

**DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF WEST BENGAL**

LITAN KUMAR SARKAR, Ph. D in Political Science, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya, India

**DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION, GOOD
GOVERNANCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
A STUDY OF WEST BENGAL**

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By

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This is to certify that the research work entitled, “**DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF WEST BENGAL**” presented in the thesis embodies the results of the original work done by me for the award of Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science**, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya., is an original work and has not been submitted elsewhere in part or in full for any other degree or diploma.

Place: Jorabat (Meghalaya)

Research Scholar

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CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

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It is further certified that this work has not been submitted anywhere else for the degree. The candidate has worked with me for the requisite number of days during the period of this research work.

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Date: 2022

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ABSTRACT

Modern discussions of development often center on the importance of decentralization and good governance. It is now generally agreed that pluralistic government is preferable, with power distributed across various tiers and "centers of authority" (Hooge and Marks 2003). India, the largest democracy in the world, has a rich tradition of both theoretical and practical work in the area of decentralization. The term panchayat, which literally translates to "assembly of five people," serves as the institutional framework for the idea of democratic decentralization in rural India. Since gaining independence, various committees and commissions have been formed in an effort to reinvigorate the system. The passage of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act in 1992 was a watershed moment in India's march toward democratic decentralization. This led to the recognition of Panchayati raj institutions as the country's third tier of government, a position they now hold thanks to their constitutional status. Importantly, the vast majority of our country's citizens call rural areas home. Therefore, governmental policy should prioritize rural development. And it is only when the rural population of India benefits from development that it would be truly meaningful. The people's participation and aid in the implementation of rural development programs makes devolving power to local bodies essential to achieving the development aim. In fact, decentralization and good governance have been an absolute prerequisite for progress in emerging nations like India. One of the most common concepts in development planning literature is "democratic decentralization." In the 21st century, the idea has been gaining traction in the realms of policymaking and administration. Since it refers to so many distinct things, there is no universal agreement on its specific definition.

In Chapter 1, we give a quick overview of democratic decentralization, good governance, and rural development in West Bengal. In Chapter 2 of the Review of Literature, we take a quick look at Decentralization, Good Governance, and Rural Development in West Bengal and other Indian States. In Chapter 3, we talk about local rural governments in India. Chapter 4 gives a brief look at the rural areas of West Bengal. Chapter 5 talks about Gram Panchayat and Anchal-Panchayat in the Indian state of West Bengal. In Chapter 6, we talk about how West Bengal's finances have changed since the start of Panchayati Raj. In Chapter 7, we talk briefly about how the West Bengal State Government controls the Panchayati Raj institutions. In Chapter 8, we get to the conclusion of the Research Work.

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The ideas of decentralization and good governance have become crucial to contemporary discussions of development. Power should be decentralized across multiple levels and "multi-centers" for governance to be effective. There is now widespread agreement on (Hooge and Marks 2003). Considered the largest democracy on earth, India has a rich tradition of decentralization theory and practice. Panchayat, which literally means "assembly of five persons," is an institutional structure that supports the idea of democratic decentralization in rural India. After gaining independence, numerous committees and commissions were established to improve the system. With the passage of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1992, India took a major step forward on the path to democratic decentralization. That's why the Panchayati raj institutions in that country are considered a third tier of governance according to the constitution. The majority of Americans still live in rural areas, and this is the single most important fact about our country. Policymakers should prioritize rural improvement. The people of India's rural areas are the key to the success of the country's development efforts. So, in order to reach the goal of development, it is essential to delegate power to local governments, which may then encourage citizen participation and aid in the implementation of rural development programs. In truth, decentralization and good governance have been the sine qua non of growth in developing nations in general, and in India in particular.

Among the many terms employed in the field of development planning, "democratic decentralization" stands out. This idea has acquired traction in the twenty-first century in terms of policy making and administration. The lack of clarity and consensus stems from the fact that it is a foreign phrase that refers to multiple situations (Mawhood1985). In other words, it has multiple meanings among academics. Decentralization is defined as "the practice of shifting functions from central administrations to local entities" in the 21st Century Chamber lexicon. According to

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the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, it is "the passing of authority from one governing body to another."

The ideas of decentralization and the least state philosophy and an active civil society are the offspring of centralization. Regardless of how it is defined and interpreted, by allowing civil society to become more decentralized and by spreading and decentralizing governance institutions, decentralization is strongly related to civil society and good governance. The free and effective functioning of civil society is what sets the way for outstanding governance, which in turn guarantees the whole expansion of the state if government is decentralized. Decentralization's intellectual discourse can be broken down into three main groups: classical liberal beliefs; development theories; and neo-liberal perspectives. The most fundamental problems with democratic administration and the efficient representation of people's interests provide the philosophical rationale for decentralization. Mill, de Tocqueville, Laski, Madison, and Wilson were the first prominent democratic liberal intellectuals to call for decentralization for its national and local benefits.

In a neo-liberal or ethical framework, limited government and a strong, involved civilian society inevitably lead to the idea of decentralization (Yasin and Sengupta 2004). If the size of government is lowered to ensure robust democracy and personal freedom, and if the governing structure is decentralized to include and identify people's preferences, then this paradigm should lead to outstanding governance that results in development. Based on the presence and efficacy of a civil society, it claims that a minimal basic state order with adequately elevated outstanding governance would make civil society sensitive about the process of governance. Using this neoliberal framework, success was viewed as a result of efficient management and well-executed plans (ibid). Recent years have seen criticism of the normative nature of decentralization from academics who view these concepts as rhetorical and ideologically masked (Yasin et al 2003). Conceptually based on Marx and Gramsci, the works of Fesler, Sarnoff, Heyden, Smith, Rakodi, Slater, and Heaphey provide empirical indicators that decentralization in emerging nations has rarely aided progress. According to Heaphey (1971), decentralization impedes progress. Similar to how many people today disagree with the Coliberal argument for decentralization, many have

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argued that decentralization need not involve a smaller state, a favorite argument of neoliberals. When done properly, decentralization can help the state function more effectively. It's possible that 'affirmative democratic state' backlash against neoliberalism is what's behind the rise of devolution (Fung and Wright2000). Because of these concerns, researchers in the field of decentralization developed a new paradigm. One of the main ideas is the contrast between decentralization and privatization on the part of local governments.

1.2 GOVERNANCE

Whether by legislation, rules, authority, or language, governance encompasses any means by which an organized society exerts control over a social structure (family, tribal, formal, or informal, or a territory, or across territories). It examines the "interaction and choices processes among players engaged in collective problems that have led to the establishment, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions." The workings of government and other formal institutions can be described to the layperson.

Multiple entities could exist (often known as governing entities). The highest authority in any geopolitical system, such as a state, is the government, whose sole responsibility and authority is to make legally binding decisions through the passage of legislation. Businesses (including corporations recognized by the government as juristic persons), political organizations, and even ad hoc groups of people all fall into other categories (headquarters, tribal groups, gang, families, religious denominations, etc.). Relation contracts that foster greater long-term cooperation and creativity in commercial and outsourced relationships typically contain some sort of governance framework for guiding those interactions. Rules, norms, and actions are said to be "governance" when they are organized, maintained, regulated, and held accountable. The level of formality is determined by the customs of both the organization and its external business partners. Therefore, governance can take many forms, with a wide range of motivations. Comparatively, although a government's mission is to serve the public good and its structure is based on popular vote, a for-profit business or nonprofit may be run by a small board of directors and focus on narrower goals.

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Additionally, many extraneous players may influence governance process without decision-making power. Lobbyists, think tanks, political parties, non-governmental organizations, citizens, and the press all fall into this category.

Schools including the Basally School of International Affairs, the Monk School of Global Affairs, Sciences Po, the Geneva Graduate Institute, Heartier School, the London School of Economics, and many more offer courses in governance for interested students.

1.2.1 THE SENSE AND SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT

"Governance can be thought of as the system by which organizations are controlled and directed. The structure and processes serve as the highest level of the entity, at which decisions, responsibilities, controls, and behaviors are made. Governance affects the setting and attainment of a company's objectives, the management of its operations, and the maximization of its performance." Good governance requires a systematic approach, encompassing strategic planning, risk management, and performance management, because it is a system and a process rather than a single business. It is, together with culture, an integral aspect of what sets apart a thriving business.

1.2.2 THE VARIOUS FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Public governance, global governance, non-profit management, corporate governance, and project management are all examples of governance at various levels, and environmental governance, Internet and IT governance, and project management are all examples of "fields of management" associated with particular types of activities or outputs (including regulatory governance, participatory governance, multilevel governance, meta governance, and collaborative governance).

Priorities in law or practice may be set by the governance structure. Fair and excellent governance are concepts that can be used across the political, governmental, volunteer, and business sectors.

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• Governance in the Universal Declaration

Distinct differences exist between the concepts of governance and politics. Collectively making decisions that are generally accepted as legally binding and putting them into practice as agreed-upon policies is a key part of the political process (sometimes with divergence of view or interests). On the other side, governance conveys its administrative and process-oriented qualities rather than its contradictory ones. This line of reasoning still assumes that "politics" and "management" are two distinct spheres. On the assumption that "governance" and "politics" are traits of authority and responsibility, this difference occasionally pertains to modern practice and thought in the field of governance. There are three main mechanisms at play in public administration:

- With the aid of community organizations or PPP networks;
- Applying the principles of competition found in free markets to the task of resource allocation within the bounds set by the state;
- Through methods that work from the top down and rely heavily on government and government agencies.

• Internal Management and Control

Laws and/or norms that bind non-governmental institutions, including private organizations, dispute resolution organizations, or other third-party groups, to "the quality of life and opportunities of the general public" constitute private governance. Private companies are merely implementing public policies. Private corporations, such as reinsurance firms, may exercise private governance through the employment of similar, unseen, and widely accepted private control over their own underlying carriers. It is not appropriate to equate "public policy" with governmental action alone. Companies and governments both have the potential to create public policies. Just using the term "government policy" makes it clear who is making the rules.

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- **Policymaking on a Global Scale**

The term "global governance" or "international governance" refers to the "complex of formal, informal institutions, mechanisms, relations between and between countries, markets, citizens, and NGOs that articulate common interests on the global plane, establish rights and obligations, and mediate differences."

World government" Many authors, including James Rosenau, have begun to adopt the phrase "global governance" in place of the more conventional "government" to describe the administration of complex systems with multiple interdependent parts. The best example of this is the international system or the relationships between sovereign nations. It's still possible to use the term anytime a level-playing field needs to establish a consistent relationship.

- **Financial Management and Administration**

The term governance is frequently used by corporations to refer to both of the following:

- The manner in which boards of directors or entities acting similarly steer businesses
- To what extent do the local laws and norms (guidelines)

The word "corporate governance" refers to the framework of norms, policies, and structures that establish the parameters for corporate management and leadership. The relationship between all the involved stakeholders and the business's goals is also part of good corporate governance. Investors, directors, and executives all play significant roles. Aside from employers and customers, there are also banks and other creditors, government agencies and regulators, the environment, and the community at large.

- **Land Administration**

Problems with land ownership and tenure are addressed by the field of land administration. It includes the rules, procedures, and institutions that decide who gets what kind of land, how that property is used and controlled, and how disputes over land

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are resolved. Fixing the so-called "country acquisition" issue is crucial for achieving equitable and sustainable growth in low-income economies. As the "meat and potatoes" of land governance, land management is essential.

Having assured land ownership rights may encourage farmers to invest in their communities and the economy as a whole, mitigating poverty and ensuring food security. As a result, thorough land management is required since small enterprises, such as farms, have a hard time obtaining financing or selling their company in the absence of legally recognized property rights.

There is constant two-way communication between issues of land ownership and land administration. For instance, the liberalization of ground markets in wealthy nations inspired by the Washington Consensus has made possible what have been called "land grabs." The perceived drawbacks of many land purchase agreements prompted new initiatives in land governance inside developing countries.

Land management, sometimes known as "how land tenure restrictions are executed," is crucial to the success of any land governance system. The extent to which people and stakeholder groups are consulted and to whom their authority is answerable is another factor.

1.3 FAIR AND EFFECTIVE RULE OF LAW

For the past decade, "Good Governance" has been a buzzword in both policy circles and the social sciences. But the idea of good government is ancient, just like human civilizations.

The concept can be found in the writings of ancient Indian authors like Kautilya's Arthashastra in the Mahabharata and Shukracharya's Intisar, as well as in the works of Western thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, etc. The ancient Indian kings had a deep commitment to the Dharma.

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Good governance, as a normative concept, has been attached to the concept of leadership. It's about maximizing the good of government and making it better. In this way, the government can ensure that even the most disadvantaged members of society have access to equal opportunities and a fair share of society's resources.

By "good management," we mean the optimal mobilization of a country's citizens. It encourages people to be politically neutral and promotes collective action. In other words, it ensures that all State resources that promote sustainable development will be used properly by its population.

1.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE RULEMAKING

UNDP defines "good governance" as "participatory, transparent, and accountable." It's effective, and it's also equitable. Support for the rule of law is emphasized. To ensure that the views of the poor and most vulnerable are heard when decisions on development resources are made, good governance ensures that political, social, and economic goals are founded on widespread consensus.

- The IMF has defined "good governance" as "a comprehensive term embracing all elements of the governance of the Country," which includes economic policies, regulatory frameworks, and respect for the rule of law.
- Managing public money via institution-based reforms within the public sector; and • creating and sustaining a transparent and stable economic and regulatory environment for private-sector activity. The IMF placed significant emphasis on advancing the idea of two primary domains.
- The author, Mohit Bhattacharya (2013), looked at the recent developments in good governance from three perspectives:
- Externally imposed, the term "pro-formal administration" was developed to prescribe a certain type of conditional support as part of an endeavor to expand public administration.
- It's a more democratic idea for making government work more openly, transparently, and responsibly.

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1.3.2 THE KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

There are a variety of qualities that good governance must have. Based on these factors, we can conclude that good governance includes specific characteristics that ensure efficient administration of the economy and a strong bond between the government and the people. According to the review of World Bank publications and other studies, eight characteristics define good governance. The subsequent items are detailed:

1. Participation
2. Law and Order
3. Transparency
4. Responsiveness
5. Oriented Towards Consensus
6. Equality and acceptance of all people are priorities.
7. Both efficient and effective
8. Accountability

1. Participation

The participation of citizens in the decision-making process is a crucial element of good government. When individuals are engaged, participation is an essential step. It can be either, but it must be well-thought-out and coordinated either way. The goals and purposes of political rights could be achieved by more citizen participation in society. The rule of law, represented by the legal framework, ensures that all citizens are treated fairly when voting on matters of government policy.

2. Legal Order

The rule of law is another feature of good government. A just legal system is essential to establishing the rule of law in any community. Rule of law ensures fairness in protecting human rights, especially for the most vulnerable members of society. Rule of law can only be ensured if the judicial system can be trusted to be fair and unbiased, and if the police force can be relied upon to uphold the law without bias or corruption.

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3. Transparency

Transparency in government is essential for the provision of equitable services to citizens. It strikes a balance between crafting policies and enforcing them in a way that adheres to standards and best practices. In this way, the public is able to get and use official data on a wide range of issues without restriction. A suitable medium for comprehending this data should be created.

4. Responsiveness

The administration relies on responsiveness in important ways, and this requirement may motivate connections across departments. There must be sufficient services for the population in a certain time frame.

5. Oriented Towards Consensus

The success of governance depends on widespread consensus among citizens. It's possible that the people's and the community's interests will be served. It helped in the pursuit of the long-term perspective on human development. In particular, it relied on the norms of society's social institutions.

6. Equality and Acceptance of All People Are Priorities

Building a just society is essential for effective leadership. What employees think and feel is crucial to the success of the business. The organization strives to ensure that all of its members feel included and welcome in its decision-making processes.

7. Efficient and Effectiveness

Institutional output is assuredly efficient and effective in meeting societal needs. The foundation of good leadership is the efficient allocation of society resources for long-term growth and prosperity. Legitimate leadership and management. Additionally, it promotes the conservation of natural resources through their responsible usage.

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8. Accountability

One of the hallmarks of efficient administration is holding those in charge accountable for their actions. When citizens and institutions are held accountable by the public sector, private sector, and civil society organizations, governance improves. Truthfulness and respect for the law are prerequisites for accountability.

1.3.3 PROPER GOVERNANCE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

If you want to make a difference in a country, work on its governance. Sustainable development is impossible without strong leadership and management.

- **Growth in the Economy**

In the absence of competent leadership, the state's economy will fluctuate wildly. All aspects of economic growth face unique obstacles, including production, distribution, investment, and even consumption. If strong leadership is established, barriers may be removed, and public funds can be allocated equitably.

- **Evolving Societies**

Effective leadership is crucial for every society to prosper. Not only has economic development served its objective. The end result of development ensures a level playing field for all social strata. Different religions, social strata, and economic groups coexist in a society. Now, social dissatisfaction will grow until there is a more even distribution of income.

Once again, fair financial distribution is insufficient. The majority must make it possible for the minority to freely go about their day. Equally important is the implementation of new reform legislation aimed at closing the gender gap.

- **Transformation in Government**

It is a key factor in the development of democratic institutions. Good governance cannot be established in a country if its political leaders are not committed to it. The integrity of political leaders and adherence to political norms and rules are crucial to its success.

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Cooperation between political institutions and political parties, as well as the development of public-benefit programs, play crucial roles in fostering healthy competitiveness and effective governance. Administration and opposition working together, for instance, can help advance democracy in the country.

1.3.4 THE BASIS OF SENSEFUL RULEMAKING

The World Bank's concept of good governance is essentially a yardstick against which the current administrative structure of a country can be evaluated. This provides strong evidence that donors' structural suitability continues to be an efficient means of investing in multilateral development aid. Therefore, good governance is typically understood as a set of procedural tools meant to guarantee the donor's chosen issue is improved efficiently. But politically, the idea of good government was not well received. For instance, governments may be reticent to hold donor organizations accountable, and they may take a generally antagonistic stance toward organizations that are viewed as interfering with the (sovereign) internal affairs of those states. Fears, real or imagined, have led many people in industrialized countries to associate the term "good governance" with the laissez-faire policies so popular in the West. Moreover, for larger, more ethnic and diverse economies like those found in the developing world, the word "excellent" is used mostly on the basis of subjective evaluations.

To achieve effective and sustainable governance, a strong working democracy based on respect for the rule of law, a free press, robust civil society organizations, and effective and independent public entities such as the Human Rights and Good Governance Commission, the Corruption Prevention Bureau, and the Commission on Fair Trade is required. The Commission plays a pivotal role in guaranteeing both the openness and accountability of the government and the promotion and protection of human rights. Good governance also requires transparency and effectiveness across all levels of government.

Democratic processes, such as policy openness and management transparency, are essential components of effective governance at the political level. This is the same as having a political system that allows for multiple competing ideologies and political parties. It should come as no surprise that proponents of multi-party systems argue that

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they are better able to ensure and achieve successful governance than those advocating for a single-party system. It's also a sign that universal suffrage is being implemented in democratic elections. For an election system to be considered democratic, it must be free and fair.

Good governance takes into account the inherent weaknesses of government. Therefore, the principle of separating powers is crucial in establishing whether or not a country has a political system that responds to efficient governance. Understanding that legislative, executive, and judicial functions are distinct from one another is the bedrock of the concept of power separation. Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches all work together to run a state. These three responsibilities and functions of government are distinguished by the notion, which stresses the need for separation between them in a free democracy.

1.4 DECENTRALIZATION

The term "decentralization" refers to the practice of moving power away from a centralized authority and giving decision-making and strategic planning authority to lower levels of management.

The ideas of decentralization have been implemented in fields as diverse as group dynamics and management science in private firms and organizations, politics, law and government, economics, finance, and technology.

Centralization was a term used by the French Directory, the country's first post-Revolutionary government, in 1794 when it established a new governmental system. The term "decentering" first appeared in print in the 1820s. For the first time in written English, the term "decentralization" appears in the early 1800s. According to Tocqueville, the French Revolution kicked off "a movement towards decentralization, an increase of centralization" in the middle of the 1800s. Maurice Block, a retired French official, wrote an essay titled "Decentralization" for a French newspaper in 1863. The piece examined the dynamics of government and administrative centralization as well as French attempts to decentralize government functions.

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Anti-state political radicals in the 19th and 20th centuries, who called themselves "anarchists," "libertarians," and even "decentralists," took the concepts of freedom and decentralization to their logical conclusions. Tocqueville, who had previously argued in favor of the idea, penned the following: "The increased participation of city residents in public affairs and their increased familiarity with freedom are two further benefits of decentralization beyond its administrative usefulness. The most potent counterweight to the demands of the Central Government is the consolidation of local, active, personal liberty, even if backed by a collective, impersonal desire." Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), a pivotal figure in the anarchist movement, wrote: "In a single phrase, "agricultural-industrial," I have summed up my entire 25-year economic philosophy. All of my political proposals follow the same basic outline: either political federation or decentralization."

In the early 20th century, the United States was a decentralized movement that fought against the concentration of wealth and power. They argue that the decline of big industry is due to the decline of small enterprises and manufacturers, and they advocate for increased property ownership and a return to smaller production runs. Robert Penn Warren and Herbert Agar, two Southern Agrarians, were among many who were enamored with the decentralist concept. Some of the new lefties and Libertarians of the succeeding years included Ralph Borsodi, Wendell Berry, Paul Goodman, Carl Oglesby, Karl Hess, Donald Livingston, Kirk-Patrick Sale (author of Human Scale), Murray Bookchin, Dorothy Day, Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Mildred J. Loomis, and Bill Kaufman.

1.4.1 BEST SELLER IDENTIFIED TEN MEGATRENDS, ONE OF WHICH WAS DECENTRALIZATION

Leopold Kohr, author of a book released in 1957, greatly influenced E.F. Schumacher, author of the 1973 best seller *Small Is Beautiful: a Study of Economics as People Mattered*. The fall of countries, in which she famously proclaimed, "When something is wrong, something is too great." Several recent best-sellers advocate for decentralization during the coming years.

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Separating functions from present state boundary areas and creating regions that could have "different overlays" on the map, based on functions such as water, transport, education, and economics were discussed in *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society*, as well as the need for decentralization and "a comprehensive overhaul of governmental structure to identify the appropriate units size."

Alvin Toffler is known for his books *Future Shock* (1970) and *Third Wave* (1980). Later, in an interview, Toffler elaborated on the books, predicting that a more open, decentralized, democratic, anticipatory democratic approach would supplant the current centralist industrialist one. The futurist John Naisbitt's 1982 book "Megatrends" was on the New York Times bestseller list for almost two years and sold 14 million copies. There are ten 'megatrends,' from centralization to decentralization, listed in Naisbitt's book. Decentralization of government systems is advocated in "New Public Management," an executive book written by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in 1996.

Decentralization, according to Stephen Cummings, was the "revolutionary movement" of the 1980s. In 1983, Diana Conyers questioned whether decentralization was the "latest" approach to development management. Local government at Cornell's Restructuring Project claims that decentralization means the 'global tendency' in which functions are passed down to lower levels of government. During World War II, governments adopted a centralized policy of "Welfare" entitlements, as demonstrated by Robert J. Bennett. This model has since evolved into the "post-welfare" strategy of intergovernmental and market-based decentralization.

"Many countries in transition or development have begun some type of decentralization programs. This trend is associated with a renewed focus on the part that businesses and nonprofits can play in the development of new service models. The trend toward decentralizing power and strengthening local governments is an indication of societal shifts as a whole. Some examples of these are the growing mistrust of governments worldwide, the spectacular breakdown of some of the world's most centralized regimes (most notably in the Soviet Union), and the proliferation of separatist demands in a single area. However, the shift away from centralized authority isn't the only factor driving the rise of localism and the desire for individuals to chart their own courses.

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Instead, as we've established, these developments are driven by a serious interest in boosting public and private sector participation in governance.

1.4.2 EXPLANATION OF WHAT DECENTRALIZATION MEANS

There are several aspects of "decentralization" to consider before selecting whether or not to restructure a country's initiatives, programs, finances, administration, or service delivery. Decentralization, defined as the distribution of governmental authority and responsibility to lower or more autonomous levels of government and/or the private sector, is a multifaceted concept with many moving parts. Because of the differences in characteristics, regulations, and conditions required for their success, there should be a variety of decentralization models to choose from.

1.4.3 DIFFERENT STYLES OF DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization can take several forms, including political, administrative, monetary, and commercial. In order to emphasize the many benefits of decentralization and coordination, it is vital to distinguish between these various concepts. In spite of this, it is obvious that the meanings of these terms overlap, and that the requirement for an integrated approach is more important than any particular definition. Policies, administrative structures, monetary systems, and market structures can all be decentralized, and this phenomenon is not limited to any one country or even one sector.

- **The Decentralization of Government**

With political decentralization, citizens and their representatives have more say in policymaking. Political pluralism is often associated with representative governance, and it may also promote democracy by giving more people and their representatives a say in shaping and enforcing policy. Proponents of political decentralization make the assumption that decisions made through more widespread participation will be better informed and more reflective of the diversity of societal interests than those made by national political authority. The idea is that if representatives are chosen from within the electoral districts, the authorities will have a greater grasp on the wants and needs of the voters.

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Constitutional or legislative revisions, the emergence of new political parties, the strengthening of existing legislatures, the creation of new local political units, and the advocacy for efficient public interest groups are all common features of decentralized political systems.

- **Decentralization of Government Functions**

The goal of administrative decentralization is to reallocate power, responsibilities, and resources in the public sector across different branches of government. This involves the central government and its agencies handing over responsibility for the planning, financial management, and operation of certain public functions to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area wider, regional, or functional authorities.

Despite their similarities, decentralization, delegation, and devolution are all distinct administrative decentralization strategies.

- **Decentralization**

This type of decentralization, which redistributes decision-making power and management and financial responsibility among various levels of central governance, is frequently considered the weakest and is most commonly done in unitary States. It might merely delegate responsibilities from federal employees in Washington to state and municipal officials, or it could strengthen field or local administrative power under the supervision of federal ministers.

- **Delegation**

A more general kind of decentralization is delegation. The decision-making and administration of public operations are delegated by central governments to semi-autonomous entities that are not wholly controlled by the central government but ultimately responsible to them. Governments delegate authority by establishing entities such as public corporations, housing authorities, transit bodies, special districts, partially autonomous school districts, regional development corporations, and special project implementation units. In most cases, these groups enjoy considerable autonomy

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when making choices. They may not be bound by the same regulations as civil servants and be able to charge customers for their services without going through an intermediary.

- **Devolution**

The third type of decentralization is called "devolution." Governments delegate authority to make decisions, provide financing, and manage functions when they create quasi-autonomous local government entities with corporate status. It is common for devolution to place service responsibilities on local governments with the authority to choose their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and make their own financial decisions. Across clearly defined and legally recognized boundaries, local administrations in the new system exercise power and carry out public responsibilities. This type of administrative decentralization is the foundation for the greatest political decentralization.

- **Local Control of Public Finances**

Accountability for financial resources is a core tenet of decentralization. Municipal governments and private organizations can effectively carry out decentralized obligations when they have access to sufficient revenue (whether generated locally or transferred from the central government) and the authority to allocate that revenue as they see fit. The use of user fees to finance or recover costs, co-financing or co-production arrangements in which users contribute financially or in-kind to the provision of services and infrastructure, and the growth of local revenues through property or sales tax or indirect fees are all examples of fiscal decentralization. Many developing countries have the constitutional power to impose taxes, but they rarely do so because their fiscal bases are so thin and they rely so heavily on central government subsidies.

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1.4.4 BENEFITS OF DECENTRALIZATION

- **Lightens The Load on C-Suite Executives**

The burden on upper-level managers to juggle multiple responsibilities is eased when power is decentralized. When it comes to centralization, the buck stops with a single manager and his immediate team. As a result, top-level executives have less time to devote to other crucial responsibilities. Devolving power to those below them in the hierarchy is the only way to lighten their load.

- **Allows For a Wider Range of Options**

Generally speaking, decentralization helps to promote a wide variety of products and markets. Diversifying operations and launching new lines of production or distribution will be challenging for a centralized corporation with an emphasis on top authority.

- **The Goal is to Highlight Products and Markets**

The product's market share decreases as new competitors enter the market or as consumer tastes shift and make the product obsolete. In these cases, the pricing, quality, delivery, innovation, etc. authority is delegated to facilitate quick service to regional units.

- **Professional Training for Managers**

If authority is spread around, middle managers will be able to take the initiative necessary to grow into more senior positions within the firm. The success of the organization is directly proportional to the quality of its management.

- **Motive is boosted**

"Louis A. Allen stated that a key benefit of decentralization is that it promotes the formation of tight-knit, specialized groups. They preferred to weld their employees into highly related groupings based on the enormous power and local autonomy offered to local managers." Worker morality improves as a result of this policy.

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- **Increased Supervision and Regulation**

Employees at lower levels are given more discretion and accountability under decentralized structures. This means they may make informed adjustments to their strategy because they have a full picture of the state of each assignment.

- **Ability to Make Choices Rapidly**

With decentralization, decisions are made more closer to the point of action. This allows for quicker decisions to be made at lower levels because the hierarchy is no longer required to refer options.

1.4.5 THE DRAWBACKS OF DECENTRALIZATION

There could be many benefits to decentralization. However, unless it is constructed and managed for the benefit of the entire company, it could prove to be counterproductive. However, there are several drawbacks to decentralization.

- **Consistent Procedures Ignored**

Decentralization makes it difficult to adhere to uniform regulations and regular procedures. Each supervisor will formulate his own set of principles and pursue his individual interests.

- **Challenges in Coordinating Efforts**

The widespread dispersion of authority that results from decentralization creates difficulties in coordinating.

- **More of a Cost**

With decentralization comes the need for more responsible financial management and the inability for a small corporation to hire experts in a wide range of fields.

- **Need Professionals Only**

Decentralization fails to work without skilled and knowledgeable workers.

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- **Conflict**

As a result of decentralization, managers at lower levels are under increasing pressure to maximize profits at any costs. New ideas for making money often spark debate among management.

1.5 SYSTEMIC METHOD

According to the United Nations Development Programme, a theory of systems approach is useful for studying decentralization's purposes and processes. "Holistic definitions of the development aims require a system-level viewpoint that takes into account all relevant tiers, domains, sectors, and functions, as well as a community-level perspective as an entry point and the most feasible support. It takes into account the importance of multi-level architectures and ongoing synergistic processes of interaction and cycle iteration in the development and completion of a decentralized system."

Still, this was considered to be a systemic strategy. Norman Johnson, a researcher at Los Alamos National Laboratory, published a book in 1999 titled: "Some agents make decisions in a decentralized system without any overarching authority or processing power. One defining characteristic of agent systems is the extent to which the agents are connected to the global flow of information or influence. For a system to be highly interconnected, every agent must be (status- or influence-) linked to every other actor."

An "architectural style for trust management in decentralized apps" is being developed at PACE, the Institute for Software Research at the University of California, Irvine. Decentralization as defined by Rohit Khare was used as the basis for the report: "A decentralized system needs numerous stakeholders to make autonomous choices."

1.6 PROPOSAL FOR A DECENTRALIZED MARKET

In a decentralized market, investors can now trade with one another directly thanks to technological advancements, rather than operating through a regulated exchange. Online auction houses that use cryptocurrency are one type of decentralized marketplace.

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Markets That Are Not Centralized Like These

- **Leading Market**

Since there is no central location where traders and buyers meet to transact in deviate money, this market is a good illustration of the decentralized nature of the market. In the foreign exchange market, dealers can use the web to compare currency quotes from several global dealers.

- **Commercial Property**

In a typical real estate transaction including immobilon, there is no central clearing house where buyers and sellers meet to finalize their agreements.

1.7 GOALS OF DECENTRALIZATION

- **Administrative**

Clutter in the middle: it's impossible for a small group of people in the capital to make decisions that affect every part of the country. The facility lacks information regarding local requirements and circumstances. In order to provide necessary services, at least some decisions must be made at the community level. This parallels the practice of corporations appointing local managers at strategic locations. The need for administrative decentralization increases in proportion to the size and diversity of a country.

- **Political**

Having a voice in the allocation of public funds and provision of public services is an essential part of democratic governance. Stronger and more legitimate democracies result when local autonomy is expanded to increase opportunities for involvement and accountability. This is especially true if a country has a diverse population with various needs and wants in each region. Theoretically, decentralization could provide opportunities for participation and access to decision-making by previously excluded groups by putting decision-makers closer to the public. It also provides a means of accommodating regional ethnic groups' justifiable calls for a measure of self-rule.

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- **Economic**

Since decentralized decision-making more accurately reflects local people's needs, goals, and willingness to pay, it is hypothesized that funding could grow. It's hoped that this would improve how the service is provided. With municipal tax and charge payers willing to pay for their services, cost recovery and resource mobilization should be accomplished as well (although the evidence on the last point seems quite weak). Because of the high expenses and potentially high returns associated with production and distribution, "the lowest unit should be given the ability to do so."

1.8 EVALUATING DECENTRALIZATION AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE IN ECONOMICLY DEVELOPING NATIONS

The literature and critical discourse surrounding the concepts of "good governance" and "decentering" are analyzed in this study (local governance). It is intended that this work will supply a global perspective on the theory and practice of these areas. The neoliberal goals typical of IFIs and donor countries are reflected in the decentralization plan advocated under the banner of "good governance." Furthermore, it will be shown that the goals of this agenda, such as fostering greater democratic involvement and bolstering growing market economies, have not always been realized in practice. There are 3 main parts to this study. Part I examines and defines the concepts of good governance and decentralization. Further, the article investigates the factors that have made decentralization such an urgent issue. The study considers a relatively brief period of government beginning around 1945. In the second section, we examine the aid conditionality policy and the beliefs held by international organizations and wealthy nations that they can spread to poor countries by providing them with aid. In the third section, we learn about actual decentralization efforts in various developing countries. This study aims to determine whether or not the neo-liberal decentralization goal is realistic in light of empirical evidence from less developed countries. There is only a brief summary to this text.

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1.9 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALIZATION: DEFINING THE TERMS

The concept of decentralization, once introduced by the donor countries, became a major topic of academic discussion. After seeing structural adjustment measures for economic development fail, the donor community added the idea of good governance to their agenda. Institutional flaws, corruption, a lack of government accountability, and/or incompetent leadership were blamed for the setback. It was thought that until more modern, market-oriented institutions were formed in the underdeveloped parts of the world, economic development and poverty reduction would be impossible. Aid predicated on good governance places a premium on making local governments more responsive, transparent, and democratic through various decentralization and relocation initiatives.

According to Morten Boas, the term "governance" had a broader academic connotation before it was studied on a global scale. As an illustration of its widespread application, consider the number of times it was used to discuss the micro-compatibility of businesses in academic journals. In more modern times, this expression has typically been used to refer to public or private social institutions. According to Rosenau, non-state channels are just as important as state channels when it comes to the adoption and implementation of policies. The most important are the market and civil society, although there are many others. Since there is no generally agreed-upon definition of "government," in Aubut's opinion, it is a challenging concept to grasp. It could convey "different meanings depending on who uses the word." There is a widespread belief that western ideas of good governance are universally applicable, regardless of the importance of any given author.

Doornbos warned against the idea that good governance ideas from the West could be applied elsewhere. That's why it's important to take cultural factors into account. In what follows, we'll take a closer look at some of the various possibilities for good government. Knack had a narrow view of who may govern, believing that it should be only established bodies (state as well non-state). For one thing, back in the 1980s, people realized how crucial institutions were to the discussion of policy. North said,

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"Institutions are the laws of the casino and the rewards for playing the game of life." The quality of government-backed institutions is thought to be crucial to economic growth and development. Because of this, businesses and individuals are more likely to put money into future projects. Stern et al. pointed out that "nations with institutional development and market-oriented political changes and a deeper role in the international economy saw rapid rise of their per capita revenue by 5 per cent per year in the 1990s." But other scholars, like Manor and Crook, have maintained that while institutions play a role, the quality of governance also depends on politicians and bureaucrats. They stress the importance of politicians' and bureaucrats' use of existing institutions to exert their power and influence.

