

Original Research Article

Role and Function of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Kamporijo Circle of Kamle District in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract: The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Arunachal Pradesh have emerged as an important level of local self-government as per the constitutional guidelines of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. PRIs were introduced in Arunachal Pradesh in January 1967 and later on revamped in January 1997 through the introduction of the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act. In the Kamporijo region, Gram Panchayats represent government at the village level, managing government welfare schemes, public areas like rural roads, public drinking water, and community halls as well as managing health and education systems at the local level. One of the main roles of the PRIs in Kamporijo Circle is implementing flagship development programmes. **Objective:** The aim of the study is to find out the role and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Kamporijo Circle of Arunachal Pradesh. **Methodology:** This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design in order to explore the role and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It combines documentary analysis, secondary sources, and contextual understanding to consider PRIs from structural, legal, and functional perspectives, and to consider PRIs spatially in terms of their interaction with the customary tribal governance system in Arunachal Pradesh. **Result and Discussion:** The core functions of PRIs are undertaken within a number of functional domains, namely: Rural Infrastructure Development, Agriculture and Livelihoods; Health and Education; Sanitation; Social Welfare; Financial Management. PRIs are a key player in helping construction and maintainage of village roads, water supply systems, Community Assets and in identifying beneficiaries and monitoring Development Schemes. **Conclusion:** The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kamporijo have made notable progress in democratic decentralization and representation.

Keywords: Rural Roads, Public Drinking Water, Flagship Development, Livelihoods; Health, Education; Sanitation.

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INTRODUCTION

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for Kamporijo Circle of Kamle District in Arunachal Pradesh have emerged as an important level of local self-government as per the constitutional guidelines of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. PRIs were introduced in Arunachal Pradesh in January 1967 and later on revamped in January 1997 through the introduction of the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act. While these institutions existed on paper, and had been formally adopted with some functionality in 1997 in the state as well as in tribal areas like Kamporijo, it was not until the early 2000's that their full functioning was really kick started with the help of various central and state sponsored development schemes (Government of

Arunachal Pradesh 2011; Singh, 2013). The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj (Amendment) act, 2018, made two tier system, but prior to that the PRIs in Kamporijo followed a three-tiered structure with Gram Panchayat members at the village level, Anchal Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. The mandate for PRIs is to facilitate participatory democracy, decentralized planning and inclusivity, especially in rural and tribal areas (Tamo & Lego, 2011). In the Kamporijo region, Gram Panchayats represent government at the village level, managing government welfare schemes, public areas like rural roads, public drinking water, and community halls as well as managing health and education systems at the local level. One of the main roles of the PRIs in Kamporijo is implementing flagship development programmes; primarily, the Mahatma

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Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The PRIs are involved in identifying beneficiaries, planning community assets, dispersing funds, and monitoring project implementation (Riba, 2012).

Elected representatives' engagement in Gram Sabhas elevates accountability and transparency, despite lower levels of participation, as well as logistical issues including delays in funding, capacity gaps, and overlapping jurisdictional roles with traditional institutions (Asha Bharati, n.d.). Importantly, PRIs in Kaporijo offer a legitimate avenue for women's political engagement. The one-third reservation for women provides pathways for tribal women to enter formal politics, raise local issues, and affect decisions on livelihood, health, education, and welfare (Arunachal Times, 2008; Mishra, 2014). Many female elected representatives have stepped into emerging leadership roles, often after some initial discomfort, to take on issues concerning their communities, in particular through cooperation with SHGs and civil society organizations. The work of PRIs in Kaporijo is still affected to a considerable extent by dual authority contexts regardless of resolution guidelines. In instances, the Traditional Institution (TI) retain informal authority over land, customary law, and conflict resolution, as the TI sometimes overlaps with the Decisions of the PRI in relation to community decision-making and control over development inputs/resources (Tamo & Lego, 2011). Evidence of cohabitation/bridge-building appears to be growing, especially where the PRIs can capitalize upon the social capital, network size/engagement, plus engagement of the TI to build community participation and support engagement with local government development programs. Given this, the PRIs in Kaporijo are emerging as a solid framework for democratic decentralization, gender inclusion, and participatory development, even though there is much work in ensuring institutional fluidity and building the capacity of locally elected governance structures, and to continue to be mindful of the roles they play with traditional governance authority structures.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the study is to find out the roles and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Kaporijo Circle of Kamle District in Arunachal Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design in order to explore the role and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) operating in the Kaporijo Circle of Kamle District, Arunachal Pradesh. It combines documentary analysis, secondary sources, and contextual understanding to consider PRIs from structural, legal, and functional perspectives, and to consider PRIs spatially in terms of their interaction with

the customary tribal governance system in Arunachal Pradesh.

