

Understanding Local Governance in Tripura: An Overview of the Panchayati Raj System in Tripura

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Abstract

The Panchayati Raj System in Tripura represents a unique double engine model of decentralized governance that integrates both the constitutional provisions of the 73rd Amendment and the special administrative framework of the Sixth Schedule. This paper presents a comprehensive overview of the structure, functions, and operational dynamics of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Village Committees functioning under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). It traces the historical evolution of local governance in Tripura, outlines the institutional framework of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zilla Parishads in non-ADC areas, and examines the corresponding institutions—Village Committees and Block Advisory Committees—within ADC regions. The paper also highlights the roles and responsibilities of the Rural Development (Panchayat) Department in facilitating administrative and financial support to these local bodies. Further, it discusses the extent of devolution of powers, functional integration, and the participation of Panchayats in implementing centrally and state-sponsored schemes. The findings emphasize the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing transparency, and promoting participatory governance for effective local administration. Overall, the paper underscores the significance of Tripura's Panchayati Raj framework as a model of inclusive rural governance combining constitutional and traditional governance structures.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj, Local Governance, Tripura, Sixth Schedule, Village Committee, Decentralization, Rural Development, TTAADC, Gram Panchayat.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a constituent state of India, Tripura's government operates under a parliamentary system like any other state. The Governor, appointed by the President of India, serves as the state's ceremonial head. However, actual executive authority is wielded by the Chief Minister, who leads the majority party in the 60-member Tripura Legislative Assembly, along with their Council of Ministers. The Tripura High Court presides over the state's judicial system. Notably, Tripura features the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), an entity focused on the progress and well-being of tribal populations.

The local administration in Tripura is governed by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Rural Local Bodies (RLBs). Furthermore, the rural administration uniquely combines traditional Panchayati Raj Institutions with two tier local bodies operating under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). The TTAADC governing tribal regions, has its own legislative and executive bodies,

including Village Committees at the grassroots level and Block Advisory Committees (BACs) at the intermediate level. The Village Committees, mirroring the functions of Gram Panchayats outside the TTAADC, foster synergy between the local governance systems of ADC and non-ADC areas.

Tripura is the third smallest state of the Indian Union with a geographical area of 10,491.69 km². Out of this total area, 7132.56 sq. km (68 per cent of the state) comes under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) established under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Of the remaining portion, only 239.3 sq km is occupied by urban local bodies. As a result, Gram Panchayats are distributed over an area of 3119.83 sq km (29.7 percent of the state) in the state. Thus, on a total basis 97.7 percent of the state comes under rural local bodies. Moreover, about 74 percent of the people in Tripura (Census, 2011) live in rural areas.

At present the state has eight districts, 23 Sub-divisions and 58 blocks. In accordance with the provisions of the Panchayati Raj System, at present there are 606 Gram Panchayats, 35 Panchayat Samitis (middle-level Panchayats) and eight Zilla Parishads (District Panchayats) in the state. Whereas, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the TTAADC has constituted 587 Village Committees in its area on par with the Gram Panchayats of non-ADC area. Apart from this, 40 Block Advisory Committees have been formed at the block level to bridge the gap between the village and the block.

2. Rural Profile of Tripura

Tripura is the third smallest state of the Indian Union with a geographical area of 10,491.69 km². Out of this total area, 7132.56 sq. km (68 per cent of the state) comes under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) established under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Of the remaining portion, only 239.3 sq km is occupied by urban local bodies. As a result, Gram Panchayats are distributed over an area of 3119.83 sq km (29.7 percent of the state) in the state. Thus, on a total basis 97.7 percent of the state comes under rural local bodies. Moreover, about 74 percent of the people in Tripura (Census, 2011) live in rural areas.