Governance is crucial to the success of institutions, as well as the honesty and competence of government officials. Since the early 1990s, the World Bank has actively promoted the idea of good governance. Therefore, according to Aubut, the most used word in World Bank governance is "the way in which authority is exercised in management of a nation's financial and social resources for development." Good governance, which the World Bank defines as "sound management of development," is "critical to the formation and maintenance of an environment to support robust and equitable development and as an integral aspect of strong economic strategy," according to the organization. While similar to the World Bank, the OECD promotes greater democracy and less spending on military in developing countries. According to the OECD rule of law, developing countries should cut down on military spending and improve their public sector management and corruption prevention. Although "preferred definitions of governance by different institutions and countries vary somewhat," they all agree that the quality of institutions and public management is crucial to the development of the world's least developed nations.

All of these definitions share the basic idea that non-governmental institutions, channels, and networks are essential to the provision of public goods. This paradigm of 'good government' places a premium on civil society, which is depicted prominently in this view of government. Its role is multifaceted, requiring it to keep an eye on government activities and serve as a watchdog while also contributing to the development of social capital, which is essential to political engagement, individual

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agency, and economic growth. A thriving civil society is now seen as a hallmark of democracy in this context. Therefore, the aforementioned criteria may be used to graphically display the 'good governance' model as a triangle with the state at the center and the market and civil society on the outsides. This model of good government is radically different from the one that prevailed during the Cold War's era of centralized states. Once considered the driving force behind economic growth, centralized government is now widely recognized as a major impediment to development. However, such a model does not take into account exogenous factors like international politics and global economics.

1.10 DECENTRALIZATION: THE FOUNDATION OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Given the above criteria, which are the outcome of trends in global governance, the decentralization of power and authority is considered as crucial by political analysts, international financial institutions, and donor states to develop more democracy at the grassroots level. This is also a necessary condition for receiving financial aid from international organizations. Since donor countries and the incorporation of national financial institutions have increased the importance of democracy in the developing world, democratization has also increased in importance. A key component of the 'good governance' package, democratic decentralization is a strategy that brings service delivery closer to the consumer, increases central government responsiveness to public demand and, in turn, reduces poverty, boosts the efficiency and quality of public services, and encourages greater participation from lower units. Most importantly, it helps foster a more democratic atmosphere in smaller communities.

Decentralization, privatization, delegation and administrative decentralization, fiscal decentralization, and devolution or decentralization were the four types identified. In recent years, devolutionary decentralization has gained widespread support from professionals, governments, and assistance organizations. The public is generally pessimistic about central governments in its current iterations because of the limited resources at their disposal. They feel powerless, unrepresented, and incapable of contributing to decision making. That's why lots of people believe decentralization is

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the key to fixing these issues. Second, the so-called "third wave" of democracy has led to decentralization. The third wave, which began about 1974 and has continued on ever since, was responsible for doubling the number of democracies on the planet. This trend agrees with decentralization's underlying concept that power should be devolved to governments and representatives who are physically closer to the people they serve. Authorities also need to be accountable to the people, primarily through popular municipal elections. Decentralization is a crucial part of democratic reasoning, and the United Nations Development Programme reflects this view. Third, devolutionary approaches to decentralization are highly advocated by Adam Smith's thesis on the effectiveness of local government from economics and the management sciences.

This idea proposes that better service provision by individuals can be achieved by the accumulation of local preferences in tiny, transferable units of Government. Local government, in contrast to supply-driven central bureaucracies, was better equipped to mobilize local resources and people in response to citizen demand. Increased productivity will allow local governments to better serve their constituents by reducing red tape and raising public awareness of tax dollars spent. Good governance is the sum total of these factors, which have contributed to its increased popularity in recent times. Simply adjusting the policies is not sufficient. Equally important is ensuring that the institutions are functioning properly. Yet, decentralizing authority and control is essential for this to happen. Before the Cold War era's conclusion, the centralized government/commandos' concept was hailed as "great governance." Every one of them, however, had some relation to the years between the wars and the post-war economic and political climate. The reasons were several. Following WWII, countries that had fought against the two-world concentration of authority and resources carried out a war economy with remarkable results, growing increasingly reliant on centralized government in the process.

Many countries in Asia and Africa, especially those that gained their independence from colonial rule after World War II, strongly agree with this assessment. The Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, for instance, both had strong leadership that supported strong central government over the entire Indian subcontinent. Take this as an illustration. Even by Pakistan's standards, that seems like a lot. In contrast to the

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nation-states of Europe, Pakistan's central government has become overdeveloped and autocratic.

In the decades following World War II, the concept of economic security emerged as a new paradigm for defining national and international safety. After World War II, the State in the First World was still powerful enough to control capital since capital had not yet surpassed the State. The Keynesian economic theory was widely held. Though, in the later stages of globalization following the Soviet collapse, the relevance of a centralized state infrastructure started to decline (characterized by increased production internationalization, "Information Revolution," and the preeminence of neoliberal social policy). Consequently, neoliberal economic principles gradually supplanted Keynesian ones.

It became impossible to address the challenges of controlling and regulating new patterns in economic growth using conventional, top-down forms of government as a result of a new global scenario that was substantially more complex than the cold war. Decentralized governance models were developed by governments in the industrialized world, supported by a neo-liberal economic perspective that questioned the Keynesian paradigm of state intervention. After supporting a centralized system of government for 40 years and paying military commanders in the Third World, the World Bank came to the same conclusion about the importance of "good governance." Those in power have blamed poor management for the Third World's economic woes in Asia and Africa. Consequently, the link between decentralization and future aid was identified as an important factor.

1.11 STRONG LEADERSHIP, LOCAL POWER, AND PROGRESS

That said, Doornbos thinks it does, despite the fact that the idea of a government-funded education in this area is hardly original. The external participation in the processes of state construction in Third World states has taken the form of development assistance conditionalities since colonial times, with the IMF's Structural Adjustment programme making these conditionalities more all-encompassing and severe. In recent times, new states have emerged, making demands on formerly autonomous nations regarding the form their governments, programs, and even political systems should take.

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Support and political conditionality make the transition to 'good government' in the past simple. Support for the West during the Cold War was a crucial criterion for the governments receiving aid. It was not clear from these external requirements how the relevant government should structure its management and policy-making processes, how it should prioritize different policy efforts, or how it should handle a wide range of issues that would naturally arise in the course of policy debate. Authoritarianism and tyranny flourished throughout that time period across most of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. However, with the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the customer states' methods of managing their political affairs were viewed as reasonable. Reducing the size and influence of states was a major inspiration for the concept of international institutions.

According to doorknobs, the universal standards for good governance developed by the Western Donor Community can shed light on the likely overshadowing of the notions of good government. Given his reading of the criteria, he argues that the universality cannot be all-encompassing. In addition, good governance norms can be conceived of in principle via a wide range of social, cultural, and political contexts, making this an interesting area of study in the fields of comparative politics and political anthropology. There is little chance that the international donor community will use comparative political anthropology or sociocultural contexts as selection criteria. Instead, standards for contributors will most likely emerge from the context in which they operate, from a local and cultural perspective that may be presented as having universal value.

Hegemonic Western perspectives on development are discussed in light of the Doornbos assistance plan. The idea here is to help underdeveloped countries catch up to the contemporary world. Some of the architects of the modernization drive that reflected the realities of the Cold War advocated for the State to play a major role; neo-liberals now argue the opposite. Nonetheless, "good governance" appears to resurrect the old modernization ambition of the middle of the 20th century in light of what Doornbos has argued regarding the universality of Western growth patterns.

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The Modernization movement, which has its roots in a Weberian-informed Western state model, has persistently sought to impose this model on the rest of the less developed world. The underlying concept is that societies with fewer resources have reached adulthood while still in the 'child' stage of development. They need to mature in the same way as "adults" do if the former is to progress. However, it might be claimed that specific assumptions made by donor countries and international financial institutions about the growth of less-developed societies make such supervision problematic (which are supposed to monitor and oversee development).

Developing a nation entail bringing it up to speed with the rest of the world in accordance with global patterns of progress that have emerged over time. Industrialization, advancements in technology, rapid expansion in material output, and rising standards of living all contribute to this. In contrast, underdevelopment refers to the lack of income and the social realities linked with outdated ideologies and social institutions.

To better the economic and social conditions of the developing world, the state structures of these countries must be modified in accordance with the governance paradigm evolved in the developed world. These assumptions require careful scrutiny. According to Samudavanija, the influence and incorporation of structural functioning into the study of relative politics by positivist behavioral scientists in the 1960s and 1960s cemented the Western world's reliance on an Aristotelian view of politics. As a result of Aristotle's "dynamic nature"³ theory, we often find ourselves trying to classify and label different varieties of government and social organization. Samudavanija argues that this classification has substantial ramifications for thinking about how different social and political systems stack up against one another. The first is encouraging people to classify new political systems into two broad categories: democratic and non-democratic, or modern and traditional. It's also significant in terms of history. Second, political change is predicated on the idea that the current political values, institutions, and functions may be totally replaced with new ones.

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Since World War II, globalization has been defined by the internationalization of output through flexible accumulation, the emergence of neo-liberal social engineering, the telecommunications revolution, the global finance hegemony, and the general compression of time and space.

In the globalized age, traditional value systems, institutions, and institutions will disappear, and the industrialized world's institutions will become uniform. The reason for this is that when a country's industrial organization and market procedures become competitive on the global stage, other countries observe, study, and eventually adopt them into their own systems.

Donor-promoted decentralization initiatives, such as support conditionality, sit within the framework of modernist perspectives on institutions. Some worry that decentralization programs are often guided by a complex, technocratic vision that severely limits the options available to communities in terms of their local institutions. The most common difficulty with decentralization is the creation of appropriate local institutions, which are typically modeled after the Western model of public administration, finance, and planning. The fundamental belief upon which decentralization initiatives were established was that the success or failure of decentralization programmes would be determined by flaws in their design and implementation rather than by the broader social, economic, cultural, or political context. As a result, diversity and variance have been largely ignored in local institutions as a result of different cultural, political, and social contexts. It's a given that the modern way of life and its institutions are introduced. In order to even consider the possibility of a "alternative modernity," one must first accept the inevitability of modernity and refrain from making doomsday predictions. However, modernity cannot be exported to the less developed world by imposing policies formulated in the developed world, which have evolved in response to quite different socio-historical contexts.

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1.12 EXPERIENCES WITH DECENTRALIZATION IN THE REAL WORLD

It is possible to read about the technical issues of decentralization, including the allocation of authority, duties, and finances, at any level of government. Some authors argue that political lenses should be used to better analyze decentralized programs, since this will allow for a more accurate assessment of the degree of democracy generated at the local level. Since the focus of this thesis is on the inner workings of municipal governments, the following literature review primarily addresses the questions of how democracy relates to decentralization and how participation and empowerment might be enhanced.

In places like Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, where conditions aren't as favorable as they are in Karnataka, the process of democracy and decentralization has been weak. Since administrative change in Ghana was not accompanied by fiscal and political decentralization, according to Awortwi, a weak local government was established. The leaders of the central government (CG), who benefited from the weak LG institutions, had little incentive to break away after this initial path of rudimentary decentralization. It follows that decentralization ultimately resulted in a return to a central location.

Much of the country's cultural heritage has been preserved thanks to a network of centrally administered patronage extending from the Presidential palace in Jakarta to the country's cities and villages.

To achieve its ambitions, it has re-established itself through new national and local alliances and conquered the institutions of democracy in Indonesia. This includes the parliament, political parties, corporate partnerships, and a bewildering assortment of paramilitary groups and crime/youth organizations. In a nutshell, it facilitates the decentralization of network growth at the local level, which is generally independent from central state authority.

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Decentralization in Indonesia has paved the way for the growth of lawless groups and institutions that seek to undermine legitimate authority. Hadiz went on to stress that there are unintended consequences to the way institutional change is planned. Decentralization is often seen as an integral aspect of the democracy process in many post-authoritarian regimes. Hadiz's argument centers on these underlying tensions and the conflicts that arise as a result of the conditions in which power localization really takes place. Resulting social strife in local power arenas is a direct result of the process's social and institutional developments. The Local Government Code of the Philippines (LGC) lays a firm groundwork for local authorities' use of discretion and accountability. It mandates democratic budgeting and planning by giving local governments 40% of national revenues. Disposition on paper should have led to less responsibility, but the culture of patronage and deference to hierarchy made that impossible.

Since the highly partisan incentive and allocation structure has left political, administrative, and financial discretion and accountability procedures vulnerable, decentralization has been implemented only partially. However, there are bounds to how widely the aforementioned cases can be employed by all less developed nations.

Successful local authorities may be uncovered, like in the instance of Bengal Shows. Most of the time, however, the reforms that were implemented could not be sustained without corresponding shifts in the underlying power structures. Money policies and political huggers, who have helped keep democracies running smoothly on both the national and local levels in most of these countries, have forced their dispersal. The result has been a reorganization of power in some contexts. From an empirical standpoint, it is clear that the new democracy's success in the hands of predatory interests is the key to decentralization. The neo-institutionalism strategy envisioned by international financial institutions and donor governments is therefore unlikely to be achieved by decentralization. The most glaring example is the rise of political gangsters to positions of power in most countries' political parties, legislatures, and executive branches, with few exceptions. The results shown above run counter to the neo-liberal decentralization hypotheses. Data reveals that policymakers' choices are constrained by actual power and interest arrangements, which runs counter to the neoliberal policy hypothesis of reinforcing 'choice. However, according to the neoliberal 'third route' to

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growth theory, social capital is essential to both social and economic development. The previous discussion and the available evidence suggest that not all forms of civil society organizations are the same. When it comes to addressing issues of collective action for the common good, organizations formed around interactions between employers, drug cartels, and predatory corruption networks, which cover both state and non-state institutions, have proven to be more effective than so-called voluntary networks. So-called market expansion can be constrained by rogue networks.

1.13 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

This proves that the government of India prioritized rural development as a central topic of discussion when discussing the country's social and economic progress after independence. Rural areas are not necessarily less developed than urban ones. It has "a design in which the core ideas of Indian civilization are reflected," hence it is indeed infused with Indian culture. It's important to remember that most of India is rural. The majority of the population of India lives in rural areas. As a result, alleviating rural poverty has been a central goal of the Indian government ever since its independence. Two-thirds of India's population, or around 600 million people, and one-tenth of the world's population are located in India. As a result, investing in rural areas becomes crucial over time. That is to say, our nation's progress and prosperity will determine the extent to which we are able to improve the economic and social conditions of those living in rural areas.

In general, when we talk about rural development, we're referring to progress made in all facets of rural life, such as agriculture, education, health, hygiene, improved communication, rural housing, rural industries, animal husbandry, etc. Therefore, rural development is the process of bettering living conditions, providing basic necessities, raising productivity and employment, and maximizing the potential of rural resources. The year 1947 marked a new era for rural Indians; the country had been under British colonial administration up until then, and its economy had been based on agriculture. Having emerged from a protracted struggle against colonial rule involving people of varying social classes, the Indian state has taken on the responsibility of supervising the transformation of its stagnant and retro-economic system to ensure that the benefits of

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economic growth are not monopolized in a certain part of its society. In this setting, the term "development" has become synonymous with economic reform and the ideology of the ruling government. The Indian government has been working to improve the lives of rural citizens ever since independence.

On October 2, 1952, work began on what would become the Community Development Program, and in 1953, the National Extension Service began rural rehabilitation with the goal of bringing people together. Irrigation programs, credit cooperatives, marketing, and other services are only a few examples of how agricultural reforms have altered rural life. In any case, the issue persisted. There have been numerous development schemes that have ignored the needs of the rural poor and landless. The standard of living for the rural poor has not improved despite the fact that the economy has improved since independence and that numerous five-year plans have been implemented, along with substantial investment. To the contrary, inflation has lured and unemployment has grown.

There is a growing discontent among rural residents as a result of their dissatisfaction with the quality of life and the slow pace of change among the economic strata, which is beginning to affect their core values and the cohesiveness of their communities. To the minds of some experts in rural economics, the Green Revolution was the key to solving the country's chronic food shortage problem. But even if food grain production increased substantially, a sizable portion of the Indian population still lived in abject poverty. To a select few rural people, it has brought benefits. While the green revolution was largely limited to the western and southern regions of India due to new technological advancements, it was a major success in the eastern and central regions. That is to say, differences between countries' regions have grown. As intended for rural development, the Green Revolution focused primarily on economic growth and rarely discussed the social, political, or cultural consequences of this shift. For this reason, its initial success quickly fizzled out.

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The problems of the 1990s: "The world is changing swiftly. We must also, though it is not necessary, all face the same direction of movement. Throughout the 1990s, we'll need to adjust our strategy for preparing accordingly to accommodate the many issues we're facing. ... Our strategy for growth ought to be long-term viable. It must be based on (a) the capacity of our own people to maintain the expanding vitality, (b) our own savings, and (c) two additional criteria based on the necessity of equality, self-help, and self-dependent progress. Second, from one development to another, attention to sustainable development is aided by a number of factors. Due to the importance of this issue on a worldwide scale, many people from all walks of life (including students, teachers, administrators, and politicians) participated in the many discussions that took place. This movement, however, has been given legitimacy by the Bruntland Report (1987) and the United Nations Conference. Plans and strategies for sustainability have also benefited from the establishment of the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (1995).

Sustainable development is important and vital for many different reasons. When thinking about the big picture, this system of self-sufficiency provides a long-term answer for the viability of introducing services and promotes both quality and social economic equity. Poverty is usually to blame for environmental destruction, which is another topic that needs to be emphasized here. Ecology and the four habitats have also gained prominence in the previous three decades. Due to rising environmental concerns, a number of development theorists have emphasized "Environmental Planning" in rural areas as a means to strike a balance between development and preservation of the natural world.

Professor Anil Kumar Jana explained this in his study "Environmental Planning for the Village." "In a nutshell, human factors like population growth, deforestation, urban expansion, population, etc., have severely degraded the standard of living in rural environments. Increased environmental contamination is due to a number of human activities, including soil pollution, water pollution, and air pollution. Indians from middle class and higher socioeconomic backgrounds have a chance to benefit from the state's provisions for their health, welfare, and safety. However, poor people's living conditions and bad habitat pattern are largely responsible for environmental

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contamination, especially in urban and rural and isolated settings." 3 The challenge for India is to accomplish progress that is good for everyone, both environmentally and socially, without causing harm to anyone else.

In order to be successful, the challenge must be based on a sustainable development that is both socially just and culturally accommodating. How feasible is a solution to this issue, given the country's dual issues of rapid population growth and persistent poverty? For the same reason, this problem must be addressed. Our policymakers and planners created the sustainable rural development plans with the goal of reorganizing rural life to make it more sustainable and healthier. In addition to addressing the economic issue, this new approach also prioritizes social and environmental concerns. Since rural poverty is not just a production issue, but also a distribution issue, the new development plan should work to ensure that profits are dispersed evenly as well as grow the economy.

This shift in perspective seeks to alleviate issues like poverty by improving rural residents' access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, as well as by encouraging women to take an active role in rural development, education, and extension. Thus, sustainable rural development has become the new paradigm for rural improvement. In actuality, a fresh perspective on development as a whole emerges as a result of innovation in rural areas. It provides evidence for ideas like quality expansion. Growth that prioritizes equity and progress can be harmonized with environmental sustainability. Both federal and state governments have embraced new approaches to enacting these and accomplishing sustainability goals. Target groups for the rural poor were established by development planners once it became clear that the 'trickle-down' idea of economic expansion had limitations.

1.14 DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THAT DOESN'T DESTROY THE ENVIRONMENT

In today's era of widespread globalization, the word "sustainable development" has become shorthand for the ideals of political equality and democracy. Recent years have seen a surge in interest in it from all around the world. Without the ability to maintain growth indefinitely, development cannot be considered complete. The United Nations

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Development Programme (UNDP) has recently declared that "development and sustainability" cannot be seen as two distinct concepts. Since India's independence, rural development has been a vital part of our ambitions, and this forum could be used to discuss this topic. The researchers will provide a backgrounder on sustainable development's beginnings and how it has evolved through time; this will aid in the transition from urban to rural settings. Finally, we examine the Indian government's vision for rural sustainability through the lens of its many projects and goals.

The Latin root of the word "sustainability" means "endurance," but in a broader sense than just the short term. Simply said, sustainability refers to the quality or capability of a process or phenomena to persist and complete its functional objective in a way that has at least two remarkable effects on it. After 1970, the concept of sustainable development emerged as an alternative to the conventional wisdom that promoted unsustainable forms of industrialization and rapid economic growth. Since the '60s and '70s, when awareness of environmental problems first began to rise, we've learned a great deal about how complex the interplay of humankind, the planet's resources, and our social and psychological surroundings can be. Because of public input, traditional development strategies and policies were formulated.

Researchers have proposed zero growth as a solution to the growing problems. However, this idea is also being criticized by a number of well-known experts. They argued that safety and sustained economic growth are not necessarily compatible with environmental sustainability. The term "sustainable development" was coined to describe this fresh perspective. It was once thought that protecting the planet's natural resources would ensure its long-term viability. In 1993, following a resolution was passed at the United Nations Conference in Stockholm in 1972, the World Environment and Development Commission (WCED) was established to promote both economic and environmental security. According to the WCED study, the term "sustainability" does not imply a higher material standard of living, but rather that one's quality of life is more valuable than material possessions. The goal of sustainable development is to provide for the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations.

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There are key distinctions between conventional development and sustainable development. In this way, the following are some of the defining characteristics of sustainable development:

- It's a method that takes a while and keeps going;
- For the most optimal results, base it on principles of fairness and equality.
- It takes an even-handed and holistic tack;
- Its purposes are the same, even if its origins are not;
- For one, it recognizes the natural world as more than just a useful tool for progress;
- The planet Earth, necessary for human life and progress; and
- It encourages audience participation.

With the hope that they may inspire a behavioural shift, sustainability indicators are a representation of the means by which individuals and communities might improve their future prospects. Here, it's important to acknowledge that these indicators aren't enough, but they're necessary for assessing sustainability.

"Rural development is a combination of activities and actions by diverse players; individuals, organizations, and groups that have taken together to lead to growth in rural regions," as defined by Shepherd. Varied people place different emphasis on different aspects of development, but traditionally, material progress—including income growth and the reduction of poverty—has been the primary focus. ⁸ That "Rural Development is a strategy meant to better the economic and social life of a certain group of people," as the World Bank put it, is an understatement. Therefore, we can define rural development as a process that increases the ability of rural residents to shape their environment and more evenly distributes the rewards that come from doing so. Here, the term "environment" refers to more than only the realm of agriculture and economics. Social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of living in rural areas are all included.

1.15 EXPLANATION FOR THE STUDY

As a result, the government places a premium on excellent governance to ensure the program is carried out efficiently through local authorities, with the help of an involved

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public. In response to internal and international impulses, the government implemented a series of reforms aimed at reforming its structure in the name of good governance. Since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act would have such a profound effect on the way things are currently run, this change deserves special attention (1992).

It's interesting that the World Bank's emphasis on good governance and decentralization lines up with both the central government's move toward liberalization and the accompanying shift in the organization's governance structure. Theoretically, this amendment promotes the formation of organizations that devolve power from federal, state, and market authorities to more decentralized levels of government (Chakrabarty 2007). The Act broke up bureaucratic monopolies in development processes and gave control back to regular people. By establishing Sabhas and panchayats at the local, regional, and state-wide levels, power in administration and development will be more evenly distributed. Root-eaters will have a greater ability to influence policy from below and carry out development projects that put the people in charge. On the basis of the notion of good governance, policymakers have developed and adopted new programs that are distinct from those that came before. All fresh content will be geared toward making audiences active participants. Through the principles of good governance of involvement, transparency and accountability, openness and outcomes in development, each of the most recent year plans has aimed to increase and strengthen ties with decent rated institutions.

1.16 POSITION ON THE MAP

One of India's easternmost states, West Bengal overlooks the Bay of Bengal. With a population of nearly 91 million, it ranks as India's fourth most populous state and fourteenth largest trading partner. And with a total area of 88,752 km², it ranks as the seventh most populous country subdivision on the planet (34,267 sq mi). As a part of India, it shares boundaries with the Bangladeshi region to the east as well as the Nepali and Bhutanese regions to the north. Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam are among Indian states that share a border with that region. Kolkata is the state capital and the third- and seventh-most populous metropolis in India, respectively. West Bengal includes the Darjeeling Himalayas, the Ganges delta, the Rarh region, and the

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Sundarbans coastline. The majority of the population is composed of Bengalis. The Bengalis are the state's largest ethnic group.

1.17 RADIUS OF THE STUDY

The improvement of rural areas in India has been a consistent focus of the country's Five-Year Plan. That's why it's so crucial to the country's overall development strategy. The main goal of rural development programs is to help the rural poor improve their level of living by allowing them to reach their full potential and take part in the objective change process. But local development of any kind could be. Effective only under a decentralized administration. Multiple scholars backed up the argument. James Manor (1999) is only one author that provides numerous strategies for fostering rural development through decentralization and democracy. He thinks local participation, transparency, and responsibility have the most sway. Less encouraging is the idea that decentralized, democratic methods can boost government commitment to rural development and lessen economic inequities within the region. This is especially true for programs and policies that move away from agricultural output. Decentralization, then, is a crucial element of rural progress. In order to achieve the need for excellent administration and to fulfil the goals of rural lift workers, the administrative machinery has been reconstructed at various levels. Part IV of India's constitution established the Panchayati Raj in 1996 as a decentralized structure for rural local self-government. With the hopes of reinvigorating the PRI system and giving the PRI constitutional stature, the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act of 1992 was passed in India. The Act of 1992 was a landmark of India's political development because it allowed for the decentralization of formerly centralized administrative structures. These Panchayats now have the power to make decisions in the 29 areas stated in the XI Schedule. Schedule XI of the Constitution mandates that panchayats create and implement plans for 29 areas critical to the nation's economic development and social fairness. Additionally, it seeks to lessen the role of politics and bureaucracy in rural improvement initiatives. In addition, the power structure at the grassroots level has been drastically altered when gramme Sabha was formally recognized as the local government center. These Gram Sabha have been given the authority to discuss and propose development ideas, choose recipients for various development programs, discuss the Panchayat's

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budget, and monitor the implementation of various development projects (Chakrabarty 2007). Grammatical Sabha is as significant as stress. This platform is intended to promote transparency and accountability. Its primary goals are to evaluate progress thus far, examine costs, and plan for future development in light of available resources (Rajasekhar et al 2007). By fortifying local councils known as panchayats, rural improvement initiatives would be more effectively carried out. Consequently, it is not an exaggeration to claim that most characteristics of good governance flourish under a decentralized form of local administration.

1.18 LIMITATIONS

- First, decentralization, through multisectoral national planning, may avert this elimination by shifting the burden of planning to local authorities that are more directly involved with addressing the difficulties at hand.
- Two potential benefits of decentralization include improved local accounting and accelerated regional development.
- Third, it helps make representatives and citizens feel more connected, which strengthens accountability.
- Fourth, because of low incomes and a parochial democratic establishment, decentralization fosters corruption, bureaucracy, and inefficiency.
- Preventing local authorities from acting on behalf of national governments is another worry inherent in a more robust decentralization movement and local autonomy.

1.19 HYPOTHESIS

A research hypothesis is a statement of some kind that makes an assertion that the researcher intends to back up with evidence (facts) and reasoning (argumentation), or that can be tested to see if it holds water. These goals necessitated the development of certain assumptions that might be used for analysis and explanation. Specifically, they are the following: -

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- First, the goal of democratic decentralization, also known as Panchayati Raj, is to ensure that marginalized groups, like as women, SCs, and STs, are not left out of the decision-making process.
- Inefficient decentralized rural governance is often the result of inadequate evolution of functions, officials, and finances to PRI.
- Third, empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions is crucial for the effective delivery of social programs.
- Fourth, democratic decentralization is a necessary first step toward strengthening democracy at the community level.
- Fifth, good governance can be achieved via the implementation of PRI that are both efficient and effective.
- For genuine citizen engagement and self-determination at the neighbourhood level, demo-critical decentralization is a must.

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CHAPTER - 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Serene Ho, Pranab R. Choudhury, Nivedita Haran, and Rebecca Leshinsky (2021), The issue of establishing legal protections for private property tenants is a difficult one that many countries must face. Land rights records could benefit from being more adaptable, pragmatic, and inclusive, and this is where the concept of "fit-to-use land management" (FFPLA) comes in. Few articles addressed this as a supported method to implementing the FFPLA in the decentralized context, despite the fact that the process and results of implementing the FFPLA have significant socio-political ramifications. This study fills that need by analyzing three land formalization programs in India that make use of adaptable recording systems in order to expand decentralization. These cases illustrate the ease and speed with which decentralization can be achieved at scale through partnerships with LGOs and non-state actors. There is a political struggle between new and conventional land stakes that undermines government power, and the difficulties of coordinating a network of private and public entities without established formal collaborative governance structures are emphasized by an institutionalist perspective. By doing so, we help make FFPLA management knowledge "fit for individuals" and stronger in its ability to back up policies and processes to guarantee land rights on a larger scale.

Inderjeet Singh Sodhi, Prabhat Kumar Datta (2021), The idea of creating a two-tier federal organization in India gained a lot of steam after 1916, when the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League both came into existence. The idea of the third level mooted by the Constituent Assembly through the incorporation of panchayats in the Directive Principles of State policy did not receive much attention until after extensive discussion following the 73rd Amendment of 1992, which coincided with a paradigm shift in the Indian State policy. The Act made it quite obvious that improving India's system of third-level federalism was a stated goal of the government. With the exception of the 5th and 6th scheduled areas, this article seeks to critically analyze the development process under the federal Indian system of Panchayati Raj Institutions

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(PRIs). Attempts were also made to analyze where the shoe still pins and the hope lies notwithstanding the constitutionalizing of the PRIs.

Inderjeet Singh Sodhi, Prabhat Kumar Datta (2021), The idea of creating a two-tier federal organization in India gained a lot of steam after 1916, when the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League both came into existence. The idea of the third level mooted by the Constituent Assembly through the incorporation of panchayats in the Directive Principles of State policy did not receive much attention until after extensive discussion following the 73rd Amendment of 1992, which coincided with a paradigm shift in the Indian State policy. The Act made it quite obvious that improving India's system of third-level federalism was a stated goal of the government. With the exception of the 5th and 6th scheduled areas, this article seeks to critically analyze the development process under the federal Indian system of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). While the PRIs have been constitutionalized, there have been attempts to analyze them.

Mr. Mrinal Kanti Das and Prof. Bijan Kumar Roy (2020), There is no dearth of data at this time in history, during this information boom. Members of the panchayat gramme are unsure of the time due to the proliferation of information available to them. The most crucial step is to learn as much as possible, and there are many other factors that could affect it. The study will also identify the informational resources available to the panchayats of the different grams in the Burdwan-I Development Block, as well as the best ways to access and make use of them. Gram panchayat members were polled via a standardized questionnaire to get the data. There are 162 people who make up the gram panchayats in this Sadar (North) block of Burdwan, and they have all been assigned to their respective gram panchayats. Questionnaires Surveys filled out by gramme panchayat members are collected and reviewed. Most participants note that the lack of libraries, information centers, etc. in the villages severely limits the group's ability to function, but its members still hope to locate such facilities in the area. Members of the gram panchayat have access to both printed materials and digital resources. The vast majority of GP participants have Facebook accounts and are actively sharing content from the site. Almost everyone in the Gram Panchayat learns

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enough despite obstacles including language barriers, malfunctioning technology devices, lack of time, and the Covid-19 epidemic.

Prof. Bishnu Prasad Mohapatra (2020), Panchayats now play a significant role in the development of India's marginalized population. The Odisha territories on the schedule are included in this as well. On the basis of data collected from 300 households in two Odisha Tribal Districts, this study concludes that the institutional organization and operation of Panchayats has paved the way for the drafting of decentralized development plans for these regions. The Panchayats were crucial in formulating decentralized development plans and increasing the participation of tribals in planning. Several critical issues concerning the economic and social progress of indigenous communities were discussed at the planning meetings. However, the goals of promoting indigenous peoples' socio-economic development through the establishment of decentralized development plans were not met. The implementation of decentralized district development plans has been hampered by a lack of Panchayat infrastructure, insufficient data management systems, and inadequate coordination at different levels. This research shows that decentralized planning in designated areas led by Panchayats is an organized process.

A. Prabhat Kumar Datta (2020) Although decentralized planning did not exist as a concept in India until after independence in 1947, its basic principles had been used in the country for some time prior. After India gained independence, there have been a number of government panels and commissions that have pushed for the implementation of decentralized planning. The most important changes were a pair of amendments to the Constitution that codified public participation and clarified the role of local governments. The alterations provided decentralized planning with constitutional authority and developed a national planning concept. This article's goals are to (1) evaluate and analyse experiences with the introduction of decentralized planning in the Union of the Indian states, dubbed West Bengal; and (2) record the many stages in India's history of decentralized planning. It's one of such places where the job was done with the people's active participation via community-based groups. This article is an attempt to use the available secondary data to support the claims made and establish some of the key conclusions. There was also brief mention of the village

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survey, which provided an opportunity for little fieldwork. The authors also identified a number of key open questions that warrant further study. Examining the potential lessons for developing countries like India is also a focus.

Debaditya (2020), Swaraj's illuminating presence is felt in every town and city. Democracy's Panchayat Raj is a woven pattern, a method of delegating powers and responsibilities according to the needs of each community individually. Focusing on democratic decentralizations, modernization, decision-making, and policy links, this study analyzes the role of Panchayati leadership in the implementation of the West Bengal Panchayati Act of 1994. The evolution and structure of Panchayati Raj were the subject of a brief discussion. The Panchayat system of ancient India's village communities is the prototypical model for the various localized forms of self-government and representative government that have emerged in different parts of the world over the centuries. The ability to maintain physical health is crucial in a country as rurally dispersed as India if the country is to realize its full administrative, economic, and social potential. Panchayat Raj provides an option for local self-governance at the village or populace level. It's a convoluted part of the municipal government, made of people's representatives and endowed with some discretion and coordinating power. Panchayati Raj was the backbone of traditional rural social organization. Although the Indian system of local self-government known as Panchayati Raj has its roots in the South Asian traditional panchayat system, it is most commonly referred to by the name of the constitutional amendment that established it in 1992. You shouldn't confuse the extra-constitutional Khap Panchayats (or Panchayats caste) in northern India with the modern Panchayati Raj and its Panchayats gramme. As the originator of India's political system and a decentralized administrative structure, Mahatma Gandhi advocated for the idea that each village should be responsible for its own businesses. Today, panchayats serve as the basic building blocks of local administration in India, making Panchayati Raj a functional form of governance in the country. Gram Parishad, Mandal Parishad, Block Samiti or Panchayat Samiti, and Zilla Parishad make up the three tiers of the system (district level). In 1992, it was made official by the 73rd amendment to India's Constitution. The primary purpose is to examine the role of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the formation, categorization, and federation of SHGs on a block level, where most of these actions are being performed. The Panchayat Raj system

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organizes a large number of committees, the Balwant Raj Mehta and Ashok Mehta committees being particularly noteworthy. Articles 243 through 243O of the Constitution of India contain a number of important clauses. In April of 1999, when IRDP had been reorganized and integrated with other programs like TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY, and MWS, the Swarnijayanti Gram Swarojgan Yojana (SGSY) was launched. The SGSY program is a great way to get people started in business for themselves. Program focused on the processing of data, including procedures such as rural poor organization (BPL) through self-help groups (SHGs) through social mobilization, capacity building, the distribution of revolving money, access to loans and subsidies, technological advancement, and infrastructure. However, several separate and interconnected forces conspired against this establishment's success. Their performance was deemed subpar by several review panels. It has strayed from its original purpose on occasion, creating a plethora of problems rather than promoting the well-being of the people. However, this does not suggest that the Institute is to blame for the problem; rather, it indicates that a faulty implementation strategy has led to this particular difficulty. But before we get to those, let's take a quick look at a few of the challenges that must be overcome to achieve smooth operation.

