



APRIL 2025

SUMMARY OF

# KURUKSHETRA

Empowering Women's Leadership in PRI's

Contours of Devolution to Panchayats

The Decade of Empowering PRI's

Water Management Through PRI'S

SVAMITVA: Unlocking Economic Growth & Property Rights

# PANCHAYATI RAJ



NEW DELHI | AHMEDABAD | ANAND | BHUBANESWAR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | GANDHINAGAR | HYDERABAD | INDORE |  
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## TOPIC 1: STRENGTHENING RURAL INDIA: THE POWER OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN PANCHAYATS

### Introduction

The decentralization of governance through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as grassroots democratic bodies. However, effective devolution requires more than structural reforms—it demands continuous capacity building. This article explores how targeted training, leadership development, institutional collaborations, and innovative schemes like the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) have strengthened the capacity of PRIs, enabling them to align with Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) and bridge the governance gap in rural India.

### Background and Context

#### (i) Constitutional Foundation

- The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 institutionalized PRIs under Part IX (Articles 243 to 243-O).
- Article 243G and the 11th Schedule assign 29 functional areas to PRIs for planning and implementing schemes for economic development and social justice.

#### (ii) Need for Capacity Building

- Empowerment without awareness, skills, and resources limits the efficacy of PRIs.
- Effective functioning requires technical, managerial, fiscal, and participatory governance capabilities.

### Importance of Capacity Building in PRIs

Dimension	Relevance
Democratic Participation	Informed citizens and representatives ensure responsive governance.
Administrative Efficiency	Well-trained PRIs streamline planning, budgeting, and execution.
Accountability & Transparency	Enhances local accountability mechanisms and reduces leakages.
Convergence with SDGs	Skilled PRIs ensure localization of targets like SDG 3, 5, 6, 11 & 16.
Social Equity	Promotes inclusion of women, SC/ST, and marginalised groups in governance.

### Institutional Framework for Capacity Building

#### (i) Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA): (2012-2016)

- Focus: Infrastructure, training, and e-enablement.
- Trained 11.19 million participants (2014–2018).

#### (ii) Capacity Building-Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (CB-PSA):

- Carried forward the RGPSA with a greater focus on grassroots delivery mechanisms.

#### (iii) Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA): (2018–2022)

- Introduced training support for Elected Representatives (ERs) and functionaries.

- Focused on aspirational districts and Panchayat Resource Centres (PRCs).
- Trained 14.24 million participants between 2018-22.

### Revamped RGSA (2022–2026): A Paradigm Shift

#### Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- Cabinet approves continuation of revamped Centrally Sponsored Scheme of **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)**
- Total financial outlay of the scheme is **Rs.5911 crore**
- Will help **2.78 lakh** Rural Local Bodies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals



### (i) Objectives:

- Enable PRIs to function as effective institutions of local governance.
- Ensure alignment with SDGs through localization and data-based planning.

### (ii) Core Strategies:

- Continuous Capacity Building using annual training calendars.

### Institutional Ecosystem for Capacity Delivery

Institution	Role
MoPR	Policy framework and funding under RGSA
NIRD&PR (Hyderabad)	Apex national training institution
SIRDs (State Institutes)	Customized state-level trainings
Panchayat Resource Centres	Local-level knowledge sharing and technical hubs
LINE Departments	Provide sectoral training (e.g., water, health, agriculture)

### Challenges in Capacity Building

- Heterogeneity Across States** – Varied levels of PRI evolution and decentralization.
- Low Literacy Among Representatives** – Especially women and SC/ST ERs.
- Inadequate Infrastructure** – In many Panchayats and SIRD/PRCs.
- Limited Tech Adoption** – Low digital literacy hinders use of tools like e-GramSwaraj.
- Poor Convergence** – With line departments and centrally sponsored schemes.

- Digitization through e-GramSwaraj and Mission Antyodaya dashboards.
- Focus on inclusion, particularly of women and SC/ST representatives.

### Leadership & Management Development: Transforming Grassroots Governance

#### (i) Leadership Development Programs (MDPs)

- Rolled out by MoPR in collaboration with:
  - IIMs (Ahmedabad, Rohtak, Shillong, Amritsar, Jammu, Bodh Gaya)
  - IIT Dhanbad
  - IRMA (Anand)
- **Focus areas:**
  - Leadership & Team Building
  - Project Management
  - Financial & Rural Innovation
  - Change Management

#### (ii) Tailored Learning Models

- Modules are customizable to state/UT needs, enabling contextual governance.
- First MDP held at IIM Ahmedabad in January 2024 marks institutional convergence.

### Roadmap Ahead: Recommendations

- Localization of SDGs:** Train PRIs on decentralized data management and result-based planning.
- Technology Integration:** Scale e-learning platforms, mobile apps, and vernacular content for remote Panchayats.
- Gender Sensitization:** Mandatory modules on gender equity, safety audits, and leadership roles for women.
- Performance-linked Incentives:** Link capacity building to performance-based grant systems (like 15th FC).

(v) **Youth & Innovation Hubs:** Promote Rural Governance Labs and Innovation Cells in PRCs.

## Conclusion

The spirit of the 73rd Amendment lies in empowering communities to govern themselves. However, this ideal can only be realized through structured, continuous, and inclusive capacity building. Initiatives like RGSA and MDPs are pivotal in creating responsive, responsible, and innovative Panchayats. With adequate training, institutional collaboration, and technology, PRIs can truly become agents of change, driving India's rural transformation and ensuring that no one is left behind in the journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

## TOPIC 2: THE PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM: EMPOWERING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN RURAL INDIA

### Introduction: Legacy of Women's Leadership in India

This article explores the transformative impact of the Panchayati Raj system on women's leadership in rural India, tracing its roots from ancient traditions to modern constitutional provisions. It also highlights government initiatives, empirical outcomes, and the path forward toward achieving gender-inclusive grassroots governance under the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

- **Cultural Roots:** Ancient Indian texts and the Vedic period glorified women's wisdom and leadership (Gargi, Maitreyi).
- **Historical Icons:** Leaders like Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Lakshmbai, and Rani Durgavati embodied political acumen and valor.
- **Philosophical Foundation:** "यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः। (Divinity dwells where women are respected) – underscores India's foundational respect for women.
- **Contemporary Relevance:** From symbolic reverence to real political participation—India's journey toward gender parity in governance.

## Constitutional Framework & Milestones

### (i) 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993

- **Legal Foundation:** Institutionalized the three-tier Panchayati Raj system under Part IX of the Constitution.
- **Article 243D:** Mandates 1/3rd reservation of seats for women in Panchayats and chairperson posts.
- **Schedule XI:** Lists 29 subjects under Panchayat jurisdiction—key for women-centric development.

### (ii) State-level Innovations

- **50% Reservation:** 21 States and 2 UTs have extended reservation beyond the constitutional minimum.
- **Open Category Successes:** Women winning unreserved seats reflect growing public acceptance.

## Transformational Government Initiatives

### (i) Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- **Training Impact:** 23.14 lakh elected women trained from 2022-25.
- **Modules:** Focus on decision-making, financial literacy, legal awareness, and leadership.



**Who can participate?**

All **Women voters** from Gram Panchayat can participate in the **Mahila Sabha**

**Ensures Women Participation from :**

- Marginalized communities
- Disabled, Elderly and Economically Weaker
- Member of Self-Help Groups

### (ii) Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan

- **Launched:** March 2024 on International Women's Day.
- **Key Features:**
  - Experiential learning-based training modules.
  - Focus on participatory planning, digital tools, and grievance redressal.
  - Model "Adarsh Mahila-Hitashi Panchayats" to serve as scalable examples.

