Chapter - 2

EVOLUTION OF PANCHAYAT RAJ SYSTEM IN KARNATAKA

This chapter throws light on the evolution of Panchayats in Karnataka. The tracing of its origin is useful in understanding the status and situation of local governments in the past, the changes that have taken place over the years and the comparative advantages of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, etc. Keeping these imperatives in the background, this chapter makes an attempt to study the attempts made earlier to evolve the local governance system in the state, the structure adopted, functions, powers and resources devolved to Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Development of Panchayats in Karnataka

The Village Panchayat System had been in vogue in ancient India for the purpose of administering justice, looking after other village affairs and promoting community life among villagers. In the erstwhile Mysore, which is now part of larger Karnataka, the emergence of local self-governance dates back to 1862. During this period a ‘Local Fund’ was established mainly to execute roads and other public infrastructure. To strengthen these bodies ‘Local Fund Committees’ were established in each district during 1874. The District Collectors (DCs) were made head of these committees. This
arrangement had naturally discouraged the non-official members and the public to participate in these committees. The government of Mysore had passed an act viz., 'The Mysore Local Boards Act, 1902', envisaging a three-tier system of local self-governments. The structure created then was Village Panchayat (VP) at the village level, Taluk Board (TB) at the taluk/block level and District Board (DB) at the district level. The officials at the respective levels were made chairmen of these bodies. The working of these bodies, however, did not come upto the expected level. Instead of becoming instrumental in the development of rural areas, they became only consultative bodies. The process of strengthening local self-government institutions received further impetus with the appointment of the Royal Commission on decentralization in 1907 headed by C.E.H. Hobhouse.

The reforms in the local self-governments which were taking place at that time especially in Madras Presidency influenced the then Mysore government to enact 'Mysore Local Boards and Village Panchayats Act, 1918, in response to the Montague-Chelmsford Committee's recommendation\(^1\). There was some improvement in the local governance during this period because non-officials were made vice-presidents at each level of government and powers and functions and finances were devolved to execute infrastructure works and to provide basic amenities.

The reform process further continued and by the end of 1927, the elected representatives were made presidents of these local bodies. Inspite of all these developments, the local governments were not without problems. There were financial constraints especially at the district board level. The reluctance on the part of princely rulers to provide required impetus was mainly due to the threat perceived to their leadership from these institutions. Thus, there was no encouragement and support for the growth of these local bodies during 1930s and 1940s.

In the process of Panchayat reforms, the period from 1949 to 1954 was of great importance, because the government constituted two expert committees during the period to look into the problems of local bodies and to suggest ways and means to strengthen them. The first committee headed by Sri Venkatappa, known as 'Integration and Coordination Committee, 1950', suggested a two-tier system with group Panchayat at the lower level and district board at the district level. It also recommended indirect election of members to the district boards i.e., these members to be elected from among the members of the group panchayats. Following these recommendations, the government passed 'The Mysore Village Panchayats and District Boards Act, 1952'. Before implementing the act, the other committee headed by D. Chandrashekaraiah, known as 'Local Boards Enquiry Committee' was set up.

The committee which examined the working of local bodies submitted its report in the year 1954. It recommended, among other things, a three-tier Panchayat system with Village Panchayat at the lower level, Taluk Board at the block/taluk level and District Board at the district level. The other important recommendations of this committee were to treat the District and Taluk Boards as "Executive Bodies" and these bodies were to be assisted by a special agency to implement public works. The recommendations of these committees could not be put into practice as the state reorganization had kept everybody busy.

**Panchayats under 1959 Act**

The experience gained from the past experiment in the local self governance and the timely report of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee at the national level provided a broad base to enact a new law for constituting a three-tier system of local self-governments by the reorganized Mysore state. The state, to put into action the Mehta's recommendations, passed a new legislation viz., 'The Mysore Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act, 1959'. On the basis of this act, a three-tier system viz., Village Panchayat at the village level, Taluk Development Board (TDB) at the block/taluk level and District Development Council (DDC) at the district level were established. Of the three tiers, the Village Panchayats and TDBs were given executive powers, whereas the DDCs were made only advisory and coordination bodies.