Sudip Mandal (2020), To effectively administer the State and its institutions within a democratic framework and to respond to citizen concerns is central to the concept of "good governance" in the modern era. Human rights protection, social justice, a level playing field, transparency in government, a strong democratic system, and competent public administration are the hallmarks of good governance. In an ideal democracy, every publicly available notion would be treated equally. Good governance, which includes transparency in public administration, is central to the Panchayat Raj ideas in Gandh. It was based on the principle of decentralization and a widespread belief in the power of the people. The democratic engagement of many rural residents is a matter of direct participation. Even in ancient times, the village was considered the most important administrative level in India. Panchayats' major policies are put into action. Gram Sabha is an integral aspect of the larger Panchayat Raj institution of India's representative democracy. The focus here is on quality, rather than quantity, and this warrants its own study. As a result, the Gandhian perspective on Panchayat Raj will be

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the primary emphasis of this study. The people of India firmly believe this to be crucial for the country's development in the twenty-first century.

Dasgupta, Debjani (2020), This study adopts the premise proposed by Evans (2008) that the state of the twenty-first century would need to forge stronger ties with cultural institutions if it is to meet the development goals predicted by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Evans highlights the significance of constructing or reorganizing institutions of governance at the grass-roots level, which leads to significant participation by the general populace in State development processes. In light of this theoretical starting point, the study aims to learn about the facts, possibilities, and constraints of establishing effective connections between the State and society in order to mold "effective" participation by the populace in the structures of local governments under different political regimes. In the Indian state of West Bengal, a left government took over several decentralized state reforms after a populist Right-Wing administration was replaced in 2011. West Bengal is a strategic example to examine the factors linking global talks with the complicated power linkages in poor countries; some initiatives were ideological, while others were sponsored by international finance institutions. In light of the situation of West Bengal, this research raises concerns about the roles and motivations of different types of stakeholders, how the agenda is influenced by shifting political conditions, and how decentralized systems in governance are affected by policy needs. The study compiles data from a variety of sources to investigate these questions, including official records and political parties, interviews with prominent government officials and politicians involved in setting the state's reform agenda, and observations of their work in action in five Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) in the Bankura District. When taken as a whole, they shed light on how the public participation arenas would be affected by the state transition in the long run. The thesis elucidates the goals of political leaders, the role of bureaucratic elites in forming governance, and the significance of international discourses. It contributes to the academic literature on effective participation by calling for a thorough exploration of the interests that influence institutional reform processes and their impact on relations between the state and society.

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H. Arends Helge (2020), Because of their proximity to the people they serve, local governments are much more efficient in providing public goods than federal or international bodies. However, sceptics argue that fiscal decentralization is counterproductive. In light of the three key challenges raised by the decentralization literature—(in)efficient local services, (un)equal local services, and (un)accountable local services—this essay aims to examine the fundamental basis for decentralizing public services. Complex and critically important to society, the domains of health and education are the primary foci of this research. Overall, the conclusion is that decentralization risks are especially critical to local public service provision, despite data supporting both the decent-enticing and the de-center-sceptic positions. When creating fiscal relations, reformers tasked with decentralizing public services should have a firm grasp on factors including local customs, history, and the impact decentralization could have on vulnerable populations. In the event of a crisis, a return to central control should be possible.

Salma Hegga, Irene Kunamwene, and Gina Ziervogel (2020), It is not yet fully researched how efficiently it works or if it increases availability to water, but several countries in semi-arid Africa are decentralizing water services and hoping to promote local stakeholders' engagement in water resources management. Little thought was given to the locals' ability to impact the management of the water systems for which they are responsible (in terms of knowledge and resources). In order to better understand the impact of the water reforms implemented at the tail end of the 20th century on regional and local stakeholders in the Omusati region in northeast central Namibia, we conducted a qualitative study. Our research suggests that decentralized water resource management may fail if central authorities do not adequately fund and facilitate the participation of local actors in the governance process. The Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals will require that local actors be supported in exchange for a more comprehensive and effective engagement, if they are to achieve their lofty aims of promoting justice and maximizing efficiency. As such, we advocate for decentralized water governance policies and practices to place greater emphasis on building the capacity of local stakeholders to assume responsibility for water systems in their communities.

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Dr. Birendra Suna and Snehalata Majhi (2020), The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act altered the hope that the underprivileged could get a functional and trustworthy rural government through the PRI, which had previously been considered as a route to outstanding administration. Media Conveyance Systems and Networks Nowadays, ladies can participate in government if they want to. The article's goals are to investigate women's participation in the three-tiered structure of free Indian government, as well as their knowledge, leadership qualities, and decision-making abilities. Both qualitative and quantitative studies have made use of field survey methodologies. The 120 elected women we used are from the 5 Grams of Banspal Block Panchayats in the Keonjhar district of Odisha. As the abstract and results of the article's analysis show, women play an essential role in shaping masculine political culture. Due to a lack of knowledge about politics and political parties, many rural women do not comprehend how the political system works. The reservation system provided women with privacy, but men still held the reins. Women are still far behind men in grassroots politics because of entrenched patriarchal norms in society and the educational system.

Katrina Kosec and Tewodaj Mogues (2020), Electoral accountability and population mobility, two main assumptions of decentralization, are not being met in many countries. What effect does decentralization have on public service delivery when it comes to these kinds of problems? The authors use a spatial regression discontinuity to analyse the effects of decentralization's partial development in Ethiopia's authoritarian setting. While decentralization does improve the delivery of some services, such as those related to agriculture, it has little effect on social services like safe drinking water. This result is consistent with a scenario in which local officials have superior information on the optimal returns on public investments and are incentivized by decentralization to boost citizen productivity - on which rents depend - rather than population utility. This work demonstrates the unintended repercussions of decentralization in a variety of non-democratic settings by illuminating the ways in which decentralization affects the provision of public goods through non-electoral processes.

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M. H. S. Shylendra (2020), Changes in the economy and a transition to democracy: possible? Can the two types of decentralization coexist in the current political economy? The essay focuses on Gujarat; however, these problems affect much of Western India. Based on an analysis of the correlation between devolution and economic growth, it is argued that the latter looks to have achieved democracy decentralization. The constitution suggests a minimum guaranteed transfer to local governments as a protection against the instability of state politics.

"Maumita Das" (2020), This article examines the accessibility and quality of three essential urban services in Bengal: water supplies, garbage collection plants, and drainage plants. This is done in light of Bengal's very thorough and unique arrangements with regard to urban decentralization. According to the findings, many people in the surveyed communities lacked adequate access to these resources. All three services were not equally available throughout and within the different communities. Councillors from underrepresented communities had less of an effect on local administration issues and on the relatively poor coverage of urban services in their respective wards since they were not heard and were not equipped to do their jobs.

Ritanjan Das (2019), As part of a nearly two decade-long process of land acquisition and development, this study examines the policy difficulties in Rajarhat, a once rural village in the Indian state of West Bengal. The narrative is taking shape against the backdrop of a neoliberal state in the global south that facilitates concurrent dispossession and, most significantly, the transformation of communities and rural livelihoods. By focusing on the emergence of "syndicates" (low-level cartels) in this region, the study seeks to determine the nature of this shift by mapping socio-economic changes and, on the other hand, by reinventing conventional caste-based social systems. This represents how neoliberal India's increasing urbanization has altered social connections in the country.

Dr. Uddagatti Venkatesha and the great poet Valmiki Rama Krishna (2019), Soon after India gained its independence, the country's leadership began looking at several ways to alleviate rural poverty by providing for the people's most basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter. A historic shift in decentralization to the level of

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grassroots participation and participation by individuals both in the formulation and implementation of the plans was brought about almost five decades earlier through the process of self-governance and planning, through the empowerment of the people through the Panchayati Raj system. The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act (1992) provided the PR I with stability, consistency, and strength through decentralization, as studied here. Elections at the local, regional, and state levels are standardized, as are elections at the intermediate and supreme levels, which are held indirectly. Rotational membership and leadership quotas for the SC ST's PRI committee are established in accordance with the county's population. At least one-third of all elected or appointed female positions. Afjalpur taluk is located in the Gulbarga District of Karnataka, and this article will use it as a case study to examine the political participation of the taluk's weaker areas of Panchayath raj institutions. By shifting the list to the rural and urban electing bodies of the eleventh and twelfth schedules of the constitution and welfarism for weaker sections, this article discussed the political participation of weaker sections and sought their opinion on their involvement in the political, economic, and social justice process.

Leonard Baatiema, Maryam Bigdeli and Seye Abimbola (2019), The mix of results is a constant subject in analyses and reviews of decentralization. Decentralization is a complex intervention or phenomenon; hence it is crucial that evidence be produced to guide implementation techniques. That's why we pooled our knowledge from various sources to describe how decentralization influences health care's fairness, efficiency, and resilience. We have taken a practical approach to summarizing the data and included both quantitative and qualitative studies on the impact of decentralization on health care systems in high-, low-, and middle-income countries. We looked through 51 studies from 25 nations sourced from Ovid's Medline, Embase, and Cochrane Systematic Review Library. 'To vote with feet' (reflecting how decentralization exacerbates or alleviates existing patterns of inequality in the distribution of people, resources, and results within jurisdictions) is one of three mechanisms we identified that decentralization uses to affect healthcare system equity, efficiency, and resilience (reflecting mutual accountability and support relations between multiple centers of governance which are multiplied by decentralization, involving governments at different levels and also community health committees and health boards). We have

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also mapped out the institutional, social, and economic factors that shape each of these configurations. Decentralization in health systems and results are combined here to highlight the processes and contextual variables that policymakers and implementers need to take into account in order to reap the most benefits from decentralized governance with the fewest drawbacks.

Sanskriti Menon & Janette Hartz-Karp (2019), India's rising urbanization rate, widespread distrust of the government, and inadequate public involvement in policy and decision-making all point to the necessity of better urban governance. Choices are acceptable to and are acceptable to the people, tackling complex difficulties effectively, as evidenced by deliberate democratic initiatives in other parts of the world, such as parallel experiences in rural India. Using two case studies from Pune, India, students learn about the importance of public engagement, inclusion, and discussion in influencing public decision-making. Because of the country's complex social and political stratification, power imbalances, and a lack of decentralized institutions of governance and information for civic decision-making, public involvement is difficult to achieve in India's political and economic spheres. Deliberative democracy efforts (induced participation), involving civil society (organic and created), and controlled by an impartial third party, have been inductively formed from this experience to form a future good governance framework. The argument is made that adopting such a paradigm would be beneficial in finding practical answers to the challenging problems of urban sustainability in India and beyond. Findings: This article draws on the results of case studies conducted in Pune to argue that structured deliberative democracy approaches, in which leaders are willing to serve as pioneers for good governance, third-party facilitators, and organized participation groups all work together, can successfully involve the public in the public decision-making process. However, in order to develop deliberative democracy in India's urban areas, advocacy on multiple fronts is required for the proposed framework. It is vital to search for 'Champions' within the political, administrative, and civilian community in order to pioneer deliberative democracy projects, create professional capacity for high-quality discussion, and guarantee that the results of these processes are important. A sustainable environment is essential for a democratic renewal, and good governance will depend on it.

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Ayangbam Shyamkishor (2019), Democratic decentralization in the north eastern Indian hill states takes a slightly different form than in the rest of the country. Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland rejected the Panchayati Raj in favour of the Municipal System and the Autonomous Counter in the Village (VC). This article assesses the work of the Village Council (VC) in Mizoram in light of the guidelines established by the Panchayati Raj Institution pursuant to the 73rd amendment of the Indian Constitution. The Village Council is the lowest democratic entity in Mizoram, similar to the Village of Panchayat in other areas of India. According to the research, Panchayat bodies have more influence than VCs do in power transfer at the grassroots level, with the exception of the VC's judicial jurisdiction. The VCs aren't capable of initiating much of anything. Though the state government depends on VC for funding, Panchayat institutions have the freedom to initiate projects that will be most helpful to the communities within their jurisdiction.

Mukherji Partha Nath (2019), The Left Front's dominance was broken in the panchayat elections of 2008. Clear and, often, sizable majorities have characterized elections to the state assembly and the Panchayat since 1977. This study of the panchayat elections in the field in 2008 begs the question, "How is Panchayati Raj to be democratically decentralized in West Bengal?" In accordance with the federal concept, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1992 gave states wide latitude in democratizing and empowering Panchayati Raj institutions. The chapter argues that the CPM-led Left Front has institutionalized, but not democratized, the panchayat system. Panchayat and Assembly elections both before and after 2008 show that the process of democratization is still very far off, even after regime changes with TMC in control.

Chattopadhyay and Maumita Das Soumyadip (2019), This essay examines the people's involvement and the potential of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act to improve participatory practices in Indian cities based on field observations from two municipalities in West Bengal. Disillusionment with this easily available arena for democracy has persisted in West Bengal despite the fact that municipalities have been unable to establish ward commissioners, the ward Committee is highly partisan, and ward meetings have not been held in over a year. Elected representatives are the only

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link between the populace and the local government, yet this representation does not always lead to active participation.

Joydeep Guha and Bhaskar Chakrabarti (2019), This essay explores how local democracy and administration might help bring about sustainable development (SDGs). Key challenges for achieving locally-based SDGs include an increased reliance on local funding, difficulty managing stakeholder networks with varied goals and ambitions, poor information flow, and deficiencies in stakeholder confidence. The article provides a comprehensive examination of the most up-to-date research on decentralization, using examples from a variety of local governments to illustrate potential solutions to these challenges. The research also emphasizes the need for local politicians and bureaucrats to strengthen their local leadership abilities and to limit their responsibilities, two areas where the SDG agenda falls short.

Avani Kapur and Yamini Aiyar (2019), This study analyzes the effects on state governments of the different types of sub-national social policy investment in the context of current initiatives to increase fiscal decentralization in India to learn more about the connection between fiscal federalism and Indian social policy. In this essay, we look at the persistence of a key centralizing feature in India's social policy fiscal architecture. The federal government's political and administrative structures are the origin of this trend toward centralization. As a result of the extraordinary dynamism of this dialogue, the primary goal of centralization—guaranteeing fairness—has been undermined, while the expectations of decentralization—better accountability by aligning expenditure with local needs and preferences—have not been established. Despite the country's centralized financial structure, the outcomes of social policy in different parts of India are likely to differ significantly.

Mr. Kumar Datta Prabhat (2019), The new push to decentralize and democratize effective government in India has given deliberative democracy a significant boost in recent years. The 1992 Constitutional Amendment in India formalized this concept through the Gram Sabha organization in rural areas (village assembly). Generally speaking, the amendment mandates the formation of the Gram Panchayat institution (a collection of villages), with the delineation of its precise functions left to the individual

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states. Although Gram Sabhas have been constituted in every state, their precise locations and mandates vary widely. Some nations, like West Bengal, have gone even further by establishing a separate body in the electoral college. This article provides a case study of the Gram Sansad in the state of West Bengal and an overview of the gram Sabha practiced across India.

Mr. Hoi Yu Ng (2018), Singapore's electoral autocracy stands out for its innovative use in fortifying a wide range of political institutions, including the longevity of parliament and elections. In contrast, local governments and other decentralized sub-national institutions receive scant resources and oversight of public housing properties falls on elected lawmakers. This dissertation examines the rise of authoritarian local councils and the factors that have contributed to their rise. Based on an analysis of primary and secondary sources like Hansard, governmental documents, and scholarly articles, this study argues that the establishment of municipal councils was politically motivated and premeditated in order to obstruct opposition to development. Moreover, it suggests that municipal governments promote authoritarianism from three different perspectives. In the first place, it creates extra trouble and disadvantages for the opponent. Second, the ruling party is given a new electoral challenge to overcome in order to correct the inadequacies of the opposition and swing the elections in its favour. Additionally, it provides opportunities for elite co-optation and improves the efficiency and focus of material delivery. In this article, we look at how decentralization in electoral autocracies works and what it means for Singapore's policy research.

A. Prabhat Kumar Datta (2018), This article aims to evaluate the success of India's decentralized democratic institutional framework in rural areas by looking back at its development over time. While the building blocks of decentralized governance in ancient India are not hard to identify, some have argued that it bears little resemblance to the modern version of decentralization developed and perfected by a number of western experts. Imperial rulers in India instituted decentralized rule to further colonial aims and maintain British power. The postcolonial state launched its rural decentralization project in the 1950s but saw little success. In the 1990s, India's stance shifted. To facilitate democratic decentralization, it was revised in 1992, although the country is at a crossroads politically right now. It seeks to document the evolution of

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the decentralization process through time and identify the obstacles and takeovers that have impeded the work of India's rural decentralization institutions.

Dr. Soumen Roy (2018), the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act established the Gram Panchayat (GP) as an elected local government at the grassroots level that promotes more responsible, transparent, open, fair, effective, and participatory governance (1992). In a democratic type of decentralization, the potential contribution of local government institutions to participatory and responsive governance has been justified, and this amendment aims to improve those institutions. This Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) formalizes the Gram Panchayat as a local self-government organization, giving its members the authority to make decisions and implement decentralized programs on behalf of the populace. Some characteristics of good governance were outlined in the 1973rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, as well as in all of the Bengals Panchayat Acts in West and their amendments. These characteristics include democratization, accountability, openness, efficiency, public engagement, empowerment, etc.

Alfred M. Wu, Lin Ye, and Hui Li (2018), Externalities of mobility, congestion cost, and capital production all play important roles in the spread of cities, which has been connected in urban literature to a random process of expansion. However, the political economy of urban agglomeration cannot be explained by standard economic models due to their failure to account for the impact of political institutions on urban distribution, most notably fiscal decentralization. As a significant transition economy, China's economic decentralization, when combined with political control, creates a more complicated urban agglomeration setting, providing a new vantage point from which to examine the country's corporate underpinnings and political repercussions. Using a tabular examination of the data from the Chinese jurisdictions between 1994 and 2015, this study finds that there has been a correlation between the growth of urban canters and the decline of the country's more rural provinces. Between 1994 and 2003, however, fiscal decentralization is linked to urban agglomeration in a distinct setting. Such tendencies may be explained by severe competition between local governments and resource absorption from powerful cities in China, particularly in recent years, as part of the fiscal decentralization framework. Without proper oversight and

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administration of the urban hierarchy formation in China, the unanticipated outcome of fiscal decentralization is called upon to mitigate more effective coordination.

Glyn Williams and Sailaja Nandigama (2018), Examining the governance change that seeks to "bring the state" closer to the people, the study makes the case that additional research needs to be done on two fronts: how does policy decentralization affect the use of power? And what sort of space remains for the impoverished to take use of? Using qualitative evidence gathered from two panchayats near the end of Left Front's lengthy rule, this research analyzes daily activities in West Bengal, an Indian pioneer in decentralization through Panchayati raj in the late 1970s (1977–2011). The book details how patronage, coercion, and surveillance were all used in the exercise of political power in the Bengali landscape, and how the poor were left with few avenues for political participation as a result. Thus, the ostensibly democratic structures of Panchayati raj existed side by side with the informal exercise of power and the reproduction for poor and marginal groups of new sorts of political identity. As a result, serious concerns about South-wide reform initiatives have been raised.

Surbhi Bharadwaj (2018), Affirmative action through reservation systems has been a staple in India for quite some time. Quotas requiring more participation from underrepresented groups in governmental institutions and agencies are on the rise. Except for caste-based elections, however, such quotas have generally been ignored in public office elections. This established order was shifted in 1992 with the establishment of the Panchayati Raj system of local self-governance. The 73rd Amendment mandates that in all PRIs, women make up 34% of the membership. PRI quotas for women were increased to 50% in September 2009 due to a constitutional amendment. This article analyses how a rise in the percentage of women in PRIs from 34% in 2004 to 50% in 2009 affected the success of women candidates in the 2009 Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, where no quotas exist for women. Do shifts in descriptive representation at one level lead to shifts at another? That's what I'm hoping to learn as I try to determine the impact of reservations on electoral behaviour. Due to the similarity in voter turnout throughout governmental levels, shifts in public opinion about candidates at one level are likely to impact elections at higher levels. An improved measure of the underlying shift in voting behaviour is the article's focus on

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the positive impact of PRI quotas on government elections that include no special provisions for women's participation. Additional literature is included in this article. Women's reservations had either no effect or a negative one on the performance of female candidates in the 2009 Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, in my opinion. Women may be a sign of society's progressive nature, but there's also evidence of a reaction that may eventually go away (or is simply difficult to assess over time). There is a danger that quotas can correct backwards social norms; for example, requiring 34–50% of quotas in areas where women hold less than 10% of political seats could have unexpected consequences, such as turning the quota into a meaningless token. The first reluctance and reaction may, however, result in a healthy balance and fairer society in the long run, ushering in a transition that would normally take decades to achieve.

Kohsheen Sharma (2018), Women's inequality with men is a worldwide problem that hasn't gone away despite many advances. At a time when India is seeing unprecedented economic growth, the country is also witnessing a dramatic rise in violence against women, and the vast majority of girls there still lack access to equal educational opportunities. In one of the most important steps toward achieving gender parity, the Indian government has recognized village councils, also known as Panchayati Raj institutions, as part of the country's constitutional order and has set aside 33 percent of Panchayati Raj seats for women. More than that, women have banded together to form self-help groups, whereas formal female education has received very little attention. We're planning research to see what effect these programs have on women's rights in western Bengal and Mizoram. We found that affirmative action increases the number of women involved in politics, but it does not guarantee that more women would participate in politics or become elected representatives. Education plays a vital role in empowering women because it gives them the tools, they need to become financially stable and take agency in their own lives. Women who face persistent discrimination and a lack of authority need both affirmative action and education to achieve their full potential.

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Oleksii Holubchak, Liliana Horal, and Svitlana Korol (2018), Research on the theoretical and practical dimensions of decentralization is being conducted in the context of the transformative shift in the system of local self-government in Ukraine. One of the most worrying parts of the country is the abundance of competing ideas, methods, and strategies for reform, all of which call for deep changes that should aim for a more transparent and participatory democratic government. More importantly, everyone in the country benefits from more opportunities for development and improved living conditions. The current state of the local government system is investigated in light of the results of successful execution of the decentralization reform. The decentralization reform's primary directions are being set up gradually until they are finalized. When all planned measures are carried out as expected, it becomes clear which factors have stymied the development of better intergovernmental financial ties. The research approach has included the use of both broad scientific methods and narrower study methodologies. In particular, the idea of decentralization as a new management system can be explored thanks to the dialectical approach to thinking. The principal components of the results can be trusted because they were derived using scientific research procedures and a defined complexity concept of the methodological base. Efforts are made to improve people's lives all around the country by looking at past research and analyzing local budget data. Principles for making wise use of public funds at the regional level: This includes: • rationalizing social welfare expenditures; • directing the development of finances for the internal market, as well as creating investment platforms and organizing local farmers into cooperatives (services revision, distribution of paid services, minimum wage revision and subsistence) Because of this decentralization, local governments now have more opportunities for territorial development and the creation of cutting-edge infrastructure in the fields of education, medicine, transportation, housing, and utilities. In comparison to the same methods of implementation, the suggested project would allow for more efficient allocation of funds, which in turn would strengthen the function of local government.

Singhvi, L.M. (2018), Dr. Singhvi shares his ideas on public administration and decentralization, including his acknowledgement of Panchayati Raj's contribution to strengthening India's democratic foundations. He took inspiration from Gandhiji's concept of "Gram Swaraj" in formulating his ideas. He was a strong supporter of

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decentralizing authority. After Shri Rajiv Gandhi took office as Prime Minister, Dr. Singhvi and the Panchayati Raj issued a new decentralization demarche. He argued that he should prioritize rebuilding the country's institutions and take bold action to restore the credibility of the defunct Panchayati Raj. Sri Rajiv Gandhi listened to him intently. He soaked it up quickly and seemed receptive. Indicating that he wanted him to head up a group charged with creating a concept article, he gave him that assignment.

Professor Soumen Roy (2018), Grassroots democracies are predicated on democratic principles and practices. Democracy is the bedrock of the people's democracy, providing a means for everyday citizens to exercise meaningful political influence in their country (political, administration and financial). The primary goal of democratic decentralization is to create a society in which people can influence government without resorting to violence. To be really grassroots, a democracy must involve the participation of ordinary citizens in shaping their country. Through the proper functioning of an efficient local self-government system, (grassroots democracy) can be institutionalized and safeguarded. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) introduced a kind of national local autonomy to rural West Bengal.

Doctors Md. Julfikar Ali and Mohidur Rahaman (2018) Many economists argue that decentralizing power benefits the economy. Their governance and development rhetoric maintains a focus on citizen participation as a key strategy for bolstering local capacities in the fight against poverty and the interface between the social and economic sectors. Changes in the context of central-local interactions, brought on by decentralization and planning in particular, have had a significant impact on local-level plan and development. Since India's independence, the planning process has seen steady evolution. This essay examines how and why planning is becoming increasingly decentralized. Growth at the neighbourhood level is achieved by the people's active and democratic participation in local government planning through decentralization of planning. The essay offers what is known as Bottom-up Planning, a paradigm of grassroots growth on a bigger scale through the implementation of a comprehensive plan.

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Aarti Garg (2017), Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India are highly visible from the perspective of democracy within the administrative structure. The State of India should take the required steps to unite village panchayats as self-government bodies, as provided for in Article 40 of the Indian Constitution. The PRI's creators foresaw a time when village councils would consist of both men and women. Traditional Indian society places a stigma on women and views them as less capable than men. Humanity has long held women in a position of subjugation, exploitation, and oppression. As a potential future mother, she faced prejudice. Again and again, they were denied the chance to have their voices heard at higher levels. After India's independence, this lack of respect for women's authority was seen as a major cause of the lag. The Seventh and Seventy-fourth Amendment Act marked a watershed moment in India's history when it guaranteed 33% quotas for women in Panchayat and municipal elections. Traditional gender, caste, and religious stereotypes can be shattered by the panchayat reservation for women, but social transformation is a lengthy and arduous process. One question that remains is whether or not the constitutional amendment would aid in the empowerment of women, or whether the current patriarchal structures will continue to control society. The purpose of this research is to examine the situation of elected women in representation at the panchayat level and to determine the extent to which different kinds of representation contribute to their development and empowerment.

Sunept M and de Faria J V (2017), The 73rd and 74th CAAs passed in 1992 in India have a solid historical foundation, and they reflect the nation's prevailing ethos at the time. This change is an attempt to disperse authority so that decisions can be made more quickly and efficiently by those closest to the action, rather than by those in a far-off capital. However, when it comes to the challenge of carrying out effective processes of decentralization in Indian cities, participatory techniques have at best been tokenistic. Currently, the public and civil sectors must work together to build local solutions, shifting the paradigm of citizenship and participatory planning from a focus on individual complaints to one of collective problem-solving. This article aims to analyze and critique participatory local planning practice in India, with a focus on the smallest administrative unit, or ward. Institutionalized and non-institutionalized processes for involvement at the grass-roots level of planning were the primary foci of the study. Successful engagement models, institutional structure, and procedures that facilitate

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productive participatory planning will be the focus of this study, as will approaches to addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as the challenges of allocating scarce resources and reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Bhuputra Panda & Harshad P. Thakur (2016), The basic goal of any health care system is to improve health by delivering clinical and public health services. Health outcomes, management procedures, and inputs, along with political, administrative, and financial stability, are all areas that could benefit from decentralization as a reform tool. It is argued that the ability of a health care system to achieve its goals depends on the variety and accessibility of the options available to its constituents on a regional or even neighbourhood scale. Lack of consensus on an adequate framework account for a significant gap in scale and quality among the studies that have considered one or more aspects of decentralization and its impact on the operation of the health system in different ways. Trust, convenience, and mutual benefit are only few of the concepts that theorists utilized to characterize, describe, and quantify the elements of health management. Finding and building targeted links between performance indicators is central to the new paradigm of "Continuum of Health Services" (fiscal allocation, local autonomy, the perception of key stakeholders, service delivery output, etc.). Practices: As part of this targeted review study, researchers combed through a great deal of published material online with the help of Google Scholar and PubMed. After initially screening for keywords and study goals, we found 180 articles worthy of further scrutiny. One hundred and four publications were studied (three working articles and 101 published publications). Our goal in this literature analysis was to provide a foundation for future study on the topic of healthcare decentralization and performance by outlining key concepts, aspects, and ideas. Themes are presented in a three-dimensional format: straightforward, difficult, and derivative. Outcome: The effects of local decision-making on health-care systems' efficacy have been examined via the lens of a compartmental analysis. It is difficult to find examples of progress due to decentralization. There appears to be a dearth of evaluations of this problem in India, as far as we could tell. Not a single study was located that assessed how local decision makers thought about and dealt with various opportunities and challenges. It's possible the current data isn't robust enough to inform the creation of effective policy. Input, process, and outcome measurement are critical to the management tenets. Ideas in

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administration the inputs, procedures, and outcomes are all intricately linked within the conceptual framework's three levels of operation (security functions, management and measurement functions). The synthesis of literature review and non-participating observations of data are integral aspects of each level of function. Measuring governance traits at the institutional, system, and person levels proved difficult for us except through proxy methods. The best method to promote policies that encourage "shared governance" requires a more objective assessment, but this is something that both governments and academics need to be made aware of. The next line of inquiry ought to zero in on contextual evidence that affects the full gamut of the health system, especially with regards to efficacy, community participation, human resource management, and service quality.

Dr. J. Devika (2016), This essay seeks to convey a feel for a well-known policy experiment in decentralization and human development that took place in Kerala in the 1990s, namely the People's Planning Campaign, by situating it within a broader contemporary political history of that area. There has been a lot of laudatory literature about this project, and the general consensus seems to be that it represents standard far-left state policy. The alternative reading sees it as a political reaction by the mainstream left to the several barriers it had suffered in the early 1990s, and hence as a way to emphasize the numerous discrepancies in politically autonomous Kerala. The term "glocalization" is also used to describe the internationalization of participatory democracy in Kerala.

Adam Saad and Kashif Ali Khan (2016), since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has been working to build its constitutional foundation on a federalist system of government. Over the years, there have been a number of initiatives to decentralize the political and financial power of this federal system down to the provinces. A uniform history of decentralization in Pakistan resulted from the failure to maintain these changes and the power struggle between national and regional administrations. However, democracies have been less committed to decentralization than autocracies, especially when it comes to the establishment of municipal governments and decentralized administrative structures. Local governments and local legislators may

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be an efficient approach to provide the services, as national and provincial politicians are often not available to their electoral areas.

Eric Alston (2016), A growing body of evidence indicates that developing countries undergoing significant regime change are opting for decentralization as a means to implement the necessary reforms. This study adds to the body of knowledge on decentralization by examining the factors that contribute to differing political choices and, ultimately, greater constitutional decentralization. The greater the population, language, religion, or resource differences between two locations, the more likely it is that these areas will have different political preferences. Subsidiarity theory suggests as much. There will be more decentralization if this conclusion holds, as the benefits of subsidiarity will likely lead to greater efficiency in these situations. Therefore, constitutional drafters can anticipate an increase in decentralization forces as a function of a country's size, population, rugged terrain, ethnicity/faith composition, and regional wealth disparity. In this article, analyse many facets of this claim using raw data from 48 constitutions of Muslim countries. The results suggest that language divisions play a more important role in determining policy preferences in the country than simple ethnic diversity, and this is in addition to the notable conclusion that population is more important than territorial size in determining the constitutional definition of sub-national government. Distinctions in language use.

Benjamin Edwards and Serdar Yilmaz (2016), the experience of Sierra Leone's post-conflict stability with decentralization highlights the significance of building and preserving a promise that local government empowers residents, as well as the necessity of fulfilling that promise in a long-term context. The transition from civil war to peace and stability is a major achievement in post-conflict stabilization. While the country has been mostly peaceful over the past decade (including during party transfers), violence has persisted in rural areas where decentralization has only been partially implemented. Using a post-conflict perspective on local governments, we examine Sierra Leone's post-war recovery, institutional and legal development, and pressing domestic problems.

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Agnese Sacchi, Santiago Lago-Peas, and Jorge Martinez-Vazquez (2016), In this article, we update and critically examine previous research into the effects of fiscal decentralization on the economy, society, and government. Our first goal is to examine two major issues in the empirical decentralization literature that have not yet been fully explored: the precision of econometric estimates of decentralization and the potential endogeneity of decentralization. We address the primary findings of Decentralization in a connected list of societal and economic challenges. Consideration is also given to the impact that measures to decentralize government spending have on political institutions and public policy. Even if we can't know for sure what will happen as a result of fiscal decentralization, we can have cautious optimism. Our analysis is limited in scope, but it demonstrates a fair amount of room for both established and novel approaches to tax decentralization.

Mohammed Abdulai Kuyini (2016) It is hoped that through decentralization, participation in all processes, and decision-making at the local level in particular, will increase. Interview data and secondary sources have been analyzed to assess this claim in five regions of Ghana. However, institutional and informal channels of participation were scant and erratic, contradicting the premise. Despite the expansion of spaces for participation, they remain largely dominated by males of rich, professional backgrounds. Women, the impoverished, the disabled, and those living in rural areas are not included in the procedure. Lack of socioeconomic resources, inadequate educational attainment, cultural practices, and politics are all to blame for its nonexistence. According to the report, decentralization will not be able to achieve the hoped-for participation rate until the underlying structural problems that limit the participation and empowerment of some marginalized groups are addressed.

Christian Rademacher and Everhord Holtmann (2016), In contrast, the system aims to decentralize political institutional structures and public affairs management as part of the transition to democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy. This research examines the usefulness of applying these (although past) experiences to the Korean Peninsula throughout two different epochs of change (1945–1949 and 1989–1991). There is a treble First, a shift in the political system should balance the maintenance of a vertical structure with either a strong or weak set of responsibilities. Second, in times

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of transitional crisis, it appears beneficial to have a small-scale circulation of elites that includes cooperative portions of old elites, as this can serve to neutralize risky obstacles and release local rationalities. Third, regional autonomy functions as a "driving" not just to democratize, but also to optimize public requirements to manage public services effectively.

E. Venkatesu and Anil Kumar Vaddiraju (2016), After over a quarter of a century of decentralization starting with the 73rd and 74th Constitution amendments, a look back is in order. So, this book review is essential. Since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was passed, a wide variety of issues relating to the decentration of different Indian states have been addressed in this edited compilation. James Manor wrote the foreword, while G. Haragopal wrote the preface. The editor not only introduced this book but also contributed two original chapters. E. Venkatesu lays out the Panchayat committee system in detail in the first chapter, while the introduction provides an overview of the entire work. BP Syam Devolution and Democratic Decentralization in West Bengal is the subject of Roy's second chapter. When Roy pens, "Even though the 73rd and 74th amendments have been on the books for almost two decades, most Indian states still haven't seen their Panchayats or municipalities begin to exercise their functional responsibilities for devolution. This is certainly the case in West Bengal. Specifically, Chapter 3 of Jawed Alam Khan's "Specification and Resources the PRIs' positions vary widely from one state to the next, as shown by a comparison of three states: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala. The decentralization process in UP is in its infancy, and the panchayats at all levels have very little power. Transferred activities in Rajasthan sometimes leave PRIs with little leeway. Conversely, in Kerala, the PRIs have been given extensive freedom while still working in tandem at all echelons of government. That's not surprising in the least, considering previous research has revealed the same thing. In the following chapter, Avaneesh Maurya addresses the difficulty of Dalit advancement in Uttar Pradesh. Panchayati Raj Institutions for Dalit Empowerment and Reservations in Uttar Pradesh is the title of this essay. He claimed that even if there are Dalit sub-castes and unequal authority between them, all Dalit sub-castes are united in their reservations against non-Dalit upper castes in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). He discovered that while some Dalits from minority groups benefited from reservations, the vast majority did not. Because of this,

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the Panchayat expansion into scheduled areas in 1996 Act features four sections addressing its implementation in various contexts, ranging from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to the north eastern region of India (PESA). The limitations of the PESA Act are the subject of all four articles. It is clear from the four articles covering the scheduled areas where PESA is in effect that the Act has had minimal impact on the local indigenous community.

