
GRAM SABHA – A TOOL OF SELF GOVERNANCE

Article Particulars

Received: 24.9.2017

Accepted: 27.9.2017

Published: 30.10.2017

Dr.P.PERIAKARUPPAN

Director, Nehru Studies Centre

Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Democracy is a tool for accountability and equality, and people all over the world are working hard to reform, deepen, and innovative democracy. The entire world is fascinated by India's democratic institutions and structures, which are inextricably connected to Indian democracy. Every village will be a republic or panchayat with complete authority. As a result, every village must be self-sufficient and capable of running its own affairs. This does not rule out reliance on, and eager assistance from, neighbours or the rest of the world. India has a long history of grassroots self-government institutions. The structure and roles of local governments varied from territory to territory in Tamil Nadu's history. The Gram Sabha is a tool for strengthening local democracy that allows all social segments, including previously oppressed groups, to sit and address issues that affect people's lives on an equal footing with other social segments. It is stated in article 243, which describes Gram Sabha as a body made up of people who are registered in the electoral rolls of a village that falls within the panchayat's jurisdiction at the village level. Emphasizing the importance of the Gram Sabha over the Gram Panchayats may motivate all sections of society, but it will erode the latter's sense of responsibility and accountability. As a result, a combination of approaches is needed to not only improve the Gram Panchayat's ability to prepare, implement, and track, but also to make the Gram Sabha aware of its own responsibilities in strengthening the institution it has elected from within itself.

Keywords: Gram Sabha, local government, panchayati raj, village republic

Democracy is a tool for accountability and equality, and people all over the world are working hard to reform, deepen, and innovative democracy. The entire world is fascinated by India's democratic institutions and structures, which are inextricably connected to Indian democracy. The entire world is fascinated by India's democratic institutions and structures, which are inextricably connected to Indian democracy. Despite a number of flaws and flaws in democratic systems and structures, half of the world's population lives under democratic regimes. Terms like people's democracy, deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, popular democracy, deliberative democracy, minimal democracy, governed democracy, expanded democracy, and enlarged democracy have been used with clear sense and exclusion.

Indian Independence, according to Mahatma Gandhi, must begin at the bottom. As a result, every village will be a republic or panchayat with complete authority. As a result, every village must be self-sufficient and capable of running its own affairs. This

does not rule out reliance on, and eager assistance from, neighbours or the rest of the world. Life would not be a pyramid with the bottom supporting the top. But it will be an oceanic circle, with the individual at its centre, always ready to die for the village, the later for the circle of villages, until the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never arrogant in their superiority, but always modest, sharing the majesty of the economic circle. As a result, the outermost diameter will not be able to crush the inner circle, but will instead provide support to those within and draw strength from it.

India is noted for its inconsistencies, diversities, and paradoxes. The quality of life in our village inevitably determines the quality of national life. Gram Sabhas provide rural poor, women, and marginalised people with the ability to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives in an open and accountable manner. As a result, coordinated efforts are needed to equip Gram Sabhas and other Panchayati Raj institutions through effective devolution of power, finance, and responsibilities, as well as required training and capacity building.

India has a long history of grassroots self-government institutions. The structure and roles of local governments varied from territory to territory in Tamil Nadu's history. Variations can be found even within a region. There was no standardised pattern of local government in the Tamil province. Inscriptions from the eighth century onwards provide concrete evidence of local self-government. Ur, sabha, and nagaram are three types of village assemblies that can be traced back to Tamil inscriptions. The Ur was the traditional forms, which included people from all walks of life who owned land in the village. The sabha was a Brahman-only assembly of villages given to Brahmins as gifts, with all lands belonging to them. The nagaram was a different form of nagaram that was used in places where traders and merchants had a stronghold. In certain cases, the various types coexisted in the same region. Mutual consultation was held between these various assemblies and other local associations as required, and the general rule was to consult all parties with an interest in the matter before making a decision. The village assemblies were in charge of regulating irrigation rights, administering tanks and roads, and overseeing the temple's affairs. They have established rules to govern each and every operation. Sabha, Ur, and Nagaram were all manageable in nature and formed functionally well within the context of self-evolving social norms and procedures. They adopted social norms because they believed that doing so would help them. Despite the fact that three distinct entities operated side by side in the same geographical region, there was never any animosity amongst them, and all three organisations jointly assisted each other for the good of the communities.

Local institutions functioned as conventional institutions under the jurisdiction of social groups after the passage of the Ripon Resolution. In the year 1920, the Madras Local Body Institution was established. Local institutions functioned as conventional institutions under the jurisdiction of social groups after the passage of the Ripon

Resolution. Following independence, a community development initiative was created to encourage people to participate in the socio-political reconstruction of rural areas. The importance of statutorizing and constitutionalizing panchayats was emphasised by the Balwantrao Mehta committee.

In Tamilnadu, panchayat institutions were founded on the basis of the subsidiarity theory. Village panchayats and panchayat unions each had their own set of duties and powers. However, there was no such thing as a gramme sabha in the old panchayati raj system. Gram sabha was created, but it was not recognised legally until the 73rd constitutional amendment Act was passed. We are witnessing a wide variety of organisations, agencies, and social and political groups operating separately in rural areas at the moment, as we have seen in previous events, and they are to be incorporated into panchayat activities through gram sabha. The people are constantly evaluating government based on its results. Via continuous and diligent action, democracy helps citizens to change. Democracy works well as long as the government is small and citizens are involved in decision-making.