The membership of Village Panchayats and TDBs consisted of directly elected representatives from the people. On the other hand, the membership of DDCs consisted of all presidents of the TDBs, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and officials of the district concerned. There was a provision for reservation seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) and women at the lower level institutions. The functions of Village Panchayats included among others, civic developments and regulatory functions. The functions entrusted to TDBs were maintenance of primary school buildings, minor irrigation, drinking water works, industry, agriculture and some regulatory functions. The Village Panchayats apart from a share in the land revenue, enjoyed certain tax powers such as tax on property, tax on land, entertainment tax, fee on bus stands etc. In contrast to this, the tax powers given to TDBs were limited and they mainly depended on the state grant and in particular on the 50 per cent of the land revenue collected in the taluk. The main functions of DDCs comprised of approval of the budgets, review and co-ordination of the works of TDBs.

Thus, the post 1959 system had a marked change compared to the system that existed prior to 1959. The conspicuous changes introduced were reservation to the vulnerable sections of population in the local bodies and devolution of civic and developmental functions. However, in spite of these the functioning of these bodies was not satisfactory. The factors responsible for their unsatisfactory performance were the absence of active involvement of SC/STs and other backward caste members in the decision-making process, insufficient finances to carry out the
diverse panchayat functions and the lack of planning expertise. It was pointed out that, the members belonging to other backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women did not make any impact on the power structure. And their presence and participation, notably in the meetings, was not upto the desired extent. Further, it may be noted that a majority of panchayat members as also those in authority positions hailed from two dominant communities viz., Lingayats and Vokkaligas. Their share in the total membership in the TDBs was 27.72 and 23.18 per cent respectively. These developments in the working of Panchayat Raj Institutions not only in the state but also in other states paved the way for constituting an expert committee, by the central government in the year 1978, under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta. The committee recommended, among others, a two tier Panchayat Raj system with Zilla Parishad at the district level and Mandal Panchayat at the lower level for a group of villages. A change of government at the centre in the late 1970s led to this report being kept in abeyance. However, a few states including Karnataka, initiated action in the early 1980s to open up a new era in the realm of democratic decentralization based on this report.


Panchayats in the 1980s (The Phase of Revolution)

When Panchayat Raj Institutions were on the decline, the report of Ashok Mehta came in handy for those leaders who were inclined to revive the system. Karnataka state was one among the few states which had shown interest, and initiated action towards, establishing decentralized local bodies in the early 1980s. The then leaders committed to the system enacted 'The Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluk Panchayat Samithis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act, 1983'. This act got the president's assent on 10th July 1985. Based on this act, a three-tier Panchayat System viz., Zilla Parishad (ZP) at the district level, Taluk Panchayat Samithi (TPS) at the block/taluk level and Mandal Panchayats (MP) at the lower level were established in the entire state in the year 1987. Though, a three-tier system was established, actual executive powers were given higher level tiers like Zilla Parishad, Taluk Panchayat and the Mandal Panchayat were made advisory and coordination bodies. This system was basically a replica of the Ashok Mehta Committee recommendation with elected bodies at village and district level and an ex-officio body at the block/taluk level.

The unique features of the system were reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and for women; delegation of a large number of development functions and responsibilities to Zilla Parishads and Mandal Panchayats;

merging of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) with Zilla Parishad. Further, the state government transferred as many as 350 plan schemes to panchayats for implementation. Equally important was the devolution of substantial plan and non-plan grants to these bodies to perform their functions effectively and efficiently. To facilitate the rural youth to participate in district governance, the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 years.

**Grama Sabha**

Grama Sabha is the basic tier of the system and is a college comprising of all eligible voters under the Panchayat Raj System, i.e., all persons above the age of 18 years of the village. Grama Sabha was constituted for each of the revenue village. It is required by law to meet not less than twice a year. The functions of this forum was to discuss and review all developmental issues of the village, to select beneficiaries under beneficiary oriented programme and also to review the accounts and audit reports. The Pradhan (President) of the Mandal Panchayat was to preside over the Grama Sabha meeting and in his absence the Upapradhan (Vice-President) was to take charge. The Secretary of the Mandal Panchayat was required to make all arrangements for the Grama Sabha and to prepare agenda also.

