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7. Conceptual Framework of Panchayat Raj in Goa

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Abstract

Panchayat is one of the oldest forms of local self-governing institution having its existence since the ancient times. Panchayati Raj Institutions have a democratic approach and aims at serving the community in various forms at the grass root level. The current study provides a conceptual analysis of Panchayati Raj in Goa, and gives an overview of its organisational structure, composition, village classification, sources of funds and the functioning status as an effective democratic institution that facilitates rural development and growth of the rural masses.

I. Introduction

Panchayat is the oldest form of local governing institution set up to serve the community at the grass root level. According to Mahatma Gandhi Panchayati Raj (Decentralised form of Government) is the foundation stone of political system wherein each village is responsible for its own affairs i.e. "Gram Swaraj" or "Village Self Governance". The current study provides a conceptual analysis of Panchayati Raj in Goa. Goa is the smallest state in the Indian Union. It is known for its beaches, temple, church and its scenic beauty. The governance and the administration of the state were under the Portuguese rule for almost four and a half century. Although prior to liberation the administration of Goa was under the Portuguese rule, there also existed some type of village governance to look after the village people that traced the existence of local self-governing Institutions.

II. Objectives

The main purpose of the study is to identify the status of Panchayati Raj in Goa, understanding its organisational structure, composition, sources of funds and its overall functioning as a key for successful decentralisation process.

III. Research Methodology

The study focuses on examining the conceptual framework of Panchayati system in Goa.

The study is purely based on secondary sources and the relevant facts and figures covered under study are taken from journals, Directorate of Panchayat, Directorate of Planning, Statistics & Evaluation Goa, and Citizens Charter Government of Goa.

IV. Theoretical Background

4.1 Panchayat Raj in Goa

Goa is a small state in the Indian Union and was under the Portuguese rule for about four and half century. The institution of local self-government has its existence since the ancient period. Prior to liberation in Goa following form of local government existed:

“**Comunidade**” system functioned as autonomous unit of village administration. The basic activity of the Comunidades was giving on lease agricultural land, orchards, and ponds by way of auction in order to generate revenue for funding the village activities like construction, repair and maintenance of markets, community hall.

The “**Camara Municipals**” were introduced by the Portuguese which governed urban and rural areas. They were engaged in various tax collections, received grants from government and performed civil functions for generating funds for economic activities of the village.

In 1959, **Juntas de Freguesias** (Rural self - government bodies) were established by the Portuguese. This government bodies were responsible for repairs of drainages, roads, gutters, street lights etc. within their purview.

Thus prior to liberation, there were Panchayats in the villages but their operations were informal and villagers settled their problems by themselves rather than approaching the government authorities.

4.2 Goa Daman and Diu Village Panchayat Regulation Act

Goa along with Daman & Diu was liberated on 19.12.1961 from Portuguese rule. After liberation, the President of India promulgated the Goa Daman & Diu Village Panchayat Regulation, 1962 under Article-240 of the Constitution of India, which provided for setting up of a single tier Panchayati Raj system in the Union Territory of Goa Daman & Diu. Thus, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) came into existence for the first time in the Union Territory of Goa, Daman & Diu in the year 1962. (Source: Directorate of Panchayat Goa)

Panchayat as a local governing institution have seen several ups and downs over the years and have witnessed a positive drastic change in its way of operations only after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The amendment provides a strong foundation for 'Democratic Decentralization' and directs the path for activating the planning process from the grassroots level. Following the enactment of the 73rd Amendment the state of Goa brought into effect the Goa Panchayat Raj Ordinance in April, 1994 and the Goa Panchayat Raj Act came into effect on 20th April 1994, which provided for setting up of a two tier Panchayats, one at the Village level and the other at the District level. (DOP, Government of Goa)

Salient features of Goa Panchayat Act 1994.

- Adoption of two tier system at District and Village level.
- Empowerment of Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha.
- Imposition of collection of taxes for financial sustainability of Gram Panchayat.
- Compulsory elections of PRI once in five years.
- Reservation of seats and executive position for SC/ST and OBC.
- Reservation for women.
- Constitution of State Finance Corporation, Election Commission and District planning committee.

Constitution of Panchayat in Goa

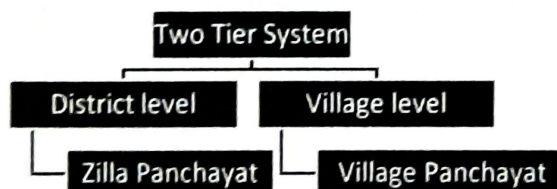


Table 1: Taluka wise Panchayat in South Goa

District / Taluka	Number of Panchayats
South Goa	
Salcette	31
Mormugao	09
Quepem	11
Sanguem	07
Cancona	07
North Goa	
Bardez	33
Tiswadi	19