The Gram Sabha is a tool for strengthening local democracy that allows all social segments, including previously oppressed groups, to sit and address issues that affect people's lives on an equal footing with other social segments. It is stated in article 243, which describes Gram Sabha as a body made up of people who are registered in the electoral rolls of a village that falls within the panchayat's jurisdiction at the village level. Despite the fact that the Gram Sabha was constitutionally established with powers and obligations following the enactment of the conformity act in 1994, the state government found it extremely difficult to make the institution work effectively. The gram sabha is currently not convened in Tamil Nadu due to the pandemic of the novel corona virus. People are members of the gram sabha, which has its own set of roles and duties to fulfil. As a result, the gram sabha ensures administrative transparency, social audit, elected official accountability, public engagement, and prevention of corruption.

Gram Sabha

The Panchayati Raj and village development are based on the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha is a forum where people can discuss local governance and development, as well as make plans for the village based on their needs. The Gram Sabha's overall mandate, oversight, and monitoring are used to execute development programmes by the Panchayat. All Panchayat decisions must go through the Gram Sabha, and no decision is official or binding unless the Gram Sabha agrees.

The word Gram Sabha is specified in Article 243 of the Indian Constitution (b). Gram Sabha is the most important and largest body in the Panchayati Raj system. It is an everlasting body. The electorate's Sabha is known as the Gram Sabha. All other Panchayati Raj organisations, such as the Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat, and Zilla

Parishad, are made up of elected members. No other body has the authority to overturn the Gram Sabha's decisions. Only the Gram Sabha has the authority to overturn a Gram Sabha decisions those who are over the age of 18 and live in the village, and whose names are on the village Panchayat electoral rolls.

The Gram Sabha must meet at least two to four times a year, according to the State Panchayat Raj Acts. In most states, four national-international days have been designated as reference dates for these meetings for the convenience of the public. They are

- Republic Day (26th January)
- Labour day (1st May)
- Independence Day (15th August)
- Gandhi Jayanti (2nd October)

Gram Panchayats, on the other hand, are free to hold Gram Sabhas on other days if it is more convenient for them. Gram Sabha should be held under the auspices of GP in a location where all members can comfortably sit. Gram Sabha may be held on a rotation basis in all of the villages under a GP if there are several villages under the same GP. Gram Sabhas may be held at any time during the day. The Gram Sabha should be organised by the Panchayat Secretary with the approval of the Sarpanch. When 10% of Gram Sabha members or 50 Gram Sabha members (whichever is greater) send a request for a Gram Sabha meeting, the Gram Panchayat Sarpanch is required to call a meeting. Those members must, however, remind the meeting's intent. A written meeting request must be sent to the Sarpanch during office hours five days prior to the meeting date. If the Sarpanch fails to convene the meeting on the requested date, the members who requested it can convene the gram Sabha meeting themselves.

Functions of Gram Sabha

The Gram Sabha, according to the Constitution, exercises such powers and performs such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State can by law provide [Art 243G], report of activities conducted by the Gram Panchayat since the last Gram Sabha is presented, as well as the resolutions and suggestions of the last Gram Sabha and the Panchayat's action thereon. In Panchayat limits, discussions take place about ration allocation, old age pension, handicapped pension, and other topics.

The Gramsabha also addresses issues such as universal enrolment, attendance, and the creation of schools under its jurisdiction. The Gramsabha also addresses the practises of hospitals and veterinary institutions. They inform the public about the steps that should be taken to protect people and cattle's health and hygiene. The Gram Sabha will be briefed by the health officer of the Panchayat tool's primary health centre on inoculation programmes, children suffering from malnutrition, and

preventative measures to be taken against diseases such as Malaria, among other things. The Gram Panchayat Secretary will classify the public works to be conducted under Panchayat grants and present them to the Gramsabha for approval before integrating them into the Panchayat's plans.

Conclusion

Since the adoption of a democratic form of government after India's independence, and after the passage of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which introduced a participatory form of government at the grassroots level. What is the ground reality of India's development and democracy? Is the big question daunting in the minds of scholars who are actively engaged in activities with the aim of seeking solutions to the poor masses' problems and assisting them in leading a good, dignified human life as human society should lead? Emphasizing the importance of the Gram Sabha over the Gram Panchayats may motivate all sections of society, but it will erode the latter's sense of responsibility and accountability. As a result, a combination of approaches is needed to not only improve the Gram Panchayat's ability to prepare, implement, and track, but also to make the Gram Sabha aware of its own responsibilities in strengthening the institution it has elected from within itself. Gram Sabha is a legislative body in which citizens can discuss their rights, needs, and requirements. It has legislative standing and is known as the people's parliament. However, it is still sluggish in fact. It must set in motion by involving people and the society in order to breathe life into it.

Reference

1. Deepening Decentralised Governance in Rural India: Lessons from the People's Plan Initiative of Kerala, Oommen M.A., Working paper No.11 –December 2004 - Centre for Socio-economic & Environmental Studies, Kerala 2. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's), CORD Publication
2. Paul Ginsburg, Democracy: Issues and Renewal, London, Profile book. 2009
3. Niraj Gopal Gayal and Pratap Bhanu Metha, 2010, Introduction, in Niraja Gopal, Geyal and Pratap Metha (ets.,). The Oxford Companion to Politics in India, New Delhi; Oxford University Press. P.xv.
4. R.C.Choudary and S.P.jain, Strengthening Village Democracy, Hyderabad, NIRD, 1999.