**Mandal Panchayat**

The Mandal Panchayat was the first elected tier of the system. It was entrusted with all the civic functions, powers and responsibility for the development and welfare programmes. The number of seats would be one for every 400 population. There were
2536 Mandals with 55188 elected members. The 25 per cent of the seats were reserved for women and 18 per cent for SC/STs. The Mandal covered a group of villages with a population between 8000 and 12000 suitably reduced for the malnad i.e., hilly areas. The Pradhan and Upapradhan were elected indirectly i.e., from among the elected members. The Mandal Panchayat was entrusted with some tax and non-tax powers. The important tax sources would be property tax, entertainment tax, site tax etc. The state government provided rupees 10 per capita grant per annum. Besides, the Mandal Panchayat used to get Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) grant from the centre.

**Taluk Panchayat Samiti**

The Taluk Panchayat Samithi (TPS) was a middle level tier constituted at the taluk level. It was purely a nominated body comprising of ex-officio members, i.e., all Pradhans of Mandals in the taluk, all MLAs/MLCs representing any part of the taluk, members of Zilla Parishad representing any part of the taluk, Presidents of the Taluk Agricultural Producers Co-Operative Marketing Society (TAPCMS) and Primary Land Development Bank (PLDB), five members belonging top SCs/STs, backward classes and women. The MLA representing the major part of the taluk was the chairman of the Taluk Panchayat Samithi. Its functions mainly consisted of advisory, supervisory, review and co-ordination of MPs budgets, plans and works.
Zilla Parishad

The Zilla Parishad (ZP) was the second directly elected tier among the panchayat structure. Its functions, responsibilities and powers were to formulate plans and to act as head of the district’s development and welfare administration. Zilla Parishad comprised of directly elected members, members of parliament and members of the state legislature whose constituency covered the district or a part thereof. Zilla Parishad had one seat for every 28000 population except Kodagu Zilla Parishad, which had one seat for every 12000 population. The Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha of Zilla Parishad were elected indirectly i.e., from among the elected members. The Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha were made equivalent to minister of state and state minister rank respectively. The Adhyaksha was the executive head of the Zilla Parishad. The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), which was implementing a large number of anti-poverty programmes at the district, was merged with the Zilla Parishad.

In deciding the devolution of schemes to the Panchayats, the principle observed was that all schemes with a Mandal orientation, would be transferred to the Mandal Panchayat; all schemes with an inter-mandal, inter-taluk stood transferred to the Zilla Parishad; the schemes which remained in the state sector were with a pronounced inter-district nature. The entire special component plan and the tribal sub-plan were handed over to the Zilla Parishads for implementation.

A senior IAS officer designated as ‘Chief Secretary’ headed the official machinery of the Zilla Parishad. The chief secretary of the Zilla Parishad was invariably senior in rank to the Deputy
Commissioner of the district. Each Zilla Parishad had a strong accounting and internal audit set up under a Chief Accounts Officer (CAO). The Zilla Parishad had a planning cell of experts headed by a Chief Planning Officer (CPO). The district level officers with their supporting staff of all development departments were brought under the control of Zilla Parishad. Each Mandal Panchayat had a Secretary and the Village Extension Worker/Agricultural Assistant on deputation from government. Mandals were entrusted with powers to locally appoint other subordinate category staff such as Bill Collector, Attender, Sweepers, Watchman, etc. with the prior approval of the chief secretary of the Zilla Parishad.

**Finances of Zilla Parishads and Mandal Panchayats**

The Zilla Parishad had no taxation powers. Its resources constituted only State and Central government grants. However, they had freedom to mobilize non-tax sources of different kinds such as rent from the buildings, income from trees (from auction of trees), fisheries, etc. On the contrary, Mandal Panchayats were endowed with both independent tax and non-tax sources and government grants. The important tax powers entrusted to Mandal Panchayat included tax on houses, sites, shop, etc., tax on mines, water cess, tax on factories, etc. Besides, the Mandal Panchayats were assigned a share in the stamp duty. The grants comprised of Rs. 7.5 per capita grant from the state and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) grant from the centre. The plan grants were distributed to Zilla Parishads on the basis of 12 criteria with different weightages and a more simple formula (based on the modified ‘Gadgil Formula’) was used to distribute grants to Mandal Panchayat.
As a result of all these facilities, planning was done from the village level upwards and its impact was felt because of effective implementation of rural development programmes. A testimony to this was the report given by the committee headed by K.S. Krishnaswamy appointed by the state government in the year 1989. The committee gave a good account of the working of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in the state. Further, the State Government had appointed a committee under the chairmanship of R.M. Honnavar in the year 1987 to look into the resource needs of the state and the Panchayat Raj Institutions and also to suggest the distribution of fiscal powers and sharing of taxes/grants between the state and panchayats and between the panchayats within the tier.

