



# INDIAS 1ST CARBON-NEUTRAL PANCHAYAT IN J&K- A STUDY OF PALLI VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

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## ABSTRACT

A small village in Jammu and Kashmir has become India's first 'Carbon-Neutral' Panchayat. Called Palli, the town in the state's Samba district has paved the way for the country to use clean and green energy sources in their daily lives. With the goals stated at the COP26 climate summit, India is working to become a carbon-neutral nation. How will this be accomplished? Individual districts and states will be able to meet the targets if they work together to expand on the existing model for long-term sustainability. In line with this, the Palli village in the Samba region of Jammu & Kashmir's Union Territory is slated to become the first carbon-free solar panchayat. From solar chulhas to electric bus rides, the fight to make the union territory carbon-neutral is on. The village is powered entirely by solar energy, with all records digitized and all Central initiatives completely utilized. Palli has undergone a complete transformation, from macadamized roads to the recently established electric bus service. A 500 KW solar plant with a total size of 6,408 square meters has been installed at a record speed. Under the national government's 'Gram Urja Swraj' program, the plant will be responsible for providing clean electricity to approximately 340 homes. The solar installation would provide enough electricity to meet the daily needs of 2,000 Palli village residents.

## KEY WORDS

Carbon, neutral, climate, village, Panchayat, electricity,

## INTRODUCTION

PM visits J&K to participate in celebrations of National Panchayati Raj Day Addresses all the Gram Sabhas across the country from Palli Panchayat in Samba district Inaugurates and lays the foundation stone of multiple development initiatives worth over Rs 20,000 crore Inaugurates Banihal Qazigund Road Tunnel which will help bring the regions of Jammu and Kashmir closer lays foundation stone of three road packages of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway and Ratle&Kwar Hydroelectric projects

Launches Amrit Sarovar - an initiative aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country “Celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day in Jammu and Kashmir marks a big change” “Be it democracy or resolve for development, today Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example. In the last 2-3 years, new dimensions of development have been created in Jammu and Kashmir” “Those who did not get the benefit of reservation in Jammu and Kashmir for years, are also getting the benefit of reservation now” “Distances, whether of hearts, languages, customs or of resources, their elimination is our major priority today” “This ‘Amrit Kaal’ of Independence is going to be the golden period of India” “Youth of the valley will not face the problems that their parents and grandparents faced” “If our villages move towards natural farming that will benefit the entire humanity” “Gram Panchayats will play a major role in combating malnutrition with the help of ‘SabkaPrayas

## OBJECTIVE

1. Focus on connectivity in the Projects worth 20 thousand crores rupees related to connectivity and electricity have been inaugurated.
2. To give a new impetus to the development of Jammu and Kashmir, These efforts will provide employment to a large number of youths of Jammu and Kashmir.
3. Many families have also got property cards of their houses in villages. These ownership cards will inspire new possibilities in the villages
4. 100 Jan Aushadhi Kendras will become a medium to provide affordable medicines and surgical items to the poor and middle class families of Jammu and Kashmir.
5. All schemes of the centre government are being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and people are being benefitted from them. People in the villages are the biggest beneficiaries of schemes for LPG, toilets, electricity, land rights and water connections.
6. All houses of Palli Panchayat getting solar power is a perfect example of Gram Urja Swaraj and the changed way of working will take Jammu and Kashmir to new heights.
7. Push for transparency and empowerment of Gram Panchayats. Measures like e-Gram Swaraj are linking processes from planning to payment. Panchayats will be audited online and a system of citizen charter for all the Gram Sabha is encouraging the Sabhas for taking up many roles. He also highlighted the role of women in these institutions and village governance especially water governance.
8. The government has been focussed on bringing about wide ranging reforms to substantially improve governance and enhance ease of living for the people of the region at an unprecedented pace.

## HISTORY

### Palli village Panchayat:

Palli village is located in Samba tehsil of Samba district in Jammu & Kashmir, India. It is situated 29km away from Samba, which is both district & sub-district headquarter of Palli village. As per 2009 stats, Palli Old is the gram panchayat of Palli village.

The total geographical area of village is 330.6 hectares. Palli has a total population of 2,207 peoples, out of which male population is 1,146 while female population is 1,061. Literacy rate of palli village is 73.36% out of which 78.53% males and 67.77% females are literate. There are about 453 houses in palli village. Pincode of palli village locality is 181133.

The district covers Samba town and adjoining tehsils: Vijaypur and village Supwal and Ghagwal tehsil. The district is separated from the Jammu district by "Purmandal Bridge". Samba is situated on the bank of Basantar River.