Polly Datta and Saibal Kar (2016), Gaining fiscal independence has never been a top concern for India's local government bodies known as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). While it has contributed to more financial independence, it has more often been used as a means to decentralize expenditure than a direct cause. No city council would willingly give up its power and accept the idea of recognizing Gram Panchayats (now GPs) as mere implementing entities without financial autonomy overnight. Thus, the wide variety of programs indicated by Mukarji and Bandyopadhyay need to be condensed (1993). Financial limitations do not appear to be the only barrier to general practitioners doing certain treatments. When examining the various facets of GPs' financial autonomy, it is essential to pay close attention to the legal and institutional frameworks within which they operate.

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Rajni Kumari (2016), The importance of decentralization in India is the main topic of this article. The literature review emphasizes strongly the importance of managing local needs and wants. This study analyzes the block- and community-based decentralized planning system. Even after 64 years of independence, India is continuously building measures towards decentralized planning. Decentralization ensures that everyone has a say in the system. People can discuss and analyze the development and administrative actions of their elected authorities, as well as assure transparency and accountability, all through Decentralization Planning.

Bannerji, Parama (2016), Global participation in governance's decision-making and planning processes has been increasingly important in recent decades. This tactic, however, has been contested by academics as effective. While some academics see promise in this approach as a way to address problems with top-down planning, such as the lack of transparency among official organizations, others dismiss it as "utopian." As a result, the study looked into how the level of participation affected the outcome. This article examines the participation scenario in regard to four representative areas in West Bengal, an East Indian state, so that more complexity can be reflected in the phenomena of participation on multiple levels, including geographical, Socio-political, and economic. West Bengal's rich history of grassroots initiatives, such the Joint Forest Management Program or the novel experiments done by the Panchayat system in the late 1970s, makes it an ideal location for our study. These four places are representative of the wide range of participation activities that may be found in both rural and urban areas. Joint forest management in the district of Pipharaghabpur, micro plans in the Chacadoba village of Bankura, and panchayat plans in both North 24 Parganas and Nadia. It was thought to be vital to approach participation from a variety of angles, including those of the formal institutions organizing the participation, the field officers carrying it out, and the community members who took part in it. The survey is meant to shed light on the nature, extent, and determining factors of participation in planning. Case studies were evaluated using qualitative methods, such as analysis of collected data, content analysis of the strategy articles, interviews, and focus group discussions. Understanding the basic truth of participation has been aided by gaining an appreciation for the motivations behind the participatory efforts, the part played or the challenges experienced by each stakeholder in formulating the plan, etc. The findings suggest that

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collective decisions can be made in a more democratic fashion through participatory planning, but that the planning process monitoring system is essential to ensuring that these decisions are put into effect. For instance, although the theory behind its participatory aspects was sound, in some places the practice fell short. According to the findings, participatory planning and governance initiatives aim to horizontalize the power structure, which is often vertical.

Narayan Billava and Nayanatara Nayak (2016), Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) view the empowerment of the impoverished, especially women, as crucial to resolving the problems associated with rural development. In light of decentralization and India's 73rd constitutional amendment, this article provides a thematic review of the empowerment of women representatives in the PRIs with respect to knowledge of panchayat functioning, capacity for self-decision, participation in community work, adaptability to changing socioeconomic conditions, and authority to make decisions. Affirmative action policies have helped increase the number of women and members of other traditionally underrepresented groups serving as elected officials. Female officials have been shown to be more trustworthy, able to deliver high-quality public services at a reasonable cost, and sensitive to women's interests. However, other research has found that women in representational roles are less likely to be literate than men, and are more likely to rely on their partners or husbands for help with decision-making (especially when it comes to village development plans). It is concluded that women face numerous difficulties in the panchayat village due to the political journey in a patriarchal and caste-ridden culture. Female delegates are dissatisfied with the male majority in the panchayat, and it takes them longer to prove their worth. Studies also reveal that men in politics devote more time to policymaking while women spend more time caring for their homes. Overall, the Seventy-third Amendment's affirmative action has given women and other excluded groups a sense of power, but they must still strike a balance. Numerous studies predict that members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, as well as women, will make significant strides forward in the coming decade, particularly with respect to their leadership roles, economic security, and educational attainment.

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Ratna Ghosh, Paromita Chakravarti, and Kumari Mansi (2015), Despite significant strides forward, women's continued disadvantage relative to men is a worldwide problem. Despite India's incredible economic success, the majority of girls still lack equal access to school, and the country is witnessing a dramatic rise in violence against women. One of the most significant steps the Indian government has taken to empower women is to give village councils, also known as Panchayati Raj institutions, constitutional standing and to reserve 33 percent of Panchayats' positions for women. While the formal education of women has received less attention than it should, women have banded together to form self-help groups. Our goal is to investigate the effects of these programs on women's empowerment in western Bengal and Mizoram. On the whole, we found that affirmative action increases the number of women involved in politics, but it does not guarantee that more women would participate in politics or become elected officials. Education plays a vital role in empowering women because it gives them the tools, they need to become financially stable and take agency in their own lives. Women who face persistent discrimination and a lack of authority need both affirmative action and education to achieve their full potential.

Mr. Abhishek Mitra (2015), Decentralizing power within a country is a highly effective method of fostering "good governance." In the 1990s, decentralizing authority was a central part of the UN General Assembly's proposal on "good governance." To put into practice the notion of democratic decentralization, the establishment of local self-government is crucial. Establishing a system of local self-government is an important step in ensuring the active participation and growth of a country's populace. Panchayati raj institutions are the oldest and most original of all institutions of contemporary and independent India, but due to the above necessity, the state government has the mandatory responsibility to construct panchayats and municipal bodies in respected regions. Only in the state of West Bengal in the twenty first century are panchayats involved in politics. The Panchayat System in West Bengal can, therefore, be endlessly discussed, analysed, discussed, and evaluated.

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Hon. Bushnu Prasad Mohapatra (2015), This article looks at the implementation of the Panchayats provisions (an extension of the Panchayats provisions) in the tribal regions of Odisha, an eastern Indian state, and how that has affected the decentralized planning process there (PESA Act). Odisha began working on the creation of decentralized schedules in 2008. However, secondary data and conversations with many locals showed that "structural barriers" and "functional ineptitude" of the local administration in the Scheduled Areas had limited their spirits in terms of the planning and implementation of development plans. This research suggests that decentralized planning should be realistic and based on making the most of available local resources while also identifying, prioritizing, and acting upon the specific development requirements of a given area. Taking into mind the significance of the PESA Act, this article recommends policy efforts such as effective involvement, prioritizing development requirements, and rationalizing the necessary and available funding. The needs of the tribes will be better addressed in this way.

Kunal Bandyopadhyay and Sudipta Biswas (2015), People's participation is widely regarded as an essential element of democratic administration. Many authorities maintain that citizen participation improves municipal services. This piece explores how effective public participation in Gram Panchayats' decentralized planning process could lead to positive changes. Citizen engagement with municipal government is also a major research area. Our study will focus on two selected Gram Panchayats in the Birbhum District of West Bengal. This study looks at the procedures used throughout the implementation of Decentralized Planning Projects/Process to create meaningful participations in local decision-making and assesses their success. Conclusion: humans play only limited roles in development efforts. However, it contends that citizen participation has numerous good consequences on governance, including increased public accountability, increased openness to diverse viewpoints, and increased legitimacy for decisions. The report also notes that citizen participation has a favourable effect. There is a lack of adequate representation of all relevant organizations and interests. It's concerning that certain areas receive disproportionate support. The research concludes that local characteristics of democratic citizenship are more important than direct participation in decision making if a democracy is to thrive.

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Kunal Bandyopadhyay and Sudipta Biswas (2015), Individual participation is widely regarded as a cornerstone of democratic rule. Many authorities maintain that citizen participation improves municipal services. This article explores the ways in which people might be more actively involved in the decentralized planning process taking place in Gram Panchayats. The interaction between residents and municipal governments is also a major subject of the research. These studies focus on two specific Gram Panchayats in the Birbhum area of Western Bengal. The current study analyzed the efficacy of local decision making in introducing decentralized planning projects and processes. The findings point to a lack of public participation in development efforts. It is argued, however, that citizen participation has a number of positive effects on government, including but not limited to increasing accountability for public issues, fostering openness to other perspectives, and making decision making more legitimate. Consequently, some people aren't able to get their voices heard by the right groups. There is cause for concern over the level of traffic and support given to certain businesses. The article concludes that democratic citizenship traits are more important for a flourishing local democracy than direct participation in decision making.

Caroline Poeschl and Jean-Paul Faguet (2015), The study of decentralization has grown increasingly formalized and quantified during the past two decades. However, as technical rigor has grown, the study's emphasis has shifted, minimizing the effects of decentralization on specific policy variables while excluding broader, more nuanced, and complex policymakers who contemplate change. One of the main concerns of politicians is addressed: issues that are methodologically challenging to answer. To do this, we pool the knowledge and expertise of policymakers in the fields of economics, politics, developments, and policy research, and use it to propel decentralization at the national level. In this chapter we will examine the following issues: To what end are politicians fundamentally decentralized? Is reform politically possible, and if so, how? When and how could decentralization improve development outcomes? What happens when cities try to outdo one another in terms of public services and policies, if any, and if so, how often is it? Which, if any, clientelism or general growth, will decentralization foster? Furthermore, will decentralization help or hinder emerging nations over time? The information presented in the book provides a solid basis for implementing solutions

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to all of these problems and provides concrete policy recommendations for would-be Reformers.

Paul Sujit Kumar (2014), The term "decentralization" is used to describe various types of institutional shifts. It has been suggested that there has been a shift in the institutional make-up of the bodies responsible for making and carrying out important policy and economic decisions. The protocol for handing up responsibilities and authority is also well-known. In recent years, decentralization has received a lot of interest from all across the world. The investigation of a key element in development strategy has been completed. This phenomenon occurs on a global and regional scale, and most countries have sought it as a means of growth, a political philosophy, and a means of dividing out tasks at different echelons. There was a rise in decentralization in the 1980s among emerging countries. As part of the decentralization process, authority is shared between the federal and state levels and the community. While panchayats as we know them now only became popular after India's independence, the institution of democracy among India's rural communities has been around for centuries. According to the Constitution of India's 73rd and 74th Amendment Act 1993, the Panchayat served as the entity responsible for autonomous government. According to the Constitution, it is the responsibility of panchayats to develop strategies for local economic development and social equity. The district planning committee should supplement the plan established by local authorities at the district level to ensure seamless implementation. A Panchayat's fortunes would rise or fall based on how well they planned and carried out their operations. It also requires people to be actively involved in the planning process from ideation to implementation. The Panchayat Development Plan, the intermediate coordination of projects, and the Panchayats District all involved the local populace in the development process. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in western Bengal are the de facto governing bodies of the region. The planning process at the local level in western Bengal takes a few stages, beginning with proposal and ending with implementation. Immediately after implementing the Panchayat 3-tier system in 1978, the West Bengal government has made modifications in response to actual needs. The state government's unwavering dedication to rural decentralization prompted calls for support from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) to aid ongoing decentralization efforts and strengthen the bottom-up planning

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process. Through this study, we set out to comprehend DFID's part in promoting decentralization in rural Bengal.

Gopa Ghosh and Ujjwal Kumar (2014), Women's contributions to political liberation have been significant since the 1970s. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts were passed with the goal of giving people in both rural and urban areas more political power. The 73rd amendment Act, which mandates 33% quotas for seats across all three levels of the Panchayati raj in India, came into effect with little time for the Panchayati state of West Bengal to execute it. After the 73rd amendment legislation was passed in the 1993 state elections, the essay analyzes the journalistic content of a selection of the most widely circulated newspapers to determine its continued relevance. Women who have been nominated for reservoir seats are interviewed, as well as other members of the panchayat and political parties. The article also delves at how the media affects women's empowerment (journals).

Sheikh Younis Ahmad (2014), Many people use the term "decentralization" to mean different things. But what do we observe in actual use? Municipal councils in which residents participated but to no avail because of a lack of funding; restaurant institutions that serve only as an effective mechanism for centralizing authority; regional and regional committees in which government authorities decide when local officials are mute; People's interests and preferences can be better understood when they have a say in the development and implementation of a strategy, which is made possible through decentralization. It gives power to the underdogs and helps them topple the powerful. The people of India recognize the Panchayati Raj system as a vital component of decentralized democracy. The Indian nations only had a federal structure consisting of a Union and individual states. The 73rd amendment helps advance decentralization in India by establishing clearer divisions of authority between the federal government and the states and municipalities. This research looks at India's decentralization movement, focusing on the 73rd amendment's treatment of rural institutional districts, sub-districts, and villages.

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Paul Sujit Kumar (2014), The term "decentralization" has been used to describe a wide variety of institutional shifts. Political, social, and economic decision-making structures were seen as having shifted by some. The protocol for handing up responsibilities and authority is also well-known. In recent years, decentralization has received a lot of interest from all across the world. The investigation of a key element in development strategy has been completed. This phenomenon occurs on a global and regional scale, and most countries have sought it as a means of growth, a political philosophy, and a means of dividing out tasks at different echelons. There was a rise in decentralization in the 1980s among emerging countries. As part of the decentralization process, authority is shared between the federal and state levels and the community. While panchayats as we know them now only became popular after India's independence, the institution of democracy among India's rural communities has been around for centuries. According to the Constitution of India's 73rd and 74th Amendment Act 1993, the Panchayat served as the entity responsible for autonomous government. According to the Constitution, it is the responsibility of panchayats to develop strategies for local economic development and social equity. The district planning committee should supplement the plan established by local authorities at the district level to ensure seamless implementation. The success or failure of the Panchways would depend on careful preparation and strategic action. It also requires people to be actively involved in the planning process from ideation to implementation. The Panchayat Development Plan, the intermediate coordination of projects, and the Panchayats District all involved the local populace in the development process. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in western Bengal are extremely potent bodies that function as genuine self-governing organizations. The planning process at the local level in western Bengal takes a few stages, beginning with proposal and ending with implementation. Immediately after implementing the Panchayat 3-tier system in 1978, the West Bengal government has made modifications in response to actual needs. A strong commitment to rural decentralization was supported by the Government of the United Kingdom, which enabled the Department for International Development (DFID) to aid in ongoing rural decentralization initiatives and boost the Bottom-up planning process. Through this study, we set out to comprehend DFID's part in promoting decentralization in rural Bengal.

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Rana Kumar (2013), Panchayat elections in West Bengal are currently undergoing a type of ruling class absolutism, making them more divisive than they were under the Left Front government. If the left front had rejected electoral opposition in order to maintain power, the recent Trinamul decision goes much further in that direction, aiming to roll back progress toward social justice and redistribution in rural Bengal.

Sen, Rajiv (2013), After 40 years of democratic decentralization experiments, the Constitutional Instruction was taken seriously, and the 73rd Indian Constitutional Act gave constitutional authority to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). In response to the needs of local democracy and the desire to revitalize and realign civil society, new institutions like Gram Sabha were founded to encourage productive citizen participation. Gram Sansad, an institution a tier below the Gram Sabha, was developed in Western Bengal to make grassroots democracy more effective and efficient.

Gochhayat Artatrana (2013), The Panchayati Raj Institutions were established as part of the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution because of the widespread view that they improve government efficiency and make room in policy for traditionally marginalized groups like the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, and women. The purpose of this study was to learn more about women's participation in women's panchayats, how they are elected, and the challenges they face once in office. This research surveyed 125 females across five grama panchayats in the Hindol Block of the Dhenkanal district in Odisha. The study was conducted in March and April of 2012, soon after the panchayat general elections in February of that year. Based on the findings of this study, women are underrepresented in both the leadership of panchayats and the democratic process. It has been revealed that some voters cast their ballots based solely on the insignia of the parties to which they belong, notwithstanding their lack of familiarity with the parties' names. Most women are largely uninterested in politics. Their hindsight contributes to narrow perspectives, patriarchal societies, and inadequate education.

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Spina, Nicholas (2013), Elements of political decentralization in the parliaments of the 29 OECD countries are examined in this article. Here I examine the role that the make-up of the legislature plays in the negotiation of politics. The strength and stability of national and governmental ethno-regionalist parties, government ideology, political decentralization programs, and the capability and rationale for political decentralization all play a role, in my opinion. Policy platforms and ideology are shown to have a moderate effect on political shifts, according to empirical research. However, there is substantial evidence that the creation of national ethnic regionalist parties and the political decentralization prospects of strong and stable administrations are both greatly expanded. The composition of government significantly affects the growth of institutions; hence decentralization considerations should be built into future designs.

Both Francesc Amat and Albert Falcó-Gimeno (2013), We are looking at how different national parliament configurations affect political decentralization processes in parliamentary democracies. Recent research has brought attention to the impact of structural determinants on varying degrees of decentralization among nations. However, we argue that decentration processes are inherent to legislative bargaining among political parties. Our basic assumption is that decentralized parties will have a greater chance of enacting decentralization reforms if they have greater legislative bargaining power. To this end, we develop a metric for measuring parliamentarians' views on decentralization by mapping out how different parties' preferences for this issue are distributed according to their bargaining power. We put 19 parliamentary systems through their paces by creating dynamic templates based on data from the Comparative Manifesto Project and the Regional Authority Index. We demonstrate that national legislatures have a significant impact on decentralization processes, albeit their influence appears to be limited to the self-rule dimension of decentralization rather than the shared rule dimension.

Chakrabarti, Bhaskar (2013), To deal with the inequitable allocation of natural resources, there is a trend toward decentralization, which makes government more accountable to local people. Water scarcity is a major element in the trend toward farmers in West Bengal, India, expanding their businesses into other sectors. Despite this, farmers in the region are becoming less involved in municipal politics. I'm trying

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to understand why so few locals have a voice in water management policymaking. I break down the intricate decentralization procedure and clarify how the water supply in a hamlet fit into a hierarchical structure. Things like water policy and the dynamics of authority between the many local political factions, government agencies, and the elite populace come to mind. The government's interference in decentralization causes problems with local participation and decision-making, which in turn reduces the amount of water available.

S. R. Shyam Singh (2013), Rising urbanization in India has boosted the country's economy but has also introduced complex management challenges that must be overcome if the country is to fully capitalize on the economic opportunities that come with urbanization. Decentralized urban government, in which citizens make decisions about city administration, is one such challenge. As the country continues to urbanize, it has become clear that the mechanisms of citizen involvement established by the Seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment Act do not ensure effective citizenship. Because of this, the study calls for a rethink and investigates successful citizen participation and the lessons that can be drawn from such examples.

Rajni Kumari, (2013), The article questions how much greater government responsiveness in India can be attributed to democracy. Furthermore, it examines the reasons why low-income voters turn out in greater numbers than high-income voters and demonstrates that states with the highest newspaper readerships have governments that are most attentive to their citizens' concerns. It's true that the government's most important tasks are usually completed, and typically by people with exceptional competence. Despite some early success with the panchayat model of local administration, Democrats remain divided over its efficacy and viability in the long run.

Professor Ambrose T. Kessy (2013), Though the terms "decentralization" and "citizen involvement" are frequently used by academics and politicians, their meaning, shape, and scope remain debatable in the current state of local government research. It appears that these notions have just an abstract use. There was a heated disagreement on measuring the claim that "critics are typically perceived by criticism as little more than theoretical exercises," which hampered efforts to increase individual agency and

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enhance municipal governance. Therefore, the most important question is how these ideas may be transferred from theory to practice. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to challenge the often-emphasized positive connection between decentralization and its practical implementation by exploring some theoretical and conceptual difficulties related to these topics.

Asoumyadip Chattopadhyay (2012), One of the main benefits of decentralization is that it allows for greater citizen participation and accountability at the municipal level, making local governments more effective at meeting the needs of their constituents and delivering on their promised services. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of India provides the legal footing for making decentralization more than just talk. This change is a distinctive cornerstone of citizen participation in urban management ideas and practices. Recognizing the significance of participation in democratic local government, this research evaluates the results of constitutional provisions on municipal involvement and accountability in West Bengal by using primary evidence. The research revealed a large discrepancy between the stated goals of the constitution and its actual provisions. The legitimacy of the WC as a forum for local participants is called into question by the political leanings and covert involvement of the WC committee. Although more people have a voice in electing officials, this has not translated into more effective representation on the part of local governments.

Lessmann, Christian (2012), This study uses a novel dataset consisting of 54 countries at varying stages of economic development to examine how decentralization of political and fiscal authority affects regional inequality. Inequality in the regions is shown to be reduced as a whole after decentralization is implemented, as estimated by both cross-sectional and panel data. But estimates with interaction variables show that the results vary with the level of economic growth. Although decentralization helps more developed countries achieve regional income parity, it may exacerbate regional inequality in developing and emerging economies. The results are in line with strategies of fiscal and political decentralization, demonstrating the importance of local control in both decision-making and taxes. Therefore, if decentralization in poor nations is advocated as advised by international development organizations, the potential negative redistributive implications should be taken into account.

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Asoumyadip Chattopadhyay (2012), Decentralization has the potential to improve government responsiveness to citizens' needs and the efficiency of services provided since it links local governance to public involvement and accountability. In India, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act provides the legal footing for making decentralization more than just lip service. This change marks a new era in the concept and practice of citizen participation in city administration. This research uses primary data to analyze the effects of constitutional provisions on local government transparency and citizen engagement in Western Bengal. It recognizes the value of participating in democratic local government. The findings show that constitutional standards are not being strictly adhered to, in spite of what is being said. Concerns were voiced about the WC's efficacy as a participatory forum at the municipal level due to the WC's political leanings and the low level of resident attendance at meetings. Elective officials and local government accountability have not translated into meaningful representation in the sphere of numerical representation.

Ghosh, Jhumur (2012), Since the 1970s, the issue of women's political empowerment has been contentious. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts were passed to give people more say in government at both the local and national levels. As a leading example of Panchayati Raj implementation, West Bengal wasted no time in implementing the 73rd Amendment Act's provision for quotas of 33 percent of the seat in all three levels of the Panchayati raj. This article uses journalistic sources to examine the problem's veracity in a few of the most widely circulated newspapers when the 73rd amendment law was implemented during the 1993 state elections. It analyzes how the press represented the responses of the women candidates nominated for the reserve seats, the other members of the panchayat, and the political parties. The role of the media (journals) in advancing women's equality is also investigated in this article.

Suman Nath, Bhaskar Chakrabarti, and Raghavendra Chattopadhyay (2011), Agriculture, irrigation, health, and education are just few of the areas that the village self-government organization was given authority over after India's 73rd constitutional amendment was passed in 1992. The purpose of the Panchayat's three-tier structure at the district, block, and village levels is to coordinate the planning and execution of several "line departments" of the government. The eastern Indian state of West Bengal,

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where the Panchayats were re-energized prior to the constitutional change that made West Bengal a 'panchayats model' for others, saw its first years marked by close cooperation between the Panchayats and others, particularly in the realms of land and agriculture. Yet, the deteriorating relationship between Panchayats and the line agencies is cause for concern given the Panchayats' recent criticism of service performance. This research explores the factors that contribute to the uneven amount of collaboration between government entities and the Panchayat. Decentralization's complex organizational coordination process is dissected, as is the integration of local government decision-making into several tiers of governance. The institutional coordination and control procedures in place between the Panchayats and the line departments are the primary subject of this study. We show how these mechanisms work in the real world. These include problems with policy and role definition on resource allocation and the distribution of power both within and outside of the Panchayat region.

Inderjeet Singh Sodhi, Prabhat Kumar Datta (2011), Although decentralized planning did not exist as a concept in India until after independence in 1947, its basic principles had been used in the country for some time prior. After India gained its independence, a number of government committees and groups advocated for decentralized planning. There were two major constitutional amendments that stood out in this regard. These amendments clarified the role and formalized the engagement of local authorities, which is often referred to as a paradigm shift. The alterations provided decentralized planning with constitutional authority and developed a national planning concept. The goal of this research was to evaluate and analyze the experiences of implementing decentralized planning in the Indian state of West Bengal, as well as to document the many stages of development that India's de-centralized planning procedures had undergone. It's one of those places where the job was done with the people's active participation through community-based organizations. This article is an attempt to use the available secondary data to back up the claims made and support the key conclusions drawn. There was also brief mention of the village survey, which provided an opportunity for little fieldwork. The authors also identified a number of key open questions that warrant further study. Examining the potential lessons for developing countries like India is also a focus.

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T. Seema Kulkarni (2011), According to this article, which is based on an analysis of women's rights and water rights under decentralized water governance in Maharashtra and Gujarat, decentralization will fail to achieve its goals unless there is a shift in people's value systems, culture, and the structure of institutions, especially the family. Quotas for women in public institutions are a good and important political initiative, but in a society where class, caste, and patriarchal discrimination and the dominance of cultural patronage of politics exist, the achievement of decentralization is certainly not enough. The creation of active social and political groups providing alternative cultural, social, and political perspectives is a crucial foundation for social revolution. One level of conceptualization, the larger water reform, and another level, women, communities, private and public realms, and institutions, all work against the efficiency of decentralized water government. Without modern decentralized processes, none of these actions will be truly democratic.

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CHAPTER - 3

DEMOCRACY DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

3.1 OVERVIEW

In recent years, the term "democracy" has been used interchangeably to refer to different social conditions, mental states, and behavioural traits. It's been given moral, poetic, and even religious connotations that people may find appealing or repulsive. But what we mean when we talk about democracy is simply that it is a form of government in which the people's will is ultimately determined through their votes. In today's political climate, this term connotes Representative Democracy, where the whole people or a sizable fraction of them exercise power over the government via representatives who are periodically elected by the people. All citizens are granted "equal participation in the government of the State's. It's not enough to say that democracy is a way of life. As a government structure, it is also important to note. Forging that way of life is what democratic government is all about. To provide the greatest possible opportunities for individuals, communities, and nations to realise their full potentials is central to the democratic ideal.

It is not sufficient to assert that good governance cannot replace self-government. Some negative forces have been unleashed as a result of the modern state becoming more centralised and mechanised as a result of scientific, technological, and socioeconomic advancements. People's independence and abilities are stifled. The bureaucracy in a centralised state can use the situation to boost its own prestige. Apoplexy in the middle and anaemia on either end characterise the social scene. Corruption, servitude, and incompetent management are the results of over-centralization. This means that "democracy at the national level can function in a healthy manner and only if it is supported and nourished by democratic local government." Historically, the concept of local self-government has been seen as a check on the power of federal bureaucracies. Some argue that the local level is where democracy truly begins to take root and flourish, serving as a vital learning ground for citizens. People in this area face issues that have an immediate and direct impact on their lives, and they can make sense of those issues

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in light of their own experiences. In addition to this, decentralised power keeps the centre from becoming too powerful and the periphery from becoming too weak.

3.2 LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT

From a sociological vantage point, a nation is a collection of smaller communities. Having no constraints placed upon you is only one aspect of liberty. A positive connotation is the opportunity to take part in local decision-making processes as a citizen. Active citizenship is a positive privilege that is as important for the individual members of a community's dignity and sense of self-actualization as it is for the nation as a whole. It is impossible to overstate the importance of training citizens in the civic art by having them carry it out in their own communities. Pride in one's hometown and a sense of personal accountability are fostered when citizens are given opportunities to make decisions about public matters at the local level.

James Bryce, author of the massive and monumental work *Modern Democracies*, spoke at length on the "general service which, self-government in small areas renders in forming the qualities needed by the citizen of a free country." This service refers to the process by which self-governance in small areas helps citizens develop the qualities necessary to live in a democratic society. The significance of the small community can hardly be denied in a democratic system. In the first place, "It fosters among the citizens a sense of their joint interest in common matters, and of their individual as well as common obligation to take care that those affairs are properly and honestly conducted," says the quote ". "Whoever learns the first lesson of the duty incumbent on a citizen of a great country has learned the first lesson of the duty incumbent on a citizen of a great country. This lesson is to learn to be public spirited, active and upright in the business of the village.

The second is that "local institutions prepare men not merely to work for others but also to operate effectively with others." Eventually, they mature into rational, judicious, and sociable people. Those that have to work together to solve problems are the ones who understand the value of giving in and giving a little. In a democratic society, every man has the chance to shine and earn the respect of his fellow citizens. In order for democracy to function, it is essential that the people be involved in government, and

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that their interests be effectively maintained at all levels of government. Constant elections are not acceptable. What is desperately needed are institutionalised channels through which the will and power of the people, the true lords of democracy, can be exerted over government. The ability to self-government at the local level affords us this. It was Be Tocqueville who said, "the power of free nations is found in the assemblies of their citizens," and he was absolutely accurate. Like elementary school for science, town meetings are essential to maintaining our right to freedom. These gatherings make freedom accessible to the people and instruct them in how to exercise and appreciate that freedom; a nation may set up a system of free governance, but without the spirit of local Institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty. Local administration in democracies, such as Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States of America, has aroused interest from the populace and attracted the best and brightest from among its members. Bryce argued that experimentation with local self-government is "the best school of democracy, and the best guarantee of its success." In an ideal world, local self-governing institutions serve as both the cradle for democracy and the greatest school for training in active and decent citizenship.

If policy is produced in a vacuum, far from the eyes of the people, then citizens have little chance to understand how their government works or what it can and cannot accomplish on their behalf. On the other hand, if some decisions are delegated to local self-governing institutions, "people have a lot better opportunity to grow politically mature, and they have some of the resources of governmental action in their own hands to use as they see fit to a range of issues," problems at the regional level so that the federal government can focus on the more systemic challenges facing the country as a whole.

J.S. Mill, an ardent supporter of Democracy, emphasised the need of local self-government institution's, He observes that there are some affairs impacting the general interests of the nation as a whole and there are others of solely local interest. Second, these local activities "bring down the vital political education to much lower grade in society, it is a school of political capacity and general intelligence." Local government is arguably more educational than other levels of government.

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Kill argues that, thirdly, it is possible that people with shared interests who do not share them with the rest of their countrymen might be better off managing those interests among themselves.

Harold J. Laski, a professor at Harvard, said that "the case for a robust Aay state's form of local administration is almost too simple to explain. There are 18 points for debate. In order to fully appreciate the advantages of a democratic government, I must first admit that not all problems are fundamental, and that the solutions to some problems are not fundamental in and of themselves. decisions about them must be made where and by whomever will be most affected by them. The people who live in a certain region can tell one other apart from those who live in other regions because they share a sense of shared identity based on shared goals and wants. "External administration is unable to grasp the genius of location because it lacks the vitalizing ability to respond to local opinion.

Local government can be found in some form or another in every country throughout the world. " According to E. Eric Jackson, "Local Government" means that "affairs and services at the local level are governed by councils chosen by the people who live in the region served by the council." A territorial, non-sovereign community with the legal right and the required organisation to regulate its own affairs is what William A. Robson calls "local government." This, in turn, necessitates the presence of a locally-based authority endowed with autonomy from higher-level authorities and the active involvement of the local populace in decision-making processes affecting its own interests. There is no absolute threshold for the presence of these features; rather, their presence is always a matter of degree. Therefore, a local government's defining features are its legal standing, its ability to act independently of State supervision, the community's involvement in decision-making and management of general local issues, and the ability to raise its own resources to cover expenses. "Local government" refers to a level of administration that has jurisdiction over a geographic area that is part of but smaller than the state as a whole. Confined or limited in scope The variation known as "local self-government" is significant since it places a premium on local autonomy. To sum up, "local self-government" refers to "the management of services and regulatory functions by locally elected Councils and officials responsible to them,

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subject to statutory and inspectorial supervision by the central legislature and executive, but with sufficient financial and other independence to admit of a fair degree of local initiative and policy-making." At the municipal level, the sole purpose of government is to improve the lives of its citizens. Finding a complete and consistent theory of municipal administration is a formidable task. It could refer to either local self-administration or local self-government, two potentially distinct procedures. When a state's territory is divided into smaller parts for the sake of administration, and those parts are then administered by agents designated by the state, we have the beginnings of local self-administration.

3.3 IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL BODI ELECTIONS

It's possible the residents of the area may vote for their own representative. However, from the perspective of State oversight, the make-up of the local agency to which administrative duties are delegated is largely irrelevant. However, self-government is a process that involves the desires and abilities of the governed, therefore its success is not guaranteed. "Local The term "self-government" refers to a form of governance in which power rests with and is exercised by a body that is accountable to and representative of the people who live in a particular area, while also answering to higher authorities. However, they are not part of the State administration, and the representatives chosen by the people of the locality concerned have, and always will have, ultimate authority over the exercise of the administrative functions conferred in them. These officials bear joint responsibility before the community and the State for carrying out the discretionary and mandatory authorities delegated to the local government.

Similarly, Professor G.D. H. Cole writes, "The political road to a better society is the road of decentralisation and responsible self-governance. "Democracy is hostile to centralization because it is a spirit that wants freedom to manifest itself immediately and, on the spot, wherever the need for expansion of a collective will arises. To funnel it all into one spot, or centralise it, kills its authenticity and spontaneity. Accordingly, any implementation of the democratic ideal in the structure of government entails a process of decentralization. The opposite of centralization, decentralisation "denotes the transfer of authority, legislative, judicial, or administrative, from a higher level of

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government to a lower." Centralization stands for a centralised location for decision-making, while decentralisation refers to a system in which power is distributed among several different locations.

"The degree of central consultation with field officials on matters that arise and are formally decided at Head- quarters, the weight such field opinion carries, the frequency with which field officials are consulted, and the importance of the matters over which they have decision- making authority can all be used to infer whether a field service is more centralised or more decentralised. Evidence of decentralisation cannot be inferred from the mere existence of a field service, its ability to handle a high volume of work, or the fact that it employs 90% of the agency's workforce ".

3.4 DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Distinguishing decentralisation from devolution and delegation, "decentralisation represents local government in places where the authority to decide lies outside the centre," has been turned over to an elected council made up of residents of the area, who are tasked with running day-to-day affairs based on their own judgement, working with their own government representatives. It's Almost Here definition of devolution as "the legal conferring of powers to discharge specified or residual functions upon formally constituted local authorities," definition of delegation as "the transfer of certain specified functions from the central to the local authority, which thereupon acts as the agent of the former, which retains the right to issue directives or revise decisions," and definition of local self-government as "the traditional form of local self-government in the United Kingdom."

There is a common misunderstanding that decentralisation equals delegation of authority. Delegation "does not divest the Government of the ultimate responsibility for the actions of the authority to who a power is delegated," but "decentralisation is a process whereby the Government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them cm to some other authority." It entrusts decision-making to people who will be most affected by policy changes.

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The concept of "decentralisation" is not usually associated with democratic values. Therefore, the term is given more significance by including the adjective "democratic." "Local self-government is the institutional expression of the political ideal of democratic decentralisation." The concept of citizen involvement represents the democratic component, while local self-government represents the decentralisation component. Democratic decentralisation is a political theory that calls for the establishment of new tiers of administration. This is exemplified by the development of autonomous States within the Indian Union and the establishment of Panchayati Raj institutions within the States themselves. To ensure public administration association, political and administrative power must be decentralised. Panchayati Raj is an extension of Community Development, both in its objective and programmes, and Panchayati Raj institutions should primarily serve as a development mechanism and not primarily as a power mechanism," said Dr. Iqbal Narain, summing up the conceptual and theoretical postulates of democratic decentralisation in the Indian context. According to Dr. Narain, "Panchayati Raj" is "the administration of locally demarcated areas, responsible for services that are primarily local and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the resident citizens therein, paying for their services through their own resources as far as possible, with their own organisational structure, legally recognised and responsible to the people in the areas, and are largely free from external control".