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Table-1: Rural Profile of Tripura

Sl. No.	Indicator	Nos/ Percentage
Area		
1	Total Area (in sq. km)	10,491.69
2	ADC Area (in sq. km)	7,132.56 (approx.68%)
3	Non-ADC Area (in sq. km)	3,359.13
4	Area of Urban Local Body (in sq. km)	239.2963
Demography		
5	Total Population (Census, 2011)	36,73,917

6	Rural Population (Census, 2011)	27, 12,464 (approx. 74 %)
Administrative Set-up		
7	Districts	8
8	Autonomous District Council	1
9	Sub-divisions	23
10	Rural Development Blocks	58
Rural Local Bodies		
11	Zilla Parishad	8
12	Panchayat Samity	35
13	Block Advisory Committee	40
14	Gram Panchayat (Outside ADC)	606
15	Village Committee (Inside ADC)	587

Source: GA (Printing & Stationary Department, Govt. of Tripura, 2025)

3. Structure of Rural Local Bodies

The formerly princely State Tripura merged into India on September 9, 1947 and the State became a Union Territory with effect from November 1, 1956. Later on, the State has attained Statehood on January 21, 1972. Recognizing the need for self-governance in tribal areas, the TTAADC was established in 1979 and later brought under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1985, ensuring legislative, executive, and financial autonomy for tribal governance.

Prior to India's merger, traditional tribal areas were governed by customary laws, which lacked democratic principles (Tripura Human Development Report, 2007). Post-merger, Tripura adopted local self-governance, initially through the United Provinces Panchayat Raj Act of 1947, leading to the creation of community development boards in 1959. The Panchayati Raj System was introduced in 1978 and later expanded into a three-tier system under the Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993, following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). In the meantime, Paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule empowers TTADC to govern village administration by establishing Village Councils. Subsequently, TTAADC has enacted Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District (Establishment of Village Committee) Act 1994 and formed 587 Village Committees till date.

3.1 Structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions:

The Government of Tripura enacted the Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 in the year 1992, following the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution and established three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) in the non-autonomous district council areas of the state. To enable Panchayati Raj Institutions to function as local self-government institutions, three-tier Panchayats were established, namely, Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. At present the state has 606 Gram Panchayats, 35 Panchayat Samities and eight Zilla Parishads. The legislative framework for the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions consists of the Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 and the Tripura Panchayat (Administration) Rules, 1994.

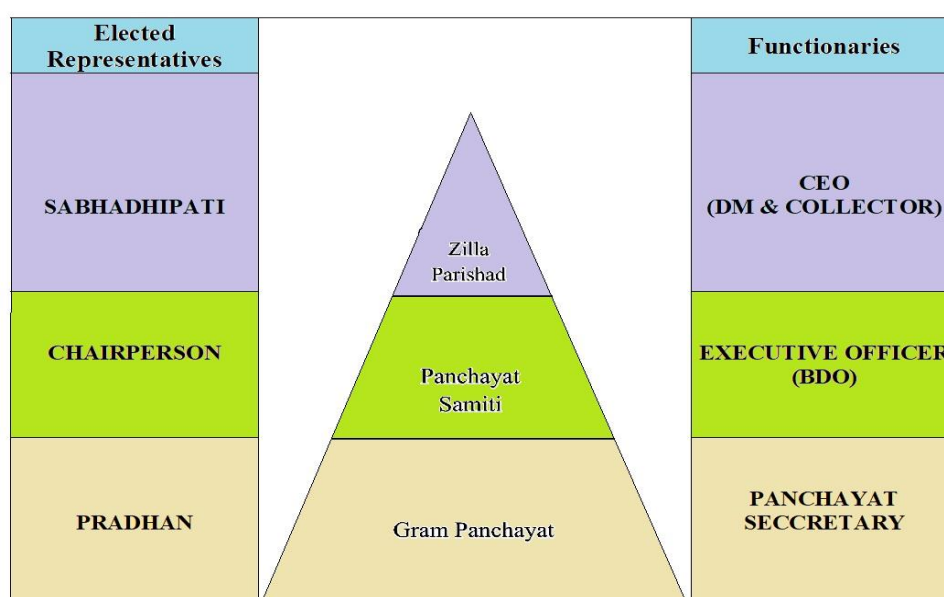
In the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions, the Zila Parishad is the highest-level institution, the Panchayat Samiti is the middle level institution and the Gram Panchayat is the grassroots level institution. The Zilla Parishad is headed by the Sabhadhipati, while the Panchayat Samiti is headed by the Chairperson and the Gram Panchayat is headed by the Pradhan. All the heads are elected.

