

Chapter – 05 Political Science

Panchayati Raj

- Since ancient times, India has always had a well-developed system of local administration at the rural level.
- This was rooted through the institution of Panchayati Raj at the rural or village level.
- Literally Panchayat means a committee of five people.
- Till 1993, the institution of Panchayat was under the control of the state government.
- Since 1993, the 73rd constitutional amendment gave Panchayat a legal status and has made it mandatory for the state to hold elections after every five years.
- **Panchayati Raj in India:**
 - (i) At present, Panchayati Raj consists of three levels:
 - (a) Gram Sabha which elects Gram Panchayat at village level.
 - (b) Panchayat Samiti at the block level.
 - (c) Zila Parishad at the district level.
- **Gram Sabha:**
 - (i) It is organized in every village.
 - (ii) Gram Sabha consists of all adult citizens above 18 years.
 - (iii) The functions of Gram Sabha are to elect Gram Panchayat, Pradhan and make budget by reviewing progress of the village.
- **Gram Panchayat at Village Level:**
 - (i) Gram Panchayat is elected by Gram Sabha.
 - (ii) It has seats reserved for SC/ST and 33% seats are reserved for women.
 - (iii) Gram Panchayat elects Sarpanch who presides over the meetings of the Panchayat.
 - (iv) Gram Panchayat performs public welfare activities, look after the health and education and records death and birth in the state.
- **Panchayat Samiti at Block Level:**
 - (i) All problems of the village cannot be solved at local level.
 - (ii) To examine the working of Gram Panchayat, there is provision of Panchayat Samiti at the block level.
 - (iii) It includes all Sarpanchs of village panchayats, Chairman of Town Area Committee, B.D.O., members of Zila Parishad from the block, all area MPs and MLA's and representatives of SC/ST and women.
 - (iv) The functions of Panchayat Samiti are to look after health matter, literacy, etc.
- **Zila Parishad at District Level:**
 - (i) Zila Parishad is at the highest level.
 - (ii) It consists of Chairman of all Block Samities, area MP's and MLA's, five representatives from each registered cooperative society, and one representative each of registered social reform committees.
 - (iii) It coordinates the functioning of Block Samities.