### (iii) Gender-Based Violence Prevention Primer

- **Purpose:** Educate Panchayat officials on tackling GBV and promoting a safe environment for women.
- **Outcome:** Empowering representatives to play a proactive role in social justice.

### (iv) SVAMITVA Scheme

- **Objective:** Provide property rights via drone-based mapping.
- **Women Inclusion:** Promotes joint/single ownership by women.
- **Scale:** 65 lakh property cards issued as of January 2025.

### (v) Gram Sabha & Mahila Sabha

**DO YOU KNOW?**

**What is a Mahila Sabha?**

A platform for women in the Gram Panchayat to voice their needs, concerns, and priorities

#### • Participation Norms:

- **Gram Sabha:** 30% women participation required.
- **Mahila Sabha:** Minimum 10% of women voters; now mandatory in many states.
- **Outcome:** Institutional space for women-centric discussion in rural governance.

### Impact Assessment: Towards Gender-Inclusive Panchayats

#### (i) Increasing Women's Participation

- **Representation:** ~46% of 31.5 lakh PRI representatives are women.
- **Policy Integration:** Women-centric GPDPs rose from 1% (2023-24) to 4.57% (2024-25); target 5% by 2025-26.

#### (ii) Recognition & Best Practices

- **National Panchayat Awards 2024:**
  - 45 Panchayats awarded; ~40% women-led.

**NATIONAL Panchayat Awards 2024**

Gram Panchayats will be honoured  
Based on their performance in 9 LSDG themes

- Poverty-free and enhanced livelihood panchayat
- Healthy panchayat
- Child-friendly panchayat
- Water sufficient panchayat
- Clean and green panchayat
- Self-reliant infrastructure panchayat
- Socially just and secure panchayat
- Good governance panchayat
- Women-friendly panchayat

सशक्त पंचायत सतत् विकास

- Emphasis on SDG-aligned governance, innovation, and community engagement.

### (iii) Institutional Support Mechanisms

- **Advisory Committee on Proxy Representation (2023):**

- Chaired by Shri Sushil Kumar.
- Aimed at eliminating “Sarpanch Pati” culture.
- Recommendations to strengthen legal safeguards and behavioral change.

### Challenges to Effective Women’s Leadership

Challenges	Details
Proxy Representation	“Pradhan Pati” syndrome limits women’s autonomy.
Capacity Gaps	Lack of training, digital access, and awareness among first-time elected women.
Patriarchal Norms	Social resistance and limited mobility in certain regions.
Underutilized Policy Space	Only ~5% GPDPs are gender-focused, showing scope for greater integration.
Intersectional Issues	Marginalized caste and tribal women face double disadvantage.

### The Road Ahead: Viksit Bharat @2047

#### (i) Legislative & Policy Support

- **Full implementation of Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam:** linking local governance experience to State/National politics.
- Gender budgeting in PRIs to institutionalize women-focused programs.

#### (ii) Digital Governance and Skilling

- Expansion of e-Gram Swaraj for transparency.
- Integrate digital literacy and AI-driven tools for PRI women.

#### (iii) Women-Centric GPDPs

- Mandate gender-disaggregated data collection and planning.
- Increase resource allocation for women’s health, entrepreneurship, and education.

#### (iv) Socio-Cultural Reforms

- Campaigns to dismantle stereotypes around female leadership.
- Encourage male allies to support gender-equal governance.

### Conclusion

The Panchayati Raj system has not only brought governance closer to people but has also unlocked leadership potential among rural women. From symbolic reservation to real transformation, India’s journey is a testament to the enduring spirit of Nari Shakti. With sustained institutional support, behavioral change, and capacity building, women leaders in Panchayats will

emerge as torchbearers of Viksit Bharat @2047— an inclusive, empowered, and equitable India.

## TOPIC 3 : THE DECADE OF EMPOWERING PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS): STRENGTHENING THE GRASSROOTS FOR VIKSIT BHARAT @2047

### Introduction

Over the past decade, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have undergone a paradigm shift—from being passive recipients of schemes to dynamic drivers of rural development. Anchored in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and powered by initiatives such as the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), e-GramSwaraj, and GPDP, this transformation has not only enhanced grassroots democracy but also contribute meaningfully to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This article explores this journey in-depth, highlighting reforms, outcomes, and the roadmap ahead toward a resilient, participatory, and inclusive Viksit Bharat @2047.

### From Vision to Vibrancy

“The voice of the people is the voice of God; the panchayat system brings governance to their doorsteps.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

The idea of self-rule in Indian villages has matured into a vibrant system of democratic

decentralization. The past ten years have witnessed the institutional strengthening of PRIs, their digital integration, and increasing convergence with national priorities such as Atmanirbhar

Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047. PRIs today are no longer seen as merely local governments but as custodians of participatory development and agents of transformative change.

### Historical Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India

Phase	Highlights
Pre-Independence	Traditional village councils, informal and caste-based
Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957)	Introduced 3-tier PRIs; suggested decentralization
73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992)	Constitutionalized PRIs; Article 243, Eleventh Schedule, 3-tier system
Post-1992 to 2014	Institutional setup, electoral regularity, capacity challenges remained
2014–2024: The Decade of Transformation	Emphasis on technology, women-led governance, GPDP, SDG alignment, and financial devolution

### Constitutional and Legislative Framework

#### (i) 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992):

- Part IX (Articles 243–243O)
- **Mandated a 3-tier structure:** Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zila Parishad
- **Article 243G:** Devolution of powers, authority, and responsibilities
- **Eleventh Schedule:** 29 subjects (health, education, agriculture, sanitation etc.)

(ii) **Article 280(3)(bb) & (c):** Finance Commission recommendations on panchayat finances.

(iii) **PESA Act, 1996:** Empowered Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas under the Fifth Schedule.

(iv) **State Panchayati Raj Acts:** Customized for state-specific needs, enabling decentralized planning.

### Decade of Institutional Empowerment (2014–2024)

#### (i) Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- **Objective:** To enhance the capacity of PRIs for participatory planning and service delivery
- **Achievements:**
  - 2.5 lakh panchayats trained on governance and SDG localization
  - PRI-SHG convergence promoted through participatory planning
  - Supported Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan to empower elected women representatives.