The District Magistrate and Collector is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Parishad and carries out the policies and directives of the Zilla Parishad, discharges duties defined under the Tripura Panchayat Act and controls the officers/officials of Zilla Parishad. Under the CEO, the District Panchayat Officer (DPO) discharges the day-to-day functions as Ex-officio Secretary of Zilla Parishad.

The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the Executive Officer (EO) of Panchayat Samity and under the EO, Panchayat Officer or Panchayat Executive Officer discharges the day-to-day functions of Panchayat Samity as Ex-officio Secretary.

The Panchayat Secretary discharges the day-to-day administrative functions of the Panchayat office.

Figure-1: Organisational Structure of PRIs



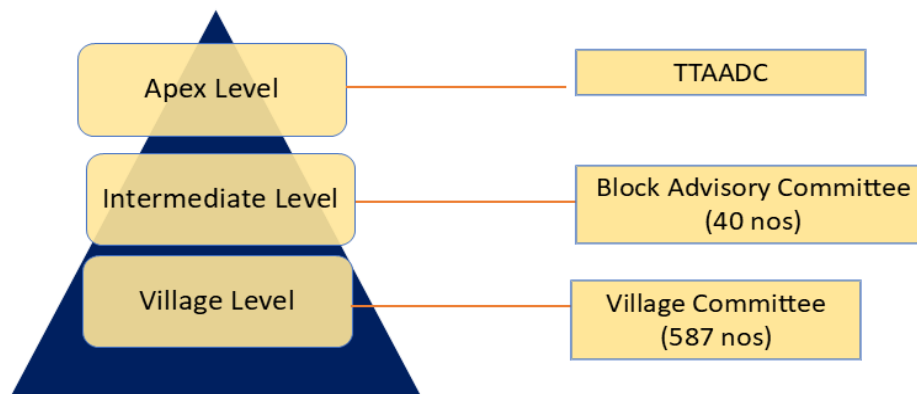
Source: Designed by the author

3.2 Rural Local Bodies under Sixth Schedule Area:

A unique feature of the State is constitution of a multi-district Autonomous District Council. During 1979, the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC under the provisions of Seventh Schedule. Subsequently, it has been brought under the Sixth Schedule in 1985. Towards strengthening democratic local self-government TTAADC has constituted 40 Block Advisory Committees at the block level, and 587 Village Committees at the village level in TTAADC territory in correspondence to the Gram Panchayats of the non-ADC area.

The Block Advisory Committee (BAC) is headed by a chairman nominated by the State Government. The Block Development Officer functions as the Executive Officer of BAC. However, Village Committees (VC) are fully elected bodies. The Village Committee is headed by the Chairman and the Village Secretary carries out the day-to-day administrative functions of the VC office.

Figure-2: Organisational Structure of Local Bodies under TTAADC



Source: Designed by the author

Box-1: Local Governance Structure in TTAADC

i. Apex Level: Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)

- Highest decision-making body for tribal self-governance for Sixth Schedule Areas.
- 30 Members (28 elected + 2 nominated) form the Council.
- Chief Executive Member (CEM) leads the Executive Committee, responsible for policy implementation.
- Has legislative, executive, and financial powers over key subjects such as land, forests, taxation, and village administration.

ii. Intermediate Level: Block Advisory Committees

- 40 Block Advisory Committees function at the block level.
- Serve as a link between the TTAADC and Village Committees.
- Provide guidance and oversight on developmental programs, welfare schemes, and infrastructure projects.
- Help in policy implementation and coordination at the block level.

iii. Village Level: Village Committees (VCs)

- 587 Village Committees function as local self-government units, equivalent to Gram Panchayats in non-ADC areas.
- Elected representatives govern the village administration.
- Responsible for village development, dispute resolution, and citizen welfare programmes.

