

PANCHAYATHIRAJ INSTITUTIONS

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS-MAINS

Grassroots Democracy: Panchayati Raj and Municipal Government, significance of 73rd and 74th Amendments; Grassroot movements

The form of grassroots democracy and domination in India and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the progression of rural areas is great. India has been a welfare state ever since after Independence and the chief objective of all governmental endeavours has been the wellbeing of its populace. Basic principles of government are elimination of poverty, ignorance, diseases and inequality of opportunities and providing a better and higher quality of life. India's democratic structure has three levels of governance which are national, state, and local.

In simple term, Grassroot democracy is a people/community driven contribution in elections, governance and decision making. Grassroot democracy can be seen as a propensity towards designing political processes where as much decision making authority as practical is shifted to the lowest level of organization. Therefore, a local government is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar grassroots need of the people (Agagu, 1997). Appadorai (1975) also opined that the local government system as government is by the popularly elected bodies charged with administrative and executive duties in matters concerning the populations of a particular district or place.

Local government was further defined by Lawal (2000) as that tier of government closest to the people, "which is vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain". Local government is a system of public administration at a local level, charged with the responsibility of bringing the people at the grassroots closer to the government. Grassroots organisations can have numerous structures; depending on the type of organisation and what the members want. These can be non-structured and non-hierarchical organisations that are run by all members, or by whichever member wishes to do something.

The grassroots level is called the Panchayati Raj System. If democracy means people's participation in running their affairs, then it is nowhere more direct, clear and significant than at the local level, where the contact between the people and their representatives, between the rulers and the ruled is more constant, vigilant and manageable. Lord Bryce believed: "The best school of democracy and the best guarantee for its success is the practice of local self-government". Decentralization is a main mechanism through which democracy becomes truly representative and responsive (Dhaliwal, 2004).

The 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution (1992) clearly prescribes that the Panchayats should be institutions of self-government through which powers are devolved to the people as to the participation in the process of planning for economic development and social justice, and implementation of schemes and programmes for these purposes. To strengthen and enhance the efficiency of local governance, PRIs were structured and designed as three tier system. The base of this pyramidal structure is the gram sabha (or village assembly), composed of all citizens eligible to vote, and so the foundation of grassroots democracy. Whatever the case, the grass roots level institutions are vital instruments in the process of development to lower levels and these processes are quicker as and when common people identify themselves as active partners. There are so many facets to the issue of grassroots governance and development in

India and it is very important because of more than 65 percent of India's population comes from rural areas and its fortune and future are determined by these PRIs.

Panchayati raj:

Panchayats as institutional means for development have been part of the Indian system since olden time. Panchayati Raj Institutions, the grass root units of local self-government have been reflected as instruments of socio economic change in rural India. Involvement of people at the grass root level is the most important way to bring socio-economic development. Panchayati Raj is recognized as institutional expression of democratic decentralization in India. Decentralization of power to the panchayats is seen visualized as a means of empowering people and involving them in decision making process. Local governments being closer to the people can be more receptive to local needs and can make better use of resources. The democratic system in a country can be guaranteed only if there is huge participation in the governance. Therefore, the system of democratic decentralization commonly known as Panchayati Raj is considered as an effectual means to ensure democracy and socio-economic transformation. It is well documented in past history that India has a long tradition of local governments, going back to more than 4000 years. This institution has survived numerous political changes and disturbances in the ancient and medieval periods till the start of the British Raj. With the coming of the colonial administration, the patterns of the working of the local bodies underwent marked changes.

Concept of panchayat raj: The word panchayat is derived from the word pancha, has references in to the existence of Grama Sanghas or rural communities. The institution of Panchayati Raj is as old as Indian civilization itself. It was in existence since ancient periods, having an effective control over civil and judicial matters in the village community. The Rigveda, Manusamhita, Dharmashastras, Upanishads, Jatakas and others, refer broadly to local administration, i.e. the panchayat system of administration.

