

Panchayat and RTI Elections in Punjab

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Received: 25-08-2023

Revised: 11-09-2023

Accepted: 26-09-2023

ABSTRACT

An important component of India's just system is panchayati raj. It illustrates the RTI's dynamic involvement at the panchayat level throughout the country. The appointment process of the national and state-level delegate bodies is smaller than normal for panchayat elections. The voter takes an interest in the deliberation process and exhibits a sense of inclusion during the selection processes for the state assemblies and the parliament. In this way, the analysis of the Panchayati Raj Foundation's constitutive process is equally indicative of the attitudes and mindsets of the people as it is of the higher-level authoritative entities. Voters participated with a sense of association in the vote-based elections for panchayats. Their level of support and voting habits may reveal emerging trends in public political speculation and attitudes toward emerging substances.

Keywords: rti, panchyat, parliament, substances, trends, constitutive process

I. INTRODUCTION

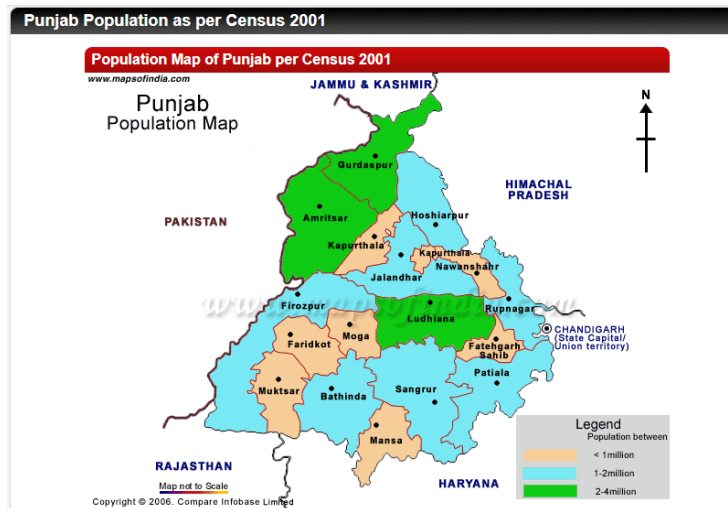
India's interesting international commitment is the Panchayati Raj structure. Different customs have appeared and disappeared from Vedic to modern times, but the village has remained the core of local government. The existence of the Panchayat as a local governing body is adequately confirmed in Maharishi Valmiki's Ramayana Arthshastra's Manusmriti. The panchayats were shrouded in secrecy during the early years of British rule nonetheless. Due to the introduction of the Zamindari structure, these foundations were essentially paralyzed for a brief period of time. In fact, the entire aging and outdated building collapsed into utter misery and destitution. In the hands of Lord Mayo and Lord Ripon in the eighteenth century, the Panchayat framework once again suggested recovery. The 1882 Act's decision is regarded as the "Magna Carta" of neighborhood government in India. The panchayati raj organizations were granted legal standing in British India as a result of this decision. Later, the Acts of 1919, 1929, and 1935 included detailed plans for changing India's Panchayati Raj system. Following independence, the established Indian constitutional parliament started limiting the rules for the new, independent India. Mahatma Gandhi, who played a significant role in the establishment of the nation, valued a decentralized system of government with a large number of local panchayats at its core and a national panchayat at its top.

Chosen by the intermediary levels of the region's and the state's panchayats, with the town panchayat having final say. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the executive of the drafting panel, disagreed with this assessment and referred to it as a "sink of localism" and a "nook of intolerance." Therefore, the town was eliminated as a managerial entity in the draft constitution. At the end of the day, the Gandhian way of thinking, which was not supported by the law, was granted a position in the mandate criteria of governmental approach under Article 40 of the Constitution. Pt. In order to elevate the stature of panchayats, Jawaharlal Nehru established the Balwant Rai Mehta Board. Later, the G.V.K. Rao Committee, the L.M. Singhvi Boards, and the Ashok Mehta Committee were formed to make recommendations about how to strengthen these organizations. The constitutionalization of these foundations is credited to P.V. Narasimha Rao, whose administration did so. filed a significant bill in Parliament in 1992 to renew these institutions in the state of the 73rd amendment modification, and it was approved by 3/4 of the state administrative meetings in April 1993. This bill mandates that the entire state government amend panchayati raj-related laws in accordance with the 73rd Amendment. This revision included crucial provisions for the efficient operation of Panchayat Raj institutions.

It establishes a fund commission in each state to examine the financial ties between the state and panchayati raj institutions, as well as the construction of a three-level framework and intermittent races for these bodies. The 73rd revision strengthened the foundations of panchayati raj institutions in India's majority rule system in this way.

II. PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN PUNJAB

According to the 2001 census, the state of Punjab, which is located in the northwest of India, has 243.59 lakh residents, with almost 66% of them residing in 12,278 municipalities. To put the past development of panchayati raj in the state into perspective, panchayats were first established in the combined territory of Punjab in 1912. Panchayats were established in Punjab prior to the arrival of the British. The British were cautious to consider energizing the operation of town and village panchayats after the extension of Punjab in 1849. They were focused on expanding the range of resources they could use to their advantage. As a result, the Punjab Village Panchayat Raj Act was passed in 1912 and replaced by the Act for creating local self-government entities in 1939.



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/census2001/population/population-punjab.html>

Following independence and the division of Punjab, a second act known as the Punjab Panchayat Act, 1952, democratized the provincial foundations. The new law allowed for universal adult suffrage and the mandatory establishment of rural panchayats. In any case, due to the government's lack of care, By 1916, there were only 31 panchayats. To put the system back in place, the Punjab Panchayat Act of 1921 was implemented, requiring the creation of panchayats in every town. However, their number couldn't rise above 300 until 1925–26, and by the end of 1930–32, it had significantly increased.

The Panchayati Raj system in Punjab developed as a result of autonomy, which had its own unique impact. By passing the Punjab Gram Sabha Act in 1952, Punjab became one of the select few Indian states to put Art. 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy into practice. In 1961, the Punjab State Government redesigned its Panchayati Raj framework in response to the Balwant Rai Mehta Board's proposals, resulting in another three-level panchayat framework involving Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayats at the district level, and Panchayats at the state level. This three-level panchayat framework included Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayats at the district level, and

Punjab continues to have a three-level panchayat framework, with Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level. In addition, there is the Gram Sabha, which is the fundamental unit. As a result, the Panchayati Raj framework has laid its foundations decently and early but couldn't grow quickly because the government tended to be unconcerned with holding the races to these bodies.

(Punjab Government website, 2006) The villages are divided into 138 community development blocks, and the blocks are divided into 19 districts, including Amritsar, Bathinda, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, etc. In particular, a three-level system gives an open door for the support of all areas of the town—women, dalits, tribals, and other minimized gatherings—in organizing and using local advancement programs.

III. PANCHAYAT LEVEL, THE ROLE OF RTI

In a progression of choices since 1973, the Supreme Court of India has proclaimed that the subjects' entitlement to access data held by open specialists is a segment of their fundamental rights. Obviously, it is basic that the general population has the privilege to get data from panchayats since they are nearby self-overseeing bodies that are nearest to the general population. Keeping in mind the end goal of encouraging access to data from neighborhood self-representing bodies, in 1997

the Government of India issued a round expressing that each state ought to consider passing requests executing three unique parts of straightforwardness. To begin with, PRIs, particularly Gram Panchayats, ought to show all crucial data relating to advancement ventures (particularly receipt of assets and how they are being spent) in panchayat workplaces or on a conspicuous board outside the neighborhood school. Second, all significant records ought to be reviewed. Third, individuals and people in general ought to have the capacity to acquire photocopies of reports relating to improvement ventures (counting all bills, summon moves, vouchers, appraisals, and estimation books) and, in addition, matters of overall population enthusiasm by paying an ostensible charge. Punjab has the accompanying laws set up that encourage access to data held by panchayat bodies:

- The 1994 Punjab Panchayati Raj Act
- The 2005 Right to Information Act

The Punjab government is likewise required to reveal comparative classifications of data about its areas of expertise and other open specialists under its control. The proactive exposure of archives of a few offices and open specialists of the Punjab Government identifying with the previously mentioned are distributed (<http://punjabgovt.nic.in>). The Punjab Information Commission and the Central Information Commission have both been set up. How do panchayats actualize rural growth plans? The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) has discharged a distribution, "Execution of Rural Development Programs—Role of PRIs with Regards to the Right to Information Act", which is intended to give data to individuals about the most effective method to get data from panchayats with respect to all major rural improvement plans (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India). It executes a number of rural improvement and poverty mitigation programs, which bolster the framework in towns, offer work and provide financed sustenance grains, and, furthermore, provide drinking water to villagers. It is basically the obligation of Panchayati Raj Establishments to actualize these plans. Be that as it may, the execution part of Gram Sabhas and panchayats at village, block, and district levels in connection to these projects is regularly not known by the villagers and, as a rule, is not by any means known by the chosen panchayat individuals themselves.

The Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, in Punjab imposes a few proactive exposure obligations on Gram Panchayats, including the requirement to present panchayat data to the general public during general meetings of the Gram Sabha.

- The previous meeting's protocols, as read by the Sarpanch.
- A report on a decision the Panchayat made about previous Sabha discussions.
- Significant decisions made by the Panchayat following the most recent regular general meeting (given out by the Sarpanch).
- A wage and consumption statement that is read out item by item.