Ponda	19
Bicholim	18
Pernem	20
Sattari	12
Dharbandora	05
Total	191

Source: Directorate of Panchayat, Goa

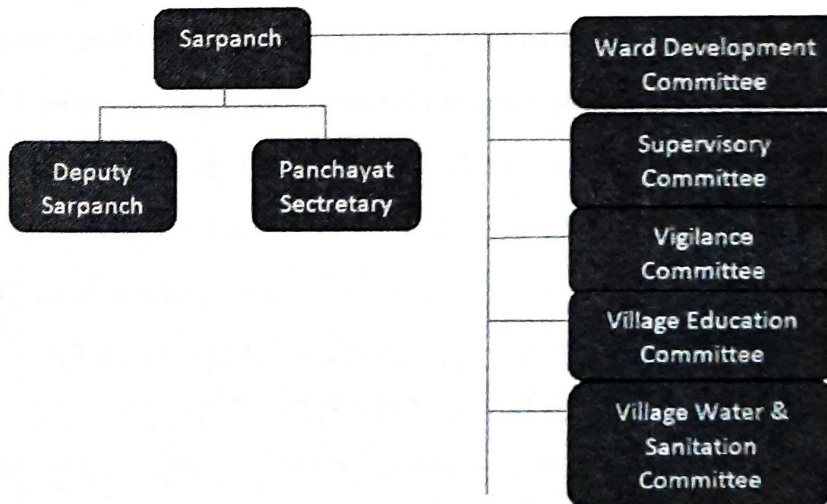
4.3 Panchayat Raj Institutions in Goa

ZillaPanchayat : ZillaPanchayat is Panchayat at Apex or District level. The State of Goa has two ZillaPanchayats: one each at North Goa & South Goa. The ZillaPanchayat consists of one member from each of the wards/electoral constituencies as per the State Election Commission guidelines. The South Goa ZillaPanchayat consists of 25 constituencies comprising of 25 elected members and North Goa consists of 30 constituencies comprising 30 elected members.

Block Panchayat : Block Panchayat is rural local government operating at the Taluka level and governs the villages of the Taluka. Since the state of Goa has two tierPanchayat structure, there is no intermediate Panchayat level as the state of Goa is small in geographical distance.

Gram Panchayat : Gram Panchayat is the formalised local self -governance at the village level. For the purpose of administration government has classified the villages into A, B, C and D based on the total population and accordingly number of members in the Gram Panchayats for each class has been decided as 11, 9, 7, and 5 respectively.

Chart 2: Organisational structure of Gram Panchayat



Source: National Informatic Center Inc.

Table 3: Number of members based on population

Population	Number of members	Classification
1500 – 2000	5	D
2001 – 5000	7	C
5001 – 8000	9	B
8001 and above	11	A

Source: National Informatic Center Inc.

Table 4: Staffing Pattern based on Classification of Panchayat

Classification of Panchayat	Staffing Pattern
A	3 Clerks 1 Peon
B	2 Clerks 1 Peon
C & D	1 Clerks 1 Peon

Source: National Informatic Center Inc.

4.4 Constitution of Committees

The Village Panchayat as per the 73rd Amendment and its provisions has to setup a standing committee as well as other committees as may be required as per the law to undertake the functioning of the Panchayat for the benefit of the people.

Standing Committee – Every Village Panchayat shall constitute the following committees through election: Production, Social Justice, and Amenities Committee.

Other Committees – include Supervisory committee, Ward Development Committee, Vigilance committee, Village Education committee, Village Water & Sanitation committee.

4.5 Sources of Funds

- **Taxes** :Tax on buildings, vehicles other than motor vehicles; entertainment other than cinematograph shows; advertisement and hoardings; lands not subject to agricultural assessment; hotels, shops, Octroi on goods other than petroleum products.
- **Non-tax revenues**: constitute construction of permission, sale of goods in markets, melas, registration of birth and death, Certified copies, registration of cattle brought for sale.
- **Rent and sale proceeds**: includes sale of old newspapers, sale of tender forms, auction sale of garden produce, auction sale proceeds of stray cattle, rent for lease of premises shops, community hall, rent for hiring of Gram Panchayat goods vehicle.
- **Grants**: Consists of matching grants linked to tax collection of previous year, salary, Establishment Grants, Grants to weaker Panchayats for strengthening administration,

Grant-in-aid for rural infrastructure, District Rural Development Agency grants, Finance Commission Grants, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and other Department Grants. Panchayats can also obtain loans from the government, banks or other institutions. They can also solicit public contribution for specific purposes.

- **Matching Grants to Gram Panchayats:** Matching Grants are released to the Gram Panchayats corresponding to their tax collections. This is an unconditional grant, which can be used by the Panchayats for any purpose.

(DOP, Government of Goa)

V. Conclusion

Goa being a Small state in the Indian Union in terms of population has constituted two tier systems for the purpose of local governance and administration. Unlike the other states in the country the Panchayats in Goa has also amended its Panchayat law in accordance with the 73rd Amendment and its provision in order to ensure smooth functioning and effective administration for the benefit of the rural masses.

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