In the Manusmriti and Shantiparva of Mahabharata, there are many references to the existence of Grama Sanghas or village councils. The earliest reference to panchayat is derived from the word Pancha, that refers to an institution of the five (pancha panchasvanusthitah) is found in the Shanti-Parva of Mahabaratha, pancha and panchavanustitah are semantically close to panchayat. An account of these village councils are also found in Arthashastra of Kautilya who lived in 400 B.C. Arthashstra gives a complete account of the system of village administration prevailing in his time. During this period, the village administration was carried under the supervision and control of Adyaksha or headman. There were other officials such as Samkhyaka (accountant), Anikitsaka, Jamgh karmika, Chikitsaka. The village headman was responsible for ensuring the collection of state dues and controlling the activities of the offenders. In Ramayana of Valmiki, there are references to the Ganapada (village federation) which was perhaps a kind of federation of village republics.

Panchayati Raj in India:

In India, the Panchayati Raj now functions as a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic unit of local administration. The system has three levels: gram panchayat (village level), mandal parishad or block samiti or panchayat samiti (block level) and zila parishad (district level). It was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution.

Various Committees on Panchayati Raj :

1. Balwant Rai Mehta : Estd 1957: In 1957, a significant innovation in establishing Panchayati Raj was effected through the Report of the Balwantraji Mehta Committee which recommended: Public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies. It was of the view that without an agency at the village level that could represent the entire community, assume responsibility and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmes, real progress in rural development could not come about at all.

2. V.T.Krishnamachari : 1960:

3. Takhatmal Jain Study Group: 1966:

4. Ashok Mehta Committee: 1977: The Asoka Mehta Committee (formed in 1978) made far reaching recommendations to amend the situation and recommended that Panchayati Raj be included in the Constitution. In keeping with the spirit of the Asoka Mehta Committee recommendations, some states, including West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh revisited their respective Panchayati Raj systems and undertook several new initiatives to endow local bodies with more powers which served as a prime inspiration and example for subsequent reform.

5. G.V.K Rao committee :1985:

6. Dr.L.M.Singhvi Committee:1986:

The charge of firming panchayati raj system fell on the Indian government formed after independence. It was clear that India had to strengthen village panchayats to support democracy. Mahatma Gandhi who strongly believed in Grama Swaraj pleaded for the transfer of power to the rural masses. According to him, the villages should govern themselves through elected panchayats to become self-sufficient. But surprisingly, the draft Constitution prepared in 1948 had no place for Panchayati Raj Institutions. Gandhi sternly criticized this and called for immediate attention. It is thus, that panchayat finds a place in the Directive Principles of the State Policy. Article 40 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy states that 'the states shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them function as units of self-governments (Bharatada, 2001).

After the independence (1947), Prime Minister Nehru inaugurated the Community Development Programme (CDP) on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (October 2) in 1952. In the Panchayati Raj inaugural Speech Pt. Neharu said, "Local Self-government is must and must be the basis of any true system of democracy. People have got into the habit to thinking of democracy at the top and so much below. Democracy at the top may not be a success unless you build its foundation from below" (Malviya, 1974). The egalitarian ideals of decentralization, development, and increased, continuous and active popular participation in the process of nation-building can be secured only through the working of an efficient system of local government. Without a well-organized system of local government, no democratic political system can be predictable to become steady and really industrialised.

The Community Development Programme was followed by the National Extension Service in 1953. NES blocks were earmarked as the lowest unit of development of administration. But both the programmes had a flaw: neither of the two was free from the control of bureaucracy. This inadequacy prompted the government to appoint a committee headed by Balwant Ray Mehta in 1957. The committee recommended a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj from village to the district level, Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level (Dash, 2007). As per the Balwant Ray Mehta Committee, Panchayati Raj was launched on 2nd October 1957 in Nagaur district of

Rajasthan. Andhra Pradesh and many state governments followed Rajasthan. Yet, by the mid-sixties the hype to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) gave way to a growing tendency of centralization and the PRIs descended to ground zero. In course of further development, the L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986), recommended constitutional status for Panchayati Raj. In July-August 1989 the then Congress government introduced the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill with a view to streamline the Panchayati Raj (Dash, 2007).

