

## **The role of Panchayat in rural development in Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A short overview of the Paschim Medinipur district where studies are conducted is provided in this paper. The district of Paschim Medinipur was designated for its inhabitants, in general, and the rural population in particular, for backwardness, Maoist problem, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe peoples, acute unemployment and serious poverty. It is one of the backward neighborhoods of West Bengal and has a virtually equal economic status while many development programs have been successfully launched in the past five decades. Indeed, the district's performance in rural development programs was insufficient for agriculture, industries, communication, nature, etc. This study evaluated the performance and the problems associated with rural development which generated bottlenecks and thus compounded rural people's grievances.

The research seeks to identify social, economic, and demographic achievements in the district of Paschim Medinipur and the wise recipient group. It underlines the aspirations and accomplishments and the inequalities and crashes of the inhabitants of the area. However, this chapter will begin with a brief review of the State of West Bengal, because Paschim Medinipur is one of 23 West Bengal districts. It was formed on 1st January 2002 after the partition of

Medinipur into Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur. Then 2017, on 4th April the Jhargram subdivision was converted into a new district.

**Table 1. PASCHEM MEDINIPUR**

Area	6,308 sq.kms
Population	59,13,457
Male	30,07,885
Female	29,05,572
Scheduled Caste	11,28,269
Scheduled Tribe	88,015
Total number of cultivators	49,098
Principal Language	Bengali
Literacy	79.04%
Crops	Rice, Wheat, Jute, nut, Potato, Flowers, Oilseeds, fruits, forest produce, betel leaf.

Source: Office of the District Magistrate, Medinipur, WB

## 1. POPULATION

Paschim Medinipur is a district in West Bengal. The total area of this district is currently (2020) 6,308 square kilometers. According to the 2011 census, the total population is 59,13,457, of which 30,07,885 are males and 29,05,572 are females. The population of this district is 65,63,938 (based on Aadhaar card 2021) of which 51,90,771 people live in rural areas. Of these, 35,15,871 are educated. The following is the population of 21 blocks in three subdivisions of Paschim Medinipur district.

## 2. TOPOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY

Medinipur was a large district. The administrative conversation has now become much smaller. On January 1st, 2002, it was divided into Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur districts. Later, Jhargram was declared a separate district on 4th April 2017. As a result at present, the area of Paschim Medinipur is 6308 sq. km. Although the district is backward, it is especially known

for its Jangal Mahal, Birsingha Gram, Kharagpur Railway, Hoogli River, Kalaghai, Kansai, and Kangsabati Rivers, and also Lalmati. To the north side of Paschim Medinipur are Bankura and Hoogli, the Bay of Bengal to the south side, Howrah and Purba Medinipur to the east side, and the west side only Jhargram.

### **Topography**

- Total Geographical area 6308 sq. km.
- No. of Towns- 20
- Total No. of Revenue Mouzas- 8694,
- No. of inhabited mouzas- 7600,
- No. of un-inhabited Mouzas- 1094,
- No. of G.P.s - 207,
- No. of Panchayat Samities- 21.

### **Administrative Set-Up**

- Sub-Division- 03,
- Community Development Blocks- 21,
- Police Stations- 20,
- No. of Assembly Constituency- 14,
- No. of Parliament Segment- 02,
- No. of Municipalities- 07,

## **3. DEVELOPMENT OF PANCHAYAT IN RURAL AREAS**

### **3.1 Gram Panchayat:**

The role of panchayats is very important in rural life. Administratively the District Magistrate and the Community Development Officer are involved in the work of this panchayat. For the convenience of their work, there is a sub-divisional ruler. The role of the panchayat and the administration is very important in Paschim Medinipur. Paschim Medinipur is an indigenous

and Maoist-dominated backward district. Various schemes of the state and the center have been announced for the district. Although more emphasis has been placed on the panchayat system since the time of the Left government, development has not been noticed due to the presence of Maoists. But after the Mamata Banerjee government came to power in 2011, the Maoist forces were wiped out and the district has changed with the adoption of new projects through panchayats. The communication system of this district has improved. The activities of the panchayat are being implemented with the right attitude.