In layman's words, democratic decentralisation means that decisions on local matters are made freely and by the majority of the population. We can infer the ramifications and scope of democratic decentralisation as follows:

- Multiple tiers of government, with each tier drawing closer to the people as the ultimate ruler.
- Assigning each agency with a specific set of responsibilities
- These institutions are democratic in nature, and their composition
- Functional democracy in these institutions
- Granting these authorities autonomy within their purview only constrained by the oversight of higher-level democratic authorities.

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Based on their analysis of the CDP, the Mehta Study Teams on Community Projects and National Extension Service recommended democratic decentralisation in 1957. They placed special emphasis on the importance of citizen involvement in the process. The Study Team consistently prioritised the decentralisation of power and the growth of local self-government. The article elaborated on the idea of public participation in Community Development, highlighting a broader aspect of the policy of democratic decentralisation: "People's participation is not merely their providing a certain portion of the cost of a particular work in cash, kind, or manual labour." That the government's role in (Community development) is limited to providing aid where it's needed is something they're well aware of. S8 Therefore, it is evident that the participation of the people is a crucial determinant of any local development, and that this participation can only be achieved through the establishment of efficient democratic institutions. A democratic government that oversees a large area, however, will not be able to properly address the concerns of its constituents. So, "there should be a devolution of power and a decentralisation of machinery controlled and directed by popular representatives of the local area," as the author puts it.

Democracy's decentralisation poses as much of a challenge to political leaders as it does to administrators. In order for the administrative bureaucracy to have a well-defined role in the execution of the programme, there must be clarity of policy and foresight in the formulation of legislation. There is a risk that the programme as a whole will suffer if the boundaries between what the administrator can and cannot do are not clearly defined by the legislation.

Naturally, Douglas Ensminger does not believe that legislation on its own will accomplish anything. As a sociologist, he knows that people's habits and institutions don't just magically appear overnight, and that this is not something that can be legislated. However, he is also certain that the process that Community Development hopes to initiate will not occur without the appropriate legislation. The Administrators can develop a programme because of the law. In this regard, the need for a fair and reasonable compromise is the most pressing issue facing legislators.

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As its name implies, democratic decentralisation is meant to be a popular initiative. Because of this, "with democratic decentralisation the administrative orientation must shift quite completely from making decisions and issuing orders to helping the people make decisions through their panchayats, co-operatives.

Every Indian knows that a Panchayat is a group of local residents who have come together to carry out the village's administrative and judicial duties. Panchayat: an innovative solution to old problems. The Indian system of Raj, or village self-government, predates even the Hindu Polity and is therefore likely the oldest political system in the world. The term panchayat has almost entirely lost its numerical connotation and now simply means an association of people for doing administrative or judicial work. Its origins can be traced back to the ancient civilization of our country, and the institution it describes served as the bedrock of our society.

3.5 POWERS OF PANCHAYATS

The traditional Panchayat was in charge of all aspects of village life, including the executive and judicial branches. It also distributed loans within the community. This panchayat was responsible for levying taxes on agricultural output and remitting the village's proportionate share of government revenue. There was a larger panchayat with jurisdiction over several of these village panchayats. When it came to running the day-to-day operations of the village, many different people had specific roles in the past. These officials include:

- The village's headman, who oversaw the community, settled disputes, and collected taxes;
- Cultivator's bookkeeper
- The guardian of the crops, the messenger of crime reports, and the voice of encouragement to passing strangers;
- The man whose job it was to protect the village's borders;
- Supervisor of storage facilities and canals;
- The minister;
- Teacher in charge;
- The horoscope reader;

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- Artisans of the village, including the blacksmith, the carpenter, the weavers, the barbers, and the poets.

These village workers were compensated for their efforts by being given a plot of land or a portion of the harvest.

There is no room to doubt that the Panchayat or village council, which was primarily responsible for the administrative and judicial work, was the most important feature of a village government in the pre-British days. However, determining exactly how it was formed is problematic. To a certain extent, it was different in each location. Sir Ferbert Risley explains how the panchayat was set up so that "Electing members of the Panchayat is not a process that can be described using standard political jargon from Europe. They have a discussion, and from that discussion, a consensus is reached. There is no majority because they all agree, and there is no minority because those who disagreed were overruled and forced to join the majority. Selection by acclamation is the only adequate term for what happened here. As a result, the Panchayat election process was very ad hoc." Within the empire, the village communities had full control over their own affairs. Because they were paid directly by the villagers, even if the village officers weren't elected by the villagers, they were still subject to the moral influence of public opinion because of the nature of their communities. These rural, self-governing institutions served their communities well even during the National era. Nonetheless, the disarray and subsequent decline of that system had done them considerable harm. It is important to note that the traditional Panchayats lost much of their former authority and esteem during the British occupation of India.

The complete breakup of the village institution began only under the British rule. Time between the fall of the Mughal Empire and the India's political scene was in disarray and rural communities were slowly deteriorating as the British Empire took over. Village institutions were rendered meaningless in the absence of legal backing under the highly centralised British administrative system. The British Raj ultimately took their lives.

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British authorities acknowledged the Dswani in 1765. If not for the for the next century, the central government in undivided Bengal showed no interest in establishing local self-government in the countryside. To be clear, the "Village Chowkidari Act" of 1870 was not an attempt at full-fledged rural self-governance in Bengal; rather, it was a mechanism for the purpose of maintaining the rural police. The unit here was the village; this is noteworthy because in later decades in Bengal, the unit was generally not the village but a Union of two or more villages.

The Chowkidar Act of 1870's chowkidar panchayat system was completely made up. The District Magistrate appointed the members of the Panchayat rather than having them elected by the villagers. In addition, the Act was not meant to encourage any sort of community spirit among the villagers, other than for safety from criminals. Under the Act, a Panchayat could be appointed by the District Magistrate in any village with fewer than sixty dwellings. There were at least five people in this Panchayat. All criminal activity in the village had to be reported to the authorities through this organisation. As a result, the Act could only cover so much ground. these panchayats, appointed by the District Magistrate, had nothing to do with the management of affairs of immediate interest to the villagers and instead served only as agents for the assessment and collection of a local tax used to fund the village police. They served no purpose related to the regular operations of local governments because they were autonomous units with a narrow focus. The Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 established Union Committees as autonomous local authorities responsible for the provision and maintenance of village-level infrastructure like roads, tanks, primary schools, and so on.

Among the first to do so was Lord Ripon, a staunch Gladstonian liberal. Viceroy with an earnest wish to advance India's self-governing institutions. He worked out a detailed plan to give local self-government institutions a physical form. The improvement of local self-government was the crowning achievement of his Viceroyalty in India's eyes. He. felt it was important "to provide an outlet for the ambitions and aspirations which had been created by the education," "civilization," and "material process" introduced by the British. The system of local self-government provided that outlet for Lord Ripen. With the goal of "political and popular education," he pushed for the May 18th, 1882

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passage of Ripon's Resolution on Local Self-Government in India. Certain principles were established by the Resolution, and Tinker has provided a concise summary of these:

In local governments, "political education" is more important than "administrative efficiency, there will be rural equivalents to city councils, with subdivisions, tahsils, and talukas serving as the administrative units of choice. A non-official two-thirds majority, preferably elected, should serve on all boards. Immediate elections in more progressive cities, with gradual elections in smaller cities and the countryside using informal experimental methods because "control should be exercised from without rather than within. Consequently, non-officials, rather than government employees, should serve as chair of all local boards whenever possible. Finally, it was agreed that the Resolution's broad recommendations should be interpreted differently in each province. Furthermore, the Centre's inability to implement Ripon's Resolution due to the involute administrative structure of the Government of India and the provincial governments' unwillingness to follow the Resolution kept the liberal Resolution in the status of a mere political aspiration of the Indians for the next few decades.

3.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS

The initial formal move by the British Government in India to the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 served to introduce self-government. It called for the creation of three institutions:

1. Regional Governments,
2. Community Groups and
3. Committees of the Union.

There must be a District Board in place for every District. Each subdivision could have its own local board, or a single board could govern multiple subdivisions or even just a portion of a larger subdivision. However, the local Board could only act in ways authorised by the District Board, and it had neither its own jurisdiction nor a means of generating revenue. It served as the District Board's working committee and was merely an advisory body. The local self-government organisation in Bengal referred to it as "a fifth wheel in the coach." The Amending Act of 1936 included Chapter 1A to do away

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with the local Board. However, some of these bodies, such as in Darjeeling District, continued to operate up until the Zilla Parishads Act, 1963 came into effect. The Act also gave the government the authority to form Unions for clusters of villages and create Union Committees to oversee things like ponies, schools, and roads, but these bodies were subservient to the District Board, which controlled the bulk of the budget. So, there were two types of governing bodies at the village level: the Chowkidari Panchayat established by the Act of 1870 and the Union Committee established by the Act of 1885. The District Board was thus established as the administrative unit in Bengal by the Bengal local Self-Government 'Act of 1885. A system of local self-government, on the other hand, should begin at the ground level, not the top.

Lord Curson's Ficeroyalty (18981904) was infamous for its decade of excessive centralization because, in his opinion, Indians are not cut out for decentralisation. localised democracy even if it's restricted to a smaller scale. Marley appointed the Bqyal Commission a Decentralization, headed by Hobhouse, in 1907 to counter the trend toward greater administrative centralization that Gursom had begun. The Commission suggested a centralised rural government that would handle Chowkidari and other local government functions. The Commission found that the existing system of rural local government was flawed because it was not developed from the ground up. According to the Commission's findings, "the foundation of any stable edifice which shall associate the people with the administration must be the village as being an area of much greater antiquity than the new administrative creations and one in which people know one another."

Village panchayats, which are responsible for running local government, should be established and supported. The Commission's report is extremely helpful because it analyses existing local government organizations and makes recommendations for decentralized systems of effective and efficient rural administration. The report found that the local institution needed to be given more autonomy, but that its findings and recommendations were driven more by a need to achieve administrative efficiency.

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The Government of Bengal appointed the District Administration Committee in 1914 to look into the state of affairs at the time and make recommendations for how the administrative machinery could be improved in light of the findings of the Royal Commission on Decentralization. This committee's investigation revealed that the Union Committee and the Chowkidar Panchayats were inadequate in their handling of village affairs. The Committee also noted that the two organisations' respective budgets were insufficient to achieve desirable outcomes, and that their respective responsibilities often overlapped. Therefore, the Committee suggested setting up a network of village authorities that would serve as a village judiciary by combining the roles of Union Committees and Chowkidar Panchayats.

The Bengal Self-Government Act was enacted in 1919 to establish a system of village self-government along the lines proposed by the District Administration Committee. Unfortunately, the Act diverged significantly from the Committee's recommendations. Here, the "unit of administration" was not the village but rather the Union, which was "an artificial combination of disjointed villages." The Union Board was in charge of running the Union.

The District Administration Committee recommended that the roles of the village panchayats established by the Act of 1870 and the Union Committees established in 1885 be combined into Union Boards, which would then have the authority to levy local taxes and collect other revenue as needed to meet the collective needs of the villages as a whole. Where the Bengal Tillage Self-Government Act of 1919 was put into effect, the provisions of the aforementioned two Acts were null and void. As a means of bridging the gap between the government and the villagers, the Act established the position of circle officer for a coalition of labour organisations. He communicated between the villagers and the Sub-Divisional office.

There was also a provision in the Act for the establishment of Union Benches to hear minor criminal cases and Union Courts to hear minor civil cases. Workers were culled from the Union Board itself.

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Independent Bengal, but they did nothing to improve the situation. Villagers' living conditions are dire. The main effect of their actions has mainly focused on broad public services like primary schooling, water distribution, transportation infrastructure, public health, etc. The District and Union Boards were unable to provide villagers with the amenities they desired due to a lack of both qualified personnel and sufficient funding crucial to maintaining even the barest existence.

In addition, the aforementioned enhancement depends on the constant villager participation and involvement was crucial. Those working in government agencies or on District Boards It was challenging for Union Boards to rally the townspeople and please elaborate on the steps that the villagers can take to better their communities' social and economic conditions. Everyone agreed that the only way to reach the villagers was to form an organisation in which everyone could participate, and that this organisation should have its own authority.

When the British handed over control of India to the Indians in 1947, they essentially handed over the administrative reins at both the federal and state levels to elected representatives. However, the benefits of democracy may take some time to filter down to levels of government lower than the State.

"The establishment of the Welfare State as the nation's goal indicated the realisation by the framer of the Constitution that the aspiration of the people could rise in a geometrical progression and that the exorcism of power at the Centre and State levels was not enough if democracy were to strike deeper roots at the lowest level," writes Jonathan Haidt.

3.7 VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

The village community under British rule became increasingly decadent, leading to a breakdown of village institutions. Gandhiji advocated for the Panchayats to be revived, so after India gained independence, the country's political leaders took a keener interest in the institution. Gandhiji focused his independence movement on rural rather than urban citizens. To him, Swaraj meant a government modelled after small-scale republics in individual towns. This, he has emphasised, is what he has said.

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A village with swaraj is a mini-nation unconcerned with the needs of its neighbours beyond those absolutely essential, while still being dependent on its neighbours in many other ways. The village's government will be run by a group of five adults, both men and women, who are elected every year and must meet certain requirements. Here there is perfect democracy based on individual judgement, and these will have all the authority and jurisdiction they need." Actually, villages should act as self-governing units, nuclei of Indian peasant Democracy, the foundation of a pyramidal structure.

Gandhiji equated ideal panchayat democracy with in his own words, Rama Rajya meant the following:

"In a religious sense, it could be interpreted as the establishment of God's heavenly kingdom on Earth. In political terms, it is a state of perfect democracy in which all forms of discrimination against any group are outlawed. Such a state. must be founded on truth and non-violence and must consist of prosperous, happy, and self-contained village and communities. In it land and State belong to the people. Justice is prompt, perfect, and cheap and, therefore, there is freedom of worship, speech, and the press - all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral self-restraint.

For the first time in the twentieth century, it was Mahatma Gandhi who advocated for the restoration of India's traditional village panchayats. So, when he found out the village was aristocratic, he was taken aback. Placed where it belongs in the draught constitution, and commented on "Sorry to say I haven't been paying attention in the Constituent Assembly. The correspondent claims that the proposed Constitution does not address or provide guidance for decentralisation or village Panchayats. It's a major oversight that needs fixing right away if we want our independence to reflect the will of the people. The people would benefit from giving Panchayats more authority."

Dr. Ambedkar said, "I hold that these village Republics have been the ruination of India," in response to criticism that the Panchayats had been left out of the draught Constitution. So, it comes as a surprise to me that some of the most vocal critics of localism and localism are also the most vocal advocates for the village. Ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism are rewarded in the village, which is nothing but a drain on localism. The draught Constitution's emphasis on the individual rather

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than the village as the basic unit is a welcome change. Dr. Ambedkar shared Karl Marx's scepticism of small communities, viewing them as "dens of ignorance" and "sinks of localism."

The President of the Constituent Assembly, Or. Rajendra Prasad, referred the question of whether the Constitution could be re-drafted basing its entire structure on village Panchayats to the Constitutional Adviser, Mr. B. N. Kao, in the wake of widespread criticism. Mr. Bao replied that the details of the Panchayat plan would need to be worked out for each Indian State with suitable modifications for towns if it were to be adopted. That would also be time-consuming, which would slow down the Constitution-drafting process. So, he decided it was best to leave the specifics of the Panchayat plan for supplementary laws that would be passed after the Constitution.

Despite the fact that the framers of the Indian Constitution knew they couldn't build everything around village Panchayats, they included the idea in Part 1 of the Constitution (Directive Principles of the State Policy) by stating, "The State shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out their functions." Since the Constitution of India only makes passing reference to local governments in list II of the Seventh Schedule, Article 40 is the only provision of the Constitution that formally recognises Panchayats as units of rural local self-government. Local government, that is, the constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards, mining settlement authorities, and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration," is the fifth item on the list. The First Five Year Plan also said, "As the agencies of the State Government cannot easily approach each individual villager separately, progress depends largely on the existence of an active organisation in the village which can bring the people into common programmes to be carried out with the assistance of the administration.

Because of newfound autonomy, the traditional notion of "local" powers that are nominally administrative and judicial in nature rural areas has undergone a dramatic shift. The creation of panchayats has been hailed as an efficient mechanism for carrying out rural development programmes and a solid basis for economic planning. To "initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages" by rapidly

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increasing employment and production and evolving a diversified rural economy, the community Development movement was launched in 1952. In a nutshell, its stated goal was to improve conditions in all areas of community life, including economics and social interaction.

A government-backed initiative, the Community Development Programme sought to "promote better living for the whole community with the active participation, and, if possible, on the initiative of the community." Because only such instrument can mobilise local resources (both human and material) on the basis of self-help and self-reliance, the programme accepts the people's agencies as the most effective instrument for the implemented of the programme. It was for this reason that the Panchayats were given more responsibility in rural development in the First Five Year Plan. The Panchayat was envisioned in the First Five Year Plan as a means of implementing village development initiatives. In the original outline it was written that: "Because only a village organisation representing the community as a whole can provide the necessary leadership, making a noticeable impact on rural life is challenging unless a village agency can assume responsibility and initiative for developing the village's resources. Village panchayats can secure the largest measure of participation by the people in various programmes of development by inspiring local enthusiasm for bettering village conditions and promoting common effort, despite the fact that legislative provisions may undoubtedly be helpful. New panchayats were formed in many areas during the Plan time period, and Block Advisory Committees (later Block Development Committees) were set up in every CDB. One more thing that the second five-year plan put an emphasis on "the importance of establishing a functional democratic system of local government within the district.

As a result, the existing village, Block, and District self-governing institutions had to be refocused in order to accommodate the Community Development Programme introduced in 1952. Giving effect to the principle of "Democratic Decentralisation and to empower these institutions, to take up developmental functions in addition to their traditional functions" were the primary goals of such a reorientation. Panchayati Raj is a term that refers to this refocused method of organising and operating local self-governing institutions.

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3.8 ROLE OF PLANNING COMMISSION AND AD HOC COMMITTEES

The Planning Commission's Committee on Plan Projects appointed Shri Balwantray Mehta to lead a Team for the Study of Community Projects and Rational Extension Service to analyse the current state of the Community Programmes and make recommendations for improving their efficiency. In 1957, the Study Team delivered its final report, which highlighted the importance of fostering effective self-governing units within the framework of community development initiatives. The following paragraph summarises the most important finding made by the Team.

One of the more recent and fruitful aspects of C.D. and N.E. S.'s work is an effort to inspire citizen initiative. Few local bodies above the village panchayat have shown any interest in or enthusiasm for this work, and the panchayats themselves have not made significant inroads into the field.

Ad hoc bodies, composed largely of nominated personnel and invariably advisory in nature, have been formed in an effort to channel local initiative. However, these organisations have shown no signs of lasting strength or the leadership required to serve as a driving force behind the sustained enhancement of rural areas' economic and social conditions. What's more, the Report noted that "we will never be able to evoke local interest and excite local initiative in the field of development" unless "we discover or create a responsible and democratic institution which will supply the local interest, supervision, and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local objects conforms with the needs and wishes of the locality, invest it with adequate power, and assign to it appropriate finances." According to the report, this was because it became clear, after only a few years of the Community Development Programme's operation, that the initiative for development in the rural areas was to be exercised by the rural people themselves. The idea of Panchayati Raj in India originated in these villages.

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Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the Block level, and a zilla Parishad at the District level were proposed as the optimal structure for rural self-government by the Study Team. On January 12, 1958, the National Development Council approved the recommendations of the Mehata Committee, making it official that all states would create Panchayati Raj bodies.

While it's true that all Indian states agreed to introduce democratic institutions to rural areas, it was also realised that in a country as large as India, it wouldn't make sense to impose a uniform set of rules on the individual states. In light of this, the Central Council of Local Self-Government issued the following recommendation: "While the broad pattern and the fundamentals may be uniform, there should be no rigidity in the pattern." Indeed, the country's size and the complexity of Panchayati Kaj, which has far-reaching consequences, allow ample room for outlining various patterns and alternatives. While it's true that all Indian states agreed to introduce democratic institutions to rural areas, it was also realised that in a country as large as India, it wouldn't make sense to impose a uniform set of rules on the individual states. In light of this, the Central Council of Local Self-Government issued the following recommendation: "While the broad pattern and the fundamentals may be uniform, there should be no rigidity in the pattern." Indeed, the country's size and the complexity of Panchayati Kaj, which has far-reaching consequences, allow ample room for outlining various patterns and alternatives. The real handover of power to the people is the most crucial part. If this is guaranteed, there may be some variation in shape and pattern depending on the varying conditions in each state.

Except for West Bengal, all other states have established panchayats with a similar structure of three levels. The Block Samity's jurisdiction overlapped with that of the Community Development Block, while the Gram Panchayats at the bottom of the pyramid covered a cluster of villages and the Zilla Parishad at the top covered an entire district.

However, things were different in West Bengal, so the pattern of "democratic decentralisation" there was slightly altered. There are now four levels of government in West Bengal, up from the traditional three levels of Panchayati raj seen throughout the rest of India. The pattern of democratic decentralisation in India, with emphasis on West

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Bengal, and in other established democracies of the Long before independence, in 1919, the Bengal Village Self-Government Act had established Union Boards to serve as a means of local self-government for Bengali villages. Thus, in West Bengal, Anchal Panchayats exist between the Gram Panchayat and the Block Samity, known as the Anchalik Parishad. These Boards had been playing a crucial role in rural areas of West Bengal, and many of them had been quite successful in arousing people's enthusiasm. Union Board schools consequently could not be abolished entirely in West Bengal. In this setting, the established organisations were integrated into the emerging Panchayat Raj structure. As a result, West Bengal developed its own unique structure, a four-tiered Panchayati Raj with Anchal Panchayats sitting between the Block-level Anchalik Parishad and the village-level Gram Panchayat.

In 1958, the government of West Bengal began implementing a version of the Panchayati Raj first proposed by the Balwantray Mehta Team and later refined by the state's central government. In 1957, the West Bengal legislature passed the Panchayat Act, which established a two-tiered system of local government consisting of the Gram Panchayat at the grassroots level and the Anchal Panchayati at the old Union Board level in CDBs. The alia Parishads Act of 1965 expanded the two-tiered administrative structure in West Bengal to include the Anchalik Parishad at the Block level and the alia Parishad at the District level in an effort to better involve "the local authorities with development activities" and to promote "democratic decentralisation and people's participation in planning and development." In a nutshell, the Act of 1963 aims to do the following three things:

- a) Liberalization of power,
- b) It's Beneficial to Invest in Your Neighbourhood and
- c) Involvement of the Public in Strategic Decision-Making and Program Implementation.

It's common knowledge that a large democratic country like ours cannot be governed by an elite class living in distant cities like Delhi or Calcutta. This calls for a democratic devolution of political authority to the people living in the countryside. Considering that democracy is predicated on the Benthamite dictum of the greatest good of the greatest number, the country's rural populace, who make up the vast majority of the

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country, must be taken into account. For democracy to have any real impact on those living in rural areas, investment in infrastructure improvement projects is essential. In rural areas, people are more energised and engaged when they have a voice in government. Awakening the sleeping masses and tapping and harnessing their latent energies requires the active participation of the people in the development works in the form of their active interest in the affairs of Panchayats and through local contribution in cash, kind, or labour. Therefore, in order to as a result, the government of West Bengal established the Panchayati Kaj. West Bengal's four-tier Panchayati Raj, like the three-tier system in other States, works to foster cooperative relationships between rural democratic institutions and national extension services, which work together to implement rural development programmes.

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CHAPTER - 4

A SURVEY OF RURAL AREAS IN WEST BENGAL

4.1 OVERVIEW

All institutions are mere vehicles for the ideas of the people they serve. One must be familiar with the rural communities that staff these establishments in order to grasp their significance. This article makes an effort to paint a picture of rural life in the Indian state of West Bengal as a whole.

There is no agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a town or a village, so the terms are often used interchangeably. The population density, cultural homogeneity, and technological sophistication of urban areas are the primary factors that set them apart from their rural counterparts. Rural areas in West Bengal are defined as those with a population of 5,000 or fewer and a density of less than 1,000 people per square mile. To be included in the definition of "towns," a location must have been designated as such by the Government of West Bengal, whether through the creation of a municipality, a notified area, a town committee, etc. The following criteria have been used in West Bengal since the 1951 Census to identify key features of the state's urban areas.

- a) Greater than or equal to 5,000 people
- b) A population density of 1,050 people per square kilometre or higher
- c) To serve as a hub for commerce, distribution, or government, and
- d) At least 75% of the adult male population is engaged in non-agricultural occupations.

However, the word "village" can mean a number of different things depending on where you are. A residential village, Muhalla, group of hamlets, or census mauza are all possible meanings. In Bengal, the term "village" refers to a survey mauza since the 1921 Census. However, not every mauza is a small town; some are actually small sections of larger cities. What constitutes a village for administrative purposes varies across India's states and even within the same state. A village is a small town with

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clearly delineated borders for which property records have been made in sane parts of the country. The term "village" is used differently in other contexts; for example, "a cluster of houses," or "two or more closely adjoining clusters of houses," whose inhabitants are regarded by themselves and others as a distinct social unit with its identity marked by a distinct local name," regardless of whether or not they constitute a revenue village. An area defined, surveyed, and recorded as a distinct and separate village in the revenue records of the district in which it is located is considered a "village" for the purposes of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957.

However, there are 'urban areas' with densities of population greater than 1,000 people per square mile, where the vast majority of residents do not work in agriculture. As an illustration, consider the majority of the Jadavpur - Behala Block, as well as parts of the Barrackpore, Baruipur, Scaiarpur, Barasat-1, and Bally Jagacha Blocks in the District of 24 Parganas and the Bally Jagacha Block in the District of Howrah. The arrival of refugees in West Bengal following India's independence in 1947 led to the development of these semiurban areas. In addition, a number of semi-urban areas, such as Diamond Harbour, Nangi, the Jake Anchals of 24 Parganas Islampur, the Kaliaganj Anchals of West RLnajpur, the Saithia Anchal of Birbhum, etc., have come into existence as a result of the natural increase in population in these areas, the migration of residents from outlying villages, and the flourishing of trade and commerce therein. Despite having many hallmarks of a town, the Government of West Bengal has not designated any of these locations as such.

Seventy-five percent or more of India's people call their rural community's home; only 18 percent or so of the country's people call a city or town their primary residence. What we did to India by ignoring her rural areas is largely responsible for her current state. If these regions continue to be ignored and allowed to deteriorate, the very foundation of the Indian Republic will continue to be compromised, and the country as a whole will continue to struggle. This is why Gandhi advocated for a "village republic;" the village is the nation's "unitary organism," and its health reflects the health of the country as a whole. It's where tomorrow's leaders get their start. It is the economic lifeblood of the country. The village needs to be returned to its former glory and functionality if it is to

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contribute to the revitalization of the Indian nation. It's crucial that it keeps playing a fundamental role in our political, economic and social systems.

Rural areas are easily distinguished from urban ones due to their notably different occupational patterns, ways of life, habits and attitudes of the people, size, geographical location, etc. The majority of people in rural West Bengal make their living by farming. In this case, the village functions as its own territorial, social, economic, and ritual unit with its own unique identity. People in a village tend to identify as a group, and we discover that they have a strong sense of loyalty to their community " In a number of ways, the village functions as a single entity. Multiple Hindu Castes, as well as other religious and, in some cases, tribal groups, are represented among the villagers. Villages are home to a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. Nonetheless, they coexist peacefully in the same village despite being located in different neighbourhoods. No community can function independently. Instead, they have to rely on one another and use the monopoly services of other occupational castes. Until recently, intergroup relationships in the villages were governed by established social usages and ethics, and violations of these norms were met with severe punishment by the village leaders who had the authority to enforce them "sanctioning power based on the threat of social exclusion as a last resort.

4.2 SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The West Bengali village as a tightly knit social organization has been on the decline for decades. To use Sir Henry Maine's definition, it is not a corporation. It's also not a "little Republic" where citizens have almost complete freedom to do as they please. The modern village is "a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness, and communalism" There is a general personal relationship among the various groups, but social interplay between the upper castes and the lower castes or between the Hindus and the Muslims is not maintained. One's socioeconomic status is based on one's level of wealth and education. The upper-caste Hindus in the east treat the lower-caste Hindus and the Muslima, who often have more resources and a higher status due to their religion, with respect but caution. This is why people from lower castes who are able to get an education are making a concerted effort to leave their traditional profession behind and find work in a more respectable field.

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In his book "Village India," Bill Marriott considers the "little Community" to be an important part of Indian culture's historical evolution. The government and the reflective thought of India have influenced the development of all these villages as they have grown upward from thousands. Marriott sees the relationship between these two groups in history as one between "little community" and "great community." The government of India developed in part as a top-down extension of community institutions. Elements of kinship structure, village loyalty, and typical modes of conflict that seem at first to be local developments in the villages turn out to be "reflexes of general state policy, and caste relationships, in part, are reflexes of institutions in the larger community.

It is possible to view the modern Indian villages that make up the country's "little communities" as relative structural nexuses, systems within great systems, and centers of individual identification within a larger field. Marriage and kinship structures, settlement patterns, conflict resolution strategies, and social stratification systems all point to the fact that they are not independent entities. They also probably couldn't have existed separately from Indian civilization. Traditional Indian social structure, on the other hand, can't be understood in isolation from the hundreds of thousands of smaller Communities that make up the larger Indian community. The existence of both smaller communities and larger ones is contingent on the other's continued existence in their respective forms.

Village life predominates in West Bengal, which is primarily a rural state. There are 44,440,095 people in the world, but only 10,928,599 (24.59%) live in urban areas. The other 35,511,696 (75.41%) call rural areas home. There is a positive relationship between a country's urbanization rate and its degree of industrialization. Though slower than in some other Indian states, West Bengal is still rapidly urbanizing. Nearly a third of Maharashtra's population lives in urban areas, making it the most urbanized state. After Tamil Nadu (30.3%), the next most populous states in India are Gujarat (28.1%), West Bengal (24.6%), Mysore (24.5%), and Punjab (24.5%). (23.3 percent).

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West Bengal, one of India's individual states, faces a unique set of challenges. Population growth during the decade between 1961 and 1971 was 27.24 percent, significantly higher than the All-India average of 24.26 percent during the same time period. At 507 people per square kilometre. West Bengal has the sixth highest population density in India. Roughly 26%¹⁷ of the State's residents belong to Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

In comparison to the national average of 40 percent, about 70 percent of West Bengal's population lives in poverty. Even more concerning is the pervasive issue of under- and unemployed people.

West Bengal has the second-highest land utilization rate in India. Investing heavily in rural electrification, irrigation, and other agricultural inputs is necessary for intensive cultivation, but the potential for extensive cultivation is low. While the national average is over 19%, only about 10% of villages in West Bengal have electricity.

4.3 MODERN ECONOMIC LIFE IN RURAL AREAS

To the extent that modern economic influences allow, "village life in West Bengal is undisturbed by city influences and retains its stability and self-sufficiency." Production of consumable goods is the backbone of the society. The land of the wealthy is farmed by those in the community on a share basis. If you want all of the harvest, you'll have to pay the cultivators a fee. The traditional peasantry consisted of a small number of wealthy farmers and a large number of landless laborers due to the economic structure that existed at the time. The landless peasants are slowly gaining access to land after the Zamindari system was abolished and the Land Acquisition Act was passed. This will cause significant shifts in the fundamental nature of rural economies and, by extension, the pattern of rural institutions' operations.

After 25 years of independence, the education level is significantly lower than expected. This state has a dismal illiteracy rate of 33.05 percent. West Bengal has the twelfth highest literacy rate in the world. It's slightly higher than the average of 29.35% across India.

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There was a free primary education act passed in West Bengal long before independence. Despite the fact that the State Government has built many free Primary Schools in rural areas since independence, this number is inadequate when compared to the increasing enrolment of school-aged children. Girls in West Bengal can get a free education up to the eighth grade right now. The Government is also making an effort to support adult education.

It's unfortunate that, despite these efforts, many villagers still don't see the value in sending their children to school. Most children in rural areas do, in fact, start out helping their parents with farm work fairly early on, and even school-aged kids often have to bring food to the paddy field so that their families can eat. The lack of education at home is not entirely the fault of the parents. No significant action has ever been taken by the government, political parties, or social leaders to get the kids back in the classroom.

The pattern of leadership in the villages is also shifting, with the old guard gradually losing ground. In rural areas, zamindars served as both formal and informal leaders. There appears to have been a power vacuum in the villages since the Zamindari system was abolished and the traditional leaders of the higher ranks in the social hierarchy were overthrown. A new pattern of leadership is emerging as a result of the ongoing social transformation, and it is becoming increasingly challenging to single out the most influential men in rural areas. It has been unusual for the present author to encounter a village that was led by a single person during his travels. Women's absence from positions of power has been noted, and previous Union Board Presidents held more sway than the current Pradhan's or Adhyakshyas. Most of the villagers are hesitant to give any one person the reins of power. Leadership is dispersed and often based on political allegiances.

Most of the villagers are hesitant to give any one person the reins of power. In this setting, leadership is dispersed, sometimes literally. Certainly, in some villages, one man may be singled out as commanding the undivided allegiance of the community thanks to his superior learning, wealth, and social standing, as well as his selfless philanthropic service. However, at the Block level, authority is severely decentralized, and no single figure commands universal support. The Block Development Officer

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(B.D. 0), Extension Officers (EOs), Anchalik Parishad (AP) members, and teachers all play formal roles at the Block level. On the other hand, informal forms of leadership, such as Casta-groups and political parties, are represented by the traditional authority structure. This authoritarian pattern of traditional authority is established primarily on the basis of wealth, age, and heredity, and it is only temporary.

It is difficult to find a leader who is respected by all in a village where social stratification is severe. Powerful members of each social class are viewed as potential leaders. People with more resources, whether financial or educational, are still looked to as leaders in rural areas.

The hierarchy in a group can be affected by several factors, including age and social status. As a result, most members of the Gram Panchayats and Anchal Panchayats in the districts of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri are members of the scheduled castes community. Nonetheless, other castes are gaining influence and status as a result of the declining trend of caste feeling.

The bands of the elders continue to hold sway as the rural panchayats' authoritative bodies. The elderly populace represents a conservative demographic. The tradition will live on thanks to this. A new generation of leaders is needed to shake up the status quo and inject fresh thinking into village institutions.

4.4 PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN RURAL WEST BENGAL

Panchayati raj Institutions in rural West Bengal have formally united people from different castes and socioeconomic backgrounds. Unfortunately, the villagers' social, cultural, and economic differences have resulted in unequal access to resources. In addition, the office bearers of the Panchayats require an exceptional level of training and education in order to effectively administer the Panchayats in accordance with the rules and regulations enacted by the Government. Again, the poor villagers are so busy trying to make ends meet that they have little time to participate in the Panchayat's affairs. Therefore, the rural areas have become dominated by a small group of highly educated and accomplished individuals.

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As a conclusion, it can be seen that the traditional authority and influence in the rural areas of West Bengal is gradually declining, and the political influence is becoming predominant, since the introduction of adult suffrage and Panchayati Baj institutions. The laws that enforced caste are no longer in place, and religious practices are having less of an impact on people's daily lives. There is a chain of command between the State and decentralized democratic institutions. In this way, the state's governing party is also the preeminent political group in the countryside. The State Government has statutory ties to decentralized institutions, and the officials who run them are also politically organized within a centralized party structure. Secularism in politics likely leads to the dominance of politics, which, with its complex institutional structure, casts a shadow over society and blurs the line between the two over time. In rural parts of West Bengal, this is the general trend.

