

1. GIVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF EVOLUTION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN ODISHA.

Odisha became a separate province in 1936. The process of decentralization set in through the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1948. The Anchal Sasan Act, 1955 intended to accord full powers to Anchal, a local authority which was at a higher level than Gram Panchayat and to confer constructive roles for villagers in the working of the system. This Act could not see the light of the day and prevented Odisha a pioneering role in the democratic decentralization process much earlier to the Balwant Ray Mehta Committee report. The fate of Gram Panchayat during 1950s and 1960s was under the mercy of various departments.

Odisha adopted the model of panchayat recommended by Balwant Ray Mehta on 26 January, 1961 two years after Rajasthan (1959). It followed the three-tier system of Mehta. A new department called Department Community Development came into being in 1962 to direct and control the administration of all panchayats. Under the dynamic leadership of Biju Patnaik, Odisha Zilla Parishad Act of 1991 and Gram Panchayat Samiti Amendment Act of 1992 were passed to provide 33% reservation to women in panchayats, which was for the first time in the history of independent India. After the enforcement of the Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, the erstwhile act was amended to give effect to the former. Today, panchayats in Odisha are of three-tier and function on the basis of provided by the Constitutional Act.