Ordinary people are getting a lot of jobs through the panchayat, they are not in the same condition as before. Many improvements have been noticed in the panchayat system. Therefore, the role of Paschim Medinipur Panchayat in the development of local administration is particularly significant.

As per 2011 data, there are 290 Gram Panchayats in Paschim Medinipur. Out of these Gram Panchayats, 173 Gram Panchayats are backward, the number of villages here is 8702, out of which 637 villages are backward. Since 2011, the district has been developing by making more use of the Central and State Panchayats. After the formation of the Jhargram district in 2017, the number of gram panchayats in this district is 207, the number of villages is 8694.

The role of Gram Sabha and Gram Sangsad in the role of Panchayat is not less in Paschim Medinipur district. In 1992, the constitution was amended to make it compulsory to form Gram Sabhas and Gram Sangsads. However, the present state government has increased the importance of the work of Gram Sabha and Gram Sangsad. As a result, these two authorities are actively working. In 1994, the Left government in West Bengal amended the Panchayat Act to create these two authorities. The rural government has succeeded in decentralizing power in a more people-oriented and democratic manner. At the same time, it has made the panchayat members much more responsible. The task of the Gram Sabha is to present the annual plan, budget, and audit report of the last year's income and expenditure of the Gram Panchayat.

The Gram Sansad is doing well in Paschim Medinipur at present. The new government is

working behind this. This time one election after another and promises which have made the panchayat system much more dynamic through financial grants. Panchayats have been very active for the 2008 Panchayat, 2009 Lok Sabha, 2011 Assembly, 2013 Panchayat, 2014 Lok Sabha, 2016 Assembly, 2018 Panchayat, 2019 Lok Sabha, and 2021 Assembly elections. The activities of the Gram Sangsad are:

- a. Initiatives for social welfare, family welfare, child welfare programs,
- b. Directing the panchayats for various projects and social justice in the area,
- c. Ethnicity, religion, caste, language, class, Wives are creating solidarity and goodwill among all people irrespective of men,
- d. Identifying the poor people and arranging their work and trying to give away various opportunities.

**Table: 2 Administrative Sub-division of Paschim Medinipur**

Sub-division	Area (KM <sup>2</sup> )	Total Population	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Block
Medinipur Sadar	2441.50	1265967	86.05	13.95	Medinipur Sadar, Garhbeta-I, Garhbeta-II, Garhbeta-II, Keshiary, Salboni
Kharagpur	2913.17	2086294	85.67	14.33	Dantan-I, Dantan-II, Pingla, Kharagpur-I, Kharagpur-II, Sabang, Mohanpur, Narayangarh, Keshiary, Debra
Ghatal	953.09	921346	87.94	12.06	Chandrakona-I, Chandrakona-II, Daspur-I, Daspur-II, Ghatal

Source: Paschim Medinipur Zilla Parishad

### **3.2 Land Reform and its effects on Paschim Medinipur district:**

Agricultural reforms hold an important place in the rural development strategy of the left-wing government of West Bengal. The left-wing government of West Bengal gave the strongest possible impetus to rural development when it was elected to power in 1977. Land reforms are an essential component of rural development and, as such, must be firmly at the forefront of the strategy for rural development. The West Bengal government is attempting to change to eliminate the feudal and semi-feudal systems that have been severely impacted by rural and impoverished sectors throughout the years. The government has verified farmers' direct engagement by keeping feudal landowners on historical pages, and this direct involvement of the general public and its representatives is best shown in rural development programs and government initiatives.

The government's primary goals and objectives are to reduce inequalities in the rural economic structure and remove these anomalies via reform in land ownership and the tenancy system. There have been enough steps to divide the land acquired amongst the poor and landless farming industry. In addition, steps are made to preserve shareholders under comprehensive multifunctional initiatives. The Panchayats have previously been mentioned to take required measures to implement the government's land reform policy. Financial support is an important element in this, and this is why many nationalized banks are making tremendous efforts to provide financial assistance to ensure that bargadars are run smoothly. In this manner, the seizures of large landowners and moneylenders are kept clean. Furthermore, in many other programs for rural development, bargadars and landowners of private property are given precedence in selecting recipients.