Panchayati raj under the 73rd constitutional amendment: 73rd Constitutional Amendment was enacted in the regime of P. V. Narasimha Rao's government which was passed by Parliament on 23rd December 1992 and became effective on 24th April 1993. This Act has added Part - IX to the Constitution of India. It is entitled as 'The Panchayats' and consists of provisions from articles 243 to 243-O. The Act has given a practical shape to Article 40 of the Constitution and gives a constitutional status to PRIs.

The Constitutional Amendment ensures, a three tier structure at the zilla, block and village levels, an election commission to hold election periodically, a state level finance commission to discover ways and means to increase resources for local bodies, reservation of 50% of seats in all the position of the three tier for women, reservation of seats for SC/ST in proportion to their population in all the positions of the three tiers, establishment of Gram Sabha for improving people's participation for their own development, and establishment of planning committee for local bodies; and an earmarked list of 29 items under 11th schedule (Dash, 2007).

Statistical reports indicated that Indian democracy has the constitutionally mandated approximately 2, 37,539 village panchayats, 6,325 intermediate panchayats and 589 zilla panchayats. The three tiers of these elected bodies consist of as many as 27, 41, 973 village Panchayat members, 1, 64,271 members of intermediate panchayats and 15,137 members of zilla panchayats. This is the broadest representative base which exists in any country of the world (Ministry of Panchayat). Besides breadth, depth of these figures can be evaluated from the fact that more than fifty percent of these grassroots representatives are from the subjugated and marginalized sections of the society, namely women, the SCs, STs and OBCs (Dash, 2007). Now the state has to perform its role as coordinator rather than service provider, steps for decentralization of power till the grassroots level is a positive step in the changing scenario in which centralised state is replaced by the decentralized system (Sharda, 2010).

Three-Tier System of Panchayati Raj in India:

The structure of the Panchayati Raj is composed of three units:

1. The Village Panchayat is the lowermost unit. There is a Panchayat for each village or a group of villages in case the population of these villages happens to be too small. The Panchayat primarily consists of representatives elected by the people of the village. Only the persons who are registered as voters and do not hold any office of profit under the government are eligible for election to the Panchayat. The persons convicted by the court for criminal offences are disqualified from election of the Panchayat. There is also facility for co-option of two women and one member of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, if they do not get adequate representation in the normal course. Every Panchayat elects a President or Sarpanch and a Vice-President or Upsarpanch. In some states the Sarpanch is directly elected by the Gram Sabha either through the show of hands or through secret ballot while in other states the mode of election is indirect. The Sarpanch has a key position in Gram Panchayat system. He supervises and coordinates the various activities of the Panchayat. The Panchayat Secretary and the Village Level Worker are the two officers at the Panchayat level to assist the Sarpanch

in administration. The Panchayat Secretary assists the Panchayat in recording decisions, keeping minutes, preparing budget estimates and reports, and does other various jobs like preparing notices, explaining circulars, organising Gram Sabha meetings etc. The Village Level Worker now called Village Development Officer assists the Panchayat in drawing up agricultural production plans, helps farmers in securing loans for agriculture, arranges the supply of inputs like seeds and fertilizers, and educates farmers about modern agricultural practices. He serves as the principal link between the Panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti. The Panchayat also keeps records of births and deaths. It makes necessary provisions for the promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry, cottage CONTI industries, co-operative societies etc. The minor disputes among residents of village are also settled by the Village Panchayat. It ensure a minimum standard of cultivation for raising agricultural production. In addition, the Panchayat also acts as the agent of the Panchayat Samiti in executing schemes of development at the village level.

2. The Panchayat Samiti is second tier of the Panchayati Raj. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee report has visualized the Samiti as a single representative and dynamic democratic institution to take charge of all aspects of development in rural areas. The Samiti, according to the Committee, offers "an area large enough for functions which the Village Panchayat cannot perform and yet small enough to attract the interest and services of residents."