Research Design:

The research adopts a qualitative design grounded in socio-legal and institutional analysis; this is appropriate for understanding the relationship between the formal state governance mechanism (PRIs) and the customary institutions operating in tribal settings. The research is descriptive in nature, as it seeks to systematically document the functions of PRIs operating in Kaporijo Circle, the roles they play in terms of service delivery and development, and the relationship they have with community and traditional structures.

Data Collection Methods:

The study relies primarily on secondary sources obtained from: Government reports and publications (e.g., Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report, State Panchayat Reports, SPICE-model report), Legal texts (e.g., 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997), Institutional documents from Directorate of Panchayati Raj, Arunachal Pradesh (2022-2023), Academic publications (e.g., Mishra, 2014, Singh, 2013, Tamo and Lego, 2011), Newspapers (e.g., Arunachal Times, 2008, 2019), Online databases and research repositories (e.g., Asha Bharati, Shodh Kosh, EPRA Journals). Furthermore, information relevant to the research from Panchayati Raj manuals and the RGSA guidelines have also been included to understand PRIs and their approaches to planning, financial devolution, and digital efforts.

Area Selection:

The research is concerned with Kaporijo Circle, a tribal and rural area in Kamle district, chosen for the representative characteristics of Arunachal Pradesh's complex confluence of statutory and traditional forms of governance. Kaporijo illustrates a unique scenario of convergence and contradiction between statutory modern governance (PRIs) and traditional institutions (TIs).

Analytical Framework:

The analytical framework will be through a three-tiered lens: Structural-Legal Perspective: Review statutory basis of PRIs in the constitution and statutes, especially in relation to devolution, gender, and the role of the Gram Sabhas.

Institutional Performance:

Assess the roles PRIs actually perform in terms of planning, service delivery, fund allocation, and implementation of rural development schemes (MGNREGA/ NRHM/NRLM).

Sociopolitical Interface:

Investigate how PRIs interface with traditional tribal authority, particularly how dual authority works,

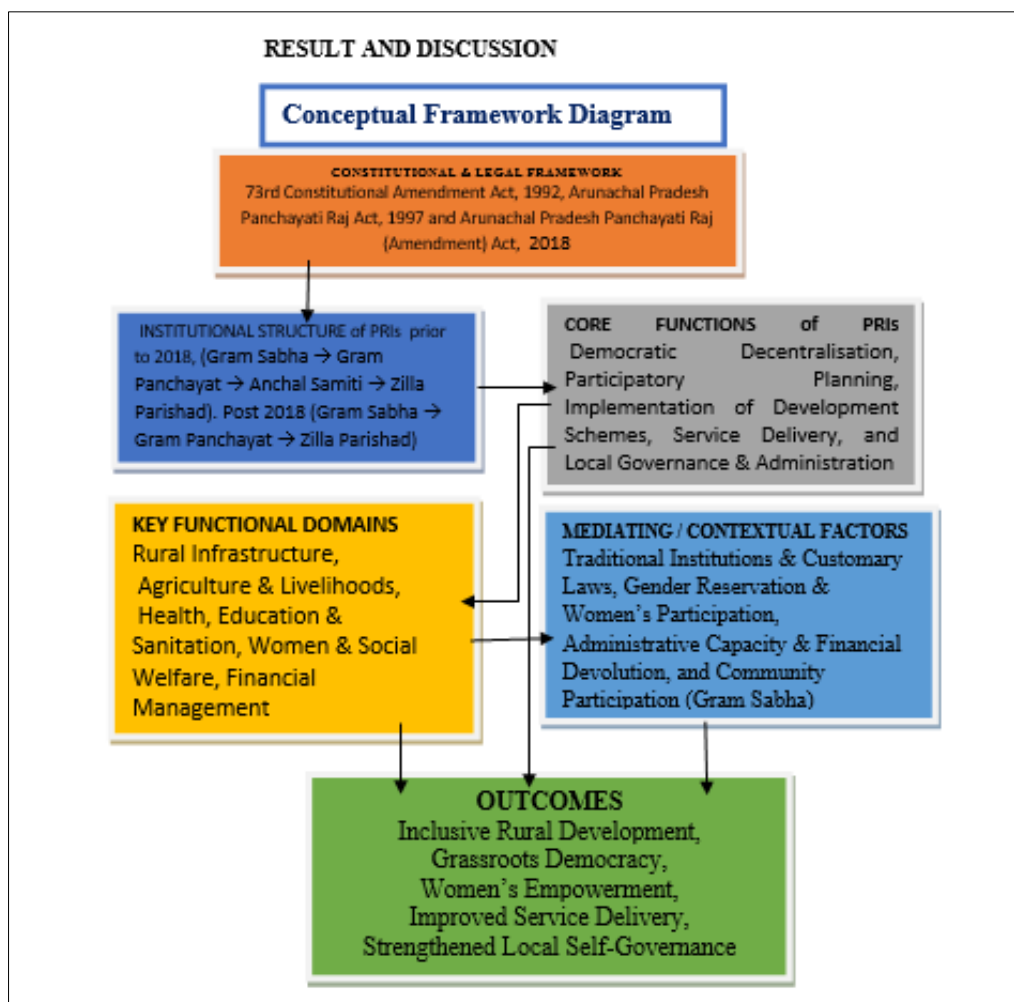
and how they resolve conflicts. The study also highlights the women's political participation.

