

APPOLLO STUDY CENTRE

1. Describe the important recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee for Local Self Government?

உள்ளாட்சி நிர்வாகம் சார்ந்த பல்வந்த ராய் மேத்தா குழுவின் முக்கிய பரிந்துரைகள் யாவை?

Balwantray Mehta Committee (1957)

In January 1957, the Government of India appointed a committee to examine the working of the Community Development Programme (1952) and the National Extension Service (1953) and to suggest measures for their better working. The Chairman of this committee was Balwantray G. Mehta. The committee submitted its report in November 1957 and recommended the establishment of the scheme of 'democratic decentralisation' which ultimately came to be known as panchayati raj. The specific recommendations made by it are:

Establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj system—Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level. These tiers should be organically linked through a device of indirect elections

The village Panchayat should be constituted with directly elected representatives, whereas the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad should be constituted with indirectly elected members,

All planning and developmental activities should be entrusted to these bodies,

The Panchayat Samiti should be the executive body while the Zila Parishad should be the advisory, coordinating and supervisory body.

The District Collector should be the Chairman of the Zila Parishad. (vi) There should be a genuine transfer of power and responsibility to these democratic bodies,

Adequate resources should be transferred to these bodies to enable them to discharge their functions and fulfil their responsibilities,

A system should be evolved to effect further devolution of authority in future.

These recommendations of the committee were accepted by the National Development Council in January 1958. The Council did not insist on a single rigid pattern and left it to the states to evolve their own patterns suitable to local conditions. But the basic principles and broad fundamentals should be identical throughout the country.

Rajasthan was the first state to establish Panchayati Raj. The scheme was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 2nd October, 1959, in Nagaur district. Rajasthan was followed by Andhra Pradesh which also adopted the system in 1959. Thereafter, most of the states adopted the system.

Though most of the states created Panchayati Raj institutions by mid 1960s, there were differences from one state to another with regard to the number of tiers, relative position of samiti and parishad, their tenure, composition, functions, finances and so on. For example, Rajasthan adopted three-tier system while Tamil Nadu adopted two-tier system, West Bengal, on the other hand, adopted four-tier system. Further, in Rajasthan—Andhra Pradesh Pattern, Panchayat Samiti was powerful as the block was the unit of planning and development while in Maharashtra-Gujarat pattern, Zila Parishad was powerful as the district was the unit of planning and development. Some states also established Nyaya Panchayats, that is, judicial panchayats to try petty civil and criminal cases.

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