In normal course, a Panchayat Samiti comprises of 20 to 60 villages depending on area and population. The average population under a Samiti is about 80,000 but the range is from 35,000 to 1, 00,000. The Panchayat Samiti usually consists of:

- About twenty members elected by and from the Panches of all the Panchayats falling in the block area.
- Two women members and one member each from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be co- opted, provided they do not get adequate representation otherwise.
- Two local persons possessing experience of public life and administration, which may be beneficial for the rural development.
- Representatives of the Co-operatives working within the jurisdiction of the block.
- One representative elected by and from the members of each small municipality lying within the geographical limits of a block.
- The members of the State and Union legislatures representing the area are to be taken as associate members.

The President of the Panchayat Samiti is called the Pradhan, who is elected by an electoral college consist of all members of the Panchayat Samiti and all the Panchas of the Gram Panchayat falling within the areas. Besides the Pradhan, the Up-pradhan is also elected. The Pradhan assembles and presides over the Panchayat Samiti meetings. He guides the Panchayats in making plans and carrying out production programmes. He ensures the implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the Samiti and its Standing Committees. Pradhan exercises administrative control over the Vikas Adhikari (BDO) and his staff. He is a member of the Zilla Parishad by virtue of his office as a Pradhan. He is the ex- officio chairman of the Standing Committees of the Samiti.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Panchayat Samiti, the Block Development Officer is commended with the responsibility for implementing the resolutions of the Samiti and its Standing Committees. He makes the budget of the Samiti and places it before the Samiti for approval. He is also responsible for preparing the annual report of the Samiti and sending it to

the Zilla Parishad and State Government. He is accountable to the President of the Samiti for his actions.

Main function of the Panchayat Samiti is to synchronize the activities of the various Panchayats within its jurisdiction. The Panchayat Samiti oversees the work of the Panchayats and scrutinises their budgets. It also reserves the right to suggest measures for improving the functioning of the Panchayats. The Samiti is charged with the responsibility of preparing and implementing plans for the development of agriculture, animal, husbandry, fisheries, small scale and cottage industries, rural health tropic etc.

3. The Zilla Parishad has top position in the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj system. Usually, the Zilla Parishad consists of representatives of the Panchayat Samiti; all the members of the State Legislature and the Parliament representing a part or whole of the district; all district level officers of the Medical, Public Health, Public Works, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary, Education and other development departments. There is also a provision for special representation of women, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes provided they are not adequately represented in the normal course. The Collector is also a member of the Zilla Parishad.

The Chairman of the Zilla Parishad is elected from among its members. There is a Chief Executive Officer in the Zilla Parishad. He is deputed to the Zilla Parishad by the State Government. There are subject matter specialists or officers at the district level in all the states for various development programmes. The Zilla Parishad has duty to performs co-ordinating and supervisory functions. It harmonises the activities of the Panchayat Samitis falling within its jurisdiction. In some states, the Zilla Parishad also approves the budgets of the Panchayat Samitis.

The Zilla Parishad also renders necessary advice to the Government with regard to the implementation of the various development schemes. It is also responsible for the maintenance of primary and secondary schools, hospitals, dispensaries, minor irrigation works etc. It also promotes local industries and art. The finances of the Zilla Parishad consist of the grants received from the State Government and share in the land cess and other local cess and taxes. Sometimes, it has been allowed by the State Government to levy certain taxes or enhance the taxes already levied by the Panchayat Samitis subject to a certain limit.

Functions of the panchayats:

The major functions of a model local government can be grouped into following six categories:

- Governance and regulatory
- Agency functions
- Civic Services
- Economic Development
- Social justice
- Environment and Natural Resource Management

Article 243G, read with the Eleventh Schedule, stipulates that State Legislative may by law endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be required to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. Such laws may also provide for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats for the preparation and implementation of plans for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them.

Municipal Government: In India territory, municipal governance has been formed since the year 1687, with the creation of Madras Municipal Corporation, and then Calcutta and Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1726. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, almost all towns in

India had experienced some form of municipal governance. In 1882 the Viceroy of India, Lord Ripon's resolution of local self-government positioned the democratic forms of municipal governance in India.