In a nutshell, the pursuit of one's own interests has come to dominate life in the rural areas. These days, there aren't many shared goals that fire up every part of a village. The general trends of the rural areas of West Bengal include the growth of glaring inequality in wealth and thus opportunity, migration from rural to urban areas, especially the flight of the educated young men to towns, and an increase in the number of absentee landlords. People in the village community are also beginning to feel less connected to one another. Rural society in West Bengal as a whole appears to be changing as a result of recent developments like the Community Development Block and the Panchayati Raj Institution, the expansion of political party activities and the medium of mass communication, and the vigorous testing of long-held assumptions about how people work, live, think, and feel about authority.

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CHAPTER - 5

GRAM PANCHAYAT AND ANCHAL-PANCHAYAT IN WEST BENGAL: THE ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ BODIES

5.1 OVERVIEW

As we have seen, the Panchayati Raj Institution in West Bengal is hierarchical, with the gram Panchayat serving as the lowest level and the zilla Parishad as the highest. West Bengal is organized into 15 zilla Parishads, 525 Anchalik Parishads, 2926 Anchal Panchayats, and 18,882 Gram Panchayats. The 1971 Census estimated that there were 33,511,696 people living in these villages, and this number is reflected in the current Panchayati Raj system. There is one Anchal Panchayat for every 10,000 people, and one Gram Panchayat for every 1,300 people. The typical range for the number of Gram Panchayats that fall under the jurisdiction of an Anchal Panchayat is between seven and ten. There are 335 CDBs spread across the state of West Bengal. However, not all Blocks are included in the current system, and only 325 Anchalik Parishads exist; this is because no Panchayat has yet been established in 10 Block areas in the local field and industrial region of the Asansol Sub-Division of Burdwan District. Many people from different parts of India have settled here temporarily because it is home to coal fields and various industries. Due to these factors, the Bengal Village Self-Govt. Act of 1919 governs Raniganj and the surrounding 9 Blocks instead of the West Bengal Panchayat Act of 1957.

Gram Panchayat is the governing body of Gram Sabha, which is the representative body of all village residents whose names appear on the current electoral roll for the West Bengal legislative Assembly. Not only was adult suffrage included in the constitution of local bodies in rural West Bengal for the first time, but it was also included in legislative elections. By the terms of the Uttar Pradesh Panchayat Act, all adults who are either permanent residents of a village or who own a habitable dwelling in a village are entitled to vote. However, the Prescribed Authority will compile this particular list. Taking it further, Behar said. This voter list will be compiled at the request of the

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Panchayat and will include all residents who are at least 18 years old. The Panchayat Inspector in West Bengal is responsible for compiling and updating a list of names taken from the electoral roll of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly that corresponds to the area where the Gram Sabha has been established. Please note that neither the Gram Panchayat nor the Anchal Panchayat are authorized to keep such a list.

Every Gram Sabha has its own Gram Panchayat, which, at its first meeting at which a quorum is present, elects one of its members to be the Adhyaksha and another member to be the Upadhyaksha of the Gram Panchayat. The total number of members in a Gram Sabha ranges from about 1,000 to 1,400. In order for the Gram Panchayat to function properly, the State Government may appoint any qualified person, whether or not he is a member of that Gram Sabha, to serve on the Gram Panchayat for such periods as it deems fit. Two restrictions have been placed on these associates, and their number is capped at one-third of the total number of the Gram Panchayat. Not only can these people not be elected to the positions of Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha, but they also cannot vote.

The power of the Government of West Bengal to nominate members to the Gram Panchayat would mean the negation of the basic principle of the local self-government, i.e, the autonomy of the Gram Panchayats. In order to help our budding village governments, grow into their full potential as quickly as possible, the government's ability to appoint anyone to the Gram Panchayats is unquestionably a positive step in the right direction. The Planning Commission adds, "the process of election by which Panchayats are constituted might not arrays throw up a sufficient number of persons with qualities most needed in village reconstruction, such as good farmers, Co-operative workers, and social workers." Co-opting a small number of people into village Panchayats—two or three in the case of smaller Panchayats and up to say, one fifth in the case of larger Panchayats—may be desirable in order to address shortages.

According to the West Bengal Panchayat Act, each Gram Sabha is required to hold two general assemblies per year. In addition, the Gram Sabha can request a "extraordinary general meeting" to be called by the Adhyaksha of the Gram Panchayat if there are at least five members of the Gram Sabha who have submitted a written request. When

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neither the Adhyaksha nor the Upadhyaksha is present, the Gram Sabha itself chooses one of its members to act as the ad hoc President.

The annual general meeting, or Gram Sabha, is where the community gets together to discuss the coming year's budget, as well as the report submitted by the Gram Panchayat detailing the previous year's accomplishments and plans for the coming year. The Gram Sabha can instruct the gram Panchayat in any way it sees fit. At its semi-annual general meeting, the Gram Sabha will discuss any matters that have been designated for discussion. Every member of the Gram Sabha recognizes the Gram Panchayat's right to inquire about any matter of interest during meetings.

Quorum requirements for Gram Sabha meetings can be found in all existing Panchayat Acts. Contrarily, the same provision in the West Bengal Panchayat Act is remarkably lenient. A quorum here will be at least 10% of the total Gram Sabha membership. According to the findings of the investigation, a lack of quorum prevented many Gram Sabhas from holding their meetings. However, the Act states that a quorum is not necessary for an adjourned meeting. The signatures of one tenth of the total number of members of the Gram Sabha on the resolutions passed in some general meetings were collected from the houses of the members to maintain their official validity, and annual general meetings were not held in several gram Panchayats.

At least fifteen days before the date of holding a meeting, the Adhyaksha or in his absence the Upadhyaksha is to make arrangements for giving public notice of the meeting by beat of drums, as widely as possible announcing the place, date, and time of the meeting and the agenda, of the Gram Sabha, in accordance with the Rules pertaining to the meeting of a Gram Sabha. In addition, a notice of the meeting is to be posted at the Gram Panchayat office. Yet, the norm Not many people show up because the date, time, and location of the Gram Sabha meeting are not widely publicized and the Milage Chowkidar hardly beats the drum. Because of this, participation in Gram Sabha meetings is low among villagers.

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It is intended that the Gram Sabha serve as a village assembly to which the gram Panchayat, or executive body, is answerable. However, in West Bengal, Gram Sabhas have been ineffective. The majority of Gram Sabhas have not held a meeting in years. In order to avoid the Gram Sabha's incisive criticism, the Gram Panchayats often fail to properly convene their meetings. Unfortunately, the Gram Sabha is now a defunct organization. There is hardly anyone here today. It has been determined that between 25% and 45% of those invited to the meeting actually showed up. The lack of real power the Gram Sabha has to control the Gram Panchayat or rouse the interests of the villagers, and the low level of political education among the masses, are likely to blame.

While the Act mandates that the Gram Sabha review the budget and the annual report, it remains silent on the process for ratifying these documents. Regarding the budget estimate, the rule is that the Adhyaksha must call a meeting of the Gram Panchayat within seven days of the Gram Sabha to discuss the budget in light of the Gram Sabha's suggestions. The meeting is where the final budget is decided upon. It is unclear, however, whether the Gram Sabha's recommendations are binding on the Gram Panchayat in terms of revising the budget, the annual report, or the work program for the following year. Furthermore, direct democratic devices such as Initiative, Referendum, and Recall are not provided for. The Act is also silent on whether or not the Gram Panchayat must resubmit the budget to the Gram Sabha after it has been revised. Contrarily, the Gaon Sabha has been granted extensive authority to direct the Gaon Panchayat by virtue of the Uttar Pradesh Panchayat Act.

5.2 HISTORY OF PANCHAYAT RAJ IN VARIOUS STATES

Each Panchayat in Uttar Pradesh creates a budget projection for the coming year and presents it at the 'Kharif' meetings of the Gaon Sabha, which begin on the first day of April. Additionally, the accounts of its actual and expected receipts and expenditures for the year ending on the 31st March last preceding such report are laid before the 'Rabi' meeting of the Sabha. The Gaon Sabha may either approve the budget as presented to it or return it to the Gaon Panchayat for further consideration with such directions as it may give in the prescribed manner. It may also adopt a resolution making recommendations regarding the report or any other matter.

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Under the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1947, however, if the Gaon Sabha sends the annual estimate back to the Gaon Panchayat for revision, the Pradhan must convene an extraordinary Gaon Sabha meeting within two weeks of the original annual meeting, at which time the Gaon Panchayat must resubmit the annual estimate with the requested revisions made.

5.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAM SABHA

The Gram Sabha's significance, in fact, cannot be overstated. That "the Panchayat shall give due consideration to the suggestions, if any, of the Gram Sabha" was also recommended by the Basappa Committee on Panchayat Raj in Mysore in 1963, just as it is in the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act.

In the Indian state of West Bengal, the Gram Sabha is virtually powerless over its subordinate, the Gram Panchayat. Even the Statutory Annual General meetings are not properly organised and when organised, the members of the Gram Sabha are only to consider the budget and the report placed by the Gram Panchayat but they cannot pass them or reject them. The Gram Sabha has devolved into a purely advisory body with no real authority over the Gram Panchayat. A low number of people showing up to a meeting of the Gram Sabha is a reflection of the lack of importance that the assembly has in the lives of the villagers.

Despite being officially recognized by law, gram Sabhas are failing to do their jobs. "The villagers generally aren't even cognizant of the Gram Sabha's existence as a distinct institution from the Panchayat. Other significant factors include the villagers' general apathy and the lack of shared purpose that prevents them from getting together. Therefore, it is recommended that 'question hour' be added to the Gram Sabha, meetings be held at least once per quarter, and different locations within the "Gram" be used for each meeting.

There is only one team Panchayat for every 1,300 people in West Bengal. Not many Gram Sabha members are punctual. As a result, a streamlined organization like the Gram Panchayat is essential. Each Gram Sabha has its own corresponding gram panchayat. It's the foundation of rural communities and administration. It is chosen

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democratically by the Gram Sabha itself. Depending on the size of the Gram Sabha's population, its membership can range from 9 to 15 people.

Each Gram Panchayat is now a legal entity in its own right, complete with common seal and provisions for perpetual succession. In this sense, it is a separate legal entity that can sue and be sued in its own name and is subject to all the protections and liabilities of a natural person. The Gram Sabha was originally intended to be recognized as a separate legal entity in its own right. The Joint Select Committee, however, voted against this because "it is neither necessary nor desirable to have two corporate bodies over the same area."

Unfortunately, unlike in other Indian states, the West Bengal Panchayat Act does not include any provisions for associating or reserving seats in the Panchayat bodies for women or members of scheduled castes and tribes. However, such provision has been made at both the Anchalik Parishad and the Zilla Parishad levels in the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act, 1963.

It's fascinating that so many ladies are interested in the primary body. The gram Panchayats now have a total of 347 elected women. A total of 22 Adhyakshas and 9 Upadhyakshas make up this group. According to data gathered from the field, all of the elected members of the Jadabati Gram Panchayat in the Jagadh Ballabhpur Block in the District of Howrah are female. This includes the positions of Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha. There is probably no other example like this in the rest of India. I think we can all agree that the percentage of women in the Gram Panchayat is not high enough to warrant the money we're spending on it. The prevalent 'purdah system' and widespread illiteracy are major contributors to this predicament. One of the officers in West Bengal's Panchayat Directorate is female, and her job is to get more women to vote in the state's Panchayat election. More women are likely to step forward to participate in the democratic process.

Following its formation, the Gram Panchayat must choose a member to serve as Adhyaksha for four years and another to serve as Upadhyaksha. However, associate members don't get this perk. Members of the Gram Panchayat serve for a total of four years, starting on the date of their very first meeting (which must be the first meeting

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in terms of both time and presence of a quorum). In Uttar Pradesh, the Pradhan of the Gaon Panchayat is elected by the members of Gram Sabha for five years, and the Up-Pradhan is required to be elected annually by the Gram Panchayat from among its members. It is interesting to compare these provisions with those of the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act.

Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam, and Himachal Pradesh all have assemblies called Gram Sabhas, and their presidents of the respective village Panchayats are elected by the Gram Sabhas in the same way that U.P. Direct election gives the President, or Adhyaksha as he is known in West Bengal, considerable influence over the other members of the Gram Panchayat and helps to solidify the Adhyaksha's position as the representative of the people. In order to ensure that the chief of the Gram Panchayat is also a member of the Anchal Panchayat, a direct election is required. Indirect election is less likely to be abused in this system. Unfortunately, this leads to structural issues. This system stifles the initiative and controlling power of the members of the Gram Panchayat because the Adhyaksha has more popular authority than the others. There could come a time when the majority of the Gram Panchayat members no longer trust the Adhyaksha or hold opposing religious beliefs. As a result, the Adhyaksha in West Bengal is selected through a backdoor election system. He is chosen from the group's membership by the Gram Panchayat. This makes him the leader of peers.

The efficiency of the people who hold these offices is crucial to the smooth operation of this decentralized body. Despite the fact that the vast majority of villagers in West Bengal cannot read or write, not everyone there lacks formal education. Therefore, if there is a requirement for a certain level of education to serve on the Gram Panchayat, many of the men who have the necessary local knowledge and experience will be disqualified from serving. Despite this, statistics show that, thankfully, there are no illiterate Adhyaksha in the state of West Bengal. This is likely why all Skate Panchayat Acts do not require a certain level of literacy to be a member of the decentralized body. Similarly, the Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha of the Gram Panchayat are not required to have any particular level of education under the West Bengal Panchayat Act. Also, the Act does not mandate any additional requisite qualifications. What it dictates is a laundry list of ineligibilities. A Gram Sabha member, for instance, cannot be elected or

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appointed to the positions of Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha, or serve on the Gram Panchayat, if they meet any of the following criteria:

- a) He is not yet twenty-five years old.
- b) Is no longer employed by any federal, state, or local government due to having been fired for morally reprehensible behaviour;
- c) Contract with the Gram Panchayat or any other government agency in which he has a direct or indirect financial stake.
- d) Either his mental faculties are severely impaired.
- e) He has not been released from insolvency.
- f) If he has an outstanding balance for any tax, toll, fee, or rate owed to the government under the Act from the year before the election, he cannot vote.

5.4 PANCHAYAT RAJ ACTS

The Inspector of Panchayat must accept the resignation of an Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha or a member of a Gram Panchayat for it to become effective. According to the Act, an Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha can be removed from office by a vote of two-thirds of the Gram Panchayat, cast at a meeting called for that purpose. The Act does not, however, specify the circumstances under which the Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha may be removed from office. Due to this loophole in the law, members of the Gram Panchayat can use the Adhyaksha or Upadhyaksha as they see fit. Especially if the majority of members after Adhyaksha's and Upadhyaksha's election change their political opinion. A lot of people in the state of UP and the state of Bihar believe in this system. Whereas the Mysore Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act, 1959 has a similar provision, it is more stringent. In Mysore, a vote of no confidence from at least two-thirds of the Panchayat's total membership is required to remove the Chairman or the 'Vice-Chairman from office.

Members of the Gram Sabha cannot unseat those who have been elected to serve on the Gram Panchayat. In the event of misconduct in the performance of his duties, incapacity to act as a member, conviction of a criminal offense, absence from three consecutive meetings, default in payment of taxes, fees, etc., the District Panchayat Officer has been given the authority to remove a member of the Gram Panchayat. The member being

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considered for such action is entitled to a hearing at which they can present their case against the proposed disciplinary measures. However, if he is found guilty of an offense or moral turpitude, he will have no further avenues of appeal and will be sentenced immediately. Section 20 of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957, and Subsection 2 of Section 102 of the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952 are very similar. The Assam Rural Panchayat Act, 1948 legalized the recall of members along the same lines as the rural local self-government system in the United States. However, it was unable to alter the 1957 West Bengal Panchayat Act. The provision of recall or the motion of no-confidence could be abused by members of the Gram Sabha in the villages of West Bengal, which are riven by party strife, caste and communal feelings.

Recall or a vote of no confidence against an elected member of the Gram Panchayat is a right enjoyed by democracies. That right has been taken away from rural residents in West Bengal due to the Panchayat Act. This progressive idea was written into the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952. In West Bengal, the system of limited recall may be implemented with oversight from a higher government body if it is determined that this will improve the functioning of the democratic spirit in the state.

The bare minimum for a gram Panchayat meeting is once a month. Aside from the monthly meeting, the 'Gram Panchayat can meet whenever one-third of its members submit a written request to the Adhyaksha. Village level workers and other government officers in Mysore are required to attend and participate in Panchayat meetings, even though they do not have voting rights. Clearly, this is not democratic. However, it has been argued that the V.L.W could have done a better job of assisting village residents if they had been involved with the Gram Panchayats from the start.

In order for the Gram Panchayat to conduct business, one-third of the total membership is required to be present at a meeting in the Indian state of West Bengal. Field research has revealed that a lack of quorum has prevented many Gram Panchayat meetings from proceeding. Meetings were reportedly held frequently without the requisite quorum, but resolutions and signatures were collected from the homes of the members absent to ensure their official validity. This reflects citizens' lack of interest in exercising their democratic rights and responsibilities and should be remedied.

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5.5 LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN GRAM PANCHAYAT

The activities of local authorities have naturally increased with the rise in population, the growth of administrative areas, the advancement of science, and the growth of the ideal of social justice; however, local authorities in India have no constitutional powers. Only the authority specified in the statute is available to them.

The Gram Panchayat in West Bengal has three different kinds of powers and functions according to the West Bengal Panchayat Act: mandatory, delegated, and discretionary. Most of the mandatory duties are civic duties that cannot be delegated or abdicated, while the delegated and discretionary duties typically involve development and rural reconstruction projects.

By "mandatory duties," we mean responsibilities that the local government is required to carry out by statute. The former are duties that the local government must fulfil by law, while the latter are tasks that the government can choose to perform or not.

Subject to the availability of funds, the Gram Panchayat is required by the Act to carry out certain responsibilities, such as ensuring the public's health and safety through measures like vaccination and inoculation, preventing the spread of disease through sanitation and water conservation, and organizing community projects. One should keep in mind that the expression "as far as is possible within the limits of the fund at its disposal" qualifies the absoluteness of such obligatory duties.

The State Government may delegate many tasks that are primarily its responsibility to the Gram Panchayat. These responsibilities fall under the purview of the State Government, but the Gram Panchayat must still perform them. The State Government may delegate certain responsibilities to the Gram Panchayat, which it must carry out.

- a) Education at the primary, secondary, technical, or vocational levels
- b) Clinics, hospitals, and maternity and children's services in outlying areas
- c) Overseeing the operation of any public ferry
- d) Irrigation
- e) Grow-more-food campaign
- f) Help for the sick and the poor

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- g) Helping those who have been uprooted get back on their feet
- h) Enhancements in the fields of cattle medicine, disease prevention, and cattle breeding
- i) Its acting as a channel through which government assistance should reach the villages
- j) Reclaiming unusable land for agricultural use
- k) The encouragement of plantations in rural areas
- l) Arranging for cultivation of land lying fallow
- m) Arranging for co-operative management of land and other \ resources of the village
- n) Helping to implement land reform in the region, and
- o) Carrying out additional State Government programs that may be devised and delegated to the gram Panchayat.

The Gram Panchayat also has a wide range of discretionary responsibilities, including the following.

- a) Public lighting system upkeep.
- b) Planting and maintaining trees in the sides of public streets or in other public places vested in it.
- c) Digging of trenches for wells and lakes, and the construction of storage sheds.
- d) Development and encouragement of cooperative businesses, occupations, and industries, including cooperative farming, cooperative retail, and cooperative service industries.
- e) Markets to be built and regulated; fairs, melas, and exhibitions of locally grown and made goods to be held and governed; rules governing the sale of goods made by local artisans and crafters.
- f) Spaces designated for manure storage.
- g) Aiding and advising farmers on the acquisition, distribution, and repayment of State loans.
- h) Filling up of insanitary depressions and reclaiming of \ unhealthy localities.
- i) The promotion and encouragement of cottage industries.
- j) Canine euthanasia (the killing of stray or rabid dogs).

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- k) Controlling the supply and distribution of food and other goods as required.
- l) The building and upkeep of stables, rest areas, cart sheds, and cattle pens, and market places.
- m) The disposal of unclaimed cattle
- n) Corpse and carcass disposal when no one claims them
- o) The creation and upkeep of reading spaces like libraries
- p) Maintaining recreational facilities such as clubs, and parks.
- q) Maintaining population, agricultural, livestock, labour force, and other statistics as may be required.
- r) The carrying out, in the manner prescribed, of any of the duties of the District Board, with its prior approval, that are likely to be to the benefit of the people residing within the Gram Panchayat's area of authority.
- s) Lending a hand in firefighting to save lives and prevent damage when a blaze breaks out.
- t) Helps cut down on theft and criminal activity.
- u) Anything else that serves the public interest in the area.

Section 33 of the Act outlines the Gram Panchayat's discretionary responsibilities. However, if the State Government mandates that the Gram Panchayat provide for any of the items listed in this section, the Gram Panchayat's discretionary duty will be transformed into a mandatory one.

As a result, the Gram Panchayat is responsible for a wide range of social service and economic development initiatives. However, it has only a limited budget to work with. Not a single thing about it generates money on its own. Therefore, the Gram Panchayat has been made a parasite body of the Anchal Panchayat, dependent on the latter for grants and contributions. Yet after covering its own costs, the Anchal Panchayat has only a small amount to spare for the Gram Panchayat's welfare and development initiatives. Furthermore, government grants, if any, are always designated for a specific type of development project. That means it can't be used for any other vital welfare initiatives. Therefore, the credibility of the Gram Panchayat among rural residents has been damaged.

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As we have seen, the gram Panchayat's duties have been divided into three categories: mandatory, delegates, and options. Such a rigid, outdated, and unhelpful categorization of tasks into mandatory and voluntary categories has no place in today's content. It hinders productivity, and it's common to observe that the local authority prioritizes mandatory tasks while ignoring optional ones. When it is up to the Panchayats to ensure the well-being of their communities as a whole, "The Panchayats should be encouraged and assisted to take up as many functions as possible applying their own order of priorities in the selection of functions from time to time." As a result, it is proposed to reorganize the Gram Panchayat's role.

The process of constituting the Anchal Panchayat starts after \ the completion of the formation of the Gram Panchayats. Each Gram Sabha is required to return one member for every 250 members, plus one additional member if the number of remaining members is not less than 125, in order to form an Anchal Panchayat under the principal Act of 1957. However, the Act was revised in 1965, and now there are two types of people who can serve on an Anchal Panchayat:

- 1) Gram Panchayats' Adhyakshas and the members of the Gram.
- 2) Members chosen by the Gram Sabhas to represent them in the Gram Panchayats.

Thus, an organic link between the lower two tiers has been established through the ex-officio membership of the Adhyakshas in the Anchal Panchayat.

Individuals who do not fall into one of the seven categories of ineligibility outlined in Section 15 and discussed above may run for election to the Gram Panchayat. It is also impossible to serve on both the Gram Panchayat and the Anchal Panchayat. When a person is elected to the Nyaya Panchayat from the Anchal Panchayat, their membership in the Anchal Panchayat automatically ends. Members of the Anchal Panchayat serve for the same 4-year period as those of the Gram Panchayat.

5.6 ANCHAL PANCHAYAT

Each Anchal Panchayat chooses its Pradhan and UPA-Pradhan at its first quorate meeting.

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Until their successors are chosen, they will remain in office. It's unfortunate that no second election has been held since the Gram Panchayat and Anchal Panchayat were established. As a result, these two primary bodies are losing their vitality and in a state of moribund decay.

A Pradhan or an UPA-Pradhan or a member of the Anchal Panchayat \ may resign from his office but the resignation takes effect only when\ the prescribed authority that is the D. P. O. accepts it. A member of the Anchal Panchayat may be removed from office by the prescribed authority for any of the seven reasons specified in Section 5.20 of the Act. He has the same right to appeal his removal to the Commissioner as any other member of the Gram Panchayat. Both the Pradhan and the UPA-Pradhan, if they were elected, can be removed from office by a majority vote of the Anchal Panchayat, or by the prescribed authority if the vote tally is less than two-thirds but greater than half.

In the event that a Pradhan or UPA Pradhan is removed from office for reasons other than recalcitrance, ineptitude, or a lack of legitimacy, the prescribed authority may do so by issuing a written order to that effect. Any person who disagrees with the order has 30 days from the date of the order to file an appeal with the Divisional Commissioner, whose decision is final. The authority delegated with this responsibility has been granted extraordinary authority. Provisions for the President of the Union Board's removal by higher authority were also included in the Bengal Village self-government Act of 1919. On the other hand, the current Act grants the right to appeal, which was not included in the Act of 1919. An interesting fact is that the Chairman of a Municipality cannot be removed from office by a higher authority under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932. As a result, it is feared that the ruling party could use this undemocratic provision to unseat an opposition party's Pradhan or UPA-Pradhan, even if they have the support of the majority in the Anchal Panchayat.

However, the Committee system makes it difficult for any local authority to perform effectively. The committee system is a hallmark of any well-functioning local government, and this is true worldwide.

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The local authority may appoint a committee to conduct an in-depth investigation and provide recommendations. Second, the local government may delegate authority to a committee to manage specific services. It's not common for Panchayats in West Bengal to have this kind of Committee.

Any given municipality's committees can fall into two categories: those required by law and those that are voluntary. Statutory Committees are those whose formation is mandated either by the Act or by rules made thereunder, and whose duties are specified therein. The West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act of 1963, for instance, includes provisions for the establishment of several Standing Committees. In contrast, non-statutory Committees are formed at the discretion of the local authority and have responsibilities set by that body. We can look to the Joint Committees of the Gram Panchayats and the Committees of Anchal Panchayats as examples of non-statutory Committees. Gram Panchayats and Anchal Panchayats are not required to establish Committees.

Written agreements between two or more Gram Panchayats can establish a Joint Committee charged with carrying out any task in which the Panchayats have a shared interest. They can give that Committee the authority to make decisions about the construction and maintenance of any joint project that will be legally binding on all participating Gram Panchayats. In the event of a dispute between Gram Panchayats, the matter must be referred to such officer as the State may prescribe, and that officer's decision must be accepted by all of the involved Gram Panchayats. But there has apparently never been a Joint Committee of the Gram Panchayats in West Bengal.

According to the West Bengal Panchayat Act, an Anchal Panchayat has the authority to form working committees and decide on their composition. Although the Committee system is not strictly necessary for a small body like the Gram Panchayat or the Anchal Panchayat, it does help link the common members to the administration and bring the rural area's functional groups closer to the Panchayat.

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Each Anchal Panchayat has a secretary. The Pradhan will rely on him for assistance and counsel as he goes about his work. According to extensive field research conducted in conjunction with a study of the Panchayati Raj Institution across various districts in West Bengal, the Pradhan has emerged as the de facto village leader, with the Secretary serving as the Anchal Panchayat's top bureaucrat.

The Government of West Bengal establishes the recruitment process, terms of employment, salary and benefits, and retirement age for the Secretary to the Anchal Panchayat. The State Government has selected him for the position. The Director of Panchayats chooses the Secretary on the advice of the Sub-divisional Magistrate.

If you want to work as the Secretary to the Anchal Panchayat, you need to have at least passed the School Final Examination or an equivalent exam. If a candidate is otherwise qualified for appointment to the position of Secretary to the Anchal Panchayat but lacks the required educational background, the State Government may waive the requirement. However, he will not be officially approved for the position until he has finished the required training.

Secretaries to Anchal Panchayats are subject to the same rules regarding leave and discipline as the lowest-ranking ministerial officers in the Subdivisional Magistrate's office. The Pradhan may approve a secretary's request for unscheduled time off. On the recommendation of the Pradhan, the Block Development Officer (also known as the Inspector of Panchayats) grants leave other than casual leave. The District Panchayat Officer is the only person the Pradhan should contact about disciplinary action against the Secretary. The Officer of the District Panchayat is authorized to take whatever action he deems necessary. Any decision made by the District Panchayat Officer is subject to appeal to the District Magistrate, whose decision is final.

Secretaries, like civil servants, are required to devote their full time to the Anchal Panchayats and are not permitted to work for any other organization. And just like government employees, they're barred from engaging in any sort of politics.

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There is a lot of overlap between being a member of a government cadre and being the Secretary of the Anchal Panchayat, at least up to the points mentioned above. One such provision is as follows: "The salary and allowances of the Secretary shall be paid out of the Anchal Panchayat Fund." This creates a distinction. The State Government provides funding to the Anchal Panchayat to cover the Secretary's salary and benefits. The State Treasury is responsible for paying civil servants' salaries and benefits. So, rather than being treated as civil servants, Secretaries are seen as the personal staff of the Anchal Panchayats. The Government appoints the Secretaries, pays for their salaries and benefits (directly and indirectly), and establishes their terms of service. However, they are still not considered civil servants. It's a major loophole in the law that needs to be fixed.

The Panchayat Secretaries are considered government employees in many states (including Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, and Kerala). The original Bill in West Bengal sought to incorporate the Secretary to the Anchal Panchayat into the government bureaucracy. There was a commotion among the position holders. If the Secretary works for the government, he may view himself as more important than the Pradhan and the other Anchal Panchayat members. Sri Iswar Das Jalan, who was the Minister for Local Self-government at the time, thought the position members' argument was without merit. Sri Jalan contended that the I.A.S. Officers in West Bengal are the Secretaries of the various Departments. The Union Government is responsible for selecting these, Officers. They continue to work for the State's Ministers in charge of various agencies, Anchal Panchayat Secretaries are also responsible to their Pradhan's. Although Pradhan's come and go, their secretaries -will always be there to support them in their endeavours. You can also point to the Minister, the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad, the President of the Anchalik Parishad, and the Pradhan of the Anchal Panchayat, all of whom are elected positions. In contrast, state department secretaries, Zill Parishad executive officers, and Anchalik Parishad secretaries all work for the government.

However, contrary to popular belief, the Secretary of the Anchal Panchayat is not a civil servant.

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Members of the Opposition, however, preferred a system in which the Anchal Panchayat selected the Anchal Secretaries. However, mistakes can be made with this system. The appointment of the Anchal's Secretary would be based on party, caste, communal, and similar considerations if the Anchal had the authority to appoint and dismiss its secretary. It will divide the Anchal into rival groups. The Anchal Panchayat's reputation will suffer as a result. There will be no job stability for the Secretary, and no room for advancement.

Sri Jalan, however, gave in to pressure from the opposition and crafted a compromise solution. The Slate Government will appoint secretaries, and it will be responsible for paying the secretaries' salaries and benefits, but those funds will go into the Anchal Panchayat Fund. The Secretary will work for and be compensated by the Anchal Panchayat. This is why it is planned to have the Secretary report to two different people. This is the role of the Anchal Panchayat's current Secretary. An amendment to the Act is needed to remove the possibility of dual control.

The authors argue that the local government workforce would be better off united under the umbrella term "Local Government Services," and being staffed through an impartial "Local Government Service Commission," similar to the impartial "Municipal Service Commission" in the Calcutta Corporation. Workers in the "Local Government Services" must have clear job descriptions, job security, and opportunities for advancement.

A total of 2,924 Anchal's live in Bengal, and they are all tested. Every Anchal Panchayat has a secretary. The Anchal Panchayat's Secretary is in charge of the organization's administrative functions and must compile the Anchal Panchayat's annual budget estimate of income and expenditures as well as its financial statements and plans for the coming year. The Secretary may be delegated authority by the Anchal Panchayat. If the need arises, the Anchal Panchayat can provide the services of its Secretary to the Gram Panchayat. The Secretary of the Anchal Panchayat also serves as the Secretary of the Nyaya Panchayat, responsible for maintaining records of its proceedings and decisions and performing other duties as may be determined by the Nyaya Panchayat. The Secretary of the Anchal Panchayat is also responsible for many

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other things in the areas of food and supply, relief, agriculture, irrigation, education, and health, but these are done on a more informal basis.

The Anchal Panchayat only employs a secretary. In India, the Pradhan acts as a liaison between citizens and the government. Except for affixing the Pradhan's signature, the Secretary handles all of the Anchal Panchayat's business behind the scenes. When the Pradhan is unable to do his job because he is weak, lazy, or inefficient, the Secretary can use him to get what he wants. If everyone in the Anchal Panchayat, including the Pradhan, lacks formal education, the Secretary becomes the de facto leader of the group. If, on the other hand, the Anchal Panchayat is comprised of people who are well-informed, engaged, intelligent, and competent, they will be able to contribute significantly to the policymaking process, and the Secretary will be compelled to fulfil the duties assigned to him.

In the Anchal Panchayat, the Secretary acts as the Chief Executive. He plays an important part in ensuring the success of the Panchayati raj Institution in rural areas. Investigations conducted on the ground revealed that proper decisions made by the Anchal Panchayat had not been carried out. As well, in a small number of Anchal's, it was discovered that the Pradhan and Secretary had a tense working relationship. In some Anchal's, the Pradhan and Secretary are at odds because the Pradhan considers the Secretary to be an insignificant clerk, while the Secretary considers himself to be superior to the Pradhan.

But if the Secretary is competent and well-trained, he can assist the people and the members of the Anchal Panchayat in making the organization function more smoothly. While many rural communities share common goals, "many Secretaries have neither the proper training nor the capacity to bring people together to work for common end." This is a contributing factor to the poor performance of the Panchayati raj system in West Bengal. There needs to be consistent, in-depth training for the Secretaries of the Anchal Panchayats. They must have completed the Ullage level Workers training in addition to any other prerequisites. They need the same employment and advancement opportunities as Ullage Workers.

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As mentioned before, the Anchal Panchayat is tasked with supervising the Dafadars and chowkidars operating within its territory. However, it is up to the State Government to decide how many Dafadars and Chowkidars an Anchal Panchayat should employ, how much they should be paid, what kind of equipment they should use, and everything else concerning their hiring, working conditions, authority, retirement, disciplinary action, and termination. These rules are a direct copy of Section 21(1) of the Bengal Tillage Self-Government Act of 1919, which states, "The number of Dafadars and Chowkidars to be employed in a Union, the salary to be paid to them, and the nature and cost of their equipment shall be determined from time to time by the district magistrate after consideration of the views of the Union Board."

Dafadars and Chowkidars are now jointly supervised by the state government and the Anchal Panchayat, as was the case previously with the Act of 1919 and as is the case with the current Act of 1957. The citizens of West Bengal are not in favour of having two sets of authorities. When it comes to law enforcement in rural areas, an Anchal Panchayat has very little room for autonomy. It contributes to the upkeep of the Dafadars and Chaukidars but has limited say over their operations.

Before the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884, cities in Bengal were expected to foot the bill for law enforcement. However, due to widespread public outcry, this obligation was removed. There was a lot of public discontent with the Chowkidari cess in Bengal before independence, and now we see the same outmoded provision included in the new law. No one, not even the well-to-do in the various Municipalities and Corporations, is expected to pay any sort of tax to ensure the safety of their lives and possessions. When it comes to protecting their property, however, the poor villagers are expected to pay taxes to the Chowkidari. This is a paradox, no doubt. To add, the State Government should fund the rural police force because maintaining law and order is their job. Currently, the State Government helps pay for some of the expenses associated with maintaining Dafadars and Chowkidars.

This Act largely reprints Section 23 of the West Bengal Village Self-Government Act, which enumerates the chowkidar's various powers and responsibilities. His shifts span the whole day and night. The chowkidar is still considered a part-time worker. Incredibly, he is being paid so little. It is usually late and irregularly paid.

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The Anchal Panchayat is tasked with a relatively small number of duties compared to the Gram Panchayat, which is responsible for a wide range of municipal development and welfare initiatives. These include:

- a) Jurisdiction over the Anchal Panchayat Fund established per Section 55;
- b) Levying, assessing, and collecting any taxes, rates, or fees required by Section 57;
- c) Care and feeding of Dafadars and Chowkidars under its watchful eye;
- d) Nyaya Panchayat's governing document and operational framework.
- e) Carried out in accordance with State Government directives. Additionally, the State Government may delegate authority over estates owned by the State to the Anchal Panchayat.