In many states of India, the village development programs of the Central and State Governments have been carried out mainly by the government officials and the Panchayat Institutions have been given the responsibility of the rural development projects in West Bengal. The panchayat has the responsibility to implement village development projects through the active participation of the people. Improving the standard of living of farmers, identifying surplus land, distributing

surplus land among landless farmers, issuing leases, including share farmers' names, providing loans to farmers on the land, arranging institutional loans, the panchayat is working as the main driving force behind the success of this agriculture.

The success achieved in the field of agriculture as a result of the active participation of the Panchayat is as follows:

a. West Bengal has gone from a deficit state to a surplus state in food grain production. The role of the Paschim Medinipur district is sufficient in the production of this food grain.

b. In most cases, agricultural production has been increased through infrastructure development and provision of other inputs. In this context, it can be mentioned that the Panchayat has acted as the main medium for providing small and marginal farmers with agricultural inputs, tax exemption, free mutation, provision of pesticides, high yielding seeds. Paschim Medinipur district is gradually moving forward for various types of cooperation from the state government.

c. Besides agriculture, other sources of income have also been enriched in this district. For example, Paschim Medinipur district is ahead of other districts in agriculture and forest development. There has been considerable progress in animal husbandry in this district.

The fallow lands of this district have been made suitable for fish farming and have been donated to the poor farmers through lease bills. Moreover, as a result of the development of the panchayat system, the 'Jal Dharo Jal Bharo' project has been implemented extensively. As a result of the development of the Paschim Medinipur district, employment has increased in different areas here.

d. The role of Panchayat in selling and storing the product is commendable. Cold storage, farmhouses, and government markets have already been set up at various places in the district at the initiative of the panchayat and the government. As a result, the panchayat is solving various problems of the farmers.

### **3.3 Role of Panchayat in Agriculture:**

A major element in the district's economic growth is natural resources. They are a potential richness and economic growth can be speeded up in areas/countries if completely explored and appropriately used. There are two main types of natural resources. It is comprehensive resources such as agriculture and renewable resources such as forests and water. It is vital to highlight that conservation, economic exploitation, and more complete use of renewable energy are necessary to speed up economic development.

In the economic life of a nation, the forest plays a key role. It is widely recognized that they contribute to rainfall, to a more equitable climate, and to safeguarding agriculture. Furthermore, its main outputs are wood, fuel, and forage, which have their economic worth. It is also essential since jobless people may use it to make furniture work and tools. In a word, in agriculture, industry, environment, jobs, and rural development, woods have an extremely significant function to play. For the district of Paschim Medinipur, the woods have an important part to play in the area's economic life.

There has been a lot of development in agriculture in Paschim Medinipur district than before. As Paschim Medinipur district is a backward district, the state government and the central government have tried to develop it through various projects. Since it is a hilly, red soil area, development has been noticed through various types of cooperation. At the same time, the money related to the loss by the panchayat and the project of the Krishi Bandhu state government is benefiting the farmers a lot.

At the same time, rural development is taking place to provide land tax exemption to farmers, land lease, and to create land records online at no cost. Various assistance is provided by the government for the development of agricultural work in Paschim Medinipur. Financial assistance is provided to financially disadvantaged farmers. Certain markets have been created for the sale of crops and the government is also trying to buy those crops, through various firms. In addition, the government provides various types of improved seeds for agriculture, so that rural



development is achieved through agricultural work. In Paschim Medinipur district, the panchayat is also arranging pumps for agricultural work, allowing tube wells and expanding drains.

### **3.4 Role of Panchayat in Irrigation:**

It was previously stated that soil is more or less permeable in Paschim Medinipur district and that soil is poor in water. In this District's agricultural, irrigation facilities like such is essential. It was previously mentioned that 326392 hectares of irrigation area exist in this district. Most of the cultivations of 'Rabi' and 'Kharif' rely on irrigation water availability. In this area, many irrigation techniques have been used. Runway water supplies (i) water supply, (ii) deep tube, (iii) water supply, (iv) smallirrigation, (v) low water, (vi) freshwater supply (vii) Irrigation of the tanks, etc.

The necessity for developing a comprehensive irrigation system is keenly felt in the district of Paschim Medinipur, to counteract the impact of irregular and unjust rainfall distributions and guarantee water in agricultural regions as per demand.