In 1919, a Government of India act amalgamated 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.

To describe, municipal governments are local authorities created by the provinces and territories to offer services that are best managed under local control. They generate profits (largely from property taxes and provincial grants) and impact people's daily lives in many ways, from garbage pick-up and public transit to fire services, policing and programs at community centres, libraries and pools. In India, Municipal Corporations or City Corporation or Mahanagar Palika or Mahanagar Nigam are urban local government that works for the development of a city, which has a population of more than one million (ten lakh). The rising 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 care, educational institution, housing, transport etc. by collecting property tax and fixed grant from the State Government.

According to the 1991 Survey of India, there were 3255 urban local bodies (ULBs) in the country; classified into the four major categories of:

- Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam)
- Municipality (municipal council, municipal board, municipal committee) (Nagar Parishad)
- Town area committee
- Notified area committee

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

Role of municipal government are as under:

1. To establish justice.
2. To insure domestic tranquillity.
3. To provide for the common defence.
4. To promote the general welfare.
5. To secure the blessings of liberty.

According to the Constitution of India, 74th Amendment Act of 1992, the latter two categories of towns are to be designated as municipalities or Nagar panchayats with elected bodies. Until the amendments in state municipal legislations, which were mostly made in 1994, municipal authorities were organised on an 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 three categories of urban local bodies:

- Mahanagar nigam (municipal corporation)
- Nagar palika (municipality)
- Nagar panchayat

In India, a Municipal Corporation is known to public by different names which varies from state to state (owing to the official language of the state or due to other regional language variations) all of which are translated to "Municipal Corporation" in English, these names including Nagar Nigam (in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana), Mahanagar

Palika (in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka), Pouro Nigom (in West Bengal), etc. The term Nagar Palika Nigam is used in Madhya Pradesh for Municipal Corporation. In Tripura, the sole Municipal Corporation of the city of Agartala is called Agartala Pur Porishod in Bengali. Also, the Vadodara Municipal Corporation is typically called by the name "Vadodara Mahanagar Seva Sadan". The comprehensive structure of these urban bodies varies from state to state, as per the laws passed by the state legislature (Vidhan Sabha) but the basic structure and function is almost the same. Under the panchayati raj system, it interacts directly with the state government, though it is administratively part of the district it is located in.

Each Municipal Corporation has a committee that comprises of a Mayor with Councillors. They are formed under the Corporations Act of 1835 of Panchayati Raj system which mainly deals in providing essential services in Cosmopolitan Cities. The no. of councillors depend upon the area and population of the city that minimum of 3,00,000. Municipal Corporation members are elected from the several wards of the specific city on the basis of adult franchise for a term of five years. There are seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and women. The Councillors are elected by direct election from electoral wards in the Municipal Corporation.

The major corporations are in the six metropolitan cities of India that include Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad and among these Mumbai is the most populated and largest metropolitan city of India.

