

Origin And Development Of Localself Governance With Special Reference To Tirunelveli District: A Historical Study

J. Jeya Kasthuri¹ , Dr. R. Selvaraju²

¹ Reg No:21214011092011, Full-Time Ph.D Research Scholar,
Department of History, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

² Associate Professor & Head, Department of History
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

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Abstract

This article is to highlight the origin and development of local self-government with reference to Tirunelveli district. At present, the local self-government acts and also serves a significant role in Tamil Nadu. There is literary evidence of the Panchayat system during their time. The councilors investigated the crimes that occurred in the towns and administered justice. This article is focused on understanding the genesis and growth of local self-government with reference to Tirunelveli district.

Key Words: Local self government, Panchayats, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Tirunelveli Municipality

Introduction

After India's independence, Gandhi wanted to revive the Panchayat system. Many state governments have enacted Panchayat laws across India. Due to a lack of access to resources in practice, the old Panchayat acts were abolished during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister, and new Panchayat acts were enacted across the country by 1994. The new Panchayat act was introduced in India. The Panchayats Act was enacted in 1994 in Tamil Nadu as well. Many leaders of the Dravidian movement, including today's Humble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, opposed this. There are many reasons for that. Some of them can be seen through various Panchayat laws enacted in India. As per the Tamil Nadu Municipal Act 28 of 1994, Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation was established in 1994.

Panchayat system in early Tamil Nadu

Pallavas ruled the Tamil country for around 500 years. Under their system of governance, the Panchayat system was more expanded than before village councilors conducted village affairs. Boards and subcommittees were formed. During the Pallava period, Uravai collected taxes. In the middle ages, the Kalabhras dominated the Tamil region.

During the Chola period, the Panchayat council was divided into five boards. The Kudavolai system was used to elect the members. Qualifications for electing Gram Sabha members were specified. It also had rules for the unfit. From the Uttaramerur inscription and many other inscriptions, we come to know that local government systems have been functioning in Tamil Nadu since ancient times. We know from history that these village republics have developed well, functioned in a balanced manner, and functioned as a basic administrative system for society.

During the Pandya period, Gramma Sabha played a vital role in the Panchayat system. The Manur inscription mentioned it. There was no major change in the Panchayat system in Tamil Nadu during the Nayak regime. They called the town by many names, like Patti, Gudi, Kurichi, Mangalam, Samudram, and Pattinam. The cases were

settled by the panchayats without referring them to the courts. We know that during the Nayak period, they collected land tax, marriage tax, prostitute tax, et cetera.

British rule

The British rule concentrated the power that was widespread among the villagers in the hands of the government. The powers of the village council were taken away. Approaching the courts for justice becomes influential.

After Independence

After the independence of our country, the Panchayat Act was passed in 1950, and Panchayats started functioning independently for the economic development of the country. As a result of their successful implementation, the villages were well developed, and the work of many projects like the national development plan, the community development plan, and the local development plan was completed quickly. In view of the rejuvenation of the people and with the aim of making people participate more in community development projects, the Panchayats Act was enacted in 1958, thereby creating organizations called Panchayats, Panchayat unions, and district Panchayat councils, in which many departments were entrusted to them to meet the needs and expectations of the people. Worked with the full participation of people's representatives.

The legal perspective on the representation rights of Panchayat council, parliament, and legislature members in local bodies is different in each state. Should the right to elect and remove the heads and mayors of Panchayats, municipalities, and corporations that are part of the local government bodies be given to the members of parliament and assembly? Any Indian citizen will answer 'no' to this question. In a judgment delivered by the Rajasthan High Court on July 15, 1999, it was held that the members of the parliament and legislature of a municipality, even if they are not elected, should remove the mayor or municipal leaders.

Since the day when the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi government tried to give constitutional status to Panchayats and municipalities, M.B.M.L., there has been a consensus that the A's do not need representation there. A model of this is found in the amendment bill brought in May 1989. Honorable former prime ministers, VP Singh, P.V. The status quo was maintained during the Narasimha Rao regime.

However, there is a lot of confusion when it comes to talk, or district-level Panchayats, district parishes, and municipalities. They play an important role in large-scale systemic change aimed at strengthening democracy at the local level. Although Rajiv Gandhi is proud of these two pre-legislative forms for Panchayats and municipalities, there are some contradictions between them. Under the Draft Panchayats Act, Panchayat administration between village and district-level Panchayats, MPs, and A.M.L. states is left to exercise their discretion in granting representation without the right to vote for A.S. However, there is no such category of representation in the Municipal Corporation Act. As a follow-up to the amendment process, according to the Narasimha Rao government, two bills were brought again, one for Panchayats and one for municipalities. There is no change in their main objectives.

