



E-ISSN: 2706-9117  
P-ISSN: 2706-9109  
[www.historyjournal.net](http://www.historyjournal.net)  
IJH 2022; 4(2): 11-13  
Received: 02-04-2022  
Accepted: 09-05-2022

**Susheel Kumar**  
Department of Political  
Science, Himachal Pradesh  
University, Shimla, Himachal  
Pradesh, India

## Gandhi's vision for rural growth and India's development strategy

**Susheel Kumar**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.22271/27069109.2022.v4.i2a.151>

### Abstract

Respect for human rights, the rule of law, the consolidation of democracy, the promotion of transparency, and administrative ability are all requirements for good governance. Good governance is dependent on the state and its institutions being receptive to the needs and ambitions of the populace, as well as on inclusive citizenship. Democracy is based on the equality of all people, their right to engage in social and political change, their right to progress, and their right to a dignified existence. A system and procedure of good government is called panchayat raj. Since ancient times, villages have served as India's fundamental administrative units. The Gram Sabha has the potential to be the pillar of the Indian democratic system and the entire Panchayat Raj institutional structure. So the main focus is on Gandhian concept of Panchayat Raj. This is useful to development of India. So in 21st century this concept becomes powerful in the Nation

**Keywords:** Rural, development, strategy, knowledge

### Introduction

#### Democratic Decentralization's Importance

Gandhi's idea of democratic decentralisation carries the imprint of his fervent faith in impartiality, the truth, and individual liberty. He refers to it as village Swaraj or Panchayati Raj. He envisions each village as a mini-republic, self-sufficient in its basic needs, organically and non-hierarchically connected to the larger spatial entities, and with the greatest amount of independence in governing its own affairs. Gandhi favoured distributing political power among India's villages. For what he referred to as true democracy, Gandhi favoured the word "Swaraj." The foundation of this democracy is freedom. Gandhi believed that only autonomous, self-sufficient societies that provide chances for people to fully participate could maintain individual freedom <sup>[1]</sup>.

#### Village Panchayats

The Panchayat Raj system was the best method for launching political and economic democracy at the local level. Mahatma Gandhi's travels around the nation strengthened his convictions that India would benefit from the establishment of Village Panchayats based on the tenet of "simple life and elevated thinking" in the rural. These village republics had everything residents wanted, were self-sufficient and contained. These were the places where all people could receive a minimal quality of living. A person had the greatest amount of freedom and chance to fully express his personality. The state would become less significant in these republics, and democracy's foundations would become stronger. According to him centralization cannot be sustained as a system without adequate force <sup>[2]</sup>.

Panchayats, which are groups of five people elected annually to oversee the affairs, are responsible for this. Gandhi focused on the individual, who was at the centre of the local government. It is anticipated that attendees will take a personal interest and attend the meeting in large numbers to discuss issues of common concern, such as village industries, agricultural production, obligations, and planning <sup>[3]</sup>.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Susheel Kumar**  
Department of Political  
Science, Himachal Pradesh  
University, Shimla, Himachal  
Pradesh, India

### **A decentralised system's village-level unit**

Gandhi firmly believed that the consolidation of either political or economic power contravene all of the fundamental tenants of participatory democracy. Gandhi proposed the establishment of village republics as both institutions of politics and as entities with economic autonomy as a way to counteract centralization. The smallest unit in a decentralised system is the village. A political village must be compact enough to allow for direct participation by all citizens in the decision-making process. It serves as the fundamental tenets of participatory democracy. The villages' technical abilities will be fully developed, and there won't be a shortage of folks with exceptional skill and artistic ability. There will be poets, artists, architects, linguists and researchers in the town <sup>[4]</sup>. Gandhian decentralisation refers to the development of a parallel political system where the institutionalisation of popular power serves to oppose the causes of modern state centralization and alienation. Utilizing local resources is essential to the growth of the Panchyati Raj system, according to Mahatma Gandhi. In order to identify the resources locally available for growth in the agricultural and industrial sectors, the Panchyats and Gram Sabhas should be formed in this way. Gandhi stated, "Let not democracy deteriorate into mobocracy. Democracy becomes an impossible thing unless authority is shared by all" <sup>[5]</sup>. Each village functions as a mini-republic, independent, and with the most freedom possible to decide on matters pertaining to the community <sup>[6]</sup>. Gandhi also advocated a system of government under the Gandhian Constitution, with the powers being distributed to all levels of government, starting at the level of the Village Panchayat, which serves as the primary unit of government <sup>[7]</sup>. These communities ought to be self-sufficient as well as able to defend themselves from the rest of the world if necessary <sup>[8]</sup>. Gandhi stated in his Presidential Address at the Belgaum Congress that the Panchayat was a good mechanism for obtaining affordable justice as well as a tool for avoiding reliance on the government for the resolution of mutual justice <sup>[9]</sup>.