Limitations:

The study employs desk-based qualitative research as it does not draw upon primary field data such as interviews or participant observation. However, while the study is limited in this sense, using well-

corroboration evidence in secondary literature, legislative texts, government records, and peer-reviewed literature minimizes the weaknesses. Therefore, the findings are interpretive, but based on triangulated authoritative source material.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



EXPLANATIONS OF THE DIAGRAM

Legal and constitutional frameworks form the basis of the PRIs structure, giving PRIs legitimacy and authority (Government of India 1998). The 73rd Amendment in the Constitution of India in 1992 is what establishes Part IX and calls for the establishment of Panchayat (local governing body) as a part of local self-government, thereby promoting democratic decentralisation and participatory planning through the devolvement of powers by way of the establishment of the Panchayat (Government of India 1992). In Arunachal Pradesh, these constitutional provisions are further supported through the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act of 1997, which adapts the Panchayati Raj System to the unique tribal and geographical context of Arunachal Pradesh (Government of Arunachal Pradesh 1997). This legal framework in Kamporijo, therefore, is of particular

significance as it introduces statutory democratic governance in an area which was traditionally governed by customary institutions (Tamo and Lego 2011).

The institutional arrangements of PRIs in Arunachal Pradesh flow from this legal framework and are established as a three-tiered system consisting of the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat at the grassroots/village level, Anchal Samiti at the intermediary level and the Zilla Parishad at the district level. The foundation of participatory democracy lies in the Gram Sabha, whereby villagers meet together to discuss issues of local concern, approve development plans and conduct social audits (GoAP 2011). Later, with the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Act, 2018 Anchal Samiti Level was abolished and Two-Tier Panchayati Raj system was introduced (i.e., Gram

Panchayat at village level and Zilla Parishad at District Level). The Gram Panchayat is the executive body of the PRIs and is responsible for implementing development programmes and delivering basic services, whereas the Zilla Parishad provides an overall coordination and supervision of development activities at the district level (Riba 2012). Therefore, this institutional arrangement provides a clear relationship between grassroots participation and planning at the district level.

The outlines of the main functions of PRIs, which make up the operational side of local governance, specifically: Democratic decentralization; participatory planning and implementation; providing a range of services and providing support for rural development schemes; and providing local administration. PRIs are also involved as implementing agencies for various government flagship programmes including: MNREGS, NRHM Housing and Sanitation Schemes, etc. Therefore, in this context, they are an important link between the Rural Tribal Communities and the State Government (Singh, 2013; Mishra, 2014). By performing these functions, PRIs not only enhance the efficiency of local governments but also strengthen democracy at the village level.

The core functions of PRIs are undertaken within a number of functional domains, namely: Rural Infrastructure Development, Agriculture and Livelihoods; Health and Education; Sanitation; Social Welfare; Financial Management. PRIs are a key player in helping construct and maintain village roads, construct and maintain village water supply systems and Community Assets and in identifying beneficiaries and monitoring Development Schemes (Riba, 2012). The financial functions of PRIs, such as preparing Budgets, administering Grants Received from the Central and State Finance Commissions and monitoring fund use further enhance their ability to influence governance in their respective jurisdictions (GoAP, 2011).

