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GANDHIJI'S IDEA OF SWARAJ AND PANCHAYAT RAJ AS A FEATURE OF DEMOCRATIC SETUP REFLECTED IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION.

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ABSTRACT

"If the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost."

- Mahatma Gandhi²

Mahatma Gandhi the proponent of panchayat Raj, during his struggle for independence and even thereafter has propagated the need of panchayat raj for the villages. He focused on the importance of panchayat raj and its historical perspective. His views published in Harijan¹, explain its importance as, "The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. Every village has to become a self sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work."

The idea was not only followed in independent India, rather finds its place at Article 40 of constitution directing the state to organize village panchayat. However the complete democratic setup, consisting of panchayat raj can be found from 73rd constitutional amendment act, thereby amending article 243, and adding schedule 11 to the constitution of India. The present study aims to correlate the idea of Gandhiji of Purna Swaraj through Panchayat Raj and constitutional mandate of Village panchayat.

Keywords:-*Gandhiji's Panchayat Raj, Panchayat Raj, 73rd Amendment, Local Self Government, Village panchayat.*

Introduction:-

The term swaraj coined to mean, from the two different words, i.e. Swa& Raj, where Swa& stands for self and Raj stand for rule. It literally means rule by self. In other words, it can also be said as self Governance, self rule or synonymously it can either way be said as Home Rule, actually propagated by Swami DayanandSaraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj.

Quoting the importance of Panchayat Raj System Gandhiji has written, " *Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness, we must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, none is to be the first and none the last. In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it. In this there is no room for machines that would concentrate power in few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be, I have thought of stinger's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.*"⁴

These views are actually expressed though not directly but indirectly in Indian constitution by adopting a democratic feature, with a doctrine of separation of powers, still the real essence of Gandhian philosophy on this democratic structure could be traced only from the passing of 73rd constitutional amendment Act.

²Harijan, 29-8-1936, page 226.

³ 18-1-1922, page 4

⁴Harijan, 28-07-1946, page 236.