### **Panchayat Raj System**

By involving all the stakeholders in the process of decision-making and the creation of public policy, the Gandhian concepts of Gram Swaraj and the Panchayat Raj system can serve as vehicles for bringing about the urgently required social and political transformation. Gandhi once observed, "Panchayat Raj is an example of genuine democracy in action. We would consider the most modest and lowly Indian to be the king of India on par with the highest person in the world" <sup>[10]</sup>.

### **Policy for Panchayat Raj Development in India**

As the cornerstone of India's political structure, Mahatma Gandhi promoted Panchayat Raj, a decentralised form of government in which each community is in charge of its own affairs. Such a vision was known as Gram Swaraj ("village self-governance"). Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommendations. A commission known as the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was established by the Government of India in January 1957 to review the performance of the National Extension Service (1953) and the Community Development Programme (1952). The committee's suggestions were accepted by NDC in January 1958, which

prepared the ground for the establishment of Panchayat Raj Institutions across the nation. The committee advocated for the implementation of the "democratic decentralisation" plan that ultimately became known as Panchayat Raj. I Creation of a three-tiered Panchayat Raj structure. As laws were made to form panchayats in several states during the 1950s and 1960s, state governments adopted this approach. The 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution, passed in 1992 to support the idea, also provided support for it. The Amendment Act of 1992 includes provisions for the devolution of authorities and duties to the panchayats for the creation of plans for social justice and economic development as well as for the implementation of the 29 topics specified in the eleventh schedule of the constitution.

### **Social Audit**

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has released detailed instructions on how to turn the Gram Sabha into an active platform for supporting the transparent planned economic and social development of the villages. The rules pertain to the social audit for the efficient execution of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and are a part of the proceedings to observe the year 2009–2010 as the year of the Gram Sabha. The rules state that the Gram Sabha serves as a venue that guarantees direct, participatory democracy as well as self-governance and transparent, accountable functioning. All individuals, including the poor, women, and those who are marginalised, have an equal opportunity to discuss and critique, accept or reject, and evaluate the effectiveness of Gram Panchayat proposals.

Therefore, Article 243G read with the Eleventh Schedule provides that the States may, by law, confer upon the Panchayats such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government under them. These laws may also provide Panchayats authority and responsibility for developing and carrying out plans for social justice and economic development, particularly those pertaining to the 29 issues enumerated in the Eleventh Schedule. As a result, several States did implement Gram Panchayat Acts, which were only feeble attempts to establish rural local government institutions. However, the Community Development Program's failure, which was intended to awaken dormant forces of change and bring a silent revolution to rural society, resulted in the formation of the Balwantrai Mehta Study Team.

### **Conclusion**

The Gandhian ideal of Gram Swaraj, however, remains an unfinished agenda even after six decades of the Panchayat Raj's implementation, which was recommended by the Balwantrai Mehta Study Team on October 2, 1959, according to the research of several eminent scholars on how the Panchayat Raj functions in various States and the Status Report of the Ministry of Panchayat Raj (1996). Several States adopted the 73rd Amendment in 1994. Therefore, those who still hold Gram Swaraj as a dearly held hope for the empowerment of people and for making India's national development a participatory democracy must make focused, systematic, and continuous efforts.

### **References**

1. Ramshray Roy, *Self and Society: A study in Gandhian Thought*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, India Pvt. Ltd., 1984, p. 123

2. Harijan, 30 December 1939;7:391.
3. Sharma ML. Gandhi and Democratic Decentralisation, New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications, 1987, p. 48
4. Gandhi MK. Panchayati Raj, Ahamedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1959, p. 16
5. Sharma ML., Op. Cit., p.88
6. Collected Works, Vol XLVI, p. 12
7. Shriman Narayan Agarwal, Gandhian Constitution for Free India, (Allahabad, Kitabistan) for further details, 1946.
8. Harijan, 28 July, 1946;10:236.
9. Collected Works, May 1967;25:478.
10. Gandhi MK. Village Swaraj, Navjivan Trust, Ahmedabad, 1962, p.71.