The Panchayat three-tier organization has important responsibilities in designing, implementing, and managing irrigation systems. The small irrigation sector is the core area in which the beneficiaries under the leadership of Panchayats are actively involved in all development phases. Beneficiaries led by Panchayats are building field canals in the common areas of large irrigation projects.

In Paschim Medinipur, Panchayats are actively engaged in the implementation and administration of all small irrigation systems right from the selection of the site to the construction. Panchayat amenities, which include the beneficiaries themselves in the building and were then given over to beneficiaries after construction, are identified and built.

Furthermore, tubes of various capacities were transferred by the committee of beneficiaries to Panchayat Samitrs for operation, maintenance and administration. To fully cover operational and

maintenance expenses, the Panchayat amenities are permitted to set and disband appropriate levels of water from the beneficiaries. The Panchayat Samiti was also authorized to carry out water charges to collect the whole of the system's operating and maintenance expenses.

Paschim Medinipur district is the main agricultural base district. The irrigation system is seen as one of the problems in agriculture. Earlier, cultivation was not good in the Medinipur subdivision, irrigation water resources were not good here. So we had to depend on rainwater here. Only in the Ghatal area, there was river-dependent farming, besides in other cases there were a lot of irrigation problems. However, government irrigation facilities were not so. Some privately owned irrigation systems were limited. Since 2011, special benefits have been noticed in rural areas as a result of irrigation systems and permission given by the Panchayat office. Now the panchayat department permits irrigation very easily and in less time. Besides, 21 check dams have been constructed in Jaltirtha Project. This role of the government has brought about a major change in the agricultural sector in the rural areas of Paschim Medinipur. Besides, water has been provided through river reform. Apart from Ghatal, other panchayat areas are not affected by floods. Rivers like Subarnarekha, Keleghai, Hoogli, Rupnarayan, Kangsavati, etc. flow in this district.

### **3.5 Role of Panchayat in Special training and opportunities:**

Panchayats are especially active in implementing the facilities of various projects of the Central and State Governments. These projects are implemented through the panchayat system. Due to the indigenous population of Paschim Medinipur district, there are many facilities here. Panchayats are working hard to make the works announced by the government successfully. DM Office, Kharagpur SDO Office as well as MLAs from the area starting from the Panchayat representatives of the area are also coming forward. The Gram Panchayat imparts training on firefighting, drought, flood, and other natural calamities in every school in the Medinipur district. Other organizations also came forward with the panchayat calling for rural disaster and development. In addition, various equipment, fertilizers, medicines, and financial assistance are provided in the field of agriculture to increase job opportunities. Water places, fish seedlings,

various equipment are donated for fish farming.

In the rural areas of Paschim Medinipur, donations are raised for raising goats, ducks, and chickens through the Panchayat.

### **3.6 Role of Panchayat in Rural education and health:**

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has created a stir in the rural areas of West Bengal, which has also created a new movement in the case of Paschim Medinipur. In the case of Medinipur, the success was not so great, but enough success has been noticed in Ghatal or Kharagpur subdivision. Through all these education missions, a radical change has been seen in the education system. Although it is a joint initiative of the Central and State Governments, the Panchayat is the main force in its implementation.

This is an opportunity for states to make their own goals about primary education. The aim was to bring all children between the ages of five and fourteen to the traditional school and alternative school. Ensuring education for every child from first to eighth grade by 2010, Village Education Committees have been formed at the village level for this purpose. A database of children's education has been set up at the Gram Sangsad level through child registration, and the Gram Panchayat of Medinipur has an important role to play in identifying out-of-school or out-of-school children. After 2011, the present government provided books for primary education, Anganbari education up to secondary level, school bags, clothes, shoes, mid-day meals for children to eighth grade, Kanyashree, Sabuj Sathy, Shikshashree also providing allowances to SC, ST. As a result, the gram panchayats have become more development-oriented and the rate of education has also increased in the rural areas.