#### (ii) Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)

- Introduced in 2015-16 for holistic planning at the grassroots
- Convergence of 29 subjects from the Eleventh Schedule with schemes like MGNREGS, NRLM.
- Institutionalized participatory planning with People's Plan Campaign (Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas)

#### (iii) Digital Empowerment and e-Governance

- **e-GramSwaraj Portal & App:** Integrated platform for planning, budgeting, accounting
- **AuditOnline:** Real-time audits and transparency in PRI finances
- **SVAMITVA Scheme:**
  - Uses drone technology for property mapping in villages
  - Generates legal ownership records, boosts rural economy
  - Over 1.6 lakh villages covered till 2023

### Financial Devolution & Fiscal Autonomy

- **15th Finance Commission:**
  - 2.36 lakh crore allocated to PRIs (2021–2026)
  - 60% tied grants for sanitation and drinking water, 40% untied
- Own Source Revenue (OSR) tools developed: tax collection apps, digital asset mapping
- Panchayat Performance Grant System encourages accountable governance

**Key Themes of the Empowerment Decade**

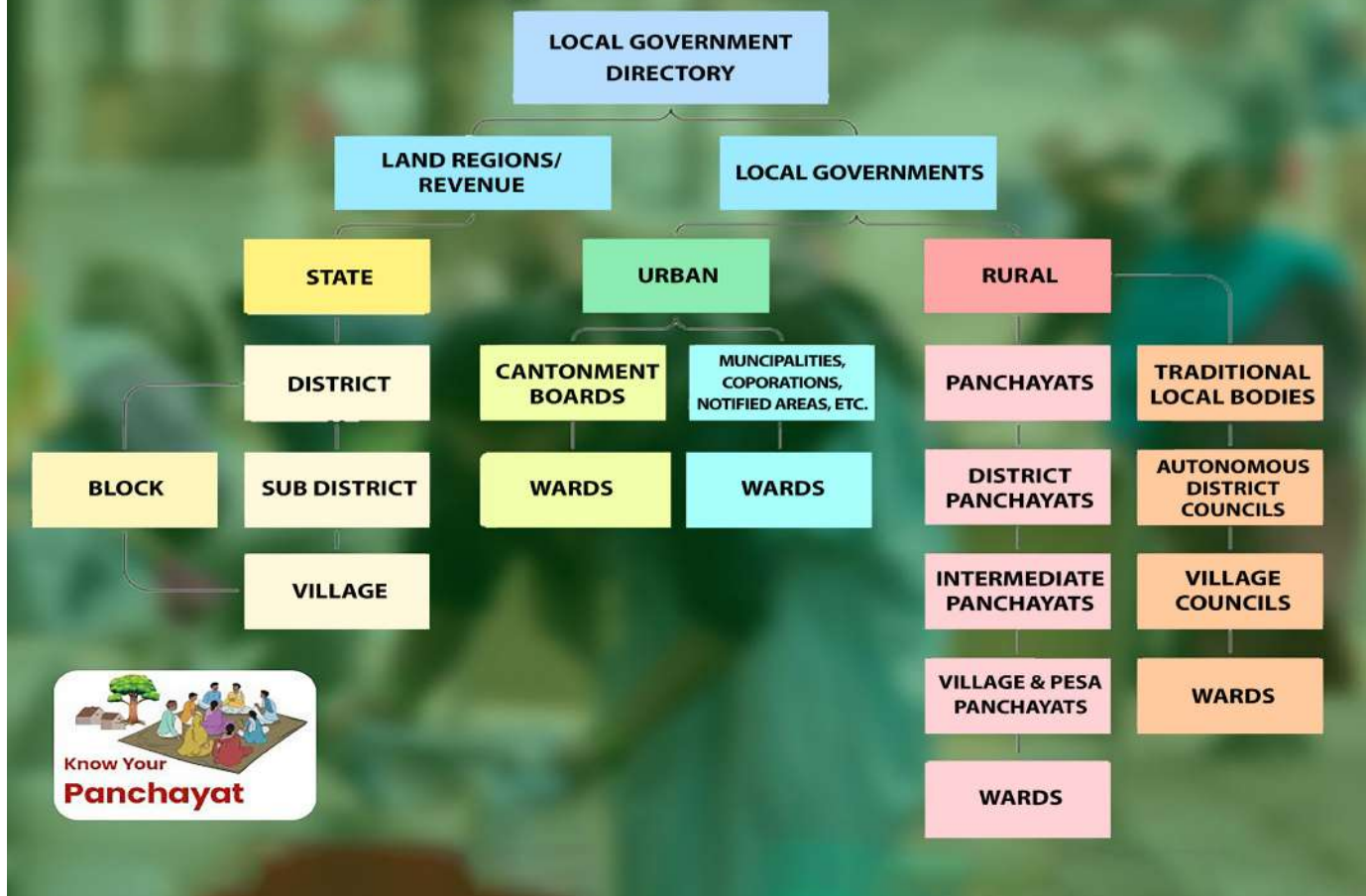
**(i) Women-Led Development**

- Over 46% of elected PRI representatives are women
- Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan (2023): capacity-building of 1 million women
- Enhanced representation of SCs/STs and women ensures inclusive democracy

**(ii) ICT-Enabled Governance**

- Real-time dashboards, biometric attendance, GPS-tagged asset monitoring
- Platforms like Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar and Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) strengthen data-driven governance

**Hierarchy Diagram of Local Government**



**(iii) PRI-SHG Convergence**

- Women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs) partner with PRIs in planning, implementation, and audits.
- Promotes bottom-up governance, accountability, and livelihood generation

**Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)**

- **LSDG Themes:** Poverty-Free Village, Healthy Village, Clean & Green Village, Self-Sufficient Infrastructure
- Use of SDG Index for Panchayats
- Performance-based ranking and National Panchayat Awards boost competitiveness





# PESA Act

The Provisions of The Panchayats Extension to The Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

**Empowering Gram Sabhas for Local Governance and Community Well-being**



Gram Sabhas have the power to manage and regulate local markets, ensuring fair trade and community benefits.



Gram Sabhas can regulate or prohibit the sale and consumption of intoxicants, promoting health and safety.



Empowers Gram Sabhas with decision-making authority for local development and governance

## National Conference on PESA Act

26TH SEPTEMBER 2024



### Case Studies and Best Practices

State	Innovation	Impact
Kerala	People's Plan Campaign	Direct citizen engagement in budgeting
Chhattisgarh	Gram Sabha-led GPDPs	Empowerment of tribal PRIs
Odisha	Technology-enabled grievance redress	Real-time monitoring of services
Maharashtra	Digital OSR tracking	Increased own revenue by 25%

**Meeting Online - eGramSwaraj**

Interface for taking Gram Sabha Sankalp is available in the Panchayat Development Plan section of eGramSwaraj section.

सर्वोत्तम कार्य प्रणाली  
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

### Challenges and the Way Forward

#### Challenges:

- Incomplete devolution of 3Fs (Functions, Funds, Functionaries)
- Capacity asymmetry among states
- Lack of technical manpower and digital divide
- Weak Gram Sabhas and irregular meetings

#### Way Forward

- Mandating Devolution through enforceable frameworks
- Capacity-building of Panchayat Secretaries & Functionaries
- AI-based Planning Tools for evidence-based GPDPs
- Integrating Climate Resilience and Disaster Management into panchayat planning.

- PRI-State-NGO Partnerships for knowledge sharing and innovation

**Role of PRIs in Viksit Bharat @2047**

- PRIs will serve as instruments of last-mile governance
- Empowering local democracy ensures social justice, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability.
- Their role in education, health, gender equality, and local entrepreneurship is pivotal to achieving the SDGs and Amrit Kaal goals

**Conclusion**

The last decade has redefined Panchayati Raj Institutions—not just as administrative bodies, but as vanguards of local democracy, participatory development, and social inclusion. With increased digitization, gender empowerment, fiscal devolution, and alignment with national missions, PRIs are well-poised to be the fulcrum of Viksit Bharat @2047. Strengthening them further through structural reforms, capacity-building, and community engagement will determine the success of India’s grassroots-driven development model.

**TOPIC 4: MERI PANCHAYAT APPLICATION: A WATCHDOG OF RURAL DEMOCRACY**

**Introduction**

India’s Panchayati Raj system, as per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992), is the backbone of rural self-governance, representing nearly 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and over 29 lakh elected representatives. However, issues such as limited access to real-time data, fragmented digital platforms, and low citizen participation have hindered effective grassroots governance. In response, the Meri Panchayat app offers a one-stop solution—bringing governance to the fingertips of rural citizens, promoting transparency, and empowering decentralized decision-making.