In this particular circumstance, any party to a legal proceeding can apply to the Sarpanch to examine the record on the installment of a charge of Rs 1 for each event. They can also apply to the Sarpanch to get copies of important records or any passage in the enroll on installment of a charge of 25 paise for the passage in question. More specifically, the PR Act provides that Gram Panchayats must disclose information related to legal proceedings, which occur at the Gram Panchayat level. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005 and the right to information

The Punjab Government began the process of providing occupations to the provincial unemployed youth under this plan in 1,317 towns in the Hoshiarpur region. The NREGA is one of the nation's most aggressive anti-neediness programs ever, giving a legitimate assurance of 100 days' worth of effort in a financial year to India's provincial families whose grown-up individuals will do untalented physical work.

According to the PR Act, Panchayat Samitis must hold their normal gatherings at any event once every two months, and Zila Parishads must hold their standard gatherings at any rate once every three months. Exceptional gatherings of both these levels must be called by the Chairmen whenever a composed demand of at the very least 33% of the aggregate number of individuals is submitted determining the reason for the meeting (Section 116, The Punjab Panchayati Raj Act). Tragically, however, under the PR Act 1994, the Zila Parishad is not in charge of sharing much data with the overall population, despite the fact that it has an obligation to distribute factual data and, furthermore, other data identifying with the exercises of Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad. For example, Zila Parishad, Ludhiana However, residents must not give up on this deficiency of the PR Act. Under the RTI Act, the Zila Parishads are open experts. Conventionally, a wide range of records kept up in a Zila Parishad ought to be open under the RTI Act, as all records kept up by panchayat bodies fall outside the domain of the exclusions stated in the RTI Act. Single Window Delivery Services in the Punjabi district of Nawanshahr, Suwidha Center.

SUWIDHA (Single User-Friendly Window Disposal and Helpline for Applicants) Centers have been inherent in every one of the areas of the state to give region organization administrations to the residents. Keeping in mind the end goal to

streamline the conveyance of government organizations through a solitary window for residents and with the extra goal of changing the mentality of mystery that government officers are habituated to, the area organization of Nawanshahr has set up a best-in-class Suwidha Center situated at the area central command. One of the windows gives data identified with the RTI Act 2005, specifically the rundown of APIOs, PIOs, and Appellate Authorities in the area, along with their phone numbers and other subtle contact elements. The significant administrations incorporate validation of oaths on the spot, conveyance of birth and passing testaments, visa applications, enlistment of relational unions, countermarks of archives, arms licenses, restoration of licenses, driving licenses, enrollment of vehicles, gathering of power, what's more, phone bills, conveyance of duplicate income records, and court arrangements in a period-bound way. On a normal day, about 1000 individuals visit the Suwidha Center (Krishan Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, Nawanshahr district).

IV. THE PANCHAYAT BODY ELECTIONS

Elections at the panchayat level are a key point of interest in local administration processes. Elections to panchayat bodies occur every five years. The Punjab State Election Commission is in charge of the supervision, heading, and control of the arrangement of constituent rolls. Elections at the panchayat level give people a fundamental majority rule space to choose a man of their choice who will then speak to them and attempt to satisfy their needs and interests.

Despite the provisions in the PR Act regarding access to data related to panchayat races, residents can also obtain data from the Department of Elections, Government of Punjab, under the recently implemented RTI Act, 2005. In the event that data related to panchayat races is not generally effectively accessible, subjects can currently apply for similar data using the RTI Act. Therefore, this office has relegated PIOs, APIOs, and departmental employees to the role of data providers.

Prior to the passage of the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act 1994, the general public of Punjab had only three opportunities to elect members to the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad: in 1963, 1966, and 1976. The term of the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad of 1966 was set to expire in 1969, but the Punjab government extended its term in the entire state from three to five years; as a result, the current Zila parishads continued to serve until 1971.

The grass-roots majority rule government remained paralyzed for over 18 years during this time, and neither central nor state specialists tried to re-build up these organizations here. It is amazing that all the progressive governments from 1976 to 1994 had been delaying elections for these bodies due to the unreliable political atmosphere in the state because of militancy.