The gram panchayats of Paschim Medinipur play an active role in various aspects of school housing, construction of extra classrooms, and management of Ghanbari centers. Even in the case of covid-19, the role of the panchayat has increased to a great extent. Even though schools,

colleges, offices, and vehicles are closed, the panchayat system of life in rural areas is conducting its activities following the rules of hygiene. In Paschim Medinipur district, ssk, msk education centers have played a special role in the panchayat areas. In Paschim Medinipur district as per 2007-2008, there are 2464 ssk education centers, 6360 assistants, 173907 students, 231 MSK expanders, 1305 expanders, 40394 students.

The panchayat has taken an active role with the state government in ensuring the provision of toilets and water in every school in compliance with the overall health provisions. In Paschim Medinipur district, the panchayat system is also active in managing the rural health system properly through the Department of Health and Family Welfare. Asha workers in every village, sisters of health centers, doctors keep in touch with the panchayat representatives of each village to keep the rural health system running.

The table below presents an overview of the sub-division-wise medical facilities available and patients treated in the hospitals, health centers, and sub-centers in 2014 in Paschim Medinipur.

### **3.7 Role of Panchayat in SHGs:**

Although the formation of self-help groups in Paschim Medinipur started a little late, many groups have now been formed. Many of these groups were formed very quickly between 2010 to 2020. Now the various functions of the panchayat are carried out through these groups. Panchayats have brought a tide of self-help groups through various government development departments, voluntary organizations, and banks. These groups have formed federations in village-based associations and panchayat associations. The role of panchayats is important for the formation of self-reliant groups. Panchayats recognize these groups and carry out various rural development works through them. In the field of rural development, SHG has been formed in every block of West Medinipur. The aim of the panchayat is through these groups -

- i. To employ one woman from each poor family in the self-help group,
- ii. To train the members of the self-help group to improve their livelihood through agriculture and livestock,

- iii. To take up various projects of the panchayat to increase women's awareness and capacity.
- iv. Sending children to Anganwadi Centers and caring for them.
- v. These groups provide cooking and feeding of children in primary schools,
- vi. School cleaning, garden maintenance, kitchen, and toilet cleaning,
- vii. Self-help group women are now planting trees and setting up nurseries,
- viii. These groups are provided by the panchayat. Raising poultry, goats, etc. and bringing financial prosperity to the family,
- ix. Through the Panchayat, Self Help Groups are creating seed stocks and grain husks.

### **3.8 Role of Panchayat in Housing projects:**

As Paschim Medinipur district lags, the government has taken initiative to build more houses for this district through panchayats. Earlier there was Indira Awas Yojana but now there is Banglar Awaas Yojana, Prime Mantri Awaas Yojana, and Gitanjali project. At present, through these three projects in Paschim Medinipur, poor families are making arrangements to provide houses to those who do not have a home. The Gitanjali and Pradhan Mantri Awaay Yojana are provided by the Central Government, while the Banglar Awaas Yojana is provided by the Government of West Bengal. The Center pays 75% of the cost of the project and the State spends 25% of the cost. Panchayats play an important role in building houses for homeless families in rural areas. Apart from that, the gram panchayat provides financial assistance for the repair of raw houses and also provides financial assistance for the houses that are damaged during natural calamities. An image of Paschim Medinipur is mentioned below:

### **3.9 Role of Panchayat in MGNREGA:**

Integrated rural development programs are indeed formulated by the central or state governments but local governments have to play an active role in implementing them. The main objective of these projects is to bring the families living below the poverty line above the poverty line with self-employment opportunities. In the case of Paschim Medinipur, we have seen MGNREGA trying to identify poor families and bring them back into the mainstream of society by making

them self-reliant. The Panchayat system is playing an active role in West Medinipur to achieve this goal. The government has taken up such projects under different names. MGNREGA has been quite effective in Paschim Medinipur as well as all over India. The previous projects were NREP 1980, NLEGP 1983, JRY 1994, SGRY 2000, SGSY 2002, NFFWP 2004, NREGA 2005, etc. The financial grant from the Central Government to the State Government for this project is 75% from the Center and 25% from the State. The activities of MGNREGA through this Gram Panchayat are:

- i. To make a specific list for each Gram Panchayat 100 days work,
- ii. To ensure employment of adult people in rural households,
- iii. This MGNREGA has reserved one-third of the work for women,
- iv. Ensuring workplace within five kilometers from home,
- v. Panchayats not only alleviate poverty through MGNREGA but also bring about socio-economic development. As the people of the area benefit financially through 100 days of work, so does the development of the area. At the same time, area cleaning, government work, irrigation work, road work, digging of private ponds, government work by pond version, water catchment water filling project work, etc. are also done.