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CHAPTER - 6

ASSESSMENT OF PANCHAYATI RAJ BODY FINANCES IN WEST BENGAL

6.1 OVERVIEW

To effectively carry out their responsibilities, local governments must be provided with sufficient funding. So, providing the Panchayati Raj bodies with sufficient funding to allow them to carry out their duties is one of their most fundamental requirements. West Bengal's rural local bodies can draw from the following sources for their budgets and amenities:

- a) Grants and loans made available to Panchayati Raj institutions from the Central and State Governments;
- b) Income collected from levies such as taxes, duties, cesses, etc., that are within the purview of local governments.
- c) Contributions made voluntarily by the people, as well as gifts from philanthropic individuals.
- d) Money earned through various means (such as investments, properties, or jobs).

6.2 FINANCES TO PANCHAYAT RAJ

The Gram Panchayat fund stores all of a Gram Panchayat's money, which is the foundation of the Panchayati Raj system in North Bengal. Allotments from the Anchal Panchayat, donations, earnings from endowments, trusts, and businesses, and any other money the Grata Panchayat receives (such as from the Anchalik Parishad, the Zonal Government, or the Central Government) go into this pot. A government notification from just a few years ago transferred control of the Gram, Panchayats' ponds and ferries to the Anchal Panchayats. There is no autonomous revenue stream for West Bengal's Gram Panchayats. Taxation authority has not been delegated to gram Panchayats under the Act. They also have zero ability to self-fund. Gram Panchayats typically do not receive grants from the State Government or the Parishads directly; instead, these funds

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are distributed to the communities' individual governing bodies via the Anchal Panchayats. For example, the State Government gives each Anchal Panchayat a one-time payment of Rs. 1,300.00 for development purposes, which is then distributed to the gram Panchayats that make up its membership. However, the government did not provide this funding in 1970-71. So, the Gram Panchayats have little choice but to rely heavily on whatever financial allocations the Anchal Panchayat decides to make. Each Anchal Panchayat allocates funds to the Gram Panchayats under its control based on the following criteria:

- 1) The amount that can be shared,
- 2) How much money was collected from each Gram Sabha as some sort of tax, toll, fee, or rate, and
- 3) The annual budgeted sum needed by the relevant Gram Panchayats to carry out their responsibilities and functions.

After covering its own expenses (such as those associated with its own administration and the upkeep of the rural police force), an Anchal Panchayat can contribute only a small amount to the gram Panchayats it serves. It has been the author's experience that the Gram Panchayats he has visited have neither trusts nor endowments, nor do they receive significant gifts or public contributions beyond the costs associated with sinking a few tubes well in the prosperous areas of those gram Panchayats. Gram Panchayats are responsible for social services, while Anchal Panchayats handle law enforcement and the courts. However, Gram Panchayats' financial resources are so low that their many duties and responsibilities are largely symbolic, just as they were under the Union Board. As a result, people no longer have faith in these establishments.

As for outlays, the Gram Panchayats put their funds toward infrastructure like roads and culverts in addition to the costs associated with running the government. Establishment costs are relatively low at between Rs. 10.00 and 30.00 per year because they do not employ any permanent staff. Depending on the specific situation, the Gram Panchayat's initial setup costs could be quite reasonable. The administrative costs of a proliferation of rural local authorities are higher than that of the union Board they replaced, at the expense of rural local development. This is because the costs of running

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each individual Gram Panchayat must be added to the establishment fees of the parent Anchal Panchayat. Whether or not the costs associated with setting up so many different levels of government in rural areas are worthwhile depends on how much interest they manage to drum up among the locals. However, they have failed spectacularly in this regard, and a quorum is rarely reached at Gram Sabha meetings. Perhaps a lack of resources available to the organizations set up for this kind of political purpose is to blame for their inability to succeed. The separation of powers and duties between the taxing authority (the Anchal panchayat) and the executing authority (the gram panchayat) may also be to blame. For survival, the gram panchayats rely on 'hand-outs' from the Anchal panchayat, despite being the only directly elected authorities and performing a wide variety of mandatory and discretionary duties. The latter controls the meagre budget allocated to these decentralized tiers of Panchayati raj and is responsible for tax collection, village police, and the distribution of grants. Moreover, the gram panchayats' current extraordinary financial weakness is in stark contrast to their role as the foundation stones of the new structure. When the Anchal panchayat is included, they are in the same position as the old union boards; the only difference is that they now receive significantly more money in grants. However, grants that account for more than 60% of local income, and which are typically designated for specific purposes, are incompatible with the local self-governing institutions.

Moreover, the meagre income of the Gram Panchayats is not properly utilised at all. However, almost all Adhyaksha's are said to observe the male in the breach and receive support from the members who want to have a well sunk or road constructed near their residence or near the houses of their favourite persona, despite the requirement that they deposit the cash balance in the Postal Savings Bank.

Anchal Panchayats' available funds include:

- a) Expenditures incurred by the State Government for both Routine and Unusual Expenditures (such as the Dafadar and Chaukidar Maintenance Fund)
- b) Tax, fees, and interest rates.
- c) Funding provided by the Zoroastrian Parliament (zilla Parishad) or other regional bodies.

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- d) Money from sources such as loans, gifts, contributions, and trust or endowment pay-outs penalties and fines levied by the law, and
- e) The Anchal Panchayat's total income, including money from the sale of both tangible and intangible assets.

Unlike Gram Panchayats, Anchal Panchayats have the authority to collect a variety of taxes, both mandatory and discretionary, in order to pay for its obligations under the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957.

- a) Charges on real estate and structures,
- b) Profession, occupation, and employment taxation,
- c) Fees associated with vehicle registration,
- d) Rates for utilities like water, electricity, and gas,
- e) Costs associated with maintaining adequate restroom facilities at places of worship and other similar destinations frequented by pilgrims.

It is interesting to note that the Anchal Panchayats, which have replaced the previous Union Boards, have access to a much broader range of taxation sources. Aside from "taxes on lands and buildings" and "taxes on professions, callings, and employments," all other taxes and fees in West Bengal are entirely optional. Additionally, the majority of these income sources are inflexible, and the local authority is hesitant to fees and rates that are discretionary in nature, according to the Santhanam Committee's findings. That 'levy of at least a few compulsory taxes is essential not only to ensure every Panchayat a small income from its own resources but also to emphasize the fact that It is a self-governing body' is shared by all of the members of Panchayati Raj Finances. Compulsion is necessary on the ground of putting the structure on a solid financial foundation and assuring a satisfactory standard of services which the local bodies are obligated to provide; house taxes, profession taxes, and vehicle taxes are all ideally suited to the task. But the Act's practice of compulsory taxation is undemocratic because it limits the fiscal autonomy of the Anchal Panchayats, which are themselves democratic institutions.

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6.3 SOURCES OF FINANCE TO PANCHAYATS

Anchal Panchayats have limited resources in relation to the demands placed upon them. They are hesitant to fully exploit even these meagre sources, as evidenced by their unwillingness to impose taxes and their unwillingness to make an effort to collect those they impose, for fear of alienating the Anchals.

In 1967–1968, the Anchals relied primarily on revenue from land and building taxes. Eighty-nine percent of the total current assessment was on land, and buildings, according to section 57 (taxes, rates, and fees) of the West Bengal Panchayat Act. Twelve percent of the total current assessment is attributable to the aforementioned subsection (b) (through professions, trades, and callings). The current assessment was 9% of the total current demand under section 57(2) (via vehicle registration fees, Nyaya Panchayats' fees, sanitation fees, water rates, and conservancy rates). Since assesses cannot be required to submit any statement of their properties along with an estimate of their annual income, tax assessment is often arbitrary. It is also common practice to underestimate tax liability in areas such as property valuation and non-farm income. For the most part, wealthy people are the ones who have managed to get themselves elected to the positions of Pradhana or other members of the Anchals. To protect their own finances, they will artificially lower the value of their own and their friends' and family members' homes. Valuation of immovable properties is done in an arbitrary fashion because no laws exist to regulate the assessment of land and buildings. Underestimating the true value of something is possible in this case. The current Act and Rules give tax evaders more room to manoeuvre because there is no minimum tax rate. Unfortunately, very few Anchals actually collect their taxes at the maximum rate permitted by the Act and the Rules.

Again, unless a scientific process of assessing properties and valuation thereof is developed, there will be no significant increase in the income from taxation of properties. Expert valuers are appointed in all Corporations and Municipalities to provide the basis for assessment, but due to financial constraints, such an independent agency is not available to the Anchals. Consequently, a non-government organization like the one in Andhra Pradesh is desperately required. If that can't happen

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right now, then perhaps the Sub-Registrar, Junior Land Reform Officer, and Sub-Assistant Engineer of the area could confer with the Anchalik Parishad to give them the authority to set prices for different types of land and buildings in the area. For tax purposes, the Anchal panchayats should be required to adhere to the Rich valuation. Since a maximum rate of taxation has been established, the Act should also stipulate a minimum rate of taxation in percentage terms.

Examining the sum of assessment revenue on a yearly basis. After a period of steady growth from 1960–1961, assessment income began to decline the following two years, resulting in a financial shortfall. Again, there was a rhythmic rise in wealth between 1964 and 1967. In 1967–68, the lack of revenue was noticed once again. This is a financially positive situation for Kane. In 1966–1967, it was discovered that while the assessment per Anchal had increased, collection per Anchal had decreased dramatically. Also, in 1967–1968, the assessment per Anchal went down, indicating a slight rise in collections per Anchal. The lack of consistency shown by the village Panchayats in their assessment and collection work is a major contributor to the erratic trend observed. As the Government failed to organize the long overdue elections, public interest in the Panchayats grew.

In most cases, the poor are the ones who must. However, the relatively wealthy do not always pay their taxes on time, so Buies outlined a method for collecting back taxes and penalties. Once the defaulters' list has been published, the Anchal Panchayats can issue a distress warrant or distraint if the taxes due remain unpaid. While the Anchal Panchayats face a growing problem of arrear demand, they rarely, with a few notable exceptions, use legal mechanisms to collect on overdue taxes and other obligations. Whatever the reasons, they highlight the complete lack of control and inability to effectively collect from assesses. The demand for realisation of outstanding dues becomes time-barred after two years, and the evaders are released from their obligation to pay the arrears of the tax, rates, and fees. To recover all of the demand made under the West Bengal Panchayat Act under the Public Demands Recovery Act, it is argued that the Act should be applied to the demand made under the West Bengal Panchayat Act. If an Anchal Panchayat is unable to collect its debts through distraint, it must notify the relevant authority and file a recovery petition using the certificate procedure. In

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order to take swift action, the Extension Officer, Panchayats should be given certificate powers. Before issuing a license to a resident of a Panchayat area, the relevant government agencies must ensure that all owed taxes, fees, etc. have been paid in full. If this were to happen, it would boost morale within the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The author raises the issue of a current anomaly in vehicle registration in this context. If a vehicle has already been registered with a Municipality or Corporation, the Anchal Panchayat cannot register it again under the Hackney Carriages Act.

6.4 SOURCE OF FINANCE THROUGH TAXES

Taxes must be paid to the relevant Municipal authority if vehicles registered with an Anchal Panchayat enter any Municipal area more than twice per week. This discrepancy needs to be fixed, and all cities and the surrounding Anchal's should use the same procedure for vehicle registration.

An Anchal Panchayat receives a yearly lump sum of Rs. 1,500 from the State Government to be distributed among its constituent gram Panchayats for development works. However, the Anchal can barely afford to give more than Rs.100 to each of the gram Panchayats under its jurisdiction. An Anchal also receives a government subvention equal to half the salary of the rural police and the full salary of the Secretary of the Anchal Panchayat. Although it was granted the authority to auction ponds and ferries a few years ago, this source of income is extremely limited due to the fact that the vast majority of ponds are owned by the Zilla Parishads. Similarly, only a small fraction of Zilla Parishads and Anchalik Parishads are in a position to give money to the Anchal Panchayats. There is a dearth of public donations and gifts to the Anchal Panchayat's coffers.

As for costs, the Anchal Panchayats are required to employ a secretary, whose full salary is subsidized by the government. But the relevant Anchal Panchayat must chip in between Rs. 15,000 and 30,000 per month from its own fund to cover the Secretary's expenses.

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An Anchal Panchayat is also responsible for employing a force of Dafadars' and Chaukidars to keep an eye on things, deter criminal activity, and safeguard residents and their possessions within the area under its purview. On average, each Anchal Panchayat employs ten Dafadar and Chaukidars who earn R3.64.00 and Rs. 54.00 per month, respectively; however, only half of their salary is reimbursed by the Government through grants to the Anchal Panchayat. As a result, the Anchal Panchayat is required to spend nearly Rs.275.00 per month out of its own fund towards the maintenance of the rural police.

In addition to these fixed costs, the Anchal Panchayat must pay variable costs for things like the Anchal Office's rent, the rural police's equipment, office supplies, printing, etc. Large Anchal families sometimes pay for an extra Secretary. This means that only 25% of an Anchal Panchayat's income is available for redistribution to the constituent Gram panchayats for development works, as the remaining 75% goes toward establishment and contingent charges.

Except for donations and grants, the Anchalik Parishads in West Bengal have no reliable source of income. There is a long list of things on which an Anchalik Parishad can impose tolls, rates, and fees according to the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act, 1963. However, this authority is severely constrained by the Anchal Panchayat's and the zilla Parishad's shared authority over the imposition of tolls, rates, and fees. At any toll-bar established by it on any road other than a "kutcha" road or any bridge, and with respect to any ferry established by it or under its management, the Anchalik Parishad may levy tolls on persons, vehicles, or animals.

Other possible charges and prices are as follows.

- a) Fees associated with registering a vehicle;
- b) A cost for providing restrooms at fairs and other public events within its purview that have been designated by the government;
- c) A licensing fee for a hat or market operating within its borders;
- d) The Anchalik Parishad sets the water and lighting rates for its territory.

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It should be noted that the Anchalik Parishads did not adopt the new bye-laws and models that had been sent to them by the State Government. They had no interest in using this part of the Act to help the institutions become self-sustaining.

Because of this, the Anchalik Parishads must rely heavily on grants and contributions from the Central Government, the State Government, and the parent Zilla Parishad. However, the zilla Parishad can only provide significant financial aid if it is financially stable. In most cases, Zilla Parishads redistribute some of the government funding they receive to their constituent Anchalik Parishads without establishing clear criteria or principles for the redistribution. Under this system, the Anchalik Parishads will not know for sure how much money will be awarded.

The Anchalik Parishad does not receive direct funding from the Central government. However, the Study Team on Finances for the Panchayati Raj recommended that a yearly average per capita grant of Re.1.00 be made available to each Panchayat at the Block level, with the money being split evenly between the Union and the State Governments and used to pay for the salaries of Panchayati Raj employees. Yet, no steps have been taken in this direction as of yet. Consequently, the Anchalik Parishad relies heavily on State grants for funding. These grants come in three forms: general grants and contributions, allotments made for the various development schemes of State Departments, and allotments made under the schematic Block Budget.

6.5 FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

The Anchalik Parishads are facing critical issues due to a lack of money for development projects and an inability to collect sufficient revenue through taxes, fees, and other means. It is undeniable that the Anchalik Parishads hold the keys to resolving many of the issues at hand, yet to date, no concerted effort has been made by these organizations to fully harness their ability to mobilize resources in pursuit of self-sufficiency. Also, it is practical for the government to allow the Anchalik Parishad to claim its fair share of certain revenues, such as the Entertainment Tax, Excise Duties, Sales Tax, Income Tax, Agricultural Income Tax, etc., that are collected within the Anchalik Parishads' respective areas of responsibility. If the Panchayat needs more money, they can add a surcharge of cm stamp duty for any transfers of real estate. The

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general populace is unaffected because the duty is paid by the property purchaser. However, the federal and state governments may provide loans to an Anchalik Parishad against its assets to help it weather a financial storm. However, trust is central to the democratic decentralization philosophy, and it is possible that the Government did not trust the Panchayat enough to give them a larger share of the revenues in order to spark widespread excitement among rural residents.

The Zilla Parishad receives the same funding from the 1985 Act as the Anchalik Parishad does. Anchalik Parishads and other local governments provide financial support, as do the federal and state governments. It is authorized to raise, with the approval of the State Government, loans on security of its assets from time to time and is eligible to receive loans from either the Central or State Government. As was previously mentioned, the Zilla Parishad shares jurisdiction over such matters as tolls, fees, and rates with the Anchalik Parishads. The Zilla Parishad's coffers are augmented by property and income tax payments, donations, and interest from trusts and endowments set up in its name.

Income from ferries, canals, license fees, rent from lands and buildings, fisheries, tree sales, fines, and cattle pounds are some of the current Zilla Parishads' independent sources of income.

6.6 FUNDS FROM STATE GOVERNMENT

The State Government provides the Zilla Parishads with grants to operate dispensaries, augmentation grants, and subvention for the payment of Dearness Allowances to its employees, just as it did for the previous District Boards. The government provides Zilla Parishads with monetary aid to improve hygiene and public health. The Government is also distributing a share equal to 5% of the land revalue raised from the districts, with each Zilla Parishad keeping 25% as its share and redistributing the remaining 75% to its constituent Anchalik Parishads. Generally speaking, this is not sufficient. By transferring just 25% of land revenue to the Zilla Parishad, an additional Rs. 150 lakhs per year would be generated for the Zilla Parishads. In 1967–1968, the Zilla Parishads shared a total of Rs. 23,71,612,03, or 21 percent of the net income of

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Rs. 1,14,80,522,94, which was made up of land revenue, augmentation grants, and subvention for D.A. to the staff.

The government is also distributing funds from the Public Works and Roads cess to the Zilla Parishads. Revenue collected from the Road cess is crucial to the zilla Parishads' budgets. In accordance with the Cess-Act of 1880, the federal government is responsible for collecting these. This act establishes an annual rate cap below which Parishads must provide annual rate recommendations. The annual valuation ceiling is quite low at just 6 paise in the Rupee. However, research shows that only half of this rate has been set in ten of the fifteen Zilla Parishads. To add insult to injury, the government's current Public Works Cess rate is significantly lower than the highest rate allowed by law. If only the Public Works Cess is increased, the State Government of West Bengal estimates that it will bring in an extra Rs.20 lakhs for the zilla Parishads.

The establishment of popularly elected bodies seeks to encourage people to voluntarily contribute money and resources to a development program. The prediction, however, has been disproved. In 1965–66, local contributions were not received at all by seven districts, and by the other eight districts, local contributions were only made in the early stages of rural water supply schemes. Some funds were collected as a local contribution for village road projects in Birbhum and Jalpaiguri. The level of citizen engagement could improve if rural governments were given a larger share of the Community Development Block Schematic budget. However, it appears that the State Government does not appear to have laid out any pattern of local contribution for the vast majority of other rural development schemes, with the exception of a few like rural Water Supply.

Since the zilla Parishads rely heavily on funding from the State Government, it is clear that the latter must find other ways to make money if they are not to become completely dependent on outside assistance. Without the zilla Parishads developing their own sources of income, it will be impossible to even maintain existing facilities, such as roads and dispensaries, let alone undertake new development works.

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In fact, the closing balance was more than the total an expenditure during the year in the case of Darjeeling and Midnapore. This was likely the result of the government realizing funds for schemes that were either not implemented in time or were not far enough along to fully absorb the releases. While it is understandable that a new organization would experience some growing pains in its first few years of operation, it is also clear that the zilla Parishads have not yet matured into stable agencies for implementing schemes.

6.7 LOW INCOME SOURCES

In West Bengal, the Gram and Anchal Panchayats, the two lowest-level Panchayati raj bodies, have been provided with an insufficient source of income, according to an analysis of the financial position of the various Panchayati raj bodies. They are not given many tax breaks, and those they do get are rarely beneficial or flexible. They don't even make the most of these meagre resources, so they rely heavily on the government for handouts. This is bad for the people because it weakens their ability to take responsibility for themselves and their institutions.

One of the main reasons for the poverty of local finances in west Bengal is the poor fiscal management, which has slowed the progress of local authorities. Sound fiscal management is essential for carrying out major administrative operations, and the budget is the primary tool used for this purpose. Fiscal concept and the performance concept are the two main ideas in budgeting. The local governments in West Bengal are subject to the fiscal concept rather than the performance concept. the Buies have established a schedule of dates to ensure proper synchronization of budgetary activities across all tiers of rural government, as the budgets of the Gram Panchayat, the Anchal Panchayat, the Achalik Parishads, and the Zilla Parishad are all interdependent. Every year, the budget process kicks off in July and wraps up in March.

6.8 DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIZATION IN RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

West Bengal's rural local government has adopted the concept of democratic centralization rather than democratic decentralization in its financial administration,

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effectively making the Gram Panchayat irrelevant. Due to the low volume of business conducted at the Gram Panchayat level, there is no dedicated organization for fiscal management. The budget is typically drafted by the Gram Panchayat's Adhyaksha, with assistance from the Anchal Panchayat's Secretary. He then arranges for the proposed budget to be brought before the Gram Panchayat for final approval. According to the Act, the Gram Sabha's annual general meeting is where the budget estimate approved by the Gram Panchayat will be discussed and recommendations made before being sent on to the Anchal Panchayat for further review. However, it is unclear from the Act whether or not the Gram Panchayat is required to adjust the budget in light of the Gram Sabha's suggestions. The Gram Sabha does not allow for a resubmission of the budget in such a situation. Only this provision is made in the rule: "Within seven days after the meeting of the gram Sabha, another meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be convened by the Adhyaksha to consider the budget having regard to the recommendation of the Gram Sabha." At that gathering, the budget will be locked down. However, this is unambiguously stated in the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. A budget estimate for the coming fiscal year, which begins on April 1st, is prepared by each gram panchayat and presented to the Gaon Sabha at its 'kharif' meeting. A similar account of its actual and expected receipts and expenditures for the year ending on the 31st March last preceding such report is also laid before the 'Rabi' meeting of the Gaon Sabha. The Gaon Panchayat's annual estimate can be approved or sent back for revision by the Gaon Sabha, and the latter body can pass a recommendatory resolution in regards to the report. Athenian democracy thus survives at the grass-roots level of rural communities.

Before the middle of 1967, each Gram Panchayat's budget was sent to the Anchal Panchayat for approval, along with the Anchal Panchayat's comments on the budget. The Block Development Officer, who is also the ex-officio Inspector of Panchayats, would then send his approval, along with any changes he deemed necessary, back to the Anchal Panchayat. A recent government announcement revised this practice. The Anchal Panchayat can now approve a revised budget that takes into account the needs of all of the constituent Gram Panchayats.

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The Anchal Panchayat's Secretary, working under the supervision of the Pradhan, is responsible for drafting the organization's annual budget, which must then be presented to the Anchalik Parishad for approval. The Anchalik Parishad can either approve or reject the proposed budget, sending it back to the Anchal Panchayat for further revisions. The revised budget must then be presented to the Anchalik Parishad for final approval in light of the changes.

The budgets of the individual Anchal Panchayats cannot be expected to be thoroughly reviewed at a single meeting of the entire Anchalik Parishad. On a regular basis, the Parishad approves the budgets that the Block Development Officer presents to them along with his own commentary. Block Development Officers frequently don't have time to investigate Anchal Panchayat budgets, so it's up to the E, Q.P. to do so. It has been proposed that the Standing Committee on Finance and Establishment of the Anchalik Parishad be given this authority in order to more thoroughly examine budgets.

An expert scrutiny alone should be provided, and this principle will ensure simplicity and speed in the finalization of budgets, proponents of this view argue, and it is wrong to submit the decision of an elected body to the judgement of another. However, because both the Anchal Panchayat and the Anchalik Parishad consist of the heads of their respective constituent lower tiers, the principle that a higher elected body should modify or approve the budget of a Gram or Anchal Panchayat is considered appropriate. Obviously, fiscal matters and tax implications need careful thought. However, action must be taken to avoid needless delays and ensure that local initiatives and interest are not hampered by the procedural checks. The government should not hesitate to adopt the principle of scrutiny by independent Government officials, as seen in Tamil Nādu, if the higher tiers are inclined to interfere with the budgets of the lower tiers in a discriminatory manner.

All of the aforementioned factors should be taken into account whenever the Zilla Parishad reviews and approves the Aechalik Parishad's budget. But in view of the composition of the Anchalik Parishad \sand the existence of an Executive Officer like the Block Development \ Officer, the external scrutiny and approval is a mere formality, and \ this may be abolished.

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More complexity is introduced into the fiscal management structure at the Anchalik Parishad level. The budget is technically the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (or Block Development Officer), but is usually handled by the Parishad's clerk. Subsequently, it will be presented to the Budget and Appropriations Panel. This Committee reviews the proposals, and then presents them to the Anchalik Parishad along with their recommendations. The Anchalik Parishad's adopted budget must be sent to the zilla Parishad, which can either approve it as-is or send it back to the Anchalik Parishad for revisions. After such revisions, the budget must be resubmitted to the zilla Parishad for approval.

Zilla Parishad's budget is also presented to the Zilla Parishad by the Executive Officer after being prepared by the Zilla Parishad's Standing Committee on finance and Establishment. The Parishad's adopted budget must be submitted to the State Government, which may approve it as-is or send it back to the Parishad for revisions. When such changes are made, the budget must be resubmitted to the State Government for approval.

Some citizens believe that the Zilla Parishad should not have to submit its budget to the State Government for review and approval because doing so would compromise the body's independence. However, they want the Parishad budget to be implemented immediately. The majority of the officials and non-officials interviewed by the present researcher agree, however, that the powers now vested in the Divisional Commissioner on behalf of the State Government are essential as they ensure the necessary and effective check upon the vagaries to which every Parishad is more or less subject. They fear that the Parishad's finances will become unorganized if the Divisional Commissioner's authority is revoked. This is because they believe that the money will be spent disproportionately on one department at the expense of the others. Given this, recommending that the Parishad be given unrestricted power over monetary policymaking is not practical. Rational oversight from without is required.

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It's impossible to overstate the value of careful budgeting. There is typically no correlation between projected costs and actual costs in rural community budgets at the grassroots level. In other words, these establishments are wholly to blame for this anomaly. They are not informed in a timely manner of the full amount of grants and subventions that are due to them from the State Government. The disgraceful inability to collect taxes is another major cause of unrealistic budgets.

The West Bengal Zilla Parishads rules, 1964 specifies, among other things, "to enable the Zilla Parishad to frame its budget, it shall be provided that " "The Planning and Development Commissioner, in consultation with other State Government departments, notifies each District Magistrate on July 1 of the likely Government grants, contributions, and other resources that may be made available during the following fiscal year to the Zilla Parishad and the Anchalik Parishads, as well as the likely allotments for these bodies. By the 31st of May prior to the fiscal year to which the budget relates, each relevant State Government department must have provided the Planning and Development Commissioner with all relevant data required for this purpose. Similarly, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Community Development must "inform each District Magistrate for communication to each Anchalik Parishad of the probable allotments which may be made available for expenditure in each Block during the following financial year under the different heads of the schematic block budget" by July 1st of each year." It is clear that the rules were drafted to inform the budgeting processes of the zilla and the Anchalik Parishads by laying out the range of possible grants and contributions. However, finalizing the State's Plan Budget a full year in advance makes this procedure impossible to implement, as the Plan Budget is rarely finalized before the start of the fiscal year to which it pertains (let alone the year before). Changes should be made to the rules or the process for government budgeting of Plan Schemes.

An audit of municipal budgets is both a necessity and a good idea. An accounting audit serves as a useful check on spending. Currently, an audit's goals are limited to finding errors and ensuring expenditures are lawful. When it comes to West Bengal's Gram and Anchal Panchayats, the Extension Officer for Panchayats serves as both a supervisor and auditor, and his oversight is typically not intended to improve things but rather to

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expose flaws. However, "the type of audit which is required is much broader in character than that at present exercised." What is required is "not a mere checking of payments to ascertain their legality," but rather "a thorough investigation of the financial methods and organization of the local authority with a view to their efficiency.... An audit of a local government's finances should be an efficiency audit first and foremost, with the goal of revealing, through the light of comparative statistics, the cost in meaningful terms of the various services provided by the council. The primary goal should be to use these statistics to compare and contrast the relative efficacy of different regions providing these services.

Zilla Parishad's Finance and Establishment Committee must conduct an audit of the alia Parishad fund at least once per quarter. However, the investigation revealed that the Committee rarely followed through with the quarterly audit of the Zilla Parishad fund, and that even when it did, the Committee usually only assigned this task to its chairman. In order to keep the books in order, it is necessary to hire a full-time Budget and Accounts Officer.

6.9 FINANCIAL STRUCTURE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ BODIES

A comprehensive analysis of the Panchayati Raj Bodies' financial structure in West Bengal reveals that their combined income is woefully inadequate to provide a stable financial footing for the organization. People are more likely to support a local government's efforts to increase revenue through taxation and other means if they believe those funds will be used to enhance existing public services, rather than to levy new ones. The villagers' growing demands for public services and community infrastructure have not been met by the villages' current level of development. Because of a lack of funds, many pressing public needs cannot be met. The lack of adequate funding is the primary obstacle to these rural local authorities effectively carrying out their duties. Rural areas have a smaller tax base and fewer lucrative tax options because of this. For this reason, they depend critically on the state to maintain their standard of living. It's become routine for them to petition the government for funding in order to engage in virtually any endeavour. However, federal funding comes with conditions that make it difficult for rural local governments to function independently, and this

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threatens the vitality of a democracy's underlying financial and administrative systems. It's true here as it is anywhere that he who pays the piper gets to choose the music. Therefore, the primary requirement in this field is to lessen the reliance of local governments on grants from the Exchequer.

The State legislature is responsible for establishing the Panchayati raj institutions. Therefore, the financial relationship between these bodies and the State Government is founded on the principle that, apart from the powers granted to them by the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 and the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act, 1965, these bodies have no inherent financial authority of their own. All costs associated with running the business, as well as any municipal, social welfare, or development programs, must come out of their own pockets. It stands to reason that rural governing bodies must be self-sustaining if they are to meet the needs of their constituents.

No separate funding is necessary for the Panchayati Raj bodies if they are merely seen as agents and arms of the State administration. The government must ensure that they have a stable source of income so that they can fulfil their many civic duties if they are to be seen as valuable members of the rural system. Each level of the Panchayati Raj bodies is a miniature government, and as such, it should be granted autonomy and sufficient funding to carry out its mandate. This is because these organizations "are primarily units of self-government at their own levels, and only secondarily agents and limbs of the State so administrative machinery."

It is the responsibility of the four-tier Panchayati Raj bodies in rural West Bengal to provide the people with municipal and civil amenities; if they fail to do so, the State Government of West Bengal will have to step in. However, if the local bodies can impeach the State Government, the State Government will not have to. In order for rural local bodies to do their jobs properly, they need access to sufficient, flexible, and self-sufficient funding. Therefore, the Constitution should establish a distinct separation of the State's and the Panchayati Raj's financial responsibilities. As a result, a State Finance Commission, along the lines of the National Finance Commission, is urgently required to evaluate the economic situations of rural and urban municipalities, to

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ascertain the necessities of each, and to divide the necessary funds between the municipalities and the State Government.

To further expand the potential for non-tax revenue, efforts should be made to assist rural local bodies in launching and managing profitable enterprises. It is indeed a matter of \ highest importance. A Panchayati Raj Industrial Corporation to assist, advise, and encourage rural local bodies to engage in profitable enterprises, and a Panchayati Raj Finance Corporation to provide financial backing for such endeavours, were both proposed as possible solutions.

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CHAPTER - 7

THE WEST BENGALI GOVERNMENT'S MONOPOLY OVER THE PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION

7.1 OVERVIEW

There has been much debate recently about how much power the state should have over the Panchayati Raj Institution. No matter the political system in place, the local level is always subordinate to the state and federal levels "Authorities at the municipal level can't be truly autonomous because doing so would elevate them to the status of states, which is outside the purview of local government. Since the Panchayati Raj bodies in West Bengal are political institutions established by statutes enacted by the State legislature, it stands to reason that they do not enjoy the same level of independence as the legislature itself " Legally speaking, state and municipal governments are merely legislative creations that can be established or abolished at will.

It has been noted that "the basic problem for any country establishing a system of local government is how to ensure that system manages to do three things simultaneously - these are: to develop as independent centres of creativity within the state; to foster political understanding and participation by the people in their own programmes; in the programmes of the state; and to ensure that these policies and programmes are carried out effectively and according to t The difficulties in balancing these three goals have been the subject of countless books. As the dialectic and the topic unfold, it becomes apparent, first, that no permanent equilibrium can be achieved between them. Some nations require more autonomy and less oversight, while others have the opposite need; furthermore, even within a nation, circumstances can shift over time and between different regions. For this reason, for instance, very strict control was imposed in Sudan at a time when political acrimony triumphed over the well-being of the local community. In the same vein, in areas where local authorities' knowledge is still in its infancy, stringent administrative oversight is necessary. The United Kingdom suffered under a similar situation until very recently, and the tight rein was only partially relaxed until the 1959 reforms. In the United Kingdom, they were probably kept around for too

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long, but nobody can dispute the government's wisdom in imposing its general policy and general standards upon the local authorities during the first forty or fifty years of the system. It is possible to give specific examples of local governments' reluctance to charge residents for services they deemed unnecessary and their attempts to save money by providing, at a substandard level, services that had actually been authorized by the national parliament. When local governments fail to accept the dire implications of the situation and refuse to implement the great education and action programme which will bring them to understand their responsibilities and privileges, their problems, and the methods of approaching solution to these, then action is required. This does not take into account the inadequate technical resources, particularly the lack of professional skills among local authorities in the early stages. The government must be ready to use coercion to ensure that its essential programs are implemented, and to take the necessary steps itself if necessary.

Thus, the extent to which local governments are subservient to the State Government varies greatly from nation to nation. In France, for example, regional governments believe it is their responsibility to implement federal policy within their jurisdictions. They have no real power and are simply representatives of the federal government. Comparatively, the local government structure in Britain is heavily shaped by law. The local government here sees its role as enforcing the law in accordance with the wishes of the people who live there, while still being subject to the overarching authority of the Central Government. The second method is widely used now outside of west Bengal. Without adequate oversight from the State Government, local bodies in rural areas are more likely to overstep their authority or make poor decisions. The State Government is also answerable to the State Legislature for the failures of these bodies. Since this is the case, the State Government imposes numerous regulations on them. The legislative, judicial, and executive branches are responsible for enforcing these regulations. Among these three spheres of influence, executive control is especially pervasive in West Bengal.

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Since the rural local bodies in this state are the brainchildren of the state legislature, their roles and responsibilities are defined in detail by law. The State Government of West Bengal has the authority under the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 to annex, separate, or transfer any portion of a Gram Panchayat. Last but not least, it can make regulations and bylaws to implement the laws.

By virtue of the Act of 1957, the executive has broad authority to oversee the Joint Committee and the Anchal and Gram Panchayats. Any office, service, work, or record of the two lower Panchayats may be inspected by the -Officers of the Panchayat Directorate (Director, lady Panchayat Officer, District Panchayat Officer. Inspector of Panchayats, Extension Officer, Panchayat), the Divisional Commissioner, the District Magistrate, and the Sub-Divisional Officer acting as the prescribed authority under the Act. Also, the Panchayats or the Joint Committee may be asked by these Officers to produce any book, record, or other document as well as to provide any return, plan, accounts, or report for the purpose of inspection or examination. Many people believe that the government's elaborate arrangements for monitoring rural local bodies have been expanded to the point where these organizations have effectively become government agencies. The Anchal Gram Panchayats are losing confidence and the will to act as a result of these arrangements. So far, the government has not presented a threat to the independence of these organizations, which is a relief.

West Bengal's Panchayats generally aren't as effective as they could be because their respective heads lack the necessary experience and education. Of course, the government must keep a close eye on these establishments, and the heads of these organizations don't mind one bit if their authority is eroded. Little to no high-ranking officials ever visit these facilities. Officers at the Block level oversee the Gram and Anchal Panchayats in the wake of deaths.

