

## **I-PANCHAYAT RAJ**

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Panchayats or village assemblies existed in ancient India as self-governing institutions which had distinct and well-defined functions. The institution of Panchayat represented not only the collective will, but also the collective wisdom of the entire rural community. As in other parts of the country, village Panchayats also existed in Rajasthan. British rule introduced a highly decentralized system of administering justice, which changed the situation and the system of village Panchayats suffered a setback. During the time of Viceroy Lord Ripon, there was an attempt to establish local bodies. In Rajasthan, the princely states of Jodhpur, Bharatpur, Jaipur, Sirohi, Udaipur, and Karauli enacted legislations on Panchayats. Bikaner state had its own Gram Panchayat Act much earlier in 1928. Thus, at the time of independence, Panchayats were functioning in some of the erstwhile princely states, while in other states no such institutions existed.

Rajasthan came into existence as a result of the process of integration of about two dozen princely states and chief ships in successive stages starting from the inauguration of the Matsya Union (comprising of the former princely states of Alwar and Bharatpur) and culminating with the merger of Sirohi state in the Rajasthan union. Greater Rajasthan with Jaipur as its capital was inaugurated in March 1949. The final stage in the formation of the present state of Rajasthan was completed in 1956 with the merger of the Part-C state of Ajmer and parts of Bombay and Madhya Pradesh into Rajasthan as a result of the recommendations of the State's Reorganization Commission, giving the state its present geographical and political identity.

In 1953, the Rajasthan Panchayat Act was enacted and village Panchayats were established throughout the state.

Rajasthan has the distinction of being a pioneer in accepting the scheme of democratic decentralization envisaging a three-tier system of representative bodies at the village, block, and district levels. The system later came to be known as Panchayati Raj, which was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 2 October 1959 at Nagour in Rajasthan.

The first elections under the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959 were held in September-October 1959. With the already existing Panchayats at the village level under the Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1953, the three-tier scheme of Panchayati Raj began functioning on 2 October 1959.

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### **II-V.P.SINGH**

V.P. Singh, who had initially denied any interest in becoming prime minister, emerged after the 1989 elections as the leader of the loosely knit JD coalition whose extreme wings were basically antipathetic to each other. Haryana's Jat leader, Chaudhary Devi Lal, who nominated V.P. Singh for prime minister, became deputy prime minister, thus raising fears in Punjab that another period of harsh Delhi rule was about to begin. V.P. Singh's first visit as prime minister, however, was to Amritsar's Golden Temple, where he walked barefoot to announce that he hoped to bring a "healing touch" to Punjab's sorely torn state. Singh promised a political solution for the region's problems, but, reflecting the ambivalence in his new coalition, the move in Amritsar was not followed up by the transfer of Chandigarh, nor indeed by any state elections.

A similar ambivalence within the coalition was seen with respect to events in Ayodhya (in Uttar Pradesh), an ancient capital and—as most orthodox Hindus believe—birthplace of the deity Rama. The Babri Masjid, a mosque erected by the Mughal emperor Bābur in Ayodhya, was said to have been built over the very site of Rama’s birthplace, where a more ancient Hindu temple, Ram Janmabhoomi, was supposed to have stood. In the fall of 1990 a mass march of Hindus bearing consecrated bricks to rebuild “Rama’s birth temple” won the support of most members of Advani’s BJP, as well as of many other Hindus throughout India. V.P. Singh and his government, however, were committed to India as a secular nation and would not permit the destruction of the mosque, which Muslims considered one of their oldest and most sacred places. India’s police were thus ordered to stop the more than one million Hindus marching toward Ayodhya, including Advani himself, who rode in a chariot such as Rama might have used. On October 23, the day that Advani was stopped and arrested, Singh lost his Lok Sabha majority, as the BJP withdrew its support for the coalition.

Singh had earlier come under severe attack from many upper-caste Hindus of northern India for sponsoring implementation of the 1980 Mandal Commission report, which recommended that more jobs in all services be reserved for members of the lower castes and Dalit (formerly untouchable) outcaste communities. After he announced in August 1990 that the recommendations would be enforced, many young upper-caste Hindus immolated themselves in protests across northern India. V.P. Singh’s critics accused him of pandering to the lower castes for their votes, and many members of his own party deserted him on this searing issue, foremost among them Chandra Shekhar, who led a splinter group of JD dissidents out of Singh’s coalition. On November 7, 1990, V.P. Singh resigned after suffering a vote of no confidence by a stunning margin of 356 to 151.

Most of those who voted against the prime minister were members of Rajiv Gandhi’s Congress (I) Party, for Gandhi retained the largest single block of party faithful in the Lok Sabha; however, Advani’s BJP support also lined up against Singh. The smallest new party bloc in the Lok Sabha belonged to Shekhar, whose Janata Dal (S)—the S stood for Socialist—gained the support of Gandhi and thus came to be invited by President Ramaswamy Venkataraman to serve as prime minister before the end of 1990. Devi Lal, who in August had been ousted by Singh, again became deputy prime minister. With fewer than 60 Janata (S) members in the Lok Sabha, however, the new prime minister’s hold on power was tenuous and not expected to survive any longer than deemed expedient by Gandhi and the Congress (I) bloc. When the Congress (I) walked out of the Lok Sabha in March 1991, Shekhar had little choice but to resign and call on President Venkataraman to announce new general elections.

