Evolution of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 marks a new era in the federal democratic set up of the country and provides constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions. Panchayati Raj institution is the first modern political institution in Arunachal Pradesh. The democratic political process was started in this state in 1969, when Panchayat Raj was introduced. Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 extends to the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, provided for the constitution of three-tier Panchayat Raj based on all India pattern- Gram Panchayat at village level, AnchalSamiti at intermediate level andZilaParishad at district level. The Act also envisages the provision for Gram Sabha in each Gram Panchayat area.

Keywords: Evolution, Panchayati Raj, Gram Sabha ,AnchalSamiti, ZilaParishad.

Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh had to go through series of constitutional process and development to acquire the present status. The name Arunachal Pradesh was formally announced on 20th January 1972 by the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indra Gandhi, at Ziro, headquarter of the then Subansiri district (presently under Lower Subansiri district). The state also got its independent political status when it was made union Territory as per North East state reorganization Agency Act 1971, by renaming erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) comprising five districts of Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap. The Union Territory was later on elevated to a full-fledged state on 20th February 1987 and became the 24th state of the Indian Republic1.

Arunachal Pradesh is situated in North Eastern part of India between the latitudes 26°28’ North and 29°30’ North and the longitudes 91°30’ East and 97°30’ East. It spreads over an area of 83,743 square kilometers which is 2.73 per cent of the total area of India. The state is bounded on the north by China, on the east by Myanmar, on the south by Assam and Nagaland and on the west by Bhutan. Arunachal Pradesh has about 1630 km long international border; 160 km with Bhutan, 1030 km with China and 440km with Myanmar2.

Conceptualization of Panchayati Raj

The term ‘Panchayati Raj’ may be relatively new, having originated during the British administration, but it owes its origin to the different traditional patterns of governance, in the phase of history in many parts of India. ‘Raj’ literary means ‘governance’ or government3. Conceptually, Panchayat can be described as an assembly of the village people or their representatives and the term
"Panchayat" is a Hindi word, which literally means assembly (Ayat) of five (Panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community.

Philosophically, Panchayati Raj is a multidimensional idea. It has its pluralistic definitions and wider connotations in the writings of different thinkers. According to Gandhiji, "Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Every village should be a republic or a Panchayat having full powers. The greater the power of Panchayats, the better it is for the people". To him "Swaraj" signified the vesting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labourer. He remarked that, "Twenty men sitting at the centre could not work true democracy. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.

Jaya Prakash Narayan, the architect of total revolution had a different view of Panchayati Raj. He was of the view that, a proper balance must be struck between a State Government on the one hand and organs of local self-government, or Panchayati Raj Institutions on the other. For this purpose, it may be necessary to provide for these Panchayati Raj Institutions in the Constitution itself and clearly short list their powers, so that they may exercise legitimate powers and remain answerable to their constituents.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave an Indian advocates of non-violence and human rights, who launched the movement called 'Bhoodhan' to distribute gifted land to landless poor was of the view that Gram Swaraj was a declaration of independence by the villages. He believed in the existence of autonomous village governed by autonomous village assemblies that could function only when they were economically self-reliant and the state must withdraw from interfering with the internal life of the village. As such, he emphasized on the need for setting up Gram Sabhas and self-government which implied absence of control by any outside power and absence of exercise of power over any other.

However, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who is often considered as the father of the Indian Constitution, completely ignored about the village panchayat in the Draft Constitution. Rather he considered the village as "A sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism." To him the village republic's spelled ruination for the country and played no part in the affairs and destiny of the country.

The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, however, favoured the idea of village republic. He said that India will progress only, when the people living in villages become politically conscious. The progress of our country is bound up with the progress in our village. If our villages make progress, India will become a strong nation and nobody will be able to stop its onward march, if you flinch from your determination and get involved in mutual quarrels and petty factions, you will not be able to succeed in your mission.

Thus, the philosophy of Panchayati Raj is based on the conviction that the paramount need of the rural people is real power devolution to the elected representatives of the people at the grassroots level not the bureaucrats and administer. In the present scenario, the concept of Panchayati Raj has come to be accepted as an extension cord of democracy upto the village. The present Panchayati Raj institution came into existence as per the recommendation suggested by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report (1987). The Committee came out with the suggestion of a three-tier system of rural local government which would be given statutory status and upon which the various developmental functions performed by blocks were to be devolved. “Democratic Decentralization” was the name
given to this process and the same began to be called as Panchayati Raj in popular speeches and literature; a name that is also synonymous with the term-Rural Local Self-Government in India\textsuperscript{11}.