Samba district consists of Eight blocks: Samba, Vijay Pur, Purmandal, Bari brahmana, Nud, Rajpura, Sumb and Ghagwal. Each block consists of GREF panchayats. The biggest village is Rajpura

### Sex Ratio in Samba District in 2011 Census:

887 Muslim (pop 22,950)

865 Christian (pop 2,306)

608 Sikh (pop 17,961)

941 Other (pop 370)

869 Total (pop 318,898)

The Panchayati Raj system as we see it today in Jammu & Kashmir has a history and struggle behind it. It is said that the Panchayati system was first introduced by Maharaja Hari Singh around 1935 for settling local disputes of the people in rural areas. Village Panchayat Regulation Act No. 1 was publicized by the Maharaja. The preamble of the said act read as: *"It is expedient to establish in Jammu and Kashmir State the village panchayats to assist in the administrative, civil and criminal justice and also to manage the sanitation and other common concerns of the village."*

The 1935 Panchayati Act was not to promote the Panchayati Raj system of governance in J&K but to use these panchayats in assisting judicial and civil administration.

In 1947 when the Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh's regime ended and all powers were transferred to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the Panchayati Raj Act was again amended in 1951 and 1958. However, the institution was kept confined within village level affairs only. The Panchayat means some members and a sarpanch and even the members of the Panchayat were nominated by the government only. This practice continued till late eighties. It was only in 1989 when the Government of Jammu & Kashmir came up with new legislation. The Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989 was enacted. This Act is still applicable and provides for the three-tier Panchayati Raj system in the state, viz Halqa Panchayat, Block development council (Block Simiti) and District Planning & Development Board also known as Zila parishad in other states. The most important provision in this act was Panchayati Adalat (a judicial role of Panchayats) with powers of settling all non-criminal local disputes.

### **Panchayati Elections**

Under the JK Panchayati Raj Act 1989 the first Panchayat election was held in Jammu & Kashmir in 2000, however, most of the seats remained vacant at that time because of militant threats. The term of this panchayat came to end in 2005 and no elections were held in the state in the following six years. It was only in 2011 when free and fair panchayat elections were held in J&K with unrepresented participation of people. The then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took an initiative and conducted Panchayat elections in the entire state. These elections by and large were successful and almost all seats were filled.

Although there was a practice of Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir but it was not mandatory. These elections were held in the past as and when the state government wanted. There was no constitutional binding for the Govt to conduct fresh elections after the expiry of 6 years term of the Panchayats under JK Panchayati Raj Act 1989. Even the elections that were held in 2011 were held for 1st tier called Halqa Panchayat comprising a Sarpanch and some Panches. For block or district council no elections were held, which indicated non seriousness of politicians of J&K Vis a Vis Panchayati Raj. The institution was not let to go up to second or third tier despite the provision being in place in Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989. The main reason behind this was that the local Govt never wanted to decentralize power.

### **J&K Panchayat Conference**

The actual struggle for three tier PRI system in Jammu & Kashmir began in the year 2012 with the group of Sarpanches led by Shafiq Mir a Sarpanch from Poshana village in district Poonch came forward to organise the members of the panchayats in J&K. He was the first person to organize various Panchayat associations under one umbrella called All J&K Panchayat Conference. Since then there was no looking back for the leaders of this organization. This J&K Panchayat Conference led by Shafiq Mir stood like a rock in all the odd times when several panchayat members were killed by militants in J&K. On seeing the gravity of the situation, on September 27, 2012 Congress leader Rahul Gandhi invited this group of Sarpanches led by Shafiq Mir to Delhi and held two days long deliberations with them in

presence of the then Minister of State for Home Jitendra Singh to find out the ways how to build confidence among the Panchayat leaders of Jammu & Kashmir who were on resigning spree at that point of time. Finally it was decided that Rahul Gandhi himself will visit Kashmir and meet the Panchayat members. On 4th October 2012 Rahul Gandhi reached Srinagar and met with the Panchayat leaders at SKICC Srinagar to build their confidence and assured them all help in empowerment of Panchayats. Though Rahul Gandhi wanted to extend 73rd amendment of constitution to Jammu & Kashmir but his government partner in the J & K National Conference was reluctant to implement this constitutional amendment on the pretext of article 370.