At present, the West Bengal government has announced 150 days of employment for the development of West Medinipur. Since this district is a backward backward Maoist inhabited area SC-ST population is more. Overall, the Paschim Medinipur district is far ahead in this regard and a lot of people have engaged themselves in this MGNREGA in Paschim Medinipur. The following is the information of three-gram panchayats from three subdivisions, where men, women, SCs, STs have registered their names.

### **3.10 Role of Panchayat in Backwards classes:**

Paschim Medinipur district is a diverse district. People of different languages, religions, and

castes live in this district. There are many backward classes among the people of these different communities, sometimes it can be caste, and sometimes it can be financial. The gram panchayat stays and implements it. There are a lot of caste and financially backward people in Paschim Medinipur. As per 2008 data, out of 290-gram panchayats, 173-gram panchayats are lagging. The main objectives of the panchayat system are to provide MGNREGA, microfinance projects, financial assistance, special financial assistance from the Center and the states, food security, social security, improvement of communication system, agricultural assistance, and loans, etc. for these backward villages. The panchayat has tried to improve the backward class through the setting up of schools and infrastructural development for backward villages, provision of hostels for SCs and STs, financial assistance, and grants for backward students. At present Paschim Medinipur has improved a lot as a result of the active role of the panchayat system.

### **3.11 Role of Panchayat in Political participation and women empowerment:**

The issue of women's participation in political institutions is relevant today. The role of women in the economic, social, and cultural spheres in the wider society is quite important. The UN Human Development Report shows that women are the most disadvantaged part of society. This deprivation is seen everywhere, such as wages, education, health, etc. The success of democracy at the grassroots level requires ensuring women's participation in local government work. In a democratic country like India, women's participation in the political process and institutions is always important. In the late nineteenth century, women's participation in political and state life increased in India. Women in India have been politically organized since the beginning of the twentieth century. In independent India, the Constitution of India does not discriminate between men and women politically and economically. Wages for constitutionally equal work, equal opportunities in education, recognition of suffrage regardless of gender. The Indian Constitution indeed speaks of equality and freedom, but in practice, it has shown that most Indian women are deprived.

In 1986, the LM Singhvi Committee recommended the reservation of seats for one-third of

women in the panchayat system. One-third of the seats were reserved in 1992 through the 73rd and 74th Amendments, and the law was enacted in 1993. However, in 1973, the West Bengal government adopted a policy of reserving one-third of the seats. At the same time, SC and ST adopted the policy of reserving seats. Among the reserved seats, SC and ST were reserved for women. After the 1993 elections, the leadership structure of the panchayat system in West Bengal became more democratic. Out of a total of 71,120 seats in the panchayat elections, 24,895 women from the SC-ST community participated in the three tiers, with a percentage of 35% women elected from the SC and ST. In 1998, out of 61398 seats in Gram Panchayat, 21728 women, 35.39 percent women were elected, 3202 out of 9516 women in Panchayat Samiti, 33.65 % women, 227 out of 664 women in Zilla Parishad, 34.19% women. In 2003, 36.63% of women participated in the Gram Panchayat, 34.44% in the Panchayat Samiti, and 34.44% in the Zilla Parishad. At the same time, women have been employed more in the administrative field than ever before.

There were women and deprivation in Paschim Medinipur district. The reservations made by the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution are, in fact, nominal.

The idea of women's political participation began in 1988. Women have gained political power through political participation and political participation women have played a role in decision making. Participation in local government has resulted in women being directly involved in the political process. In it, women can play an active role in rural development. In Paschim Medinipur district, women have come forward in the field of rural development through various programs. Women have a say in politics, education, health, and employment. The formation of SHG in the West Medinipur district has resulted in more women participating in politics than ever before. There are also reservations for women's participation in 100 days of work to become financially self-sufficient. Appropriate policies for the protection of women are followed at all levels of the panchayat in Paschim Medinipur. In addition, the development of the education system has seen a significant increase in the number of female students between 2011 to 2020. As a result of the current government launching Kanyashree, Rupashree, etc.



projects, the tendency of students to go to school has increased. As a result of giving priority to women in all the functions of the panchayat, women come forward in politics voluntarily. The present government has reserved 50% of women in local administration.

