

**1. Panchayati Raj system in India requires second-generation reforms to secure grassroots development through democratic grassroots governance. Comment.****Approach**

Define in general terms what is meant by PRI. In next part mention why there is a clamour for reform with help of some examples. Then proceed to address the second part of question on second generation reforms needed for better functioning of PRIs. In conclusion make an assertion on how these set of reforms will be beneficial for an effective PRI .

**Introduction**

Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is a system of rural local self-government in India. Local Self Government is the management of local affairs by such local bodies who have been elected by the local people. PRI was constitutionalised through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to build democracy at the grass roots level and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country. In its present form and structure PRI has completed 27 years of existence. However, a lot remains to be done in order to further decentralisation and strengthen democracy at the grass root level.

**Issues being faced by Panchayat Raj Institution**

- The grey area is the lack of adequate funds. There is a need to enlarge the domain of panchayats to be able to raise their own funds.
- The interference of area MPs and MLAs in the functioning of panchayats also adversely affected their performance.
- The 73rd amendment only mandated the creation of local self-governing bodies, and left the decision to delegate powers, functions, and finances to the state legislatures, therein lies the failure of PRIs.
- The transfer of various governance functions—like the provision of education, health, sanitation, and water was not mandated. Instead the amendment listed the functions that could be transferred, and left it to the state legislature to actually devolve functions.
- There has been very little devolution of authority and functions in the last 26 years.
- Because these functions were never devolved, state executive authorities have proliferated to carry out these functions. The most common example is the terrible state water boards.
- The major failure of the Amendment is the lack of finances for PRIs. Local governments can either raise their own revenue through local taxes or receive intergovernmental transfers.
- The power to tax, even for subjects falling within the purview of PRIs, has to be specifically authorised by the state legislature. The 73rd Amendment let this

be a choice open to the state legislatures—a choice that most states have not exercised.

- A second avenue of revenue generation is intergovernmental transfers, where state governments devolve a certain percentage of their revenue to PRIs. The constitutional amendment created provisions for State Finance Commissions to recommend the revenue share between state and local governments. However, these are merely recommendations and the state governments are not bound by them.
- Though finance commissions, at every level, have advocated for greater devolution of funds, there has been little action by states to devolve funds.
- PRIs are reluctant to take on projects that require any meaningful financial outlay, and are often unable to solve even the most basic local governance needs.
- PRIs also suffer from structural deficiencies i.e. no secretarial support and lower levels of technical knowledge which restricted the aggregation of bottom up planning .
- There is a presence of adhocism i.e. lack of clear setting of agenda in gram sabha, gram samiti meetings and no proper structure.
- Though women and SC/STs has got representation in PRIs through reservation mandated by 73rd amendment but there is a presence of Panch-Pati and Proxy representation in case of women and SC/STs representatives respectively.
- Accountability arrangements remain very weak even after 26 years of PRIs constitutional arrangement.
- The issue of ambiguity in the division of functions and funds has allowed concentration of powers with the states and thereby restraining the elective representatives who are more aware and sensitive to the ground level issues to take control.