4. Brief Profile of Rural Development (Panchayat) Department

The Rural Development (Panchayat) Department is working towards strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the State by ensuring proper implementation of the Tripura Panchayat Act and Rules in

liaising with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Apart from this it also caters to the needs of local bodies under the Sixth Schedule areas (TTAADC). The Rural Development (Panchayat) Department provides financial assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions in the form of allocations under State Finance Commission, Central Finance Commission and other major schemes.

4.1 Mission of RD (Panchayat) Department

The mission of the department is to reduce poverty through community mobilisation, financial inclusion and sustainable livelihoods development. The department focuses on building strong representations of elected representatives and panchayat functionaries for development of PRIs & non-PRIs and also to ensure qualitative capacity building of elected representatives and functionaries for ascertaining significant difference in decision making.

4.2 Vision of RD (Panchayat) Department

The vision of RD (Panchayat) Department, Government of Tripura is to focus on the Acts, Rules and Guidelines that benefits the rural strata of the society which strives to energise the democratic decentralization process and improves the operation and efficiency of Elected Representatives and Functionaries to promote proper planning in the grassroots level using modern technology and other means.

4.3 The organization structure of the RD (Panchayat) Department:

The Rural Development (Panchayat) Department is headed by one Additional Secretary rank officer as Director of Panchayats. He discharges the day-to-day functions of the department with the help of Additional/ Joint/ Deputy Director who are posted by the State Government. At the District level, the District Panchayat Officers also posted by the State Government. The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the ex-officio executive officer of the Panchayat Samiti and plays an important role in the Panchayati Raj institutions. Here it is mentioned that all the senior administrative officers are posted by the State Government. They function with the help of departmental manpower.

5. Envisaged role of RD (Panchayat) Department:

The Rules of Executive Business of the Government of the State of Tripura envisaged the following roles for RD (Panchayat) Department-

- All matters relating to the Tripura Panchayat Act. 1983 and the Rules framed thereunder.
- Establishment and Constitution of Gram Panchayats. Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishads etc. their control, inspection and supervision.
- Re-organization of Grams.
- Complaints and inquiries against Office Bearers of Gram Panchayats
- Publication of journals and periodicals connected with Gram Panchayats.
- Panchayat Training Institute.
- Establishment, budget and accounts matter.

6. Devolution of Functions to Panchayats

Local government is a state subject. Therefore, the role of the states is very important as far as devolution of powers to Panchayats is concerned. Here the State legislatures have a critical role in determining various aspects of Panchayati Raj. However, under Article 243G, the Eleventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution envisages transfer of functions, funds and functions relating to 29 subjects to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). In this regard the state has devolved only five subjects to the PRIs. These are- (i) water resource,

(ii) Primary School, (iii) Adult and No-Formal Education, (iv) Social Welfare including Welfare of the Handicapped and Mentally Retarded and (v) Women and Child Development.

6.1 Duties of Gram Panchayat

The Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 prescribes a list of duties for gram panchayats, with the clarification that these duties should be performed subject to the availability of funds. These duties are classified as obligatory duties, other duties and discretionary duties.

Table- 2 Duties of Gram Panchayat in Tripura

Sl. No	Obligatory duties	Other duties	Discretionary duties
1	Sanitation, conservancy and the prevention of public nuisances	Primary, social, technical, adult or vocational education	The maintenance of lighting of public streets
2	Curative and preventive measure in respect of malaria, small pox, cholera or any other epidemic diseases	Rural dispensaries, health centres and maternity and child welfare centres	Planting and maintaining trees on the sides of public streets or in other public places vested in it
3	Supply of drinking water and cleaning of public streets and protection thereof	Management of any public and markets which are not declared as regulated markets under any law for the time being in force	The establishment and maintenance of horticulture training centre
4	The maintenance, repair and construction of public streets or public places	Irrigation including minor irrigation, water management and water shed development	The sinking of wells and excavation of ponds and tanks
5	The protection and repair of buildings and other properties vested in it	Grow more food campaign	The introduction and promotion of co-operative farming, cooperative stores, and other co-operative enterprises, trades and callings
6	The management and care of public tanks, common grazing grounds, burning ghats and public graveyards	Care of the infirm and the destitute	The allotment of places for storing manure
7	The supply of any local information which the District Magistrate, Zilla Parishad, the	Rehabilitation of displaced persons	The construction and regulation of markets other than markets which are declared as regulated