In the intervening period, the village local government systems were disintegrated and degraded under the rule of the British. But during British rule, the Local Board Act was passed in 1884 by the initiative of Lord Ripon Brown, and Zilla Board and Unions were formed at the village level. These also underwent different changes over time.

Committees

Various committees were formed to make recommendations for the implementation of local self-government in India. They are

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957)

In 1957, a committee was formed under the leadership of Bal want Rai Mehta. The Community Development Projects and the National Extension Service assessed the extent to which the movement had succeeded in utilizing local initiatives and in creating institutions to ensure continuity in the process of improving economic and social conditions in rural areas. The Committee held that community development would only be deep and enduring when the community was involved in the planning, decision-making, and implementation processes. The suggestions were for the following:

- an early establishment of elected local bodies and devolution to them of necessary resources, power, and authority,

- that the basic unit of democratic decentralization was at the block/samiti level since the area of jurisdiction of the local body should neither be too large nor too small. The block was large enough for efficiency and economy of administration and small enough to sustain a sense of citizen involvement.
- Such a body must not be constrained by too much control by the government or government agencies.
- The body must be constituted for five years by indirect elections from the village panchayats.
- Its functions should cover the development of agriculture in all its aspects, the promotion of local industries, and others.
- services such as drinking water, road building, etc., and
- The higher-level body, Zilla Parishad, would play an advisory role.

G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985)

The Planning Commission appointed the G.V.K. Rao Committee to once again look at various aspects of PRIs. The Committee was of the opinion that a total view of rural development must be taken in which PRIs must play a central role in handling people's problems. It recommended the following:

- PRIs have to be activated and provided with all the required support to become effective organizations.
- PRIs at the district level and below should be assigned the work of planning, implementing, and monitoring rural development programs.
- The block development office should be the spinal cord of the rural development process.
- District development commissioner to be introduced.
- Election should be conducted regularly. This is one of the main topics that the GVK Rao Committee focused on.

Objectives of the Panchayat Union Organization

In our country, 74 percent of people live in villages. 80 percent of the people depend on agriculture and related industries for their livelihood. After the country gained independence, the Panchayat Union Development Administration was established in 100 villages or areas with a population of more than 66,000 to alleviate the poverty of the people, increase employment in the villages, and raise the standard of living of the Rama people. Through this, they implemented the first development plan. Its main objectives

1. Encouraging the people to provide basic facilities themselves, participate in the projects themselves, complete the tasks themselves, and meet the basic needs of the village.
2. To implement all the projects of agriculture, livestock, fishery, irrigation, industry, cooperative, housing, education, health, etc. in the village, the technical officers of respective departments should work together, implement the projects under the leadership of the regional development officer, and do the necessary benefits for the daily lives of the people.

After the initiation of these schemes in 1952, after a period of about five years, the work done by these organizations in the villages was examined. Accordingly, according to the recommendations of the Balvantrai Mehta Committee and the Ashok Mehta Committee, which examined the progress of the National Development Plans established by the Central Government and claimed that the welfare programs were carried out by government officials and that people did not show much interest and participation in them, they set up three levels of democratic institutions in the villages, with elected representatives in them. They said that if the basic facilities needed by the people are implemented in consultation with the people, the welfare schemes will be better. Based on that, there are three levels of Panchayat organizations, namely the village Panchayat and the Panchayat union. District Development Forums were established, and these systems were functioning in Tamil Nadu as well.

In order for democracy to spread to the villages, to develop the villages, to expand the villages without concentration of power and economy, and to enable the people to participate in the political administration, as per the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Political System Act, the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, based on the village Panchayat, Panchayat Union, and District Panchayats have been created.

Therefore, it is expected that the Panchayat union, which has been established in the past, should carry out poverty alleviation projects and take steps to raise the standard of living of the people, with the intention of fulfilling the purpose of the Panchayat union development works that were entrusted to the Panchayat unions.

Legal framework

The following laws and subsequent amendments were passed to implement the selected recommendations of various committees.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992)

The idea that produced the 73rd Amendment was not a response to pressure from the grassroots but to an increasing recognition that the institutional initiatives of the preceding decade had not delivered, that the extent of rural poverty was still much too large, and thus the existing structure of government needed to be reformed. This idea evolved from the Center and the state governments. It was a political drive to see PRIs as a solution to the governmental crises that India was experiencing.