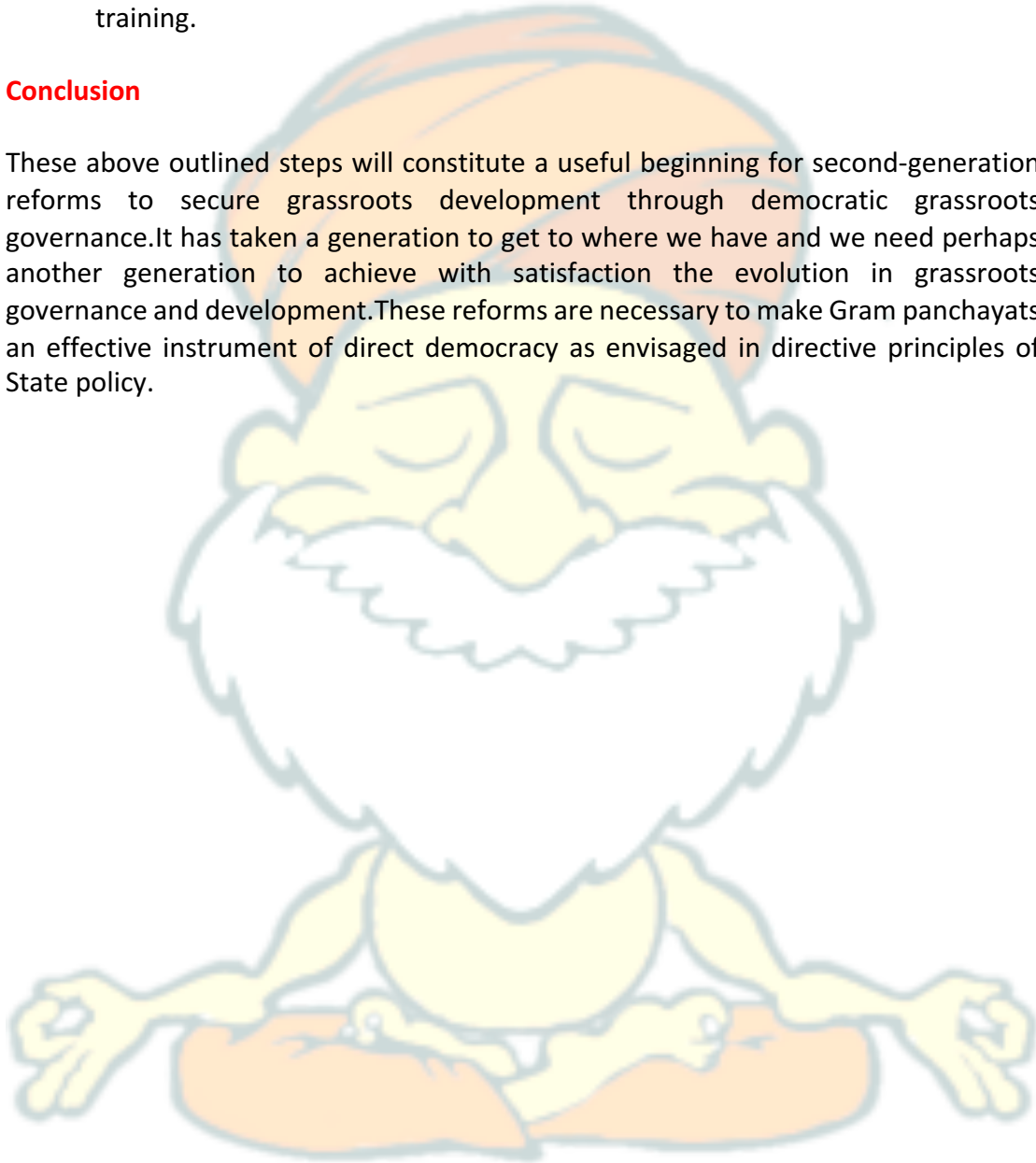
Second generation reforms:

- Effective devolution: The 2013 expert committee laid out in detail how to achieve this through the device of “activity mapping”. Devolution is necessary for any institution to be innovative and independent.
- It would involve clear identification of where competence, authority and accountability lie. Giving the Gram Panchayats the responsibilities of asset creation, operation, and maintenance, while involving it in the planning process through the Gram Sabha; giving the middle tiers responsibilities for human capital development; and giving higher levels of government the responsibility of policy, standards and monitoring of outcomes.
- Activity maps should be incorporated in the guidelines of all centrally sponsored schemes.
- The massive amounts of money earmarked for poverty alleviation should be sent directly to gram panchayat accounts. This will make citizens directly participate in decisions related to spending the funds and planning collectively.
- Financial incentivisation of the states to encourage effective devolution to the panchayats of the three Fs — functions, finances, functionaries.

- District planning based on grassroots inputs received from the village, intermediate and district levels through people’s participation in the gram and ward sabhas.
- Social audit should be made a mandatory feature. This will ensure transparency and make the process much more participatory.
- Empowerment of panchayat members, especially the women (so that they no more remain mere proxy for their male counterparts) through adequate training.