Post 73rd Constitutional Amendment Period

After the passing of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in the year 1992, establishment of three-tier Panchayat Raj Institutions in the states (two-tier in the case of small states) became mandatory. Consequently, Karnataka government enacted ‘The Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993’ replacing the earlier 1983 act. According to the new act, a three-tier structure of Panchayat Raj, namely Grama Panchayat (GP) at the lower level, Taluk Panchayat (TP) at the block / taluk level and Zilla Panchayat (ZP) at the district level were established throughout the state in the years 1994 and 1995. The Act also provided for the constitution of Grama Sabha.


for every village, which has to meet twice a year. The President of
the Grama Panchayat and in his absence the vice-president had to
preside over the Grama Sabha meetings. The purpose of a Grama
Sabha was to involve local people in decision-making relating to
their village needs and problems. If we compare the present
functions of Grama Sabha with those of 1983 Act, everything
appears to be common.

**Panchayats' Structure and Powers**

**Grama Panchayat**

A Grama Panchayat is constituted for a population of 5000 to
7000 as well as four to seven villages. One Grama Panchayat
member represents around 400 people. The President and
Vice-President are elected indirectly from among the elected
members. The President is the ‘executive head’ of the Grama
Panchayat. The term of the President and Vice-President is five
years (now reduced to 20 months). There will be one full time
government official called ‘Secretary’ to carry out the orders of the
Grama Panchayat and functions entrusted to it. Apart from this,
the Grama Panchayat had powers to appoint certain personnel
such as bill collectors, watermen, sweepers, etc., on the ad hoc
basis and they could be paid only nominal salary.

**Taluk Panchayat**

A Taluk Panchayat is constituted for each of the taluk in the
State. Elections were held for this institution in the early 1995.
Each elected member represents a population of ten thousand. The
President and Vice-President are elected indirectly from among the
members. The MPs, MLAs, MLCs and Adhyakshas of Taluk
Panchayat (one-fifth by annual rotation) under the jurisdiction of Taluk Panchayat are also members of the Taluk Panchayat. The term of office of the President and Vice-President as per the original Act, was five years. However, through an amendment, their term of office has been reduced to 20 months. The President is the 'executive head' of the Taluk Panchayat. The administration wing of the Taluk Panchayat is headed by a Class-I officer namely 'Executive Officer' and he is assisted by a Block Development Officer and other extension officers.

**Zilla Panchayat**

The Zilla Panchayat is established in each of the districts in the State. Originally there were 20 Zilla Panchayats but as a result of bifurcation of certain districts, their number has gone upto 27. The Zilla Panchayat is composed of the members elected directly from among the voters. The MPs, MLAs, MLCs and Presidents of Zilla Panchayat (one-fifth by rotation) in the district are also members of the Zilla Panchayat. Each elected member represents a population of 40,000. This criterion is relaxed in the Malnad districts. The election of President and Vice-President, their term of office and powers are the same as that of the Taluk Panchayat. The administrative wing is headed by the 'Chief Executive Officer' (CEO) of a rank of IAS. However, a recent government policy makes the state cadre (KAS) officials to be appointed as CEOs. The CEO is assisted by a host of other specialized personnel. They are accountable to the President of Zilla Panchayat. The organizational structure of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the state is depicted in Chart 2.1.
Chart 2.1. Organizational Structure of Three-Tier Panchayat in Karnataka

Zilla Panchayat

- People's government
  - President
  - Vice-president
  - Elected members and Ex-officio members

- Development Administration (CEO – IAS and non-IAS)

Deputy Secretary (Administration) → Deputy Secretary (Development) → Chief Accounts Officer → Chief Planning Secretary → Council Secretary → Engineering Wing

- Assistant Secretary
- Assistant Secretary
- Accounts Officer (Two)
- Project Appraisal and Evaluation Officer