The achievements of panchayats as a result of the reservation of women's seats are as follows:

- a. Increased level of political socialization of women's political participation,
- b. Inclusion of backward sections in panchayats,
- c. Increased nature, tendency, and positive role of women's political participation.
- d. Women participate in meeting processions, they are actively participating in and leading the development work of the panchayat.
- e. Through SHG, women have learned to unite, destroy the bad aspects of society and increase social awareness.
- f. Family Health Being aware of legal rights issues is solving family problems themselves.
- g. Women's social status has increased among family members and relatives. The role of women in the social sphere of the village has increased as a representative, they come and lead various social and cultural events.
- h. As a result of participation in panchayats, rural development is being accelerated through the formation of self-help groups, child health care, low infant mortality rate, maternity care, maternal health, and nutrition monitoring, ICDS management, and pulse polio.
- i. Through women's participation, they discuss their various problems among themselves, so that they can find solutions to the problems. As a result, women are also aware of their rights.
- j. As a result of an increase in the number of women members in the panchayat, violence against women has decreased significantly. Due to alcohol and gambling, women's power has united to solve family problems and has broken the barrier of alcohol. The role of women is quite

important for such activities in Paschim Medinipur, in which case the panchayat has actively cooperated to help women participate.

### **3.12 Role of Panchayat in implementation of government project:**

At present, the role of panchayats has increased a lot in the implementation of various government projects. Sometimes it is indirect and sometimes it is direct. Promoting projects, reaching out to consumers, registering their names, registering their list, etc, Indirect work is more like identifying consumers for implementation of projects undertaken by the Central or State Government, filling up their forms, going to the office on the right day. Letting them know, helping them if they have problems, etc. At present local government has to play a much bigger role in projects like Agriculture Friend or Prime Minister's Agriculture Fund. In the case of other government projects, all the documents have to be delivered to the government office.

Again, the role of the panchayat is very much like the Duare Sarkar. Here the work of filling up various forms is done by the panchayat officers. Through this panchayat system, various problems can be solved very easily. Therefore, the role of the panchayat organization as a local government is significant in the implementation of government projects. As a result, the backward people of Paschim Medinipur have been able to avail various benefits. Seeing the damage caused by various natural calamities, the panchayat sent its report to the government. In addition, during this time of crisis (Covid-19), the panchayat is actively and vigorously adhering to the rules and regulations of the rural development and trying to provide government services to the people.

### **3.13 Role of Panchayat in Nirmol Bangla / Sachha Bharat:**

The Swachh Bharat Avijan or Swachh Bharat Mission was launched in 2014. The Center adopted this project to keep the rural environment clean. This project is adopted to open-defecation free. However, the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan was formed in 2009 to build a clean India. Swachh Bharat Mission started the first phase of work in 2019, the second phase is scheduled for 2020-21, 2024-2025. Nirmal Bangla was created for a clean Bengal in West Bengal. However,

Paschim Medinipur district is a backward, illiterate, low-intelligence population, which defecates in open spaces in rural areas due to lack of a suitable environment.

The toilets in the schools were not 100%. Subsequently, after 2014, all the schools in Paschim Medinipur have built toilets, efforts are being made to provide toilets for the people of every village through Nirmal Bangla or Swachh Bharat Mission toilets of most of the houses have been constructed through Panchayats. Now several villages in Paschim Medinipur have come under Nirmal Bangla and Swachh Bharat Mission. At present, many well-educated people and educational institutions have joined hands with the panchayat. As a result, the panchayat has become quite active in building a clean Bengal.