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### III- MANDAL COMMISSION

#### Background to the issue of Backward Classes

After India achieved independence, affirmative action started for the “Depressed Classes” or the Scheduled Castes and Tribes providing benefits to the most backward and socially ostracised of India’s communities. However, there were no benefits or even a list of the country’s other backward classes, which although not as politically and socially backward as the ST/SCs, but were still marginalised in society, and behind forwarding castes in fields of education, employment and economic development. To address this problem, the country’s first **Backward Classes Commission** was set up headed by Kaka Kalelkar in 1953. This was also called the **Kalelkar Commission**. In 1955, the commission submitted its report which stated that there were 2399 backward groups in India out of which 837 were ‘most backward’

and the major evidence of backwardness cited was caste. However, the Union Government, in its pursuit of ultimately creating a casteless society, rejected its recommendations.

#### Mandal Commission Details

The commission developed 11 criteria to identify the backward classes who were called “**Other Backward Classes**” or **OBCs**. The criteria are classified as social, economic and educational.

#### Social Indicators

1. Castes or classes considered socially backward by others.
2. Castes or classes that relied on manual labour for their livelihood.
3. Castes or classes where:
  1. At least 10% males and 25% females more than the state average got married below the age of 17 years in rural areas
  2. At least 5% males and 10% of females more than the state average got married below the age of 17 years in urban areas
4. Castes/classes where participation of women in work is at least 25% more than the state average.

#### Educational Indicators

1. Castes or classes where the number of children between the ages of 5 and 15 who never attended school is at least 25% more than the state average.
2. Castes or classes when the rate of student dropout between the ages of 5 and 15 is at least 25% more than the state average.
3. Castes or classes amongst whom the proportion of matriculates is at least 25% less than the state average.

#### Economic Indicators

1. Castes or classes where the average value of family assets is at least 25% less than the state average.
2. Castes or classes where the number of families living in kutcha houses is at least 25% more than the state average.
3. Castes or classes where the number of households having taken consumption loans is at least 25% more than the state average.

All the indicators were given different weightage points. The social indicators were given 3 points each, educational indicators were given 2 points each and the economic indicators were given 1 point each. The 11 indicators were applied to all castes covered by the survey in a state. All castes which had a score of 11 points were declared as socially and educationally backwards.

#### Mandal Commission recommendations

The Commission reported that 52% of the country’s population was comprised of OBCs. initially, the commission argued that the percentage of reservation in government service should match this percentage. However, this would have gone against an earlier

Supreme Court ruling which had laid down the extent of the reservation to under 50%. There was already a 22.5% reservation for SCs and STs. Therefore, the figure of reservation for OBCs was capped at **27%** which when added to the already existing reservation would be below the 50% mark. The Commission also identified backward classes among non-Hindus.

The recommendations are briefly mentioned below:

1. Reservation of 27% public sector and government jobs for OBCs for those who do not qualify on merit.
2. Reservation of 27% for promotions at all levels for OBCs in public service.
3. The reserved quota, if unfilled, should be carried forward for a period of 3 years and deserved after that.
4. Age relaxation for OBCs to be the same as that for SCs and STs.
5. A roster system should be prepared for the backward classes on the pattern of that for the SCs and STs.
6. Reservations to be made in PSUs, banks, private sector undertakings receiving government grants, colleges and universities.
7. The government to make the necessary legal provisions to implement these recommendations.

#### Mandal Commission Impact

In 1990, the then Prime Minister V P Singh announced in the Parliament that the recommendations of the Mandal Commission would be implemented. Violent protests ensued in northern and western India. Many students immolated themselves in protest and a few of them died as well.

The southern states' reaction to the Commission's recommendations were much milder since there was already reservation touching 50% in those states, and hence, they were more agreeable to those recommendations. Also, according to Ramachandra Guha, the percentage of upper castes in those regions was less than 10% while in northern India, it was above 20%. Additionally, the youth in the southern states were not as heavily dependent on government employment because of a better industrial sector there.

In 1992, the SC upheld the 27% reservation for OBCs but also stated that the only caste was not an indicator of social and educational backwardness. It said that the 'creamy layer' among the OBCs should not be the beneficiaries of the reservations.

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### IV-INDIA AS A NUCLEAR POWER

#### List of Nuclear Power Plants In India

Given below is the list of 7 sites of Nuclear Power Plants in India. Candidates can download the List of Nuclear Power Plants in India PDF given both at the top and bottom of this article.

Name Of Nuclear Power Station	Location	Operator	Capacity
Kakrapar Atomic Power Station – 1993	Gujarat	NPCIL	440

(Kalpakkam) Madras Atomic Power Station – 1984	Tamil Nadu	NPCIL	440
Narora Atomic Power Station- 1991	Uttar Pradesh	NPCIL	440
Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant -2000	Karnataka	NPCIL	880
Rajasthan Atomic Power Station – 1973	Rajasthan	NPCIL	1,180
Tarapur Atomic Power Station – 1969	Maharashtra	NPCIL	1,400
Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant – 2013	Tamil Nadu	NPCIL	2,000

Candidates can read in detail about the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in the given link.

- Nuclear power is the fifth-largest source of electricity in India after thermal, hydroelectric and renewable sources of electricity.
- Presently, India has 22 nuclear power reactors operating in 7 states, with an installed capacity of 6780 MegaWatt electric (MWe).
- 18 reactors are Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and 4 are Light Water Reactors (LWRs).
- Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited -NPCIL based in Mumbai is a government-owned corporation of India that is responsible for the generation of electricity through nuclear power.
- NPCIL is administered by the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India.