The framework provides the basis for understanding how the functioning of PRIs within Kamporijo is affected by factors which mediate their operations and their relationship to development outcomes. The primary mediator in the development of PRIs is the relationship between the two systems: PRIs and traditional/customary systems; tribal systems that regulate land ownership and disputes through customary law (Tamo & Lego, 2011). The framework also recognises the role of gender reservation and women's participation in the development of PRIs, as defined in Article 243D of the Constitution, which has facilitated greater political participation by tribal women in PRIs (Mishra, 2014). Other mediating factors affecting the functioning of PRIs include administrative and financial capacities, the manner in which the finances of the state government are devolved, and the ability of communities to participate in the activities of the Gram Sabhas (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2015).

The final output of the functioning of PRIs is the achievement of rural development that is participatory, inclusive, strengthened grassroots democracy, empowerment of women, and improved service delivery through enhanced local self-governance. PRIs in Kamporijo are significant contributors to participatory and inclusive development if they have strong institutional capability, support and coordination with traditional institutions (Singh, 2013; Mishra, 2014). This is not the case for all communities, as limitations in the levels of devolution, institutional capacity and coordination may prevent these outcomes from being realised. Thus, the conceptual framework is a tool to understand the functioning of PRIs, how these organs of government operate within a complex socio-political environment, and how effective these PRIs are, both as formal institutions of governance and in coordination with customary tribal institutions.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

1. Structural Frame & Legal Basis:

The structural frame and legal basis for the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Kamporijo Circle, Kamle District, and Arunachal Pradesh must be understood in two contexts: (1) that of the Indian constitutional frame; and (2) that of the special socio-legal architecture of the state in accommodating a statutory decentralized government with local customary practices.

(i) The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:

The legal basis for PRIs in India and in the state of Arunachal Pradesh exists primarily in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, which amended the Constitution of India to create Part IX "The Panchayats," which consists of Articles 243 to 243O. Such amendment contemplates a three-tiered structure of PRIs consisting of a Gram Panchayat at the village level, a Anchal (Panchayat) Samiti at the block level, and a Zilla Parishad at the district level with powers to plan development related to economic development and social justice for implementation to realize that planning at a local level. In particular, Article 243D prescribes the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Women under the provisions of local self-governance institutions. Article 243K provides for the establishment of State Election Commissions to conduct elections to the Panchayats; and Article 243I establishes State Finance Commissions to review the state finances and defines a distribution of finances between the state and Panchayats.

(ii) The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997:

Arunachal Pradesh has implemented PRIs through its Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 under the 73rd Amendment. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh since 2018 Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Amendment Act, the Panchayati Raj system is structured

as a two-tier structure, e.g. Gram Panchayat (GP) at the village level and Zilla Parishad (ZP) at the district level. Arunachal Pradesh used to have a three-tier structure typically seen in most Panchayati Raj Systems mainly due to the geographically difficult and hilly terrain and scattered population. The State Government is responsible for defining the jurisdiction, composition, election process and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Additionally, the institutional vehicle fixes the devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to local bodies based on the activity mapped out by the relevant Department and advice or recommendations of the State Finance Commission. Importantly, the systems provides for the reservation provisions for women and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to ensure equitable representation and to reflect the demographic reality in tribal areas of Kamporijo Circle.

(iii) PESA Act, 1996 - Partial Status:

Nevertheless, while the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) is intended to empower tribal communities in Scheduled Areas, Arunachal Pradesh is not actually listed on the state's Fifth Schedule and therefore is not subject to PESA. However, in practice, some PESA principles, such as the role of traditional institutions, do unofficially coexist with PRIs in places such as Kamporijo Circle. Panchayati Raj thus is not governed by PESA framework but have evolved through state-specific laws and customary practices.