Subsequently, several committees were set up to the growth of Panchayati Raj system. In 1977, Ashok Mehta committee was constituted by the Janata party government under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta to have a fresh look on the working of Panchayati Raj institutions. The committee advocated a new approach in Panchayati Raj institutions to effectively function as the institution of democratic decentralization\textsuperscript{12}.

In 1985, the planning commission of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of GVK Rao in order to intensify the rural development programmes and to review the administrative arrangement at the grass-root level. The committee recommended for decentralized planning at the district and block levels. Further, the committee also advocated for regular election to the Panchayati Raj bodies\textsuperscript{13}.

In order to revitalize Panchayati Raj system by ensuring democracy and development, LM Singhvi committee was appointed by Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1986 under the chairmanship of LM Singhvi. The committee recommended for constitutional recognition of the Panchayati Raj institutions. It also advocated for regular, free and fair elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions\textsuperscript{14}.

**Evolution of Panchayati Raj**

After independence some sort of beginning was made to associate people with the administration when the government implemented various development programmes. One of the major development programmes was the Community Development programme introduced in 1952. The Community Development programme was introduced to bring intensive development under various heads of the community development schemes, such as agriculture and animal husbandry extension, education, public health, ponds, cottage industries, irrigation etc. But the programme was not a success because of the lack of people’s participation in it. It was followed by a series of development programmes, but it continued to be a dearth of people’s participation\textsuperscript{15}.

However, the urgent need for the rapid socio-economic development was felt in the aftermath of Chinese aggression, 1962. The government of India realized that India’s defeat in the war was due to lack of proper administration. Thereafter, a necessity was felt for urgent development of this area and also to bring a change in the policy of government towards this area. The policy of NEFA administration was also shifted towards bringing these areas to mainstream of national life. To achieve this goal, the pace of development activities in all walks of life was accelerated. Large sums of money were also invested in these areas under different schemes and projects\textsuperscript{16}. These unleashed a process of social mobility and prepared the ground for government to introduce modern political institutions as prevalent in the mainland. Consequently, this brought the political life of local people much closer to that of the country.

**The Dying Ering Committee:**

After the set back of Chinese aggression, the government of India intended to introduce modern democratic institution for the administration of North East Frontier Agency. Modern governmental institutions were sought to be introduced so that the territory could come closer to the
mainstream of political life in the country and to organize the people to take lively interest in developmental activities. As the first step towards realizing these objectives, a four member committee, popularly known as Dying Ering committee was appointed by the Governor of Assam in the year 1964 to consider the expansion and development of modern local self-government in North East Frontier Agency. In making its recommendations, the committee was to examine the scope and pattern of authority and functions exercised by the indigenous tribal institution at the village level and above. It was to find out how far the existing systems were adequate and how best they could be modified or enlarged to introduce democratic working in the fields of judiciary, local development and administration. The committee was also required to give due consideration to the stage of advancement of the tribal people. Finally, the committee had been requested to frame proposals regarding:

a) The type of democratic bodies suitable at the village level and above;

b) The nature and extend of jurisdiction of these bodies;

c) Taking into consideration the varying stages of development of different tribal groups in which the recommendation of the committee could be implemented.

The committee submitted its report on January 1965 with certain politically and administratively significant recommendations. The most important recommendation of the committee was its suggestion to set up a four-tier and organically linked popular bodies in NEFA (present Arunachal Pradesh). At the village level, there should be a village council, to be elected or selected as per their customary laws. The existing tribal councils should be recognized and given formal authority by the Administration in all areas. The judicial, development and general functions should be vested on village council. Above the village level, the AnchalSamiti should be constituted at the block level consisting of the head of village councils falling within the circle and other such persons as may be nominated to it. At the district level, over the AnchalSamities, there should be ZillaParishad replacing the existing District Development Committee. The committee also suggested the creation of Agency Council at the state level.