### **Conclusion**

These above outlined steps will constitute a useful beginning for second-generation reforms to secure grassroots development through democratic grassroots governance. It has taken a generation to get to where we have and we need perhaps another generation to achieve with satisfaction the evolution in grassroots governance and development. These reforms are necessary to make Gram panchayats an effective instrument of direct democracy as envisaged in directive principles of State policy.



**2. Do you think lateral entry into the civil services would ensure better governance? Critically examine.****Approach**

Define what is meant by lateral entry in context of civil services. In next part mention what new qualities can the lateral entrants bring with them. Further write what are the limitations of lateral entry. In conclusion take a balanced view on need of both the systems in present context.

**Introduction**

Lateral entry means when personnel from the private sector are selected to an administrative post of the government despite them not being selected in or being part of a bureaucratic setup. Lateral entry is needed because contemporary times require highly skilled and motivated individuals at the helm of administrative affairs, without which public service delivery mechanisms do not work smoothly. But this cannot be done at altar of social equity, transparency, and accountability.

**Body**

In today's world, administration has increasingly become complex. There are time and again suggestions from various committees like 2ARC to have lateral entry into civil service to gain from best available talent. Lateral entry is expected to improve governance by

- Efficient and effective delivery of services. For example Nandan Nilekani the founder of Infosys led to development of Aadhar card, Aadhar today has eliminated ghost beneficiaries and delivered services to the needy.
- Certain areas like economic affairs, commerce, climate change, new and renewable energy have become significant in today's globalised world where technical expertise from outside talent comes handy. Ex: Former PM of India Manmohan Singh was a lateral entrant who anchored LPG reforms of 1991.
- Domain Expertise: The government's idea is to bring in domain expertise from the private sector to the Central administration which helps address the complexity of present day administration
- Augments the availability of manpower: The government also faces a shortage of IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers working on deputation in the Centre, this option of lateral entrants will help address this problem.
- To induct competitiveness: Another objective of inducting specialists is to improve efficiency and create competition in governance delivery which is criticised for being status-quoist and conservative in its functioning.
- Aligned with Liberalisation Policy: After liberalisation in 1991, markets are playing critical role in administration. In such environment, regulatory capacity of govt. is critical which depend upon the up to date knowledge of administrators, which require fresh intake from private sector.

- **Participatory Governance:** In the present times governance is becoming more participatory and multi actor endeavour, thus lateral entry provides stakeholders such as the private sector and non-profits an opportunity to participate in governance process.

However, it is quite difficult to say that lateral entry will ultimately improve governance because

- **Lack of Reservation:** Groups representing SCs, STs and OBCs have protested the fact that there is no reservation in these appointments.
- **Issue of transparency:** The key to the success of lateral entry would lie in selecting the right people in a manner which is open and transparent. The selection process conducted by credible Constitutional body like UPSC partly address this problem.
- **Incoherence in Value System:** Private sector approach is profit oriented on the other hand motive of Government is public service. This is also a fundamental transition that a private sector person has to make while working in government.
- **Internal Resistance:** Lateral entry is faces resistance from serving Civil Servants who would have worked within the system for years and in line for occupying such top level posts. A lateral entry can thus be met with resistance from the existing bureaucrats
- **Conflict of interest:** The movement from private sector raises issues of potential conflict of interest. This issue requires stringent code of conduct for entrants from private sectors to ensure conflict of interest is not detrimental to public good.
- **Lack of specific criteria:** The criteria laid out in the advertisement were broad-based, and so failed to provide a narrow window to attract people of eminence or domain experts in the fields advertised for.
- **Lack of Institutionalised Process:** Lateral entry is being done on temporary and ad hoc basis. This cannot be a sustainable model of human resource management.

### **Conclusion**

An efficient and effective administration is needed for a country to progress rapidly and therefore the quality of bureaucracy plays an important role in determining the overall performance of administration. In this context there is a need to enhance the skill sets of existing bureaucracy and the new entrants which are being recruited, while lateral entry should be focused for delivering specific goals which the traditional bureaucracy lacks today and this will ensure and equal competition between both the recruits. The mission Karmayogi and the selected lateral entry initiated by government of India are right steps in this direction.

