



Year End Review 2019: Ministry of Panchayati Raj

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is responsible for the work of advocacy, monitoring and implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment.
- The role of the MoPR involves strengthening the administrative infrastructure, basic services etc. by leveraging technology and capacity building of the functionaries of Rural Local Body (RLB).

Important Schemes and Policies

Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants

- Ministry monitors the effective utilization of FFC Grants by the Gram Panchayats (GPs) through **Public Financial Management System** (PFMS).
- Around 5.5 Lakhs assets created by using FFC grants in GPs have been geo-tagged to give thrust to the digital monitoring system.
- A majority of Gram Panchayats are on-board in PRIASoft-PFMS and a lot of them are already doing digital payments through PRIASoft -PFMS.

Panchayat Enterprise Suite Application

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has conceived a software viz, **PlanPlus**, the software application facilitates the consolidation and integration of all plans of all planning units.
- The Gram Panchayat development plans (GPDPs) prepared by the panchayats are uploaded on the software and the citizens can also view the activities being planned in their respective areas.
- Currently, generation of plans through PlanPlus has been prescribed as one of the necessary conditions for release of performance grants.
- Action Soft is another Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) Application which works in collaboration with Plan-Plus and captures the work execution flow, converges and keeps track of flow of funds from different sources during implementation and brings about total transparency in the reporting of physical and financial progress of works.
- PRIA Soft is another PES application developed for managing receipts and expenditure of approved list of works through voucher entries.

Fourteenth Finance Commission Recommendations

- The Fourteenth Finance Commission recommendations are path breaking to strengthen local governments.
- **Fiscal decentralization** and the **trust-based approach** have empowered our Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats to address the local needs.
- The **devolution of funds** has also had an impact on the effectiveness, responsiveness and quality of the public services delivered in rural areas.
- The **formulation of GPDPs and digitization of Panchayat records** through PES applications has made the system more transparent, accountable and effective.
- Through proper planning at the local level, the funds devolved can be effectively utilized for more inclusive development.
- The State Governments should trust the village Panchayats and provide them flexibility to utilize the untied funds to meet the local needs.
- **Decentralized planning** will be a motivating exercise for the citizens if their demands are heard,

accepted and fulfilled.

Panchayati Raj: Background

- Panchayati Raj, the institutional manifestation of democratic decentralization in India, became an integral part of the Indian Constitution only after five decades of independence in the year 1993 after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- Post Independence, the **first major Community Development Programme was launched in 1952** with the aim of bringing about overall development of rural areas through people's participation.
 - This programme was formulated to provide an administrative framework through which the government could reach to the district, tehsil/taluka and village level.
- Later in 1957, the Planning Commission appointed a **committee headed by Balwantrai Mehta in 1957 to study the Community Development Programmes and National Extension Services Programme** especially to assess the extent of people's participation and to recommend ways to ensure this.
- The committee recommended three-tier panchayati raj system in the country viz Zila Parishad at the District Level, Panchayat Samiti at the Block/ Tehsil/ Taluka Level and Gram Panchayat at the Village Level.
- Though the committee did not recommend a rigid frame work for the same, the seeds were sown for the birth of contemporary Panchayati Raj.
- Subsequently **the Ashok Mehta Committee's recommendations** in 1978 for a two-tier system with Zilla Parishad at the district level and Mandal Panchayat as the base and **L. M. Singhvi Committee's recommendations** that the PRIs should be enshrined in the Constitution and 'Gram Sabha' should be the base for decentralised democracy, bore fruits in the form of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993.
- This became landmark development in the history of local self-government. It uniformly introduced a three-tier Panchayati Raj system throughout the country and provided them with necessary powers and authority to help them to function as units of self-government. Panchayati Raj was started in India on the premise that at the local level there should be some kind of democracy which would involve people in the process of governance. If the people are to be involved they have to be given responsibilities in the functioning of the institutions and development programmes of the government. This is the only way democracy reaches the masses.

Mission Mode Project (MMP) on e-Panchayat

- Under the e-Panchayat MMP, a suite of Core Common Applications has been developed collectively called Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) Applications. Following are some of the key activities undertaken under the e-Panchayat MMP during the year:
 - **Unified portal focusing on Work Based Accounting:** It will bring in a more user-friendly interface with ease of navigation that would make it hassle-free for the GPs to track, monitor and modify their Action Plan.
 - **On-boarding of schemes on PRIASoft-PFMS integration for real time payments by GPs:** The Ministry, in the current year, has put in place a robust mechanism capturing the entire gamut of activity right from the stage of planning to monitor the various stages of work, recording the expenditure incurred for the works to providing complete detail of the asset created.
 - **Gram Manchitra:** It is a Spatial Planning Application provides a single/ unified Geo Spatial platform to better visualize the various developmental works to be taken up across the 29 sectors and provide a decision support system for GPDP.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- Launched in 2018, this centrally sponsored scheme is an effort in the direction of achieving "Sabka

Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas”.

- The RGSA helps more than 2.55 lakh **Panchayati Raj Institutions** (PRIs) to develop governance capabilities to deliver on SDGs through inclusive local governance with focus on optimum utilisation of available resources.
- The key principles of SDGs, i.e. leaving no one behind, reaching the farthest first and universal coverage, along with gender equality will be embedded in the design of all capacity building interventions including trainings, training modules and materials.
- Priority will be given to subjects of national importance that affects the excluded groups the most, e.g. poverty, primary health services, nutrition, immunization, sanitation, education, water conservation, digital transactions etc.
- The implementation and monitoring of the activities of the scheme are broadly aligned for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with main thrust on Panchayats identified under Mission Antyodaya and Aspirational districts as identified by NITI Aayog.
- This scheme extends to all States and UTs of the country and will also include institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas, where Panchayats do not exist.
- The scheme will strengthen Gram Sabhas to function as effective institutions with social inclusion of citizens particularly the vulnerable groups.
- It will establish the institutional structure for capacity building of PRIs at the national, state and district level with adequate human resources and infrastructure.
- Panchayats will progressively be strengthened through incentivisation on the basis of nationally important criteria which will encourage competitive spirit among them.

People’s Plan Campaign (PPC)- Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas

- It aims to draw up Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) in the country and place them on a website where anyone can see the status of the various government’s flagship schemes.
- To provide sustainability to the GPDP formulation process into a participative and transparent exercise, **the process of GPDP preparation for the financial year 2020-21 again started in a Campaign mode from 2nd October, 2019 as PPC-2019.**

NOTE

- **National Panchayat Day:** It is celebrated on 24 April every year. It was on this day in 1993, that the 73rd amendment act had come into force.
- **Panchayati Raj:** The term was coined by PM Nehru who inaugurated the 3-tier Panchayati Raj in Nagaur (Rajasthan, 2 October 1959).

Incentivization of Panchayats

- The Ministry has been incentivizing the Panchayats/ States/ Union Territories (UTs) under the scheme of Incentivization of Panchayats, one of the central components of the restructured scheme of RGSA, in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services & public goods and to encourage a spirit of competition.
- Awards, including financial incentives are given annually to best performing Panchayats/States/UTs under various categories namely,
 - Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP) for Gram/ Block/ District Panchayats;
 - Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP) for Gram Panchayats;
 - Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award for Gram Panchayats;
 - Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) for Gram Panchayats and e-Panchayat Puraskar for States/UTs.

