

# LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT PANCHAYATI RAJ

# INTRODUCTION:

- The term Panchayati Raj in India signifies the system of rural local self-government.
- It has been established in all the states of India by the Act of the state legislatures to build democracy at the grass root level.
- It was constitutionalized through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992.

# History of Local Administration:

- The village panchayat as a system of administration began in the British days, as they offer to satisfy the demands for local autonomy.
- They opened up the governance of the lowest level to the citizens
- The government of India Act 1935 also authorizes the provinces to enact legislation.
- Later, the conceptualization of the system of local self-government of India took place through the formation and effort of following four important committees from the year 1957 to 1986:
  - 1. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957)
  - 2. Ashok Mehta Committee (1977)
  - 3. G V K Rao Committee (1985)
  - 4. L M Singhvi Committee (1986)

# Panchayat and Municipality

- Panchayat Municipality are the generic terms for the governing body at the local level
- Both exist as three-tier System at the lower, intermediate and upper levels.
- The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act provides for a Gram Sabha as the foundation of the Panchayat Raj system.
- It is essentially a village assembly consisting of all the registered voters in the area of the Panchayat.
- The State has the power to determine what kind of powers it can exercise, and which functions it has to perform at the village level.
- The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act provides for three types of Municipalities :
  - Nagar Panchayat for a transitional area between a rural and urban area.
  - Municipal Council for a small urban area
  - Municipal Corporation for a large urban area

- Municipalities represent urban local self-government'
- Most of the provisions of the two acts are parallel, differing only in the fact that they are being applied to either a Panchayat or a Municipality respectively.
- Each Gram Sabha is the meeting of a particular constituency called ward.
- Each ward has a representative chosen from among the people themselves by direct election.
- The chairperson of the panchayat or Municipality at the intermediate and distinct level are elected from among these representatives at the immediately lower level by indirect election.

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## **Elections Held in the Local Government Bodies**

- All seats of representatives of local bodies are filled by people chosen through direct elections.
- The conduct of elections is vested in the hands of the State Election Commission.
- The Chairpersons at the intermediate and district levels shall be elected indirectly from among the elected representatives at the immediately lower level.
- At the lowest level, the Chairperson still be elected in a mode defined by the state legislature.
- Seats are reserved for Scheduled Cast and Scheduled Tribe proportional to their population.
- Out of these reserved seats, not less than one-third shall be further reserved for women.
- There should try a blanket reservation of one-third seats for women in all the constituencies taken together too (which can include the already reserved seats for SC and ST).
- The Acts bar the interference of courts in any issue relating to the election to local bodies.

## **Qualifications Needed to be a Member of the Panchayat or Municipality**

- Any person who is qualified to be a member of the state legislature is eligible to be a member of the Panchayat or Municipality.
- But he shall not be disqualified on the ground that he is less than 25 years of age if he has attained the age of 21 years This means that unlike the state legislature, a person needs to attain only 21 years of age to be a member of panchayat/Municipality.
- The local governing bodies are elected for a term of five years.
- Fresh elections should be conducted before the expiry of the five-year term.
- If the Panchayat/Municipality is dissolved before the expiry of its term, elections shall be conducted within six months and the new Panchayat/Municipality will hold office for the remainder of the term if the term has more than six months duration.

THANKS