**Background and Rationale**

**(i) Fragmented Governance Tools**

- Multiple portals like eGramSwaraj, Audit Online, and DISHA operated in silos.

- Stakeholders faced difficulty accessing consolidated Panchayat-level information.

**(ii) Digital Shift in Rural India**

- As per TRAI (2023), over 500 million rural internet users exist in India.
- Increased mobile penetration and digital literacy among Panchayat representatives led to demand for a unified app-based platform.

**Meri Panchayat App: Key Features**

**(i) Unified Platform**

- Integrates scattered digital resources into one portal.
- Enables real-time access to development works, financial records, and Panchayat decisions.

**(ii) Multilingual and Intuitive Interface**

- Supports major regional languages.
- Simple OTP-based login ensures accessibility for all user segments.

**(iii) Panchayat Dashboard**

- **Displays key statistics:** population, area, elected members, resource availability.
- Geo-tagged visuals of development projects increase credibility and oversight.



**Empowering Rural Democracy: Participatory Governance**

**(i) Project Suggestions by Citizens**

- Residents can propose development activities.
- Upload geo-tagged photos for suggested work sites—enabling evidence-based decision-making.

**(ii) Social Audits and Public Oversight**

- Citizens monitor and rate ongoing works.
- Community-based monitoring enhances the spirit of “Jan Bhagidari” (people’s participation).

**Transparency, Accountability, and Good Governance**

Mechanism	Role in Strengthening Governance
Real-Time Financial Reports	Reduces scope for fund misuse and ghost entries.
Public Display of Decisions	Ensures informed citizenry and participative decision-making.
Citizen Ratings of Projects	Builds trust and reflects feedback loops.
Contact Access to Officials	Enhances approachability and responsibility.

**Role in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**(i) SDG Alignment**

SDG Goal	Meri Panchayat’s Contribution
SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Institutions)	Enhances transparency and accountable institutions
SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure)	Encourages citizen-planned local infrastructure growth
SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities)	Supports inclusive and sustainable community development
SDG 5 (Gender Equality)	Enables women to participate equally in Panchayat planning

**(ii) Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP)**

- App facilitates citizen inputs into GPDPs, ensuring bottom-up planning.
- Enables inclusive governance by bridging the information gap.

**Institutional Support and Integration**

**(i) Ministry of Panchayati Raj**

- Lead developer and implementing agency of the application.

- Collaborates with NIC, e-Governance bodies, and state departments.

**(ii) Synergy with Digital India**

- The app reinforces the vision of Digital India and e-Governance in rural areas.

**Challenges and the Way Forward**

**Challenges**

- Digital literacy gaps among marginalized communities.
- Network issues in remote villages.
- Need for continuous app maintenance and training.

**Recommendations**

- **Digital Literacy Drives:** Especially for women and SC/ST communities.
- **Offline Functionality:** Allow temporary data syncing.
- **Periodic Training Modules:** For elected representatives and secretaries.

**Conclusion**

The Meri Panchayat app stands as a digital sentinel guarding the integrity and inclusiveness of India’s rural democracy. By democratizing information, fostering transparency, and enabling real-time citizen engagement, the app represents a paradigm shift in grassroots governance. As India marches towards its vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, such innovations in rural digital governance will serve as foundational tools in building an equitable, participatory, and sustainable nation.

**TOPIC 5: GRAM MANCHITRA AIDING IN VILLAGE PLANNING**

**Introduction**

Gram Manchitra, a GIS-based visualization and planning tool, empowers Panchayats in preparing accurate, evidence-based, and participatory Panchayat Development Plans (PDPs). Aligned with Viksit Bharat @2047, this initiative integrates digital technology, spatial analysis, and real-time data to bridge rural-urban planning gaps, ensuring sustainable, inclusive village-level development.

- The 15th Finance Commission allocated over ₹2.36 lakh crores directly to Gram Panchayats (2021-26), creating a need for accountable, data-driven planning mechanisms.

- **Need for Innovation:** Bridging resource gaps and achieving transparency requires leveraging geospatial and digital tools like Gram Manchitra, which integrates planning with precision, community participation, and sustainability.

enabling evidence-based, area-specific, and need-based rural planning.

### Gram Manchitra: Vision and Institutional Architecture



### Evolution of Decentralised Planning and Digital Tools

#### (i) Historical Perspective

- Traditional Panchayats were central to land management and conflict resolution but lacked integration into the formal administrative system.
- With the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Panchayats became institutions of local self-governance across 29 subjects (Eleventh Schedule).

#### (ii) Shift Towards Participatory and Digital Planning

- Past efforts, e.g., e-Gram Swaraj, GPDs under RGSA, lacked spatial context.
- Gram Manchitra emerges as the first-of-its-kind spatial decision support system

#### (i) Vision Statement

“To empower Gram Panchayats through geospatial technologies for preparing self-sustainable, inclusive, and accountable Panchayat Development Plans.”

#### (ii) Anchoring Institutions

Institution	Role
NIC	Developed Bharatmaps and Gram Manchitra platform
Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Integrated with e-Gram Swaraj for planning and budgeting
Survey of India	Provided drone-based data under SVAMITVA for Abadi areas

### Core Features and Planning Tools of Gram Manchitra

Tool Name	Functionality	Application Example
Asset Report Tool	Lists all assets in District/Block/GP; helps identify gaps	Identify lack of veterinary centres or schools
Connectivity Analysis	Analyzes road widths and types for navigation planning	Optimize ambulance/fire truck movement
Street Light Tool	Assesses illumination and provides pole installation estimates	Plan for safer, well-lit villages
Road Analysis Tool	Offers estimates for road construction based on length, width, elevation	Prepare cost-effective road infrastructure proposals
Solar Energy Estimation	Estimates village-level solar power potential based on rooftop data	Identify households with RCC roofs for solar installation
Climate Data Integration	Provides real-time weather forecasting	Disaster preparedness, agri-planning
Profile for Abadi Areas	3D terrain modeling using SVAMITVA drone surveys	Plan drainage, water harvesting structures
Vehicle Navigation Tool	Identifies feasible paths and stops roadblocks due to vehicle entry issues	Optimize route for grain distribution

## Gram Manchitra & Viksit Bharat @2047 Alignment with National Missions

National Mission / Scheme	Contribution via Gram Manchitra
Digital India	Enhances data transparency and real-time monitoring
Jal Jeevan Mission	Identifies gaps in water infrastructure using asset mapping
Swachh Bharat Abhiyan	Plans for solid waste and sanitation infrastructure spatially
PMGSY	Road Analysis Tool helps prioritize critical connectivity projects
SVAMITVA Scheme	Drone-based property mapping aids planning and dispute resolution
Renewable Energy Mission	Supports rooftop solar energy estimation for energy self-sufficiency

### Impact and Advantages

#### Participatory, Transparent, and Need-Based Planning

- Enables visualization of ground realities for better public involvement.
- Shifts planning from 'one-size-fits-all' to tailored, evidence-based planning.

#### Enhancing Accountability and Efficiency

- Tracks public assets in real-time.
- Assists elected representatives in making informed decisions.

#### Promotes Sustainability

- Facilitates planning for clean energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, and sustainable agriculture.