Sl. No	Obligatory duties	Other duties	Discretionary duties
	Panchayat Samity or the Sub-Divisional Officer, within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the gram panchayat is situated		markets under any law for the time being in force, the holding and regulation of fairs, melas, huts and exhibitions of local produce and products of local handicrafts and home industries
8	Organizing voluntary labour for community works for the upliftment of its area	Improved breeding of cattle, medical treatment of cattle and prevention of cattle disease	Assisting and advising agriculturists in the matter of obtaining State loan and its distribution and repayment
9	The control and administration of the gram panchayat fund established under this act	Acting as a channel through which Government assistance should reach the villages	Filling up of insanitary depressions and reclaiming of unhealthy localities
10	The imposition, assessment and collection of the taxes, rates or fees leviable under this Act	Bringing waste land under cultivation through improvement of land and soil conservation	The promotion and encouragement of cottage industries
11	The performance of such functions as may be transferred to it under section 31 of the cattle Trespass Act, 1871.	Promotion of village plantation, social forestry and farm forestry	The establishment and running of piggeries, duckaries and milk centres
12		Arranging cultivation of land lying fallow	The destruction of rabid dogs
13		Arranging co-operative management of land and other resources of the villages	The construction and maintenance of sarais, dharmasallas, rest houses, cattle sheds and cart stands
14		Assisting in the implementation of land reform measure in its area	Regulating production and disposal of foodstuffs and other commodities in the manner prescribed
15		Implementation of such schemes as may be formulated	The disposal of unclaimed cattle

Sl. No	Obligatory duties	Other duties	Discretionary duties
		or performance of such acts as may be entrusted	
16		Filed publicity on matters connected with development works and other welfare measures undertaken by the State Government	The disposal of unclaimed corpses and carcasses
17		Supervision of supply of food and essential commodities through ration shops	The establishment and maintenance of libraries and reading rooms
18		Minor forest produce	The organisation and maintenance of akharas, clubs and other places for recreation or games and sports
19		Rural housing programme	The maintenance of records relating to population census, agricultural labour census, crop census, cattle census and census of unemployed persons and of other statistics as may be prescribed
20		Rural electrification including distribution of electricity	Rendering assistance in extinguishing fire and protecting life and property when fire occurs
21		non-conventional energy sources	Assisting in the prevention of burglary and dacoity
22		Family welfare, and women and child development	Relief against famine or other calamity
23		Welfare of the weaker sections and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes	Assisting in formulation and implementation of the schemes and Annual Plans of the State in so far as such schemes and Plans relate to the area under its jurisdiction
24		Maintenance of community assets	The performance in the manner prescribed of any

Sl. No	Obligatory duties	Other duties	Discretionary duties
			of the functions of the Zilla Parishad or the Panchayat Samiti, as the case may be, with its previous approval, calculated to benefit the people lying within the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayats
25		Public distribution system	Any other local work or service of public utility which is likely to promote the health, comfort, convenience or material prosperity of the public, not otherwise provided for in this Act.
26		Poverty alleviation programme	

6.2 Duties of Panchayat Samity:

Subject to any general or special direction of the State Government, the following are the important duties of every Panchayat Samiti within the area falling under its jurisdiction-

- Preparation of Annual Plan of Panchayat Samiti;
- Consideration of Annual Plan of Gram Panchayats and submission a consolidated plan to Zilla Parishad;
- Preparation of Annual Budget of Panchayat Samiti and submission of consolidated Annual Budget of Gram Panchayats;
- Promotion & development of 29 subjects (under 11 Schedule, Article 243G);
- Performing such functions and executing such works as may be entrusted to it by the Government or the Zilla Parishad.