Also, if the director of Panchayats or the District Magistrate determines that a gram Panchayat or an Anchal Panchayat's actions are illegal or harmful to the public good, they can halt or reverse the action in question.

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When the prescribed authority interferes by suspending what has been done or is about to be done by the Panchayat, the aggrieved party has the right to appeal to the Commissioner of the Division, whose decision is final. Law and order in the district are the sole responsibility of the District Magistrate. ' Accordingly, if the Panchayats' actions threaten public safety, the District Magistrate has the absolute right to halt or reverse any resolution, order, or act passed by the Panchayats. It is possible, however, for political pressures to influence the decisions of the Director of Panchayats and the District Magistrate, who ultimately have the authority to determine the competence of the rural local body. Clearly, it would have been preferable to have the aggrieved Panchayats be able to appeal to an impartial Judiciary rather than the Divisional Commissioner.

7.2 STATE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

There is another aspect of government control which is more \ serious and undesirable. The Adhyaksha and Upadhyakha of the Gram Panchayat and the Pradhan and Upa-Pradhan of the Anchal Panchayat can be removed from office by the District Magistrate for reasons such as recalcitrance, ineptitude, and other similar reasons after being given an opportunity to explain themselves. The District Magistrate can also issue a show cause notice and remove an elected member of the Gram or Anchal Panchayat for reasons such as abuse of power, moral turpitude, incapacity, and prolonged absence (more than three months). Those who disagree with a District Magistrate's ruling can appeal to the Division's Commissioner within 30 days of the order's issuance; the Commissioner's decision will then stand as final.

As well as having the authority to remove any member or officeholder of any Panchayat, the State Government also has the authority to reconstitute the Gram or the, Anchal Panchayats if it is satisfied on the report of the District Magistrate that the Panchayats are persistently making default in performing their duties or exceeding or abusing their powers. The Government may extend the period of suspension for such further term, not exceeding two years, as it may consider necessary, but in no event for more than two years.

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Under the Bengal Municipal Act, there is no time limit on the application of the supersession provision. The Bengal Municipal Act is more stringent than the Infest Bengal Panchayat Act regarding municipal corporations, which states that the period of supersession cannot exceed two years. A President can assume executive power over an entire state, replacing both the local and state governments. So, it's not wrong to give the State Government the authority to make up for any mistakes.

According to the Constitution, both the federal government and individual states are responsible for national politics. Neither the preamble nor the body of the Constitution make any reference to local governments. State governments delegate authority to local governments, but should retain the ability to correct any mismanagement at the local level.

The government has two options if a Gram Panchayat or Anchal Panchayat fails to do its job or abuses its authority: it can either reconstitute the body or replace it entirely, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Many places have found that even after a new election, the same people tend to return to the local bodies that had been abolished, resulting in the continuation of maladministration. When this occurs, only supersession can put an end to the corruption.

Anchalik and zilla Parishads are both under the government's heavy hand. The State Government can reverse the decision of any Zilla Parishad, Anchalik Parishad, or Standing Committee thereof. If it believes the resolution is unlawful or harmful to the public interest, the government may take such action. Perhaps such a move by the government would be in the best interests of the people.

however, there are other forms of government control that are far more severe and invasive. The State Government can remove a zilla Parishad or an Anchalik Parishad from office if it proves incapable of carrying out its responsibilities or is consistently late in doing so. Due to having "an opportunity of making any representation against the proposed order," the top two bodies appear to be in a stronger position than the bottom two tiers when it comes to the power of supersession. Similar provisions of supersession with respect to District Boards were made in the Bengal Act III of 1885.

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The only distinction is the length of the supersession period. The previous law allowed for a three-year period, but the Act of 1963 only allows for two.

The government did not abolish any Parishads in accordance with Section 108 of the Zilla Parishads Act, 1963, until April of that same year. But in April, 1969, the Government of West Bengal issued an Ordinance to bring the zilla and the Anchalik Parishads under State control and appoint Administrators for these institutions, under a new Section - Section 109A – inserted in the Act by the Ordinance, and subsequently passed by the State legislature. All powers, duties, and functions that are normally exercised and performed by the zilla Parishad, the Anchalik Parishad, any Standing Committee, the Chairman or "Vice-Chairman of the zilla Parishad, or the President or Vice-President of the Anchalik Parishad shall, after the appointment of the Administrators, be exercised and performed, by the Administrator in such manner as the State Government directs. " The State Government may, by order, appoint a person to act as the Administrator for a zilla Parishad or an Anchalik Parishad, as the case may be, where the constitution of a zilla Parishad or an Anchalik Parishad has become defective by reason of a judgment, decree, or order of a competent court or for any other reason preventing it from functioning until it is reconstituted in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

Minister of the Panchayat Department said that the present constitution of the Zilla and the Anchalik Parishads established under the Act of 1963, had become defective, which is why the West Bengal zilla Parishads (Amendment) Bill, 1969 was brought before the Assembly. He emphasized that these groups would be ineffective until they were reorganized in line with the law. So, until the Anchalik Parishads and the Zilla Parishads were reconstituted, the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act provided for the appointment of an Administrator to exercise and perform their powers, duties, and functions.

The opposition claimed the Bill was introduced for purely political reasons and would have a negative impact on the populace. In response to a question from the opposition, the Minister explained that the legislation's goal was to clean up the Panchayati Raj government. Indulging in politics, if that's what he did, was perfectly acceptable.

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It's worth noting that the 1967 United Front Government had suspicions that some Parishads weren't making good use of government relief funds. Funding cuts were made. The new government wanted to abolish some Parishads due to their inefficiency and waste of taxpayer money, but despite their best efforts, they were unable to find any evidence of massive irregularities in the Parishads' finances. However, the Parishads were not eventually rendered obsolete due to the intervention of the Hon'ble High Court. The Government, however, was able to do what it had not been able to do in the two years prior to 1969 thanks to the West Bengal zilla Parishads (Amendment) Act, 1969. This looks like an instance of legislative despotism over state and county governments. To the extent that any responsible authorities agree with There needs to be serious thought given to whether the Panchayats should be impacted by the rise and fall of political parties, or whether conditions should be created so that the Panchayats can continue to operate as an undisrupted part of the Government.

The Government's last resort for maintaining order is to replace the local body with a more central one. Other than this extreme measure, the Government employs more tried-and-true methods of control, such as inspections. Any office, institution, or record, register, or other document maintained by the Anchalik or the Zilla Parishads may be inspected by the Commissioner or any other officer not below the rank of Deputy Collector. The officers have the authority to request any information they deem relevant from the two organizations.

Taking a disagreement between municipalities to court is highly undesirable because it breeds a culture of litigation and wasteful spending of public funds. Therefore, in the event of a disagreement between two or more Zilla Parishads, or between a Zilla Parishad and the Anchalik Parishad, the parties involved must take the matter to the State Government, whose decision shall be final.

It's a well-known fact that most municipal governments are short on vision and weak in the administration department. Therefore, the State Government is allowed to send any Officer to the meetings of the upper two tiers and of any Standing Committee thereof in order to supervise and guide these bodies by providing facts, information, and technical advice. The State Government is the sole authority with which to issue

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directives to the two higher tier Panchayats and to establish rules governing their recruitment, qualifications, pay scales, and conditions of service. As in France, the Panchayati Raj Institutions in West Bengal have been reduced to the role of an agent of the Government in the spheres of administration and development planning as a result of this sweeping power of control in the hands of the Government. When employees have complaints, they look to the State Government rather than their own institution, and when it comes to administrative and developmental planning, Panchayat leaders look to the Government for guidance. The rural local bodies are, indeed, in their infancy, and so they need a reliable system of guidance and supervision in their formative years. However, if this system of control is maintained for too long, it may stunt the development and initiative of these organizations. The Government should gradually exert less and less control over the Panchayati Raj Bodies to allow for the institutions to develop at a dynamic pace.

Local governments are subject to further federal oversight through the use of grant-in-aid programs. Increased government oversight can be traced back to the high ratio of federal grants to total rate revenue. Panchayats lose their independence because they have to follow the rules set by the central government in order to receive funding from the Panchayats' higher tiers or the government itself. Because "The diminished independence of local authorities is a reflection and in turn reflected by the diminished role of local sources of revenue," it follows that whoever pays the piper gets to call the tune.

In addition, the Act of 1957 grants the State Government the authority to authorize the doing of any matter or thing that appears to be necessary for the purpose of removing any dispute or difficulty concerning interpretation of any provision of this Act or any rule made thereunder, or any matter arising out of or relating to such interpretation, or any other matter not provided for in this Act, in the establishment, constitution, or operation of an Anchal Panchayat or a Gram Panchayat. This provision of the Act of 1957 has been dubbed the "Henry VIII Clause" by Mr. B. Mukherjee. It's hard to imagine a scenario in which the State Government has more authority. It is an example of administrative ukase usurping the role of courts in a clear case of jurisdictional conflict. To the extent that it is an administrative delegation, its legality, but not

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necessarily its propriety, may be unquestionable. A parallel law-making body is established through the administrative process when the legislature gives the State Government a blank check for "any matter not provided in the Act." It is argued that, legally speaking, the Act's flaw lies in its unlimited delegation of legislative power.

Control by the central government is weaker at the Zilla Parishad than at the lower three Panchayats. When the Zilla Parishad's Executive Officer completes his confidential report, the Parishad's Chairman will sign off on it before sending it to the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate will then forward the report to the State Government along with his thoughts on the matter. Though the District Magistrate is the State Government's primary representative in the district, he does not have direct authority over the Zilla Parishad in the same way that he does over the other subnational bodies. In this case, he has no say beyond providing feedback on the report.

The Block Development Officer is the government official in charge of the first three levels of the Panchayati Raj Institution. Executive Director of the Anchalik Parishad is B.D.O. in a purely ceremonial capacity. Through the S. D. O., he transmits the Parishad President's initialled confidential reports to the D.M., who in turn forwards them to the State Government along with his comments. In most cases, B, D. O. is a member of W.B.J.C.S. Working for the District Magistrate and the S.D. O., he is a member of the Department of Agriculture and Community Development. He has a team of nine Extension Officers assisting him. The Block Development Officer and the President of the Anchalik Parishad report to the Directorate's top officials, and the Extension Officers report to them. The B, D.O. is located as described by W.H. Morris-Jones: By making their own block specialist staff into subordinate assistants and by bossing the VLWs, "B.D.Os. more often than not found release from their own double subordination" (to the higher C.D, levels and to the Collector). Because of this, there are often disagreements and even stalemates among the members of the Panchayati Raj bodies in West Bengal due to the fact that they all have different loyalties.

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In West Bengal, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been accused of being heavily influenced by bureaucracy and paternalism. However, it must also be recognized that many retrograde forces, such as ignorance, incompetence, casteism, communalism, corruption, theft of public funds, favouritism, etc., are very much alive in rural areas. To put it simply, the Panchayati Raj is a dyarchy. A dyarchy, in this case, means that the people and the government will work together to better the community. Therefore, the role of the State Government in ensuring the efficiency of the rural local bodies is crucial. Governments are liable for ensuring that these bodies are well-structured, carry out their duties effectively, and contribute sufficiently to the execution of development programs. Thus, the State Government's oversight is not all negative; it also serves to direct, advise, and inspire the rural local bodies to participate actively in the development programs. However, it appears that rather than a positive, constructive form of government oversight, formal, negative oversight is being implemented in West Bengal. This view is supported by surveys conducted in various rural areas. The success or failure of West Bengal's village democracies is likely to be determined by the State Government's prescribed authority, which is vested with numerous broad powers. Self-governance in rural areas is a pipe dream if the prescribed authority is "prone to an authoritarian rule. The future of Panchayats as units of Self-Government is secure if he dedicates himself solely to the service of the villagers as a guide, even if that means forgoing the comforts of an official complex.

Monitoring and regulating the Panchayati Raj institutions is a complex and nuanced endeavour. There are times when political motives are at play here, and these are not meaningless occurrences. Therefore, a specialized group is required to provide guidance to the government on crucial matters of Panchayati Raj institution policy. "It Is necessary to provide a machinery by which such advice and guidance can be made available to them in a friendly and informal manner, and to decide the various issues and matters which come up to government with as little delay as possible. Given the breadth of responsibilities placed on rural local self-governing institutions, a strong body at the State Level is required to monitor and coordinate the actions of these bodies, as well as make recommendations to the State Government on issues requiring its attention.

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CHAPTER - 8

CONCLUSION

West Bengal's Panchayati Raj, like that of other Indian states, is based on the principle of "democratic decentralization," which entails the complete and total delegation of authority over matters of local and rural concern from central government to elected village councils, with full citizen participation. Obviously, this is a very important aspect. To a large extent, the Acts of 1957 and 1963 have not lived up to the lofty expectations of their authors. At the moment, rural local bodies in West Bengal serve more as arms and agencies of the State Government than as autonomous governing unit. Some of the underlying causes of this state of affairs include inadequate financial resources, excessive dependence on Government grants, too much bureaucratic control over the Panchayats, incompetent personnel (both elective and permanent), nepotism, corruption, and casteism of the local people.

In this State, Panchayati Raj got off to a terrible start. It took the government eight years, from 1956 to 1963, to establish the first of two tiers of village Panchayats. Rally in 1964, the Anchalik Parishad was formed at the Block level, and the zilla Parishad was formed at the district level. As a result, there is zero coordination and mutual understanding between these organizations. For a truly representative test of the new system as a coordinated whole, the Panchayati Raj should have been implemented across an entire District all at once.

No level of Panchayat government has held elections in quite some time. There were supposed to be elections for the Panchayati Raj bodies every four years. Electoral preparations had been put off until 1966 due to political instability, the war with Pakistan, and the resulting emergency. In order to put the election on a more democratic footing, the Front Government that took power in 1967 appointed Administrators to replace the previously elected representatives of the 2LHa and the Anchalik Parishads, and they also introduced a comprehensive Panchayat Bill in 1969. The coalition government was quickly toppled, however, and West Bengal was placed under the control of the president. As things stand politically, it could be argued that the

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administrative machinery is not in a position to give the holding of Panchayat elections the attention it deserves. This debate, alas, appears to be purely superficial. In spite of its stated commitment to giving Panchayati Raj a concrete form, the government seems to have always shown little interest in doing so. Repeatedly postponing the election of the rural local bodies is indicative of a government bureaucracy that is slow to act even in the face of an emergency. The Panchayat Bill has reportedly been brought up for discussion in the current administration. There is no doubt that this is a kind act. The time for thought is over; now is the time for action. Government should remain committed to the concept of making it so that "the Panchayats may function unaffected as an integral part of Government," despite the inevitable rise and fall of political parties that characterizes our political life. The second option's minimum guarantee is necessary if the Panchayati Raj bodies are to serve as effective units of self-government.

The final chapter makes an effort to summarize the issues and proposed solutions that have been briefly discussed in the preceding chapters with regard to rural local bodies in West Bengal. Improvements are needed to the structure, function, administration, and finances of West Bengal's Panchayats.

Sometimes there is reluctance to give the Panchayati Raj bodies the authority and resources necessary to carry out their local self-government responsibilities. But "Nationally, our focus is on Community Development. The Study Team on C.P claimed that N.E.S. arrived at the idea of democratic decentralization by expanding the concept of people's participation in community Development "The contribution of individuals does not consist solely of the provision of money, goods, or labour equal to some fraction of the total cost of a given undertaking. They are fully cognizant of the fact that all facets of Community Development are their responsibility and that the Government's involvement is limited to providing aid where it is required. As a result, we can confidently delegate authority and responsibilities to local governments while also providing them with the resources they need to carry them out. Sri S. S. Khera boldly argues that there should be no hesitance in entrusting the various panchayat institutions with the necessary authority, the functions, and the powers, as well as the resources, if the approach to Panchayati raj is to be consistent with the language and meaning of article 40 of the Constitution. Again, in our agrarian society, the Agriculture

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and Community Development Department and the Panchayat Department should be merged into a single entity to serve as a coordinating force for growth and change.

However, this may pose a significant threat to the Community Development Programme's crown jewel: the Extension Method for disseminating best practices. This Is the Plan" "believes in introducing better methods by convincing skeptical parties of their value. One cannot force them to become adoptive parents "them, but rather are asked to adopt them on their own accord once they've had a chance to weigh the pros and cons. It is a great tragedy if the Extension Method is stifled by the Panchayati Raj movement, as its ethos is entirely in line with democratic principles. The threat, however, appears to have been overstated.

It is argued that a three-tiered, village-level-to-district-level structure is the most effective form of rural self-government for West Bengal. More power and resources should be delegated to the Gram Sabhas and their subsidiary Gram Panchayats as the primary units of grassroots democracy. These days, a Gram Sabha in West Bengal is made up of, on average, 1.9 villages. Expanding this area has the potential to make the Gram Panchayat a functional political and economic unit, to attract more capable individuals to the Gram Panchayat's work, and to introduce more heterogeneity as a tool against casteism and narrow interest groups. It is true that if the Gram Sabha's jurisdiction is expanded, local issues cannot be adequately discussed in a manageable Sabha session. In such a case, "UP-Gram Sabha meeting could be held in each village," and the decisions put before the Sabha session, would be more feasible. In order to increase the likelihood of success for community efforts, it is important to get as many people involved as possible in the consultation process. The Panchayat Executive's power would be bolstered by the villagers' social approval in this way, and democracy would reach its intended constituents at the community level. There are a number of duties that the Gram Sabha must fulfill in order to fulfill its role as the primary unit of the three-tier Panchayati Raj.

- a) To review the proposed annual budget and offer feedback.
- b) The purpose of this meeting is to review the Panchayat's Annual Administrative Report and provide feedback on it.

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- c) To deliberate on plans to organize community service, voluntary labour, or the mobilization of the local people for any specific work on the annual or supplemental program.
- d) New or increased taxation proposals, as well as ideas for new programs not included in the annual program's budget, will be taken under consideration.
- e) Review of the Panchayat's Annual Audit Report.

The Anchal Panchayat performs functions formerly handled by the Union Boards. The only difference was that Union Boards were also tasked with carrying out infrastructure improvements in the service areas they oversaw. But the Anchal's have no such responsibility. Consequently, the Anchal Panchayats ought to be done away with and their territories, duties, and funds given to the newly expanded Gram Panchayats. In order to better serve the people in their areas, these Panchayats will take on new responsibilities in the areas of revenue and law and order as well as the current responsibilities of development and welfare.

Anchalik and Zilla Parishads are to be kept, but they need to look different and perform different duties than they do now.

Community Development Blocks have been replaced by lower-level Panchayats in most states, making these odd bodies the most visible manifestations of the Panchayati Raj system. Although the Block Development Officer is the de facto Chief Executive Officer of the Anchalik Parishad in West Bengal, the Anchalik Parishad and the National Extension Block operate separately at the Block level. In order to avoid dyarchy and promote better coordination between the Block staff and the Anchalik Parishad, the Block staff should report to the Anchalik Parishad and be given the authority to implement the community development programs. In addition to this, it is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the activities of the individual Gram Panchayats. In most cases, a police station's jurisdiction overlaps with that of a Block. An increasing number of people and businesses mean that a single Block is beginning to resemble a small District, and the Anchalik Parishad will soon be responsible for revaluing property and maintaining law and order in addition to its current responsibilities.

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India's government still revolves around the district. That's why it's recommended that the Zilla Parishad be kept around. It will be the best organizational structure for coordinating and supervising the efforts of the individual Anchalik Parishads and for carrying out some of the original responsibilities that the Anchalik Parishads lacked the authority to assume. The Zilla Parishads should take on the duties of the District School Boards in addition to their current responsibilities.

Members of these rural local bodies, known as Gram Panchayats, should be chosen through direct election. Nyaya Panchayat at the Gram Panchayat level, on the other hand, should be made up of Judges elected by the members of the Gram Panchayat to prevent them from getting involved in local politics. Members of the Anchalik Parishad will be directly elected by the voters of the constituent Gram Sabhas, with the Adhyakshas of the Gram Panchayats serving as ex-officio members. A Block's Mayors must send their Chairman to the Anchalik Parishad to speak for all of their communities. Members of the Zilla Parishad should be directly elected, with the exception of the Presidents of the Anchalik Parishad, who would serve as ex officio members. There must be designated seating in the Zilla Parishad for the District's mayors and county chairs. Initiative through direct election may ensure vigorous participation of the rural people in the rural administration and development. Seats may be reserved for women and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in all three tiers of the local government. The Chairmen and Mayors serving as ex officio members will aid in keeping the rural and urban areas working together. An organic connection in the three-tiered structure of Panchayati Raj will be established through the Adhyakshas' and Presidents' ex-officio membership in their respective higher Panchayats.

The upper Panchayats have been stifled by the presence of Members of the Slate legislature and Parliament, who have stifled the development of local leadership. In addition, the demoralizing influence of these political leaders is felt by the local bodies. For this reason, they need to stop joining such groups.

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Some have called for the Panchayati Raj to adopt a cabinet system of government similar to that of the Union and State governments. There is a strong two-party system in Britain, which suggests that this type of system would work well there. The Committee on the Management of Local Government recommended adopting such a system in 1967. But in Most of Bengal, where there is a multiparty system, which, as events in India since 1967 have shown, inevitably results in a coalition of irresponsible and unstable governments, this may not be the case.

The Committee system, as it currently exists in the Anchalik and the Zilla Parishads, should be maintained for the proper functioning of these bodies in the current contest. Gram Panchayats, however, lack such statutory Committees, so they must instead establish functional sub-committees made up of both members of the k Panchayats and knowledgeable outsiders. The Panchayats, through these sub-committees, will be able to bring together the various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as youth groups, cultural associations, women's groups, etc., for the benefit of the villages as a whole. There is no doubt that groups like these can greatly enhance political participation and social movement dynamics.

Regarding the question of the division of powers among the three levels of the Panchayati Raj, it is argued that these bodies must function primarily as units of self-government at their respective levels, despite being subordinate to and agents of the State Government. Each level of government should be given sufficient autonomy, including the authority to levy taxes in line with the services it is expected to provide. This means that the Anchalik Parishad (Samiti) is responsible for completing tasks that the Panchayat cannot, and the Zonal Assembly (Zilla Parishad) is responsible for taking on tasks that the Samiti cannot. For this reason, only the remaining functions will be passed on to the "next higher units." Since rural local bodies aim to improve the quality of life for residents across the board, it makes sense to give the Gram Panchayats authority over not only municipal but also judicial and development matters.

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Regarding the budgets of the Panchayati Raj bodies, it is agreed upon by all parties that "adequate financial resources must be made available to these local bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively." Without a methodical method of assessing and valuing land and buildings, the revenue generated from these assets will remain stagnant. Therefore, a specialized expert body is urgently needed, much like Andhra Pradesh's. The Board of inland Revenue employs independent valuation officers to conduct property assessments in England. Each rating area has a different valuation list that needs to be prepared every five years by a valuation officer. Since a maximum rate of taxation has already been prescribed, the Act should instead provide for a minimum rate of taxation and prescribe progressive tax rates.

When analyzing the tax structure and how much is actually collected, it is found that only half of the taxes assessed are collected, while almost no action is taken to collect the remaining half. Therefore, all Acts-based demand should be considered public demand and recovered via the Public Demands Act.

West Bengal's rural local bodies' combined income is woefully inadequate to provide even a shaky financial footing " To ensure the success of a Panchayat's efforts to raise local resources through taxation and other means, it is important that the populace understand that the funds raised will go toward the improvement of public services, rather than being wasted on overhead. The public services and community infrastructure in rural areas are woefully inadequate. In reality, there are not enough funds to satisfy even the most pressing needs of the public.

Local taxation has a small footprint and yields little financial benefit in rural areas. As a result, they rely heavily on government funding just to keep operating. However, government funding comes with a number of conditions that undermine the organization's ability to function independently in terms of both money and management. As a result, it's important to give rural local bodies access to sufficient, autonomous, and flexible income sources so they can grow as functional units of local self-government. It's practical if these organizations can lay claim to a fair portion of government revenues like excise taxes, sales taxes, entertainment taxes, and agricultural income taxes. The entire land revenue of the State should be transferred to

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the rural local bodies in the following ratio, as in Mysore; this may include imposing a surcharge on stamp duty to strengthen the Panchayat finance. Fifty percent to the proposed Gram Panchayats, fifty percent to the Anchalik Parishad, fifteen percent to the Zilla Parishad, and the remainder to be retained by the State Government to meet the collection expenses. Recommendation from the dormant Study Team on Panchayati Raj Finances "Every Panchayat should receive basic maintenance aid of Re.1.00 per capita, with funding split evenly between the Central and State Governments.

Municipal and civic services in rural areas of West Bengal are the responsibility of Panchayati Raj bodies. If these organizations didn't exist, the state government would have to pick up the slack. As a result, a State Finance Commission, modelled after the Indian finance Commission, should be established to evaluate the financial capacity of local governments, identify their needs, and divide up funds from the State Government. To further expand the potential for non-tax income, efforts should be made to assist rural local bodies in launching and managing remunerative ventures. The Study Group for Panchayati Raj Finances proposed two new types of corporations that might be useful here: the Panchayati Raj Industrial Corporation and the Panchayati Raj Finance Corporation.

The Panchayati Raj institutions are, indeed, in their infancy and necessitate a reliable system of guidance and supervision. However, the expansion and initiative of these establishments could be stunted by an overly stringent control system. This calls for a shift away from the traditional approach to auditing and inspection, which centers on finding problems. Education and mentoring should be added as a supplementary. There is no longer a need for the static and unproductive process of formal inspection and auditing in any public institution. ' Panchayati Raj units must be innovative, even risk-taking, displaying qualities of initiative at every opportunity if they are to fulfill their mandate and the needs of the country. They will also have a lot of employees in unfamiliar situations. This means they are more likely to make mistakes than they would be in more familiar, routine settings. A program needs to be dynamic without sacrificing quality, so it's important to acknowledge and plan for the increased possibility of error. Mistakes, on the other hand, require a strategy distinct from dishonesty. The functions of inspection and audit - the role of an effective educator -

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are fundamentally constructive because they respond to individual errors with educative action rather than punishment. It is possible that a Directorate of Guidance and Supervision for Panchayati Raj be suggested for West Bengal in this competition. In the current setup in Punjab, every three months, peripatetic teams made up of administrative, audit, and technical officers spend four days with each Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad to monitor their operations and assist with the elimination of bottlenecks.

West Bengal's District and lower-level government officials and the people they represent have finally found common ground thanks to democratic decentralization in the state's rural areas. Formerly, government officials were responsible for formulating and enforcing policy, but in this new venture, citizens' elected representatives play a more central role in the process. Democratic decentralization's goal is, indeed, to transfer power from officials to the people, and in this case, the officials would be skills sent to help the people. The convenience of having it on hand when you need it. For this reason, it is important that officials and Panchayat leaders work together for the greater good. At the Anchalik Parishad level, however, the politician-civil-service administrator relationship based on the Western Democratic model is still in its nascent stages. So far, this has only worked on the interpersonal level between the Parishad President and the Parishad's top administrator, known as the B.D.O. This lack of homogeneity between the Panchayat leaders and the officials may not be widespread, but in some Blocks visited by the researcher, tension between the President and the B.D.O. has come to light, effectively paralyzing the Parishad's normal work. It is difficult for the Official front to accept giving up the power they have held for so long. They fear that the Panchayat's leaders won't be able to craft policies that comply with the law because they lack experience in doing so. They argue that legal uncertainty will arise if Panchayat leaders are given more say in policymaking. The B.D.O. is responsible for advising the Anchalik Parishad and its Standing Committees on policy matters, given his or her position as keeper of the rules and body of official experience. His job is to ensure that the Parishad's decisions are lawful, so he must be "frank and fearless" in his approach to this responsibility. Members of the public should welcome his candid advice. However, it is thought that in Panchayati Raj, such positive attitudes have not yet fully developed. Any B.D.O. who draws the attention of the non-officials

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to the rules and technical aspects of the program is seen as unhelpful and bureaucratic. Yet again, the villagers lack the education and experience necessary to collaborate effectively with the policy experts among the government. B.D.O.s, on the other hand, persistently resist taking seriously the suggestion that "Village people, although largely illiterate, could be counted on to assume increasing responsibility for both the formation and execution of village and block development programmes."

However, the newly promoted B.D.O.'s are keeping in good terms with the village elders. Therefore, it is necessary to define the responsibilities of all functionaries (officials and non-officials alike) and provide them with a thorough training program that is periodically updated with new material. It should be noted in this context that the tension between the B.D.O and the President of the Anchalik Parishad is exacerbated by a number of factors, including the B.D.O.'s and other high officials' inability to maintain cohesion, the Block Officials' lack of in-service training, the lack of prospect of their promotion, the disparity of pay scales and status, and the existence of multiple loyalties within the Block administration. This is another issue that needs fixing.

The involvement of political parties in the management of primary local bodies has always been looked down upon by a sizable segment of the public in our class-ridden, fragmented, rural areas. They argue that one goal of Panchayati Raj is to gain the villagers' support for local development projects. However, power politics does not mix well with developmental activities because "parties create dissensions where unity is if called for, exaggerate differences where they should be minimized." As a result of these differences, it is impossible for political parties in West Bengal to have a unified plan for the rural areas of the state. As an added insult, it is claimed that the Panchayats of rural Parties are doomed to a life of isolation and despair.

Truth can be found in the claims of the aforementioned school that opposes the involvement of political parties in Panchayat government. However, this oversimplifies a very complicated issue. Political party withdrawal from Panchayats is an ideal but impractical solution. Political parties are allowed to take an active role in elections at the Anchalik and Zilla Parishad levels in West Bengal, as they are elsewhere in India;

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however, they have agreed to refrain from introducing political passions into the Anchal Panchayat and Gram Panchayat election processes. The Pradhan of each Anchalik Parishad in West Bengal is automatically a voting member of that body, and each District's Adhyaksha has a vote in the Anchalik and Zilla Parishads. Thus, political party influences filter down to rural areas via these channels.

There is some truth to the claim that political party participation can amplify preexisting sources of disruption. A broader perspective emerges from the competition between the policies and programs of the various political parties, and it would be remiss not to mention the role that they play in maintaining.

Furthermore, the exclusion of political parties from the Panchayat does nothing to address the root causes of village unrest. Instead, the existing economic, caste, or religious pressure groups would fill any void left by the disappearance of political parties, and politicians have always been found to secretly exert influence in favour of favoured groups and individuals. To this end, it is argued that it would have been preferable to have allowed the parties to run as independents in the Panchayat election. This means that they are personally liable for any actions taken by the Panchayats that they are a part of. Candidates elected to Panchayat offices must answer to both the Panchayat and the Gram Sabha, and the political parties to which they belong. Panchayat officials are appointed by political parties, and those parties would rather not have their reputation tarnished in the eyes of the voters by appearing to break their promises of honesty and efficiency.

In addition, political parties with a clear social philosophy engage in outreach among the general public, spreading political ideas and instilling political wisdom that can go a long way toward eradicating petty divisions like casteism and religious intolerance. People learn to set aside narrow self-interest and instead focus on the greater good of society as a whole.

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Political parties can also keep alive an organic connection between state and local governments, and between the Gram Sabha and the Lok Sabha. Further, the party system may aid the Panchayati Raj in establishing "a base for the plural system of power" as various opposition parties may not be able to take control of the State Government or the Union Government but may be able to win control of the local level.

Panchayats, like other organizations, will inevitably reach a point where they can no longer take on additional responsibilities without risking their own political futures. Myron Weiner makes the astute observation that "those who argued, as many Gandhians did, that local bodies should be given more powers but that there should be no politics in the local bodies involving political parties, castes, or factions were taking a contradictory position." There must be politics wherever there is power; this is a fundamental law of political science on par with the law of supply and demand in economics.

Getting the parties into the Panchayati Raj Institution, rather than out of it, is the current priority in order to ensure effective administration of the grassroots democracy. Field research has shown that the problems in party politics can't be solved by removing them from Panchayats or limiting their powers, but rather by making sure they work better.

In West Bengal, a four-tiered Panchayati Raj structure has been put in place, but no effective devolution of power and authority has been made to these rural local bodies. This has disappointed those who had high hopes and expectations for the Panchayati Raj institution and damaged its reputation. These municipalities are currently only acting as agents of the State Government, discharging their limited programs in this capacity. There should be no overlap between delegation and devolution, so plans should be made to give Panchayat Governments, which are subsets of the State Government, the authority to govern at the local level.

Naturally, there is no yardstick by which the level of decentralization can be measured. According to Paul H. Appleby, decentralization will pass or fail based on how well the nation's administration functions in tandem with the rest of the country. Any successful government will have the appropriate amount of decentralization in place. If it goes any further, it risks becoming "national debilitating" and giving rise to what Thomas

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Jefferson called "local egoisms." So, Appleby suggested that law enforcement step in to keep national norms stable. It is argued, however, that this body ought to be an independent Board.

"An individual in a pluralistic society is likely to hold a variety of beliefs and allegiances. It is not always the case that national integration is achieved through the eradication and suppression of smaller loyalties. A well-integrated and powerful nation is the result of a harmonious and peaceful resolving of competing loyalties " This national integration process needs to be balanced and move in both horizontal and vertical directions at the same time.

Governmental authority in India is split between the federal government (the Union) and the individual states (the States). to the very bottom, she has a system of decentralized, self-governing municipalities. By loosely basing the State-Local relations on the Union-State relations, the State's subjects can be further subdivided, allowing the transfer of a few subjects of local importance to the multi-tiered Panchayati Baj institution. To the same extent that the roles of the Union and the States have been spelled out in the Constitution, so too should the roles of the rural local bodies, such as the village council, the block council, and the district council. If the independence of the states can serve as a foundation for a unified country, then the independence of the municipalities within a state could do the same.

The fundamental principle of grassroots democracy is confidence in the ability, common sense, and intelligence of the average villager. If this is the case, then the grassroots should have been unburdened by the weight of red tape and allowed to stand on their own, while also receiving the devolution of power and responsibility that was previously carried by the government's bureaucracy. The people of the villages "may not be literate, but they have the capacity to take right decisions in their own interest and also of the nation as a whole. Since India's founding, her constitution has included provisions for universal adult suffrage out of a deep and abiding faith in the common man.

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While the structure of the Panchayati Raj is important, what really makes it work is the quality of the villagers who serve as its driving force. When it comes to human interactions, quantitative factors must make way for qualitative ones, and that holds true in local government just as much as it does in other spheres of life. No reliable means of gauging or testing civic awareness exist at this time. Let it, however, exist, for it is the essential flame that gives life to a local council's many and varied endeavors. Educating the villagers in the spirit of the Constitution is essential for the effective realization of democratic decentralization, that is, the Panchayati Raj as a social, economic, and political ideal in rural areas of West Bengal. This is because the civic consciousness demands a change in the social thinking of the villagers, who are working at the root of democracy.

Another crucial factor is the dismal financial situation of India's poor peasantry, who are the backbone of the country's democratic system. If steps are not taken right away to ensure social security and economic benefits to the poor villagers, they will never be expected to actively participate in local self-government. In order for democratic decentralization to flourish in the countryside, it is urgently necessary to rescue them from their prison of pain economy. However, in West Bengal, this is hardly a reality. "The wealthier segments of our rural communities have reaped the greatest social and economic benefits, and a consequential result of this trend has been a shift in political power. The economically disadvantaged have so far had little say in how the Panchayats are run. Only amongst equals can a democratic government function. The sources of inequality and exploitation, however, are land and money lending in our villages. However, the co-operative movement in West Bengal has been a total failure, despite the fact that it has the potential to eliminate the payday loan industry. Despite the government's best intentions, not much has changed in terms of land reforms. Those who could most benefit from them is not in a position to do so. Neither sharecroppers nor undertenants have it better than the rest of us. As long as there is gross disparity in wealth among the villagers, they will not be able to bond over a shared love of place. This kind of community is doomed to fail under Panchayati Raj. The Directive Principles of State Policy's emphasis on economic parity can, of course, pave the way for greater progress toward establishing the Panchayat's ideal of a truly representative Panchayati.

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