The Government of India accepted the recommendations of Ering committee and it was incorporated in the North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation 1967 with minor modifications. The President of India promulgated the North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation 1967 in exercise of the powers conferred by Article-240 of the constitution of India, read with sub-paragraph (2) of the paragraph 18 under the VI schedule of the constitution. The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967 came into effect on 2nd October 1968. Under this regulation, the Panchayat bodies were constituted in 1969. The Regulation provides for constitution of Gram Panchayat at village level, AnchalSamiti at Block level and ZillaParishad at District level. Besides, these bodies, the Regulation also provides for an Agency Council at the state level. The North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation 1967 has been amended six times subsequently in the year 1970, 1971, 1972, 1980 and 1992. Except for the amendment of 1971, other amendments brought about minor changes in the Regulation. Notwithstanding the Panchayati Raj system provided by the Regulation was similar to those prevalent in other parts of the country, yet the state had distinct aims and objectives. In other parts of the country decentralization of power has been the main aim of Panchayati Raj. However, the objective of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh was to integrate the
hitherto isolated area with the mainstream of national life by establishing a uniform political practice with an integrated political system throughout the state.

Gram Panchayat: The North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj regulation of 1967 accorded the status of Gram Panchayat to the village authorities constituted under the Assam Frontier (Administrative of Justice) Regulation 1945. The Gram Panchayat was constituted only to serve as the Electoral College to elect member of AnchalSamiti. The AnchalSamiti, however, may assign to any Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction with certain specific matters relating to its own functions in administrative and developmental activities. The regulations did not provide for a separate Gram Panchayat in 1967. The existing traditional village authority constituted under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1948 was accepted as the Gram Panchayat. Therefore, the existing traditional village councils were to be regarded as Gram Panchayats. However, the 1971 amendment to the Regulation brought changes in the provisions relating to Gram Panchayat. It created a new body which was to be elected as per prevailing tribal custom and practice by the inhabitants of the village or villages falling within a Gram Panchayat. Subsequently, under the provisions of Arunachal Pradesh Gram Panchayat (constitution) Rules, 1972, a Gram Panchayat was constituted in a village or group of villages with not less than 500 populations and there should be one Panchayat member for every 100 person. However, a Deputy Commissioner at his discretion may constitute a Gram Panchayat in a village or group of villages with a population less than 500 persons. And the members of the Gram Panchayat were to be elected by tribal customary method. However, this practice of election was removed through the North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1992 which says that Gram Panchayat members are to be elected by secret ballot and the election is to be conducted by the Presiding Officer to be appointed by Deputy Commissioner.

AnchalSamiti: The regulation provides the constitution of AnchalSamiti at block level. The Governor was also empowered to amalgamate two or more blocks in a single block for composition of AnchalSamiti. AnchalSamiti is the intermediary body in the Panchayat system. Its jurisdiction extends over the area of a community development block. Every AnchalSamiti consists of (i) one representative elected by the members of each Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction. However, the total number of elected members in Block should not exceed 25 in numbers; (ii) one representative elected by the Co-operative societies situated within the Block from amongst themselves. In case of on co-operative society in a Block, the Chairman of the society shall be a member of the AnchalSamiti; (iii) not more than five persons nominated by the Deputy Commissioner from the members of the tribes which have not secured represtation in the AnchalSamiti; (iv) the Sub-Divisional Officer of the area within which the AnchalSamiti falls as the ex-officio President of the Samiti; and (v) such Officers as ex-officio members, as may be deemed necessary, appointed by the Deputy Commissioner provided that these members shall not be entitled to vote.

The Regulation has vested the AnchalSamiti with sizeable powers, funds and functions in planning and implementing developmental schemes. The AnchalSamiti is envisaged to be an executive body to undertake specific services in the spheres of sanitation and health, public works, education and culture, administration, agriculture and preservation of forests, breeding and protecting cattle and village industries. Unlike Gram Panchayat, the AnchalSamiti has its own fund for...
discharging its functions. Apart from the grant-in-aids it receives for certain specific schemes, it may levy taxes and cess on following items:-

1. a tax on brick or concrete building;
2. a tax on supply of drinking water, sale of firewood and the thatch, conservancy, lighting and slaughter houses.
3. a tax on cultivable land lying fallow for consecutive years;
4. a tax on fisheries allotted to AnchalSamiti;
5. a fee on the registration of cattle within its jurisdiction;
6. a license fee in respect of tea stalls, hostels, sweet-meat shops, restaurants, bakeries, and confectioneries; collection of hides and bones; cinema halls, circuses, professional variety shows and fairs; brick and title kiln; oil and rice mills; huts and bamboo stalls; carts, carriages, cycles, and boats; sawmills and timber depots;
7. a cess for the supply of water for irrigation;
8. a surcharge on duty for the transfer of immovable property.

