with the spirit of democracy and should be further strengthened and encouraged. It should be made economically viable and self-sufficient by providing adequate resources, funds, and generous grants. The Panchayat elections are conducted and supervised by the Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections. All these measures ensure a bright and long-lasting future of the Panchayat System in India.

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