### Challenges in Implementation

Challenge	Details
Capacity Building	Need for training Panchayat functionaries in GIS-based tools
Data Curation	Drone data needs preprocessing and verification
Internet Connectivity	Digital divide hampers real-time use in remote areas
Integration with Legacy Systems	Synchronization with traditional records and schemes needed

### Way Forward: Strengthening Gram Manchitra

#### Institutional Strengthening

- Upskilling panchayat officers via dedicated GIS training modules.
- Embedding GIS officers at district/block levels for on-ground support.

#### Data Governance

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for data collection, updating, and validation.
- Integration with real-time MIS systems for better monitoring.

### Policy Recommendations

- Mandating use of Gram Manchitra in all GPDPs from FY 2025-26.
- Linking GIS-based planning with fund release from FC grants.

### Conclusion

Gram Manchitra is a transformative intervention in India's decentralised planning landscape. It merges technology, local wisdom, and participatory governance, ensuring that each village's development aligns with its unique needs and resources. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat @2047, Gram Manchitra can serve as the digital blueprint for rural self-reliance, inclusive growth, and bottom-up planning.

## TOPIC 6: WATER MANAGEMENT THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS)

### Introduction

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), the third tier of democratic governance in India, were constitutionally empowered through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. With a three-tier system across 2.69 lakh Panchayats serving over 95 crore people, PRIs are pivotal in executing local-level governance. Water being central to rural livelihoods, health, and agriculture, PRIs are at the frontline of ensuring effective water governance — including drinking water, irrigation, watershed development, and water body conservation. The decentralization model promotes participatory democracy and localized solutions for sustainable water resource management.

### Constitutional Framework and Functional Mandate

- XI Schedule of the Constitution assigns 29 subjects to PRIs; at least 6 are directly linked to water (e.g., minor irrigation, agriculture, fisheries, drinking water).
- Article 243G empowers PRIs to formulate and implement plans for economic development and social justice, encompassing water conservation.
- The principle of “Catch the rain where it falls”, championed by Jal Shakti Abhiyan, aligns with Gandhian decentralism and ecological democracy.
- Empowerment under State Panchayati Raj Acts allows flexibility for local adaptation based on agro-climatic zones.

### Institutional Architecture and Governance Mechanisms

- **Standing Committees:** Water management committees under Gram Panchayats monitor scheme implementation and grievance redressal.
- **Gram Sabha:** Functions as the primary forum for participatory water planning and social audits.
- **Women’s Participation:** With 33%-50% reservation in PRIs, women play a crucial role

in decisions related to water access, hygiene, and household security.

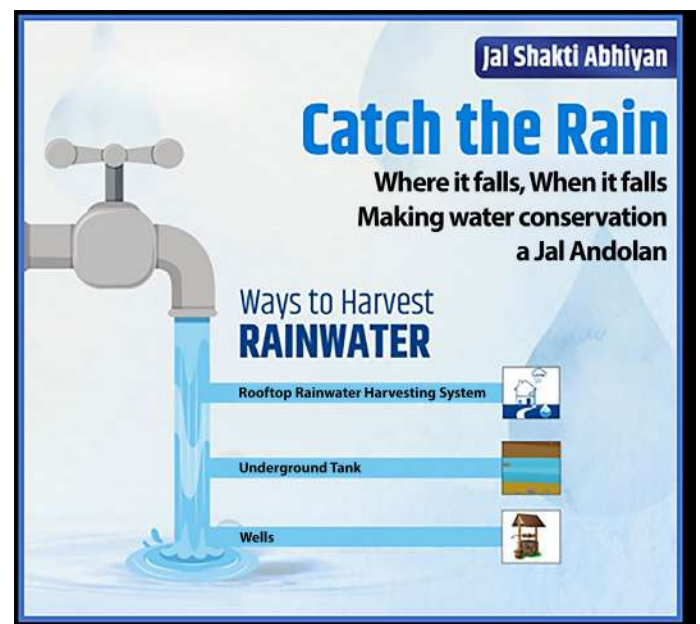
- **Transparency and Social Accountability:** Use of Jan Suchna Portals, water dashboards, and wall paintings for information dissemination.

### Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM)

- Agriculture consumes nearly 90% of freshwater in India.
- PIM, introduced in the 1990s, entrusts Water User Associations (WUAs) with operation and maintenance (O&M) of irrigation systems.
- **PRIs act as facilitators for WUAs by:**
  - Identifying canal users.
  - Supervising equitable distribution of water.
  - Collecting user charges to sustain infrastructure.
- **Successful case:** Andhra Pradesh’s WUAs, which integrated PRIs with water user committees under APFMIS Act, 1997.

### Rural Drinking Water Schemes

- Jal Jeevan Mission (2019) targets 100% Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.
- **PRIs are responsible for:**
  - Preparing Village Action Plans (VAPs).
  - Setting up Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs).
  - Monitoring quality via Field Test Kits and laboratories.
- Real-time dashboards and Har Ghar Jal certification campaigns ensure accountability and coverage.



## Water Bodies Conservation and Restoration

### (i) Water Body Census 2023:

- 97.1% of India's 24.25 lakh water bodies are rural.
- 62.4% of publicly owned water bodies are under Panchayat jurisdiction.
- **PRIs play a critical role in:**
  - Demarcating and digitizing water body boundaries.
  - Removing encroachments.
  - Ensuring post-restoration O&M under RRR (Repair, Renovation and Restoration) of Water Bodies, a PMKSY-HKPP sub-scheme.



### (ii) Watershed Management and Integrated Planning

- Watersheds, as micro-hydrological planning units, facilitate convergence of multiple schemes:
  - WDC-PMKSY, IWMP, and Neeranchal National Watershed Project.
- **Role of PRIs:**
  - Conducting hydrological and participatory rural appraisals.
  - Implementing ridge-to-valley approach for soil and water conservation.
- Use of Geo-tagging and Remote Sensing for watershed boundary management and M&E.

### MNREGS and Water Security

- MGNREGS, post-2014 guidelines, mandates 60% fund use on agriculture and allied activities.
- **75% of MGNREGS works include:**
  - Water harvesting pits, check dams, percolation tanks.
  - Construction of soak pits, farm ponds, and trenches.
- PRIs ensure demand-based planning and people's participation via Rozgar Diwas and Lok Samvad platforms.

### Village Level Water Budgeting

- Water budgeting integrates community knowledge with hydrological assessments.
- **Components:**
  - Resource mapping of local aquifers, rainfall, and recharge zones.
  - Estimating demand for domestic, agriculture, and livestock needs.
- **Outcome:**
  - Source sustainability plans to reduce overdrawal.
  - Promotion of crop diversification, micro-irrigation, and water re-use.

### Financial Empowerment: XV Finance Commission Grants

- Allocation of ₹2.36 lakh crore for Rural Local Bodies (RLBs).
  - 60% tied to water supply and sanitation.
  - 40% untied for discretionary use aligned with local priorities.

- **Performance-linked disbursements tied to:**

- ODF+ status.
- Greywater treatment.
- Regular Gram Sabha and asset audits.

### Groundwater Governance: Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY)

- ABY, a World Bank-aided scheme, spans 8353 Gram Panchayats across 7 states.
- **Key Features:**
  - Community-led aquifer mapping.
  - Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) for fund release.
  - Strengthening of groundwater institutions through IEC campaigns and participatory planning.
- PRIs prepare Water Security Plans (WSPs) with focus on demand-side management.

### Localization of SDG 6 through PRIs

- **SDG 6:** “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”
- **PRIs act as SDG accelerators through:**
  - Water safety and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure.
  - Gender-sensitive sanitation access.
  - Climate-resilient water strategies at village level.
- PRIs integrate indicators in Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), ensuring bottom-up planning.