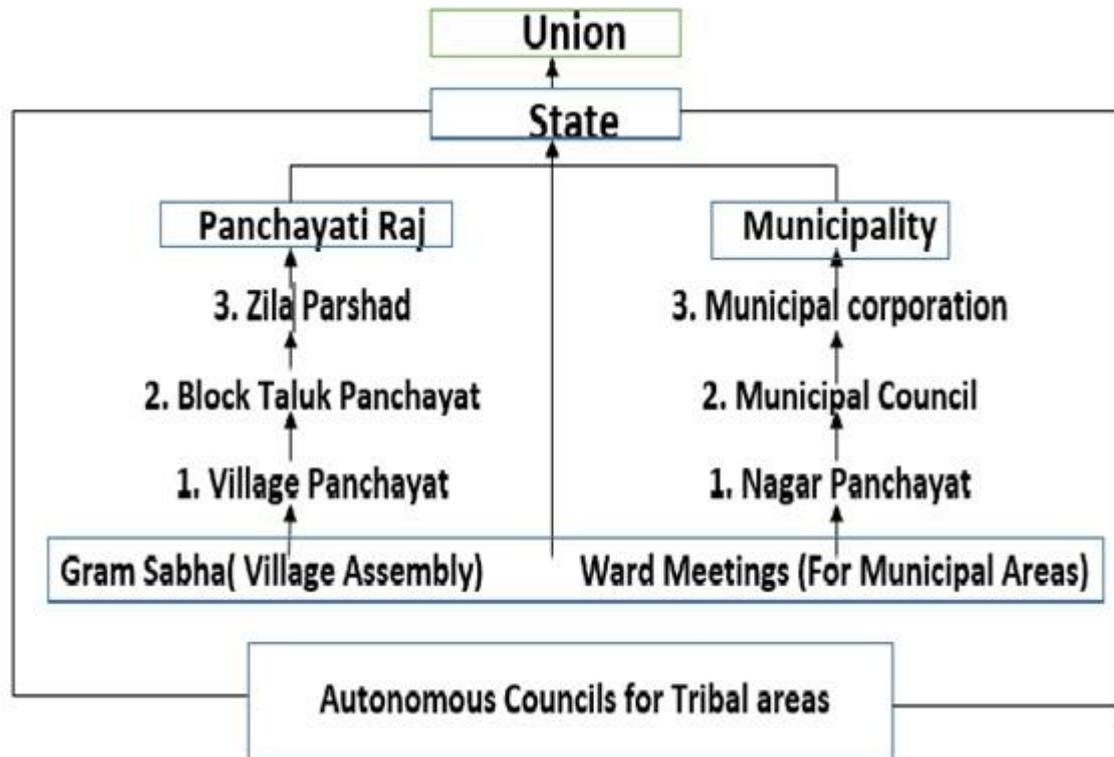
Mayor is the head of the Municipal Corporations in India. The Municipal Commissioner is the official in charge of this organization. Executive Officers monitor the implementation of all the programs related to planning and development of the corporation with the coordination of Mayor and Councillors.

Functions and responsibly of Municipal Corporation of India are mentioned below:

- Municipal Corporation building
- Water supply
- Hospitals
- Roads
- Over bridge
- Street lighting
- Drainage
- Solid waste
- Fire brigades
- Market places
- Records of births and deaths
- It also helps in education and primary health care

Figure:

**Implication of Panchayati Raj/ Municipalities as the
Third Tier of Governance on
India's Federal structure**



Significance of 73rd and 74th Amendments:

The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution made provision for Panchayat Raj institutions to be established at the village level and for funds to be made available by state finance commission for village level activities (U.B. Singh, 2002). The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution brought in a Local Government system as the third tier of governance for economic development and social justice. It is well recognized that India is large democracies characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity and inequality across the states. State governments form an important intermediate tier between national and local governments. The constitution mandates a one-third reservation for women in panchayat assemblies and allocates a portion of panchayat spending for women's planning. Kerala is the only state in India with a sex ratio that is not female adverse, and is generally considered to have excellent gender development indicators: high literacy rates, high average age of marriage, low maternal mortality rate, no female infanticide. Yet the political participation of women remains strangely low, violence against women is snowballing, and women as a group are poorer and more susceptible to unemployment and illness than men.

In fact, 73rd amendment has created a scope to attain development with social justice, which is mandate of the new Panchayati Raj system. The new system brings all those who are interested to have voice in decision making through their participation in PRIs. The Panchayati Raj system is foundation for the "Social Justice" and "Empowerment" of weaker section on which the development initiative have to be built upon for achieving overall, human welfare of the society. The main claim of the Amendment Act relating to the strengthening of PRIs is that the participation of poorest of the poor in the process of development is ensured. It is doubtful whether the poorer sections could find their way to enter the PRIs through elections.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment was based upon belief that liberal democratization was in itself sufficient condition for meeting rural India's welfare needs (Tiwari 2010). According to the 73rd amendment, PRIs can realize the dream of rural administration and rural development with complete coordination and clearness.