**3. There has been an impetus on 'participative governance' in recent times. What do you understand by this concept? Is governance in India truly participative? Give your views.**

### **Approach**

Define what is participative governance. In next part mention benefits and instruments of participatory governance in India. Write some examples for steps taken in recent times. In conclusion write what more can be done in this regard.

### **Introduction**

Participatory governance is a form of democracy in which citizens are involved in the decisions about public policy that affect their lives. It gives citizens a central role in the making of particular decisions through various means like public discussion, negotiations and voting. Participatory governance strives to create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to policy-making.

### **Body**

Participatory development attempts to introduce a bottom-up style of development in order to remedy the government-led approach's shortcomings, specifically by focusing on qualitative improvements in local society's participation.

Importance of people's participation in a democracy:

- **Good governance:** People's participation is essential for good governance and is the backbone of the democratic process. When people express their views and opinions, it becomes possible for a government to effectively execute various welfare measures listening to people's grievances. It is significant in various policy and decision making processes undertaken by the government.
- **Feedback mechanism:** People's participation helps the government in understanding the viewpoints of citizens and gather feedback. This helps them to make policies implementation better and plugging various loopholes regarding various welfare measures.
- **Better policy implementation:** Without people's participation any effort made for their welfare does not give desired results. People's participation is important, especially where policy seeks to make a behaviour change. For example, Swachh Bharat abhiyan, beti bachao beti padao etc. are made successful due to the drive to involve people at a local
- **Accountability:** People's participation makes the government accountable to them. It creates a 2 way mechanism in which the government understands the issues of citizens better and people learn about government efforts in a better way. Thereby removing misunderstandings and making the government accountable and answerable to people. For example, RTI has increased accountability in government due to increased participation of citizens.

Participatory governance in India:

- Universal adult franchise which has been incorporated in India from the independence itself ensures that each citizen of the country lays an important role in governance of nation by electing the government.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions- Gram sabhas, tribal councils, autonomous districts etc. These have been instrumental in empowering people at grassroots level to take their own decisions in development of the village and district.
- Social audit: These are audits done by civil society and people who are impacted by various policies and decisions of government. It makes government accountable towards people. It also decreases corruption, saves essential resources and spur political development of people.
- Pressure groups, NGOs : The civil society in India has played a greater role in making government privy of the issues which vulnerable groups faces and also to design an effective policy. The reforms such as amendments in Dowry act, the Sati act, The right to information act all have been effectively implemented with pressure groups movement.
- Media: Media has been an important pillar to raise the voice of people, make them part of governance process by asking people's questions to the centre's of power. The amendments in criminal laws regarding sexual offences after Nirbhaya case was mainly due to media focussing on peoples demands.

Recent impetus on participatory governance in India.

- India has recently started a programme called MyGov to facilitate citizen-government dialogues on important governance matters. In this the government asks for suggestions on various policies to know what are demands of citizen.
- The digital age has empowered citizens, across all ages, to be more aware and expect more from their governments. This knowledge helps people to participate in governance.
- Right to Information Act has empowered people to understand the government in better fashion, bringing in transparency. Various acts of corruption have been exposed through RTI act where the coal case, Assam fodder scam and Adarsh scam are few examples.
- Social audits are increasingly being incorporated in legislation itself. For example MGNREGA has social audits mentioned in its act itself.
- The Mann ki bat module of Indian prime minister connects government directly to people which make people participate and share their views.
- The laws and new policies before being enacted are being released in public for elucidating views, this helps to people contribute in legislative functions.

### **Conclusion**

Participatory governance truly empowers citizens and ensures good governance. The government of India has taken various measures to increase the citizens participation in decision making over the last years. But still more needs to be done in this sector as

compared to western democracies Indian democracy still lacks in citizens participation. These can be done through

- Improving citizen competence through empowerment, and capacity building should be focused on. This will make citizens' involvement truly participative. It will help tackle the issue of proxy representation as seen in case of women members of local bodies.
- The state machinery must have an appetite to warmly accept feedback and undertake improvement mid-way through established programmes.
- Mechanisms like social auditing need to be institutionalised.