### Conclusion

PRIs are pivotal actors in India’s quest for water sustainability, blending traditional water wisdom with modern governance tools. Their constitutional empowerment, financial devolution, and participatory mandate equip them to operationalize both national schemes and global commitments like SDG 6. Strengthening PRIs through training, digital tools, and inter-institutional convergence will be key to building a climate-resilient, water-secure rural India.

## TOPIC 7: UNTAPPING THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF RURAL INDIA THROUGH SVAMITVA PROPERTY CARD

### Introduction: Land Formalization as a Foundation for Rural Economic Development

#### (i) Land as a Foundational Economic Asset:

- Land is not merely a physical resource but a critical driver of socio-economic development in rural India.
- It is intrinsically linked to livelihood, investment potential, and access to institutional finance.

#### (ii) Challenges in Rural Land Governance:

- Absence of scientific cadastral surveys and digital record-keeping in inhabited (Abadi) rural areas.
- Presumptive and informal property ownership norms leading to legal ambiguities.
- Frequent disputes over land boundaries, inheritance, and encroachments, clogging the judicial system.
- Difficulty in accessing formal credit due to lack of clear titles, pushing citizens toward informal lending markets.

#### (iii) Need for Institutional Reform:

- Clear property rights through state-sanctioned documentation are essential for financial security.
- Formal recognition of ownership unlocks latent economic value of rural land.

#### (iv) SVAMITVA Scheme: A Paradigm Shift:

- Conceptualized by the Government of India to introduce geo-referenced property titles.
- Issuance of property cards under State Revenue or Panchayati Raj legislative frameworks.
- Employs cutting-edge technology for mapping and recording ownership.

### Genesis and Implementation Trajectory of the SVAMITVA Scheme

- **Strategic Launch:**

- Inaugurated by Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 24th April 2020 during National Panchayati Raj Day.

- **Vision and Objectives:**
  - Provide 'Record of Rights' to rural households residing in Abadi areas.
  - Bridge the urban-rural divide in property ownership and documentation.
  - Lay the groundwork for digitally inclusive rural governance.
- **Institutional and Administrative Convergence:**
  - MoUs signed with Survey of India for technical support.
  - Coordinated with Revenue Departments, PRIs, and State IT systems for seamless integration.
- **Progress and Coverage:**
  - Over 2.41 crore property cards issued to date.
  - Scheme has expanded to cover more than 1.61 lakh villages across 31 States and Union Territories.
  - Formation of multi-tier grievance redressal and data validation protocols.
- **Technological Backbone:**
  - Integration of drones, LiDAR, GIS, and AI-powered analytics for high-resolution spatial mapping.
  - Creation of cadastral maps ensuring unambiguous property delineation.

### Economic Empowerment through Formalized Property Rights

- **Facilitating Access to Credit and Financial Ecosystem:**
  - Legally validated property cards recognized as collateral by banks and NBFCs.
  - Enables rural households to secure loans for agriculture, micro-enterprises, housing, and education.
- **Promoting Rural Entrepreneurship and Self-Reliance:**
  - Boosts asset-backed investments in local economies.
  - Encourages enterprise development, aligned with the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- **Reduction in Disputes and Strengthening of Social Harmony:**
  - Clearly defined land ownership mitigates familial and community disputes.
  - Reduces dependency on the judiciary, enabling quicker conflict resolution.

- **Asset Monetization and Economic Fluidity:**
  - Facilitates monetization of rural assets through formal market mechanisms.
  - Enables productive capital flow into rural regions.

### Pilot Implementation and Subsequent National Rollout

- **Pilot Phase (2020):**
  - **Launched in six states:** Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh.
  - Over 1 lakh property cards issued across 763 villages, validating operational feasibility.
- **Full-Scale National Expansion:**
  - Based on pilot learnings, the scheme expanded nationwide from 24th April 2021.
  - Integration into state-level digital land governance portals.
  - Periodic training for PRI functionaries and survey teams.
- **Scalability and Replicability:**
  - Modular and interoperable architecture enables horizontal replication across states.

### Technological Interventions and Data-Driven Governance

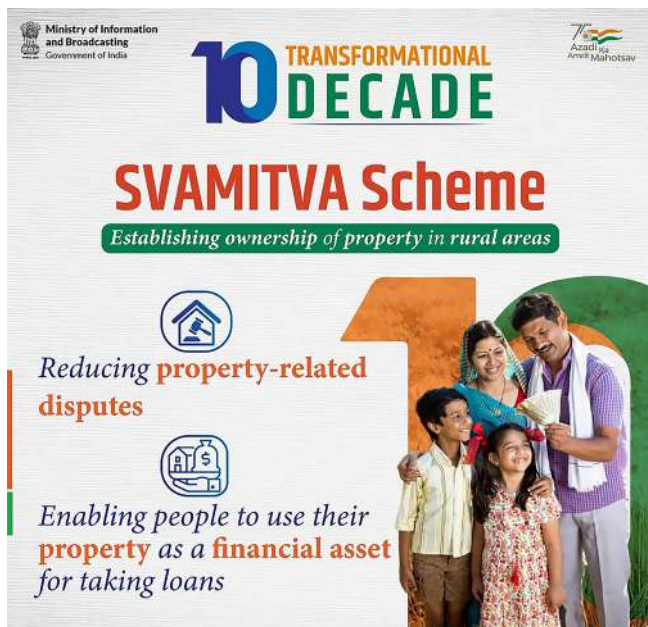
- **Precision Mapping and Digital Infrastructure:**
  - Drone surveys produce geo-tagged, high-resolution cadastral maps.
  - Digital database links land records with Aadhaar and Gram Panchayat digital systems.
- **Enabling Scientific Village-Level Planning:**
  - Creation of base maps allows micro-level spatial and development planning.
  - Supports formulation of Panchayat Development Plans (PDPs).
- **Development Control Regulations (DCRs):**
  - Guides rational land use, safe construction practices, and environmentally conscious zoning.
- **Fiscal Empowerment of Panchayats:**
  - Property taxation is facilitated through verified maps and updated records.
  - Enhances Own Source Revenue (OSR), reducing dependency on state grants.

### Social Equity, Gender Justice, and Inclusion

- **Gender-Inclusive Titling and Empowerment:**
  - Property cards issued in the name of female family members or jointly.

- Facilitates women's access to loans, entrepreneurship, and inheritance rights.
- **Enhancing Social Security and Status:**
  - Legal recognition of land ownership uplifts social standing in patriarchal settings.
  - Contributes to reduction in domestic financial dependency.
- **Global Development Alignment:**
  - Advances SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities).
  - Aligns with global human development and inclusive growth indicators.

### Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs): Key Enablers of Decentralized Land Governance



#### (i) Strengthening Local Self-Governance:

- Accurate land data empowers PRIs for evidence-based policy formulation.
- Enables transparent implementation of schemes like MGNREGA, PMAY-G, and Jal Jeevan Mission.

#### (ii) Decentralized Fiscal Governance:

- PRIs collect fees for building permissions, trade licenses, and other services.
- Improved OSR leads to autonomous village development initiatives.

#### (iii) Capacity Building and Institutional Learning: Continuous skill development for PRI representatives on geospatial tools, legal frameworks, and financial planning.