Congress pioneer Beant Singh was sworn in as CM of Punjab in 1992 after a long stretch of President Rule. He attempted to money upon its crisply obtained picture of 'eradicator of militancy' and did not defer the reclamation of the majority rules system at the nearby level. The Beant Singh government passed the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act in 1994, hanging in the balance of the 73rd Amendment Act, and a race commission was constituted to lead the decision of these bodies. The Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishads decisions were held in September 1994 after a long hole of 18 years. The Congress political gathering won a greater part in these elections. The residency of these bodies was to be finished in 1999; however, the government did not direct the decision to these bodies until 2003. After the 2003 elections, these bodies were led on May 12, 2008, in which Akali political gatherings got a total dominant share. The residencies of these bodies were lapsed in 2013, so the government led the decision on these bodies on May 19, 2013.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, gave the order to establish a three-level structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad), enabling them to accept the role of self-governing organizations at smaller scales of organization for decentralized planning and administration. The emphasis was on creating a Gram Sabha for every town for exercising forces and using the powers granted in the constitution.

V. ZILA PARISHADS AND PANCHAYAT SAMITI

The panchayat samities were hung on May 19, 2013 for the 333 seats in 22 Zila parishads and the 2732 seats in 146 panchayat samities. Elections were held for 329 seats in 22 Zila parishads and 2729 seats in 146 panchayat samities. 5786 hopefuls challenged for 2732 zones of peace samities, and 760 challenged for 331 seats in 22 zila parishads. The state recorded 65% voter turnout; the highest surveying was seen in Mansa, i.e., 72%, and the lowest in Gurdaspur, i.e., 52.81%. The state saw occurrences of savagery in the areas of Patiala, Mansa, and Pathankot. Some episodes of illegal conflagration and gathering conflicts were likewise seen in the locale of Muktsar, separated from occurrences of corner-catching in the regions of Ferozepur, Faridkot, Fazilka, and Gidderbaha. Be that as it may, the general race was serene, as were the signs guaranteed by the boss pastor of Punjab, S. Parkash Singh Badal (The Amar Ujala, 2013). The party-shrewd position of vital political gatherings in these races demonstrated numerous huge signs. The SAD-BJP consolidates won 299 seats out of 329 seats of zila Parishads and 2122 seats out of 2739 seats of panchayat samities. (Report Issued by Punjab Rural Development and Panchayat Department, Mohali, 2008).

The Congress political party suffered a massive annihilation in these elections, packing away 454 seats in the Panchayat samiti race and just 26 positions in Zila Parishads. The party has been out of force for the last six years. Overall, SAD-BJP did well in Amritsar, Bathinda, Barnala, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Moga, Mukatsar, and Tarn Taran, though Cong did well in these areas.

The residents of Kanakwal town near the Guru Gobind Singh Refinery in Bathinda Talwandi Sabo body electorate boycotted the Panchayat surveys for a long time (2012 and 2013) in protest of the air pollution problem they were experiencing as a result of the refinery. However, in the recently concluded Punjab elections, the town recorded 88.9% votes in favor of the first round as people came out to exercise their establishment for "it has been claimed that the vote was split between the AAP and Congress, with the former holding a slight advantage.

The victory of SAD in these rulings shows that small-scale administration under Akalis had improved during the previous seven years. They previously won the Assembly election a second time, and they are now choosing to run for local government positions again. At the town level, there were almost always two parties, and the Congress used to gain the votes of one of them. However, this time, SAD was able to win over the poor working class, which had previously been the Congress's support base. The weakening provincial structure of Congress is another reason for its poor performance. The gathering pioneers lacked enough workers to turn out the voters at the town level. In addition, while Congress President S. Partap Singh Bajwa fought valiantly, other trailblazers were not sincere and opted for an amiable, limiting approach. They sought to remain hidden while avoiding volatile legislative matters. Therefore, it is necessary to think about and research the escape clauses in order to perform better at any time.

VI. CONCLUSION

Elections to provincial-level local bodies confirmed that, like many other states, Punjab has constituent bipolarity. The main rivalry in Punjab is between the Akali Dal, the most important territorial party in Punjab, and Congress, the main political party at the national level. Since Punjab was reorganized in 1966, the main legislative issues revolve around these two political groups. However, SAD contested this choice while working with the BJP. Additionally, a Congress gathering joined forces informally with the People Party of Punjab. Joint resistance was defeated by the depressing BJP administration coalition. A change has been made in the SAD plan for Punjab. Since its founding, Akali Dal has worked for Sikh and Panthic personalities, but over time it has changed its religion-political shading to political-financial shading, as in these races, political and financial issues have grown to be more significant than its governmental issues. In this decision, SAD has embraced a mainstream approach to deal with winning general society support in the double-group state. The coalition between the SAD and BJP helped the SAD win the support of Hindu groups in addition to helping to improve Hindu-Sikh amicability in the state. Both SAD and BJP stressed in this decision improvement, peace, and harmony. Religion has commanded the governmental issues of Punjab despite the interest in producing Punjabi Suba in the 1950s, the rise of militancy in the 1980s, and the request to make a free Khalistan. However, in this fight for votes, SAD did.

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