District Level Departmental Heads

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Fisheries
- Forest
- Health
- Education
- Sericulture
- Animal husbandry
- Co-operation
- Others
Functions of Panchayat Raj Institutions

In the devolution of functions across the tiers, the principle followed was that all schemes related to a village orientation were transferred to Grama Panchayat; the schemes with an inter-village were transferred to the Zilla Panchayats. Keeping this principle, the State has assigned a large number of important functions to the panchayats. Under the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, Schedule-I assigns 30 functions to the Grama Panchayats, Schedule-II assigns 29 functions to Taluk Panchayats and Schedule-III assigns 30 functions to Zilla Panchayats. The functions entrusted to three-tier system of panchayats are shown in Appendix 2.1. These functions relate to provision of basic amenities, information and functions in development sectors like agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, health, education, etc. In fact, the functions and power of Grama Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats are delegated to them by the State Government in accordance with the provisions of Article 243(G) of the eleventh schedule of the constitution. The state government has transferred more than 600 state and centrally sponsored schemes (plan and non-plan) to panchayats for implementation. Further, the government has allocated different plan schemes to the Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats to correspond to the functions assigned to them in Schedules I, II and III of the Panchayats Raj Act, 1993. Again, certain functions have been revised and reallocated between the Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats on the basis of the recommendations of a 'High Power Committee' for Redressal of Regional Imbalances which was headed by D.M. Nanjundappa.
To an extent, this has solved the problem of overlapping of certain functions across the tiers.

**Staff Position in Panchayat Raj Institutions**

The administrative set up that existed before the establishment of panchayats i.e., the departments at the district and taluk levels have been merged with the respective levels of the panchayats. Presently, a total of 3.43 lakh personnel are working in all the three-tier panchayats. Further, the total emoluments of these personnel accounted for Rs. 261687 lakh in the year 1999-2000. The staff strength of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Karnataka and sector wise emoluments can be seen in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Strength and Emoluments of Panchayat Staff in Karnataka during 1999-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale (Rs.)</th>
<th>Staff Strength of PRIs in Karnataka</th>
<th>Sector-wise Emoluments (Rs. in lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan (Nos.)</td>
<td>Non-plan (Nos.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6646.68</td>
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<td>General Education</td>
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<td>150534.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Youth Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>147.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Public Health</td>
<td>3767.87</td>
<td>24828.29</td>
</tr>
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<td>Family Welfare</td>
<td>6624.79</td>
<td>538.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilla Panchayat Housing</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare of SC/STs and BCM</td>
<td>437.08</td>
<td>5308.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Finances of Panchayat Raj Institutions

In Karnataka, each Grama Panchayat has been given some independent powers of taxation and a fixed statutory grant of Rs. 1.5 lakh per annum. This grant has been increased to Rs. 3.5 lakh in the year 2001-02. They also receive Jawahar Grama Samrudhi Yojana (JGSY) grant from the Central Government.
The 10th and 11th Finance Commissions have also provided grants. Their main tax powers consist of house and site tax, water cess, factory tax, entertainment tax etc. On the other hand, the Taluk Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats have no independent powers of taxation. The Taluk Panchayats however, receive a 3 per cent (surcharge) share in the stamp duty every year. The Zilla Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats largely depend upon the grants from the state for plan and non-plan purposes. A lump-sum allocation is indicated in advance to each Zilla Panchayat as its plan outlay. The Zilla Panchayat in turn makes the allocation to the Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats under its jurisdiction. In respect of non-plan schemes the state government fully meets the requirements of salary, maintenance of assets and other essential services transferred to Panchayat Raj Institutions. On an average 25 per cent of the state plan outlay (state and central share) is being transferred to the panchayats since 1994-95. The non-plan grants being transferred to panchayats amount to a larger sum than that of plan grants. The State Government allocates grants to Zilla Panchayats on the basis of certain criteria adopted during 1987. Further, for allocation of grants from Zilla Panchayat to Taluk Panchayats within the district a new set of criteria has been adopted since 1998.