### Global Best Practice and Future Roadmap

- **Global Leadership in Rural Land Governance:**
  - SVAMITVA offers a replicable framework for countries with informal rural land tenure systems.
- **Technological Enhancements:**
  - Incorporate AI/ML for pattern recognition, fraud detection, and predictive planning.
  - Potential integration with blockchain for immutable record-keeping.
- **Integration with Formal Financial Sector:**
  - Partnerships with banks, microfinance institutions, and digital lenders.
  - Develop credit scoring models based on asset records and transaction histories.
- **Inclusion of Other Land Typologies:**
  - Extend coverage to agricultural lands, forest fringes, and wastelands.
  - Enable comprehensive spatial governance and climate-smart planning.
- **Capacity Building for International Dissemination:**
  - Share India's experiences through South-South cooperation and global rural development platforms.

### Conclusion

- The SVAMITVA Scheme is a landmark reform for rural India, combining technological innovation with inclusive governance.
- It formalizes property ownership, unlocks economic value, and enhances financial autonomy of citizens.
- Strengthens PRIs, ensures spatial planning, and fosters socially equitable and economically resilient communities.
- As India moves towards Viksit Bharat @2047, SVAMITVA stands as a cornerstone of rural transformation and a model for the world.

## TOPIC 8: REVISITING STATE PRI ACTS: A NECESSITY FOR MAKING PRIS MORE EFFECTIVE

### Introduction

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) institutionalized Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as engines of local self-governance,

entrusted with decentralized planning, delivery of public services, and local development. However, three decades later, the fiscal autonomy and functional empowerment of PRIs—especially Gram Panchayats (GPs)—remain critically underdeveloped. A recent Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) Report (2024) and corroborating data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raise alarm over the declining Own Source Revenue (OSR) of PRIs, highlighting the urgent need to revisit and revise the State Panchayati Raj Acts to fulfill the original vision of self-governance.

**Current Fiscal Status of PRIs: Alarming Realities**

**(i) OSR(Own Source Revenue) Performance:**

- **MoPR(Ministry of Panchayati Raj)Report (2024):** Average OSR contribution to total GP receipts is just 6% (2021–22).
- **RBI (2023):** OSR share is only 6.31%, highlighting extreme dependence on central and state transfers.
- **NIPFP(National Institute of Public Finance and Policy) Study:** Average per capita OSR is INR 59 (2017–22), indicating negligible local resource mobilization.

**(ii) Grants-Based Model:**

- 95% of GPs’ revenues come from intergovernmental grants.
- Overdependence on conditional transfers undermines fiscal autonomy.

**Key Bottlenecks Identified:**

**(i) Inconsistencies and Gaps in State PRI Acts**

- Empowerment to levy taxes and charges varies drastically across states.
  - **Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal:** Empowered to levy only 2 taxes.
  - Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala: Empowered to levy up to 8 taxes.
- **Ground reality:** Many empowered taxes are not actually levied.
  - E.g., Uttar Pradesh levies no tax despite empowerment to levy six.

**(ii) Ad-hoc and Ineffective Tax Assessment Mechanisms**

- Property tax and user charges assessment lacks uniformity and legal clarity.
- Only Karnataka has adopted a structured, usage-based property tax system—yet replication is hindered by manpower shortages.

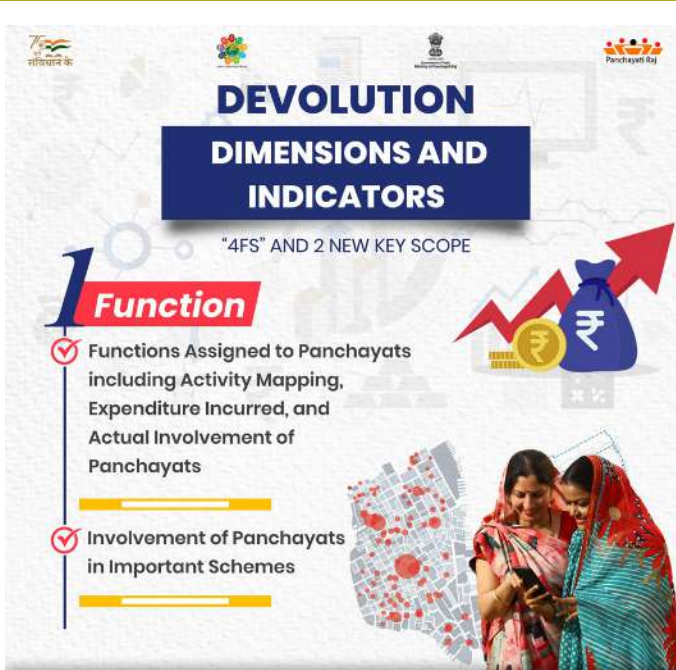
**(iii) Technical and Manpower Deficiencies at GP Level**

- **GPs lack:**
  - Technical guidelines.
  - Assessment tools.
  - Trained staff (often 1 secretary per multiple GPs).

**(iv) Non-devolution of Asset Ownership and Services**

- Community Property Resources (CPRs)—like water bodies, forests, minor irrigation—are still under line departments (PHED, Revenue, Forest).
- E.g., Water supply remains under PHED in West Bengal and Maharashtra, curtailing potential GP revenue.





**(iii) Devolution of CPR Ownership and Public Service Provision**

- Transfer management of CPRs and service assets to PRIs:
  - Minor irrigation, forests, tanks, rural water systems.
- Enable PRIs to monetize usage sustainably.

**(iv) Strengthen Capacity and Manpower**

- Recruit dedicated Panchayat staff for revenue management.
- **Constitute District-Level Capacity Building Units to:**
  - Train GPs on technical, legal, and fiscal tools.
  - Build digital literacy and use of web-based applications.

**(v) Legal Ambiguities**

- Disputed/encroached lands lack taxation guidelines.
- Payment of taxes wrongly interpreted as ownership entitlement, deterring levy.

**(vi) Delay in State Finance Commissions (SFCs)**

- Many states delay the constitution or ignore SFC recommendations.
- Assigned revenue sources like profession tax, stamp duty surcharges are not devolved uniformly:
  - **Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh:** Devolved to PRIs.
  - **Uttar Pradesh:** Only to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

**(v) Expedite and Empower State Finance Commissions**

- Time-bound constitution of SFCs with actionable mandates.
- Ensure SFC recommendations on devolution of:
  - Stamp duty, registration fee, entertainment and profession taxes to RLBs.

**(vi) Legal Reforms and Clarificatory Orders**

- Address taxability of disputed/encroached lands.
- Clarify distinctions between legal title and taxation eligibility.
- Encourage transparent license fee systems for commercial activities.

**Roadmap for Reform: Revisiting State PRI Acts**

**(i) Uniform Empowerment and Revision of PRI Acts**

- **Harmonize powers across states to:**
  - Levy property, water, sanitation, trade, vehicle, and pilgrim taxes.
  - Impose user charges based on service use and land ownership.

**(ii) Clear Guidelines for Assessment and Collection**

- Define tax base, valuation standards, and fee structures.
- **Digitized, rule-based systems for:**
  - Property tax (e.g., Karnataka model).
  - Water charges and commercial levies.



