

Panchayati Raj & Community Development

These notes are your ultimate revision weapon to revise Panchayati Raj and Community Development. We've distilled years of previous exam questions (PYQs) into one powerful, concise resource. Everything you need to know, nothing you don't.

- **PYQs, Decoded:** All key concepts from past exams, organized and simplified.
- **Revise in Record Time:** Short, precise, and designed for last-minute review.
- **Focus on What Matters:** Master high-probability topics and boost your confidence.

Panchayati Raj System in India: A Structured Overview



1. Constitutional Foundation & Amendments

- **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**
 - This is the foundational amendment that granted constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj System.
 - It came into force on **April 24, 1993**.
 - It added **Part IX** (Articles 243 to 243-O) to the Indian Constitution.
 - It added the **11th Schedule**, which contains 29 subjects under the purview of Panchayats.
 - The Prime Minister of India at the time of this amendment was **P.V. Narasimha Rao**.
- **74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**
 - This amendment deals with **Urban Local Bodies (Municipalities)**, not Panchayats.
 - It added **Part IX-A** to the Constitution.

- **Legislative Authority**

- 'Panchayati Raj' is a subject in the **State List** of the Seventh Schedule.
- The **State Legislature** is authorized to make laws regarding the composition and powers of Panchayats.

2. Historical Background & Key Committees

- **Origin of the Name:** The suggestion to name the system 'Panchayati Raj' came from **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- **Key Committees:**
 - **Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957):** Known as the "Architect of Panchayati Raj." Recommended a **three-tier system** and termed the concept '**Democratic Decentralisation**'. This led to the first implementation of Panchayati Raj in **Rajasthan's Nagaur district on October 2, 1959**, by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Andhra Pradesh was the second state.
 - **Ashok Mehta Committee (1977):** Recommended a **two-tier system** and the creation of **Nyaya Panchayats** as separate judicial bodies.
 - **L.M. Singhvi Committee (1986):** Recommended providing **constitutional status** to Panchayats.
 - **G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985):** Focused on improving the representative character of PRIs.
- **Other Committees:** P.K. Thungan Committee (1988) also contributed to the discussion.

3. Core Structure of the System

- **Three-Tier System:** The 73rd Amendment provides for a three-tier structure in every state:

1. **Village Level:** Gram Panchayat

- 2. **Intermediate Level:** Panchayat Samiti / Kshetra Panchayat / Janpad Panchayat / Taluka Panchayat
- 3. **District Level:** Zila Parishad / Zila Panchayat
- **Exception:** States with a population of **less than 20 lakh (2 million)** are not required to have the intermediate level.
- **Excluded States:** Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram do not have Panchayati Raj Institutions.

4. Key Institutions & Their Composition

- **Gram Sabha (The Village Assembly)**
 - The base of the system, consisting of all persons registered in the electoral rolls of a village.
 - **Quorum:** A valid meeting requires 1/10th of the total members, with 1/3rd of the present members being women.
 - In **Scheduled Areas** (under PESA), the presiding chairperson is elected by consensus from ST members or, failing that, the oldest ST woman.
- **Gram Panchayat (The Executive Body)**
 - The basic unit of rural local governance.
 - A Gram Panchayat area is divided into **wards** (e.g., 10-20 wards in Chhattisgarh).
 - Each ward directly elects a **Panch (Ward Member)**.
 - The **Sarpanch (President)** is elected as per the State Act (directly by voters or by the Ward Members).
 - **All members are directly elected; there is no provision for nomination.**
- **Panchayat Samiti / Kshetra Panchayat (Block Level)**
 - Primary role is that of an **Administrative Authority** and a link between the Gram Panchayat and Zila Parishad.
 - Members are directly elected by the people.
- **Zila Parishad (District Level)**
 - Primary role is that of a **Coordinating and Supervisory Authority**.

- The Chairman is elected by and from among the elected members (e.g., in Uttar Pradesh).

5. Elections, Tenure, and Reservations

- **Tenure:** The normal tenure of a Panchayat is **five years** from the date of its first meeting.
- **Dissolution:** If dissolved prematurely, a new Panchayat must be elected within **six months**, and it serves only the remainder of the original term.
- **Election Authority:** Conducted by the **State Election Commission (SEC)**. The State Election Commissioner is appointed by the Governor.
- **Reservations (Article 243-D):**
 - Seats are reserved for **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** in proportion to their population.
 - **At least one-third (1/3) of all seats** are reserved for **women**. This includes a quota within the SC/ST reserved seats.
 - Several states (e.g., Bihar, MP, HP, UP) have increased women's reservation to **50%**.

6. Financial Provisions

- **State Finance Commission (SFC):**
 - Constituted by the **Governor** every five years under **Article 243-I**.
 - Reviews the financial position of Panchayats and makes recommendations on the distribution of funds between the state and local governments.

7. Special Provisions: PESA Act, 1996

- The **Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** grants special powers to the **Gram Sabha** in Scheduled Areas (10 states including AP, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan).

- Powers include:
 - Power to **prevent the transfer of land**.
 - **Ownership of minor forest produce**.
 - Authority where its recommendation is required for granting mining leases for **minor minerals**.

8. Roles, Functions, and Limitations

- **Functional Domain:** Panchayats are empowered to prepare plans for **economic development and social justice** (Article 243-G) for the 29 subjects listed in the **11th Schedule** (e.g., agriculture, land improvement, minor irrigation, poverty alleviation programs).
- **Core Objective: Democratic Decentralization and people's participation** in development.
- **What PRIs are NOT responsible for:** Maintenance of public order. Their functions relate to public health, sanitation, and public utility services.
- **Limitations:** The 73rd Amendment does **not** provide for:
 - Regular remuneration (salaries) for members.
 - Disqualification of members for having more than two children.
 - The power of **Judicial Review** (this rests with the judiciary).

9. Related Schemes & Facts

- **MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act):**
 - Aims to implement Directive Principles of State Policy (like **Article 43**).
 - The **Gram Panchayat** is primarily responsible for planning and implementation.
- **National Panchayati Raj Day:** Celebrated annually on **April 24**, first celebrated in **2010**.

10. Urban Local Bodies (Municipalities)

- **Constitutional Basis:** 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.
- **Tenure:** Normal tenure is **five years**.
- **Election Qualifications:** Minimum age is **21 years** for Councillor and **25 years** for President/Mayor.
- **District Planning Committee (DPC):** Constituted under **Article 243-ZD** to consolidate plans from Panchayats and Municipalities into a draft development plan for the entire district.
- **Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC):** Constituted under **Article 243-ZE** for metropolitan areas.

Know More About Panchayati Raj and Community Development:

- [Panchayati Raj and Community Development – Old Year Questions](#)
- [Panchayati Raj and Community Development One Liner Questions & Answers](#)