As far as Grama Panchayats are concerned, the state government is making Rs. 3.5 lakh grant per annum to every Grama Panchayat uniformly. JGSY grant is distributed among the Grama Panchayats on the basis of SC/ST population of the respective Grama Panchayat.
State Finance Commission

As per the Article 243(l) of the 73rd Act, every state has to constitute a ‘State Finance Commission’ (SFC) to look into the financial needs of the State and the Panchayat Raj Institutions, and to distribute tax resources and grants between the State and Panchayat Raj Institutions and between the panchayats. The State Government had appointed a First SFC under the chairmanship of G. Thimmaiah in the year 1994, which submitted its report in the year 1996. Among others, the First SFC recommendations include: no tax powers for middle and the district level tiers; transfer of 36 per cent of the state’s total Non-Loan Gross Own Revenue Receipts (NLGORR) to Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) every year. The share of rural local bodies was 85 per cent; the shares of the three-tiers in the total Panchayat Raj Institutions plan grants are 40:35:25 for Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats respectively. The First SFC has suggested five criteria, with varying weightages, for the distribution of grants from the state to the panchayats. These are i. Proportion of rural population (23.03 per cent); ii. Proportion of rural area (32.59 per cent); iii. Road length per sq. km (8.34 per cent) and iv. Illiteracy rate and number of persons per hospital bed (20.34 per cent)\textsuperscript{12}. The state government has accepted a few of the recommendations, which are as follows, transfer of 36 per cent of State’s total NLGORR to Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies. The five criteria suggested for the distribution

of grants were also considered and yet a few have not been considered for implementation\textsuperscript{13}.

Further, the State Government had appointed Second State Finance Commission under the chairmanship of K.P. Surendranath in the year Feb. 2002, which submitted its report in Dec. 2002. The Second SFC recommended that the Zilla Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats should not be allowed to impose and collect taxes. It further, recommended that 48 per cent of State's total Non-Loan Gross Own Revenue Receipts (NLGORR) should be transferred to Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies for every year and share of rural local bodies was 80 per cent. The devolution scheme recommended by First SFC in the ratio of 40:35:25 to Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats respectively has not been accepted by the state government. The second SFC felt that the divide between plan and non-plan allocations has to be recognized and taken into account in the context of following ground realities i.e., i. Zilla Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats which do not have their own sources of revenue must be empowered by the state government to impose and collect tax revenue, ii. They are responsible to implement programmes under non-plan head, iii. Major components of budgetary provision under non-plan expenditure are towards payment of salaries. On the basis of present position, the non-plan allocation to Panchayat Raj Institutions has to be gradually enhanced. One more interesting recommendation by the second SFC is that the state government

should make a grant of Rs. 3.50 lakh to every Grama Panchayat annually. It further, argued that this grant has to be raised by Rs. 25,000 per Grama Panchayat every year over a period of five years.

The second SFC has suggested five criteria with verifying weightages for the distribution of grants from the State to the panchayats, which is different from weightages given by first SFC. They are, i. Proportion of rural population (19.81 per cent), ii. Proportion of rural areas (29.33 per cent), iii. Proportion of rural SC/STs population (11.75 per cent), iv. Proportion of rural illiterates (12.03 per cent) and v. Ratio of rural population per hospital bed (7.50 per cent)

State Panchayat Council

A State Panchayat Council has been constituted to act as a forum for elected representatives to voice their aspirations and offer their suggestions to improve the Panchayat Raj System and make it more responsive to the people’s needs. The State Panchayat Council consists of several persons, the details are as under,

Table 2.2. State Panchayat Council Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Person In-charge</th>
<th>No. of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Chief Minister</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Vice-chairman</td>
<td>Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister for Primary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister for Revenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister for Law and Parliament Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adhyaksha of the all Zilla Panchayats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Secretary (RD and PR Department)</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing analysis that drastic changes have occurred in the evolution of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Karnataka over a period of time. The present system has elected bodies at all the three levels; a large number of functions have been provided at all the three levels; a large number of functions have been delegated; reservation for the vulnerable sections have been provided at all the three levels both for ordinary seats and for authority position; large volume of grants have also been devolved. The administration of these bodies has been strengthened by deputing state personnel to these bodies and made the personnel accountable to the elected body. A Finance Commission was set up to look into the finances of both State and the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Some innovative programmes such as ‘Panchayat Jamabandi’ (Social Audit) introduced to make these institutions more effective, transparent and accountable.