2. Structural Framework of PRIs in Kamporijo Circle:

Kamporijo Circle is a part of the Kamle Zilla Parishad and for Panchayat Raj election convenience, it has two Zilla Parishad segments i.e., Kamporijo-I and Kamporijo-II Zilla Parishad segment. Kamporijo follows the two-tier pattern of the state at each Zilla Parishad segment:

a. Gram Panchayat (GP)–Village Level: The Gram Panchayat (GP) comprises one or more villages in a manageable population size. In practice this forms a cluster of villages. The GP consists of elected Panchayat Members and an elected chairperson. In addition, the GP has various local functions including: Infrastructure development and maintenance; Sanitation; Drinking water; Building village roads; Street lighting; Improve education in the village. Each Gram Panchayat operates under the Gram Sabha, which is the body comprising all the registered voters in the village. The Gram Sabha is where great participatory governance debates take place, including decision-making, planning of developmental activities, and conducting social audits to ensure accountability and transparency.

b. Zilla Parishad (ZP)–District Level: The Zilla Parishad of Kamle district is made up of elected representatives from all the Panchayats, including those from the Kamporijo area. The Zilla Parishad is headed by a chairperson who is elected by the Zilla Parishad members. The Zilla Parishad has the responsibility for

coordinating and supervising the planning of developmental work in all blocks of the district. It also creates developmental plans at the district level to link with the respective line departments and provides financial oversight and program monitoring to ensure efficient execution.

3. Institutional Linkages in Kamporijo Circle:

a. Block Level Coordination: Although Arunachal Pradesh does not possess an official Intermediate Tier (Panchayat Samiti), coordination for PRIs in Kamporijo is achieved through administratively supported rural development blocks, which provide organizational support for planning, capacity building, and monitoring functions.

b. Devolution of Powers: The state government has devolved powers relating to 29 subjects to the PRIs under the 11th Schedule of the Constitution. Sufficient devolution of these powers remains uneven, including those relating to agriculture, minor irrigation, health, education, and women & child development.

c. Reservations and Gender Inclusion: Pursuant to Article 243D and the State Act, 33% of seats are reserved for women in Kamporijo Circle and elsewhere. Thus, a gradually increasing trend can be observed with tribal women becoming engaged to leadership positions, transcending their traditional bureaucratic role.

4. Co-existence with traditional institutions:

In Kamporijo, governance is structured to be dualistic; in places like Kamporijo, statutory PRIs co-exist with traditional tribal institutions such as the Mel/Nyel/Nyele as village council and also clan leaders. The TIs are capable of functioning as customary decision-making bodies or forums within the village. The primary responsibility of these traditional institutions is conflict resolution, land disputes, application of customary laws, and enforcing social norms at the community level. With statutory PRIs having legal primacy in relation to the Indian Constitution, customary authorities still exert considerable authority, particularly in relation to anything culturally sensitive or community related. With this dual framework in mind, the two systems are being harmonized, often through informal assistance of the elected panchayat members and shared tribal authority in order to create a more local and inclusive governance.

5. Financial and Administrative Support:

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (P.R.I.) in Kamporijo have different channels for financial support, such as the Central Finance Commission, State Finance Commission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (M.G.N.R.E.G.A.), and the grants and funds of the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions and various flagship rural development schemes. They are also provided administrative support to carry out effective operations and programming by officials such as the District Panchayat Development

Officer (D.P.D.O.) and Block Development Officers (B.D.O.).

6. Decentralised Planning & Service Delivery:

The P.R.I from Kamle, has achieved the full devolution of 29 functions, which include; agriculture, irrigation, education, health, infrastructure, and social welfare. The Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (R.G.S.A.) has begun to provide supportive infrastructure for the capacity building of P.R.I., planning and Gram Sabha, supported by digital services that have reached the most remote village in its entirety, like Kamporijo (Panchayat Raj Arunachal Pradesh).

7. Financial Empowerment & Recognition:

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh devolved 10% of the States own revenue grants to P.R.I.s under the new "SPICE" model during the 2022 – 23 administration and as a first step towards independence and to allow for sustainable local governance (D.P.D.O. East Kameng). In a demonstration of the efficacy of such decentralised initiatives, the Kamle Zilla Parishad was awarded the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar in 2019 for excellence in service delivery and grassroots governance (Arunachal Times).

8. Political Inclusion & Empowerment of Women:

The mandatory reservation of a minimum of 33% for women, Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Scheduled Castes (SCs) has greatly contributed to women's leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across Arunachal Pradesh. Although there is no dedicated data available for Kamporijo, trends across the state suggest that the political participation of women in local governance is increasing. However, a range of issues remain, including instances of proxy leadership whereby the elected female representatives are not exercising an independent agency.

9. Engagement of communities, Gram Sabha and local governance:

In the Kamporijo Circle, Arunachal Pradesh, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are key representatives of local governance. The Gram Panchayats are democratically elected with authority from village representatives through direct elections; hence leadership is given to the elected representatives which are accountable to the Gram Sabha - which is made up of all adult villagers. The Gram Sabha is the most basic local system of participatory governance. Without consistent meetings, deliberations or engagement, the Gram Sabha cannot hold the PRIs accountable or be able to provide ongoing learning concerning local issues (Singh, 2013; Government of Arunachal Pradesh (GoAP, 2011).