6.3 Duties of Zilla Parishad:

Subject to any general or special direction of the State Government, the following are the important duties of Zilla Parishad within the area falling under its jurisdiction-

- Prepare Plans for economic development and social justice of the District and to ensure the coordinate implementation of such plans in respect of 29 Subjects under different Departments.
- Manage or maintain any work of public utility or any institution vested in it or under its control and management;
- Acquire and maintain village huts and markets;
- Make grants to Panchayat Samiti or Gram Panachayat;
- Adopt measures for the relief of distress;
- Co-ordinate and integrate the development plans and schemes prepared by Panchayat Samitis in the

District;

- Examine and sanction the budget estimates of Panchayat Samiti or Panchayat Samitis in the District;
- Undertake or execute any scheme extending to more than one Block;
- Take over the maintenance and control of any rural bridge, tank, ghat, well, channel or drain belonging to a private owner or any other authority on such terms as may be agreed upon.
- The Zilla Parishads of two or more adjacent Districts may jointly undertake and execute any development scheme on such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed upon.

7. Powers and functions of Village Committee:

The Village Committees derive their power and responsibilities under section 20 and 21 of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District (Establishment of Village Committee) Act 1994.

7.1 Functions of the Village Committee

- Subject to the control and guidance of the Executive Committee the Village Committee shall initiate the development schemes for their village areas. They shall act as the implementing agency for all minor development schemes in their respective village areas. They shall be the Executive Agency of minor development schemes within their jurisdiction for which the District Council may provide funds. They may also receive and recommend the cases of any individual Development Scheme or grievances to the District Council.
- Subject to such rules as may be prescribed on behalf by the Executive Committee, Village Committee may exercise all or any of the following functions-

Category	Functions and Responsibilities
A. Public Health and Sanitation	• Shall ensure proper sanitation and cleanliness in the village. • Shall take curative and preventive measures to control epidemic diseases. • Shall establish and maintain burial and cremation grounds and make arrangements for the disposal of animal carcasses. • Shall take measures for the destruction of stray dogs and disposal of unclaimed cattle.
B. Water Supply and Infrastructure Development	• Shall construct, maintain, and improve village wells and tanks for water supply used for drinking, washing, and bathing. • Shall clean and maintain village roads and pathways. • Shall maintain and construct new buildings and houses as required • Shall construct and maintain a village rest house for public use.
C. Agriculture and Livelihood Promotion	• Shall encourage villagers to take up kitchen gardening and educate them on preparing organic manure and the use of fertilizers. • Shall promote cattle rearing under the <i>khutti</i> system and develop grazing grounds to control stray cattle.
D. Education and Social Welfare	• Shall promote and maintain the registration of births and deaths within the village. • Shall support educational activities for children, adults, and women.

Category	Functions and Responsibilities
	• Shall maintain records on population, cattle, spinning and weaving looms, and landless or unemployed persons.
E. Cultural and Recreational Activities	• Shall establish and maintain social and cultural clubs with reading and recreation rooms. • Shall promote indigenous sports, folk dances, and music. • Shall organize celebrations of national days and other village festivals.
F. Miscellaneous and Delegated Functions	• May take up any other matters that the Executive Committee considers appropriate from time to time. • Subject to conditions and modifications made by the Executive Committee, may perform duties and functions specified in Chapter III, Part II of the <i>Tripura Panchayats Act, 1993</i>.

7.2 Powers of Village Committee:

The Village Committee shall exercise the following powers within its jurisdiction as prescribed by the Executive Committee:

1. Power to Levy and Collect Fees:

The Village Committee shall have the authority to levy and collect fees at rates determined by the Executive Committee for the following purposes:

- Maintenance and operation of primary schools;
- Maintenance of roads, bridges, paths, and lands constructed or maintained by the Village Committee, or those transferred to it for upkeep.