### **3.14 Role of Panchayat in rural infrastructure development:**

At present, the role of panchayats is sufficient for rural development. Infrastructure should be given more importance in rural development. The issue of social infrastructure has not been given much importance in the past. Many works for the development of rural infrastructure are done by the panchayats and villagers. At the village level, infrastructure refers to drinking water, roads, houses, electricity, bridges, bridges, banks, various institutions, etc. The works carried out by the Panchayat for the development of rural infrastructure in Paschim Medinipur are as follows:

- a. Improving the communication system through roads suitable for all seasons,
- b. To stop the movement of heavy vehicles on rural roads,
- c. To build bridges and bridges over necessary canals,
- d. To build permanent pucca houses at Anganwari Kendras at the initiative of villagers,
- e. To build their own houses for each children's education center,
- f. Construction of affordable toilets,
- g. Arrangement of drainage,
- h. Initiatives for the development of playgrounds, markets, gardens, rural libraries, health centers, etc.,
- i. Construction of community halls in each area,

- j. Maintenance of rural schools
- k. Power supply For each family,
- l. Lighting on the roads where people walk, etc.

All these works are done by the gram panchayats of Paschim Medinipur district and they focus on infrastructure for adequate rural development.

## Conclusion

There are some challenges with which the Panchayat Raj institutions are involved effectively in the rural development process. Finance, administration, and organization are the biggest issues. The institutions of Panchayat Raj do not have sufficient authority and resources, but the Member States have plenty to do with them. Today's issue for society is how rural people may be empowered in every regard. It is here that from a grassroots development point of view the social responsibility of public and commercial organizations.

Panchayat is the former democratic autonomous institution of India. Panchayat is described as "Sabhas" and "Samites" in the old Indian book "Rigveda." Panchayat refers to the assembly (yat) of the wise five elders, recognized by and selected by the people in the hamlet. Panchayat Raj's ideology is strongly rooted in Indian rural history and culture. It's not a novel idea at all. Panchayat Raj provided the community with a structure of autonomy. Panchayat Raj is the base of the Self-Government Unit.

The panchayat system of West Bengal has improved a lot since India. With the 73rd amendment to the constitution, the panchayat system has become more effective and women's participation has increased. The pace that the panchayat system started during the Left government has continued. With the new government coming to power in 2011, the panchayat system has taken on a new dimension. In the case of women empowerment, 50 percent of seats have been reserved in the local administration.

The government has taken up and tried to implement several projects for rural development

through panchayats in Paschim Medinipur district, inhabited by Maoists, tribals, and Scheduled Castes, to keep the literacy rate low in the area. The backward Paschim Medinipur district is now showing the direction of development in 2020.

To make the panchayat system more dynamic and successful, the things we need to keep in mind are:

- a. Information must be presented to the public,,
- b. The people will be aware of the Panchayat in advance about each subject,
- c. Initiatives must be utilized,
- d. The movement will be used to make genuine empowerment of women should be done,
- e. Educated and corruption-free leadership should be brought to the forefront,
- f. Panchayat system should be brought above politicization,
- g. Attendance of members in Gram Sansad and Gram Sabha meetings should be increased,
- h. Panchayats have to play a neutral role in solving local problems.

The Panchayati-raj idea in India is not new. It has been discovered that the method works well in the administration of minor units of the nations, such as the villages. Various Constitutional Framers recognized this idea and, taking into consideration the intention of the Constituent Assembly, it has been granted constitutional validity by the seventy-third amendments under Part IX. There have been numerous problems with its efficient operation even after two decades of the work of the Panchayati raj in India constitutionally. It would be no mistake to state that the institutions of Panchayati raj have begun to perform their administrative function in the way it was intended.

However, the issue lies at the level of the input of the main parties concerned, i.e. the general public. Today the institution is induced by numerous wrongdoing activities, such as proxy voting,

corruption, or political interference.

It is thus essential to start the reform aimed at the people first, which includes training the voters to make them capable of understanding their rights and responsibilities. Even the operation of Panchayat in India requires structural changes since it has no tax collection capabilities and thus relies on financial aid and loses its independence from the State Government. The involvement of the political parties in the Panchayati raj system is also extremely persistent and these problems should therefore be addressed as soon as possible. The Panchayati Raj Institutions thus have done a great deal towards the realization of their goal. Today, however, there are many issues to be dealt with. The bulk of the population in India belongs to the rural regions; therefore the management of these entities is necessary.

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