In the year 2014 BJP- PDP came into power in Jammu & Kashmir. In the first stroke this government dissolved all Panchayats prematurely two years before its term completion. However, by that time All J&K Panchayat Conference had become a strong voice and it started its struggle again and finally around 40 member delegation of this organization met with Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi on November 5th 2016 and demanded the fresh Panchayat elections and implementation of 73rd amendment of Indian constitution regarding Panchayati Raj in Jammu & Kashmir. This was the time when the whole valley was shut after the killing of a prominent militant commander Burhan Wani in July that year. It was a very bold decision of the organization at that time because it was the step seen as against the winds. This proved a significant meeting with PM Modi and he gave his full support to the organization and assured them to hold fresh elections in the state of Jammu and Kashmir although the PDP lead Govt in Jammu & Kashmir was not ready to conduct the elections fearing bloodshed. Finally, in 2018 after the collapse of PDP -BJP Government Panchayat elections were announced by PM Modi but all the political parties of Jammu & Kashmir Particularly NC and PDP openly boycotted those elections and militants had already given boycott calls. The Panchayat Conference was the only organization led by Shafiq Mir who came forward and announced to contest these elections. The elections were held and by and large 74% polling was registered in Jammu & Kashmir. The polling percentage was higher in Jammu region and it was less in Kashmir valley.

## **CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM**

- **Threats and Boycott:** – The challenges of Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj system are much more as compared to other Indian states Panchayat Raj system. The Jammu and Kashmir state is presently facing militancy which is a major challenge to the Panchayat Raj system from the implementation of J&K Panchayat Raj act 1989. The threat of gun and separatists' poll boycott is a major challenge to the Panchayat Raj system of Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2011 total 77% of valley adult franchise participate in Panchayat Raj election without any threat, but unfortunately latter situation was very unfavourable as the elected Sarpanch and Panch were troubled about their families, properties, and their life because many Panchs and Sarpanchs were killed by gunmen in different parts of the valley. A fear environment was created so that the people will not participate in Panchayat Raj election. Because of the pressure and fear, many Panches and sarpanches resigned.

- **Lack of security to elected member of Panchayat:** Elected member of Panchayat always remain worried about their life because the situation of state is very wrecks, many Panchs and Sarpanchs were killed in different parts of state. To save their life all elected members demand to state government for security protection but government failed to provide security to elected member of Panchayat.
- These all challenges and issues are created by some politically, socially, economically and disputed condition of state.

### Various feats achieved

- All its records have been digitised and the benefits of all the Central schemes are available in this village around 17 km from Jammu.
- Palli village, with its enthusiastic and dedicated elected representatives full of dreams, has shown how to implement the Glasgow pledge (Panchamrita) made by PM Modi.
- It has set an example of the slogan Sabka Prayas (everyone's efforts).

### What is Carbon Neutrality?

- **Carbon neutrality** refers to achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions or buying enough carbon credits to make up the difference.
- This can be done by balancing emissions of carbon dioxide with its removal (often through **carbon offsetting**) or by eliminating emissions from society.
- It is used in the context of carbon dioxide-releasing processes associated with transportation, energy production, agriculture, and industry.
- The term **carbon neutral** also includes other greenhouse gases, usually carbon-based, measured in terms of their carbon dioxide equivalence.
- The term “net-zero” is increasingly used to describe a broader and more comprehensive commitment to decarbonisation and climate action.
- Net-zero emissions are achieved when your organization's emissions of all greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) are balanced by greenhouse gas removals

### Methodology

Carbon-neutral status can be achieved in two ways:

- **Carbon offsetting:** Balancing carbon dioxide emissions with carbon offsets — the process of reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions or removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to make up for emissions elsewhere. If the total greenhouse gasses emitted is equal to the total amount avoided or removed, then the two effects cancel each other out and the net emissions are ‘neutral’.
- **Reducing emissions:** Reducing carbon emissions can be done by moving towards energy sources and industrial processes that produce fewer greenhouse gases, thereby transitioning to a low-carbon economy. Shifting towards the use of renewable energy such as hydro, wind, geothermal, and solar power, as well as nuclear power, reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

## Agreement and Target

- The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change**. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016.
- Its goal is to **limit global warming** to well below 2, **preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius**, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- Article 4.1 of the Paris Agreement asks countries to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.
- It also requires countries to undertake rapid reductions in carbon emissions to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases.

## CONCLUSION

Panchayat raj is the only way to improve the common denizens of the valley and is only device for common man to come in the main stream but these institutions in the valley are incapable and are not empowered as was expected by the people. These institutions have become the spring of corruption outcome of which the common man of the valley remain no faith on these institutions. To tackle this central Govt planned major step towards achieving the Glasgow goal of making Kashmir carbon neutral Panchayat, Palli will be model project which is bound to motivate other Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir and the country to become carbon neutral. Through which the Panchayats had to play a central role in decision making of village and pushing for major technology-related measures, e- swaraj and mode of payments to make Panchayat more powerful.

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