The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act, passed in 1992 by the [Narasimha Rao](#) government, came into force on April 24, 1993. It was meant to provide constitutional sanction to establish "democracy at the grassroots level, as it is at the state or national level." Its main features are as follows:

- ❖ The Gram Sabha, or village assembly, as a deliberative body for decentralized governance has been envisaged as the foundation of the Panchayati Raj System. The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution empowered the Gram Sabhas to conduct social audits in addition to their other functions.
- ❖ A uniform three-tier structure of panchayats at village (Gram Panchayat—GPP), intermediate or block (Panchayat Samiti—PPS) and district (Zilla Parishad—ZZP) levels.
- ❖ All the seats in a panchayat at every level are to be filled by elections from respective territorial constituencies.
- ❖ Not less than one-third of the total seats for membership as well as the office of chairpersons for each tier have to be reserved for women.
- ❖ Reservations for weaker castes and tribes (SCs and STs) have to be provided at all levels in proportion to their population in the panchayats.
- ❖ To supervise, direct, and control the regular and smooth elections to panchayats, the State Election Commission Act has ensured the constitution of a State Finance Commission in every state or UT for every five years to suggest measures to strengthen the finances of panchayati Raj institutions.
- ❖ To promote bottom-up planning, the District Planning Committee (DPC) in every district has been accorded constitutional status.
- ❖ An indicative list of 29 items has been given in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. Panchayats are expected to play an effective role in the planning and implementation of works related to these 29 items.

97th Constitutional Amendment Act (2011)

Cooperative Societies are taken under "Local Government" after the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011, under Dr. Manmohan Singh's government. Part-IX of the Indian Constitution is related to local government, under which Panchayat Raj was defined. After the 74th Amendment, municipal corporations and councils were included and defined by inducing Part IX-A, and in 2011, cooperative societies were included in local government by inducing Part IX-B in the Constitution.

The 97th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2011 provided for amendment in the following ways:

1. It amended Article 19(1)c by inserting after the word 'or unions' the words 'or cooperative societies'.
2. It also inserted Article 43B in Part IV of the Constitution as "The State shall endeavor to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control, and professional management of cooperative societies."
3. After Part IX-A of the Constitution, Part IX-B was inserted. Part IX-B extends from Article 243ZH to Article 243ZT.

Local Self-Government in Tirunelveli District

According to the Report of 2017, in Tirunelveli, there were 425 town panchayats with 2,866 villas on the provincial side, and in the metropolitan region, there were 37 town panchayats, 7 districts, and 1 partnership. In 2019, the Tenkasi region was made up of the Tirunelveli Area.

Tirunelveli is managed by the Municipal **Corporation**, as laid out on June 1, 1994, by the Civil Company Act. The city covers an area of 189.9 km² (73.3 sq mi) and holds a population of 473,637 in 2011. The complete population after considering different districts is 968,984. As of now, Tirunelveli is one of the metropolitan partnerships in Tamil Nadu. It has three regions, in particular Ambasamudram, Vickramasingapuram, and Kalakad. Seventeen town Panchayats.

Establishment of a Municipal Corporation for the City of Tirunelveli

1. With impact on and from the date of the beginning of this promotion, the neighborhood in the Tirunelveli District will comprise the City of Tirunelveli for reasons for this demonstration; furthermore, from the date of the initiation, a metropolitan partnership will be considered to have been laid out for the expressed city by the name of Tirunelveli Civil Company: Given that the public authority may, now and again, after counsel with the partnership, by warning, change the constraints of the city comprised under this sub-segment to incorporate in that or to prohibit accordingly the regions determined in the notice, given further that the ability to give a notice under this sub-segment will be dependent upon past distribution,.
2. The company will, by the said name, be a body corporate, having never-ending progression and a typical seal with the ability to secure, hold, and discard property and to go into contracts, and May, by its corporate name, sue and be sued.
3. The Tirunelveli Region, working prior to the date of the initiation of this demonstration, will be considered to have been annulled from such an initiation.
4. Municipal Authorities
5. The municipal authorities charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act shall be:
6. Mayor
7. Council
8. Standing Committee
9. Commissioner and
10. Wards Committee
11. Conclusion
12. Local Government and Infrastructure Tirunelveli Civil Partnership is liable for the city, the two adjoining regions of Palayamkottai and Melapalayam, and twelve different towns of around 20,000 people each. The company is responsible for 475 miles of streets. Most are single carriageways; however, the Public Parkway NH7 to the port town of Thoothukudi is a double carriageway. Mechanized vehicle possession for the area in 2011 was 24% of families for bikes and 3% for four-wheelers. 33% of drives to work involve walking. In Tirunelveli, bike proprietorships arrived at the midpoint of 46% of families. In 2015, 650 transports were worked in Tirunelveli Area by the Tamil Nadu State Organization, and 275 were enlisted with private administrators, as well as 250 smaller than normal transports. There were 4,000 taxicabs, 3,000 maxicabs, and north of 8,500 enrolled auto-carts. The typical family size in Tamil Nadu is 3.5 people. 55% of families don't have their own latrine.

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