It is observed that Gram Sabha serves as the local governance structures in which the locals engage in participatory planning processes, where they are directly involved in local development planning, implementation

and monitoring as per the rules and guidelines of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) (Panchayat Raj Arunachal-Pradesh). The PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) provide opportunities for inclusive and participatory governance through bodies like Sectoral Working Committee and by engaging community mobilizers, who are field workers fully mobilizing communities and promoting transparency and accountability in local governance (DPDO East Kameng).

10. Effective Governance & Rural Development:

PRIs in Kamporijo are involved in the following way. PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) are involved in the construction and maintenance of rural areas' significant villages, roads, bridges, water supply, sanitation and electrification; while they are involved in infrastructure and physical development activities, they equally have a strong focus for programs in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, education, health and women development, therefore addressing the economic and social needs of rural communities. More recently, there have been concerted efforts to integrate digital and e-governance, with Panchayat Bhawans and rural resource centres established as digital delivery service efforts with technology enabled service delivery maturing (EPRA Journals; DPDO East Kameng; Panchayat Raj Arunachal-Pradesh).

11. Challenges & Tribal Context:

While Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have provided a framework for modernization and formal governance, traditional village councils and elder-led forms of governance persist and co-exist particularly in culturally different communities like those in Kamporijo. However, it is observed that PRIs in peripheral areas continue to be challenged by persistent problems that include elite capture by local Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), delays in project implementation and community-level political fragmentation.

12. Service Delivery:

In Kamporijo, PRIs carry out 29 of the subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule, such as rural infrastructure, agriculture, education, sanitation, and water supply. They are also the direct intermediaries for the delivery of central and state-sponsored development schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). PRIs mobilize community engagement and help ensure development services reach remote tribal populations (Riba, 2012; Mishra, 2014).

13. Financial Control:

PRIs in Kamporijo have some financial autonomy built into their operational decision making through the receipt of central and state grants, own-source revenues, and contextually germinated sources of funds. They are expected to develop and implement local

development budget plans and make expenditure priorities based on community needs. Constraints to the realization of their full operational capacity include: limited fiscal devolution and irregular flow of funds (GoAP, 2011; Singh, 2013).

14. Women's Inclusion:

A significant change in Kamporijo local governance is that women have been included due to state mandated reservation policy for women. One-third of all seats in Panchayati Raj bodies are reserved for women. This further encouraged women to be involved in village level decision making. In practice, there are now women leaders who are more vocal in Gram Sabha and champion the implementation of welfare schemes, particularly schemes that promote health, sanitation, and self-help group (SHGs) (Mishra, 2014).

15. Community Planning:

The process of participatory planning in RGSA further consolidated the role of PRIs in Kamporijo. In the context of Gram Sabhas, the communities are involved in identifying their development needs and preparing a Village Development Plan (VDP). The process of bottom-up planning has potential to ensure that government interventions are more in line with community needs and to remove the bureaucratic nature of planning while ensuring grassroots-based governance (Tamo & Lego, 2011).

16. Innovation and Digitisation:

The PRI system has also begun to adapt to innovations provided by digital governance tools. The use of initiatives like e-Panchayat and IT interventions are improving transparency, keeping records, improving grievance redressal and tracking of services. Supported under schemes like RGSA there are investments into infrastructure to enhance digital literacy amongst local functionaries, for example, internet-enabled PanchayatBhawan is being provided for swift administrative processing (Astha Bharati, n.d.; GoAP, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kamporijo circle have made notable progress in democratic decentralization and representation. However, the extent of this progress will depend on the level of institutional capacity shared with TIs, the level of administrative support, and commitment to sustainability in providing pathways for elected representatives, mostly women to become inactive agents of rural transformation in tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kamporijo Circle are legally recognized under the 73rd Constitutional amendment and the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997, operating at a two-tier level in the Kamle district. Though they are statutorily given a large range of developmental functions, the operations of the Panchayati Raj Institutions are heavily interconnected to traditional

tribal institutions, which still having significance in today's socio-political reality. Because the constitutional and customary structures are simultaneously active and overlapping in Kamporijo, we have to think about balancing statutory obligations and normative legitimacy.

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