**Own Source of Revenue (OSR) for Panchayats**

**Panchayats generating their own revenue by :**

Leveraging Government schemes such as SVAMITVA, for development & collection of OSR in Panchayati Raj Institutions



## Case-Specific Recommendations

State	Reform Urgency	Key Measures
Uttar Pradesh	High	Empower and mandate property tax, devolve CPRs
Odisha	High	Legalize property tax, clarify encroachment norms
Maharashtra	Medium	Transfer rural water supply, digitalize tax norms
Karnataka	Low (Model State)	Expand manpower and replication in other states
Andhra Pradesh	Medium	Empower RLBs, streamline SFC devolution
West Bengal	High	Transfer water supply, simplify tax administration

### Conclusion

Strengthening the fiscal foundations of PRIs—especially Gram Panchayats—is not merely a matter of revising taxation lists but reimagining the legal, administrative, and institutional ecosystem under which PRIs operate. Revisiting and harmonizing the State Panchayat Acts, backed by financial decentralization, capacity building, and devolution of asset management, is crucial to make GPs not only administratively effective but also fiscally self-reliant. The roadmap for Viksit Bharat @2047 must integrate empowered, resourceful, and participatory Panchayati Raj Institutions at its core.

## TOPIC 9: CONTOURS OF DEVOLUTION TO PANCHAYATS: A FRESH LOOK AT THE PANCHAYAT DEVOLUTION INDEX - 2024

### Introduction

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, introduced on April 24, 1993, marked the foundation of Panchayats as crucial institutions for rural self-governance within India's multi-tiered federal structure. Part IX of the Constitution, titled "The Panchayats," allows the devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats, which is essential for local governance. The Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution lists 29 subjects that Panchayats are empowered to manage, including Agriculture, Drinking Water, Rural Housing, and Education. However, the actual devolution of power, functions, finances, and functionaries to Panchayats has been inconsistent across States, requiring a comprehensive evaluation of devolution practices in India.

The Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI), developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj

with the support of reputed research institutes, is a crucial tool for assessing the extent of devolution to Panchayats and identifying areas for improvement.

### Genesis and Past Exercises

#### (i) Inception of Devolution Index:

- In 2004, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj conducted a roundtable with State Ministers to discuss the status of Panchayats and devolution.
- The concept of the Devolution Index was introduced to evaluate the transfer of powers and responsibilities from States to Panchayats, using a "3F" framework (Functions, Finances, and Functionaries).
- Over the years, additional dimensions were added, including Capacity Enhancement and Accountability, to capture a more comprehensive picture of devolution.

#### (ii) Methodological Evolution:

- The Devolution Index has evolved over time, with initial studies focused on the "3F" framework.
- By 2009, a two-stage approach was adopted to evaluate the compliance of States with mandatory constitutional provisions, such as the creation of a State Election Commission, holding regular Panchayat elections, and establishing State Finance Commissions (SFCs).
- Between 2009 to 2013, the index was expanded to include capacity enhancement and accountability, reflecting the growing complexity of local governance.

### The Panchayat Devolution Index – 2024 Report

The most recent PDI report, compiled by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) for the year 2021-2022, provides an analysis of devolution trends in India.

**(i) Key Findings:**

- **Overall Devolution Increase:** The devolution score across India improved from 39.9% to 43.9% between 2013-14 and 2022-23, indicating a positive trend towards decentralization.
- **Capacity Enhancement:** The score for capacity enhancement surged from 44% to 54.6%, a more than 10-point increase, likely attributed to the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) launched in 2018.
- **Functionaries:** The functionaries’ score rose by more than 10 points from 39.6% to 50.9%, reflecting significant investments in infrastructure and recruitment of officials.
- **Financial Devolution:** Financial devolution increased from a national average of 32.05% to 37.04%, suggesting a better flow of funds to Panchayats.

**(ii) State-wise Rankings:**

- **Top States (2015-16 vs 2022-23):**
  - **2015-16:** Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Sikkim, West Bengal, Telangana, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan.
  - **2022-23:** Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Tripura, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh.

**(iii) State-Specific Highlights:**

- **Framework:** Kerala remained the top performer in ensuring compliance with constitutional provisions.
- **Functions:** Tamil Nadu excelled in transferring functions to Panchayats.
- **Finances:** Karnataka was the leader in financial devolution.
- **Functionaries:** Gujarat led in providing human resources to Panchayats.
- **Capacity Enhancement:** Telangana showed significant improvement in this dimension.
- **Accountability:** Karnataka ranked highest in ensuring transparency and accountability.

**(iv) Noteworthy Improvements:**

- Uttar Pradesh saw a significant rise, moving from 15th place to 5th. Its improved ranking was primarily due to enhanced accountability measures, including better transparency and anti-corruption initiatives.

- Tripura improved from 13th to 7th due to better revenue collection and stronger support for Panchayats through Finance Commission grants.

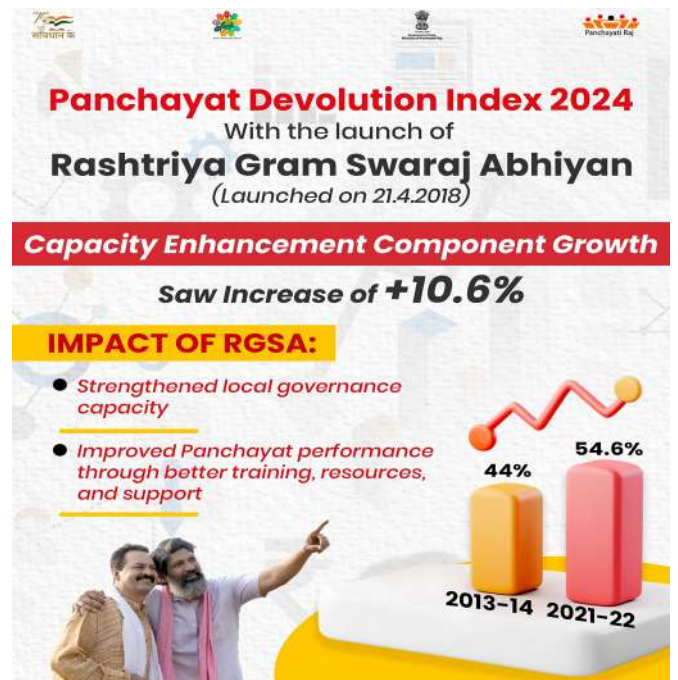
**Implications of the Panchayat Devolution Index**

**(i) Assessment of Local Governance:**

- The Devolution Index is an essential tool for gauging the overall health of local governance in India. It helps policymakers understand where reforms are necessary and where States are excelling.
- By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the devolution process, the PDI provides actionable insights for further strengthening Panchayats and empowering local governance.

**(ii) Targeted Policy Development:** The PDI serves as a basis for creating targeted policies aimed at addressing the gaps in the devolution process. It provides data that can help the central and state governments design interventions to improve Panchayat functionality.

**(iii) Fostering Healthy Competition:** The PDI not only identifies areas for improvement but also fosters healthy competition among States. The rankings motivate States to enhance their performance and strengthen the decentralized governance system.



**(iv) Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:**

- For the general public, the PDI provides transparency into how Panchayats function, helping citizens hold their local governments accountable.

- Elected representatives and government officers can use the PDI as a roadmap to strengthen the Panchayat system and ensure effective service delivery at the grassroots level.



## Conclusion

The Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI) has become a pivotal tool in evaluating the progress of decentralization and local governance in India. The increasing devolution scores over time reflect the growing commitment of States to empower Panchayats and ensure better service delivery to rural populations. However, significant challenges remain, especially in ensuring uniformity across all States. As India continues its journey towards a more decentralized governance structure, the PDI provides valuable insights for future reforms and policies aimed at strengthening Panchayats, ensuring accountability, and promoting a more inclusive and democratic local governance system.

**KURUKSHETRA -APRIL 2025 (ENDS)**