ZillaParishad: The regulation provided for the constitution of ZillaParishad at district level. It consists of following categories of members: (i) the Vice-Presidents of all AnchalSamities in the district as ex-officio members; (ii) one representative of every AnchalSamiti in the district to be elected by its members from among themselves; (iii) not more than six members are to be nominated by the administrator from among the sections of population that have not been secured representation in the ZillaParishad and (iv) the Deputy Commissioner in the charge of district as the ex-officio member as well as the President of Zilla Parishad.

The regulation envisages the ZillaParishad with the power to act as supervisory and advisory body over the Gram Panchayats and AnchalSamities located within the district. Further, it is the supreme body in finalizing the plans and programmes of the district. More specific functions of ZillaParishad were to make recommendations to the Governor in output of the budget estimate of the AnchalSamiti, the coordination and consolidation plan proposed by the AnchalSamities and drawing up of the district plan; and to review the working of the AnchalSamiti from time to time.

Agency council: At the territorial level the regulation provides for an Agency council for the entire area of NEFA. Agency council was an advisory body of the Governor. The Council is to be constituted by the Governor through notification. It consists of the Governor; the members of the parliament representing the NEFA; the vice-presidents of all the ZillaParishads to be elected by its members from amongst themselves in the prescribed manner; and the advisor to the Governor, as ex-officio member. The Governor presides over the meetings of the Council and consults it in regard to the matters of administrations of NEFA, the Five year Plan and the annual plan proposals; and proposals for undertaking legislation with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the state list in the seventh schedule to the constitution. Precisely, the Agency council was to be developed in the line of a legislature and was to advise the Governor on administrative policies for the entire NEFA area.

The first Agency Council was constituted with 20 members i.e. four members from each District (Five Districts). However, this provision was omitted from the Panchayati Raj Regulation in 1971 by the North East Frontier Agency Administration (Supplementary) Regulation, 1971. As a result, the Agency council was replaced by the Pradesh council in 1972, when the Agency was given the
union territory status and subsequently it was developed as the provisional legislative assembly on 15th August 1975. Table 1.1 shows the number of Panchayat bodies constituted in 1969 in Arunachal Pradesh the then NEFA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Districts</th>
<th>ZillaParishad</th>
<th>AnchalSamiti</th>
<th>Gram Panchayat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kameng</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Na*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subansiri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Na*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Na*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Na*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Na*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>838</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data not available


Post 73rd Amendment Act:

The Panchayati Raj system of Arunachal Pradesh was required to revise its provision in conformity with the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. So the 73rd Amendment of the constitution in 1992 was brought into force by a notification to enact a comprehensive law on the subject to bring in conformity with the new amended provision under the constitution and the task was required to be completed before 24th April 1994. Accordingly, the state Government had promulgated an ordinance on April 18th 1994. However, the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj ordinance, 1994 could not become an act as it did not provide the provision for reservation of seats for scheduled castes. The 1994 ordinance passed by the state legislative Assembly was reserved by the Governor for the assent of the President of India. The same ordinance was returned to the state Government in September 1996 with the following suggestions: (i) constitution of Gram Sabha as per Article 247 (c) of the constitution; (ii) reservation of seats for scheduled caste as per Article 243(d) of the constitution; (iii) direct elections to Panchayat as per the Article 243 (c) of the constitution. By taking into consideration the suggestions made by the presidents of India, the state legislative Assembly passed the new Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj bill in 1997, but without including the suggestion made for the provision of reservation of seats for the schedule caste. The state Government maintained that Arunachal Pradesh is hundred per cent tribal state and no indigenous schedule caste population inhabits in the state. However, Government of India introduced the constitutional Amendment (86th Amendment Bill, 1999) in the parliament. It sought exemption of the state from the requirement of reservation for the scheduled caste. The relevant clause of the Amendment Bill reads: "Nothing in Article 243(d), relating to reservation of seats for scheduled castes, shall apply to the state of Arunachal Pradesh". The parliament passed the bill in the year 2000 in the form of 83rd constitutional Amendment Act. The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997 was formally notified on 30th April 2001.

Thus, the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997 was introduced to revitalize the Panchayati Raj system and to bring better developmental activities in Arunachal Pradesh. The Act
provides for uniformity of Panchayati Raj systems, constitution of Gram Sabha, reservation of one third members for women, reservation of seats for schedule tribes, direct elections to panchayat, a fixed tenure of five years for every Panchayat body and constitution of state election commission and state finance commission.

**Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997:**

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Generally, the Gram Sabha exercises the following functions:

1. Providing assistance for the implementation of developmental schemes pertaining to the village;
2. To help in identification of beneficiaries for the implementation of developmental schemes in the villages;
3. Mobilize voluntary labour and contributions in kind or cash or both for the community welfare programmes;
4. To promote adult education and family welfare within the village;
5. Promotion of unity and harmony among all sections of society in the village and
6. Such other matters as may be prescribed.

**Gram Panchayat at village level:** The Act provided that a village or group of villages having a population not less than three hundred is to have a Gram Panchayat or to be considered as Panchayat area. However, the Deputy Commissioner can declare any area as Panchayat area having even less than three hundred populations as a special case. The Gram Panchayat shall be constituted by direct election with the system of secret ballot. The term of the Gram Panchayats shall be for five years from the date of notification by the Deputy Commissioner. Precisely, a Gram Panchayat performs such of the assigned functions subject to developmental activities and such condition as may be specified by the state Government from time to time. The reservation of seats for women both in the Gram Panchayat and chairperson should not be less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election.

**AnchalSamiti at Block level:** An AnchalSamiti is constituted by the government for the Anchal block. However, the government may include, exclude any village or part of a village within the limits of an Anchal block or amalgamate two or more Anchal blocks into a single block, after consultation with an AnchalSamiti or Samities and the area included under municipality, town committee or cantonment shall be exempted from the Anchal block. Not less than one third of the total numbers of
seats to be filled by direct election in every AnchalSamiti shall be reserved for women. The term of the office of the members of AnchalSamiti shall be 5 years. The Act also made provision for chairperson in each AnchalSamiti. The AnchalSamiti was envisaged to perform following functions:

1. Preparation of annual plans pertaining to the developmental schemes entrusted to it;
2. Consideration of annual plans undertaken by Gram Panchayats under its jurisdiction and submission of consolidated plan to the ZillaParishads and
3. Such other functions and works as may be entrusted by the ZillaParishad or the state government from time to time.

**ZillaParishad at district level:** ZillaParishad is the apex body of the Panchayati Raj system at the district level. It is a supervisory and advisory body for the Gram Panchayats and the AnchalSamities, falling within its jurisdiction. In every ZillaParishad, not less than one third of its total number of seats to be filled by direct election shall be reserved for women. Such reserved seats may be allotted by rotation by the Deputy Commissioner to different ZillaParishad constituencies in the prescribed manner. There shall be chairperson of ZillaParishad selected by the elected members from among themselves. Both the chairperson and ZillaParishad will hold the office for a period of five years. The ZillaParishad performs the functions of supervision, coordination and integration of the developmental scheme at AnchalSamiti and district levels. It prepares the plan for the development of the district and such other functions as may be assigned by the Government in relation to any developmental activities to which the executive authority of the Government extends or in respect of function which have been assigned to the state Government by the Central Government. On the whole the ZillaParishad is the highest body for each district to be constituted by the notification of the government. As such the ZillaParishad is the supreme body in finalizing the plans and programmes of the district.

The elections to the Panchayati Raj bodies were held in 1969, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984 and 1987. The Panchayat election which due in 1990, but was held in 1992 because the Governor extended the term for two years i.e. the three years term was replaced into 5 years term. However, the institution of Panchayati Raj remained defunct due to constitutional deadlock after 1994. As a result, it was only in 2003 the last election to the Panchayati Raj bodies was held after 1992 election. Therefore, the 2003 Panchayat election was the first Panchayat election in Arunachal Pradesh which was held on the basis of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997. Table 1.2 gives the detail number of Panchayat members in Arunachal Pradesh after 2003 election.

**Table 1.2 District-wise number of elected Panchayat Raj members in Arunachal Pradesh with Female and Male break-up in each Tier in 2003.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Gram Panchayat members</th>
<th>AnchalSamiti members</th>
<th>ZillaParishad members</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kamang</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kamang</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papum Pare</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

The introduction of Panchayati Raj institution has given a new orientation to the politics in Arunachal Pradesh. The Panchayati Raj institution has been the first modern political institution in Arunachal Pradesh. It contributes a solid foundation for designing the political process in Arunachal Pradesh and modernizing the tribal society as a whole. The growth in the Panchayati Raj system in Arunachal Pradesh led to the development of village community. It serves and equips the rural people with both experience and knowledge about the democratic system of the Government in the country, thereby enabling the rural people to play a crucial role in the state and national level political realm. The Panchayati Raj institution as the grass-root unit of local self-government has been also considered as an instrument for socio-economic transformation of rural areas.

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