Striking Features of the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts (1992):

1. Panchayats and Municipalities will be "institutions of self-government".
2. Basic Units of Democratic System - Gram Sabhas (villages) and Ward Committees (Municipalities) comprising all the adult members registered as voters.
3. Three-tier system of panchayats at village, intermediate block/taluk/mandal and district levels.
4. Smaller states with population below 2 million only two tiers Seats at all levels filled by direct election
5. Seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and chairpersons of the Panchayats at all levels also shall be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population.
6. One-third of the total number of seats reserved for women. One-third of the seats reserved for SCs and STs also reserved for women. One-third offices of chairpersons at all levels reserved for women.
7. Uniform five year term and elections to constitute new bodies to be completed before the expiry of the term. In the event of dissolution, elections are compulsorily within six months.
8. Independent Election Commission in each state for superintendence, direction and control of the electoral rolls. Panchayats to prepare plans for economic development and social justice in respect of 29 subjects listed in 11th Schedule. 74th Amendment provides for a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by panchayats and Municipalities.
9. Funds: Budgetary allocation from state governments, revenue of certain taxes, collect and retain the revenue it raises, Central Government programmes and Grants.
10. In each State a Finance Commission to determine the principles on the basis of which adequate financial resources would be ensured for panchayats and municipalities.

Grassroot movements: A grassroots movement, also referenced in the context of a political movement, is one which uses the people in a given district as the basis for a political or economic movement. Grassroots movements and organizations use collective action from the local level to affect change at the local, regional, national, or international level. Grassroots movements are related with bottom-up, rather than top-down decision making, and are sometimes considered more natural or spontaneous than more traditional power structures. Grassroots movements utilize numerous strategies from fundraising and registering voters, to simply encouraging political conversation. Major goal of specific movements vary, but the movements are consistent in their focus on increasing mass participation in politics.

It is found in reports that grassroots movements use strategies that build power from local and community movements. Grassroots Campaigns, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating and supporting grassroots movements. It is said that the aim of grassroots movements is to raise money, build organizations, raise awareness, build name recognition, to win campaigns, and to expand political participation. Grassroots movements work toward these and other goals via strategies focusing on local participation in either local or national politics. Grassroots organizations derive their power from the people, thus their strategies seek to engage ordinary people in political discourse to the greatest extent possible.

Below are the strategies considered to be grassroots because of their focus on engaging the public:

- Hosting house meetings or parties
- Having larger meetings (AGMs)
- Putting up posters
- Talking with pedestrians on the street or walking door-to-door (often involving informational clipboards)
- Gathering signatures for petitions
- Mobilizing letter-writing, phone-calling, and emailing campaigns
- Setting up information tables
- Raising money from many small donors for political advertising or campaigns
- Organizing large demonstrations
- Asking individuals to submit opinions to media outlets and government officials
- Holding get out the vote activities, which include the practices of reminding people to vote.
- Using online social networks to organize virtual communities

To summarize, decentralization of power is a worldwide movement to liberate the people from clutches of state and government. Grassroots institutions are in different stages of execution of program. Grassroots democracy is the political processes which are driven by groups of ordinary citizens, as opposed to larger organizations. After independence, approximately one third of the villages in India had successful traditional Panchayats. The government decided to promote their creation as effective units of local self- government with the aim of nurturing democratic participation by involving villagers in the development of their communities to reduce the costs of administration. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are supposed to be sincere institutions of local self-government, not adjuncts to the implementing agencies of State governments. However, bureaucratic lethargy, public indifference, lack of political will and consistency led to the failure of the system. Grassroots Democracy has been strengthened by implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment act (CAA) in 1992. Gram Panchayat is the smallest unit of Democracy in India. 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments prescribes regular elections every five years and election within six months of the dissolution of any PRI. To guarantee free, fair, and timely elections, there is a facility for establishing state election commission. The most innovatory provision is the reservation of one-third of the seats for women in local bodies, along with reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their regional populations. The amendment lays down 29 functions to be entrusted to the PRIs. To maintain a democratic philosophy, popular accountability, and transparency, the amendment emphasizes the need for periodic meetings of the Gram Sabha, composed of all adults in each village. These meetings approve ongoing programmes and financial allocations.