

FEDERALISM

By:- P Naik

TGT(SS)- AECS, Kakrapar

Decentralisation in India

When power is taken away from Central and State governments and given to local government, it is called decentralisation. The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are a large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level. People have better knowledge of problems in their localities. They also have better ideas on where to spend money and how to manage things more efficiently. Besides, at the local level it is possible for the people to directly participate in decision making. This helps to inculcate a habit of democratic participation. Local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government.

Amendment of the constitution to make the third-tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

- Now it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.**
- Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.**
- At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.**
- An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each State to conduct panchayat and municipal elections.**
- The State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies. The nature of sharing varies from State to State.**

Village Panchayat

Rural local government is popularly known by the name panchayati raj. Each village, or a group of villages in some States, has a gram panchayat. This is a council consisting of several ward members, often called panch, and a president or sarpanch. They are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village.

Panchayat Samiti or Block or Mandal

A few gram panchayats are grouped together to form what is usually called a panchayat samiti or block or mandal. The members of this representative body are elected by all the panchyat members in that area.

Zilla Parishad

All the panchayat samitis or mandals in a district together constitute the zilla (district) parishad. Most members of the zilla parishad are elected. Members of the Lok Sabha and MLAs of that district and some other officials of other district level bodies are also its members. Zilla parishads chairperson is the political head of the zilla parishad.

Local Government in Urban Area

Municipalities are set up in towns. Big cities are constituted into municipal corporations. Both municipalities and municipal corporations are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives. Municipal chairperson is the political head of the municipality. In a municipal corporation such an officer is called the mayor.

Thank You!

