

Gram Sabha: Importance and Implications in Rural Development

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Abstract:

Local self-government in India has not been a great success and the major area of concern is the weaknesses in the working of Gram Sabhas. Also, there is a huge gap between the aspirations of the people and the performance by the grassroots institutions. Gram Sabha is the most powerful foundation of local self-government institution in India as it ensures elected representatives directly accountable to the people. Panchayati Raj System was set up with the notion that Gram Sabha, the general assembly of the village will play key role for effective functioning of the Panchayats. In Gram Sabha, all the registered voters of the panchayat will participate and get an opportunity to join in the decision making on matters affecting their lives. As direct participation of the people in planning and monitoring of elected representatives is a must for the success of any plan/activity in rural areas. This is the main reason behind the introduction word “Gram Sabha” as the soul and essence of the Panchayati Raj System in India. More important is the fact that the concept of democratic decentralization on the cardinal principle of what is appropriate at each level should be given/recognized through the most significant institution of Panchayati Raj System i.e., Gram Sabha.

Key Words: Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Direct Democracy, Base of Democracy, Soul of Panchayati Raj System.

Introduction:

Gram Sabha as per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 is an integral part of the Panchayati Raj System. In other words, it is perceived as a forum for people's participation in local planning and for ensuring transparency in administration. The amendment to incorporate the word “Gram Sabha” as the foundation of the Panchayati

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