2. Power to Impose and Realize Additional Fees

Notwithstanding the provisions mentioned above, the Village Committee shall also have the power to impose and realize fees for the following services within its jurisdiction:

- Use and maintenance of rest houses constructed by or transferred to the Village Committee;
- Maintenance of public wells, tanks, and water supply systems under the control or management of the Village Committee;
- Maintenance of lighting installations within the village; and
- Implementation of anti-epidemic measures and other social service schemes aimed at improving public health and sanitation in the village.

8. Involvement of Panchayats in Important Schemes:

Besides the allocated functions, the PRIs are also involved in implementation of various Central and State sponsored schemes. Table 3 shows the list of important centrally sponsored schemes in which panchayats are directly and indirectly involved.

Apart from this, many state sponsored schemes are also run through panchayats. The selection of beneficiaries for centrally and state sponsored schemes is generally done by the Panchayats through the Gram Sabha.

Table: 3 Involvement of Panchayats with Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Sl. No	Schemes	Nodal Department
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1	Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	Social Welfare & Social Education
2	Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)	DWS
3	Krishonnati Yojana	Agriculture
4	Mahatma Gandhi NREGA	Rural Development
5	National Food Security Mission (NFSM)	Food
6	National Health Mission (NHM)	Health & Family Welfare
7	National Social Assistance Program(NSAP)	Social Welfare & Social Education
8	NRLM including DDU-GKY	Rural Development
9	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY)	Rural Development
10	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)	Rural Development
11	Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)	PWD(Water Resource)
12	Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman(PM POSHAN)	Social Welfare & Social Education
13	Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)	Rural Development (Panchayat)
14	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana	Agriculture
15	Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA)	Education(Elementary)
16	Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna (SAGY)	Rural Development
17	Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)	Rural Development
18	Pradhan Mantri Matsa Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	Fisheries
19	National Livestock Management Programme	Animal Resource Development
20	National Bamboo Mission	Industries and commerce
21	Border Areas Development Programme (BADP)	Revenue
22	Mission VATSALYA (Child Protection Services and Child Welfare Services)	Social Welfare & Social Education
23	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	Social Welfare & Social Education
24	National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	Social Welfare & Social Education

9. Role of Panchayats in convergence

There are four (4) parallel bodies at the village level that are formally merged with the Panchayats and are accountable to the Panchayats. Moreover, these bodies are headed by the Gram Pradhan/Chairman of the Village Committee.

Likewise, at the intermediate level level four (4) block level bodies are merged with Panchayat Samity. These bodies are accountable to Panchayat Samities and chaired by the Panchayat Samity Chairperson. At the district level, three (3) district level bodies are merged with Zilla Parishad. These bodies have been

made a unit of the Panchayat Institution and Presided/ Chaired by Elected Representatives of the District Panchayat. Table 4 shows the details of the parallel bodies merged with the Panchayat Institutions.

Table: 4- Parallel bodies merged with the Panchayat

Sl. No	Gram Panchayat	Panchayat Samity	Zilla Parishad
i	Village Education Committee	Block Education Committee	Disaster Management Committee
ii	Village Health and Sanitation Committee	Block, Health and Sanitation Committee	District Water & Sanitation Committee
iii	Village Development Committee	Block Development Committee	District Monitoring Committee
iv	Women and Child Committee	Women and Child Committee	

Though other community-based institutions like Self-Help Groups, Producer Groups, etc. are functioning separately, yet these institutions are integrated with the Panchayats.

10. Role of Panchayats in Village Level Administration

Gram Panchayats and Village Committees, as the local governing bodies at the village level, are mandated to operate in collaboration and cooperation with other grassroots-level government and non-government agencies. The village level administration comprises the following setup-

Table: 5- Village Level Administration

Department	Name of Institution	Role
Panchayat /TTAADC	Gram panchayat/ Village Committee	The core local governing body, responsible for planning and implementing local development initiatives.
Agriculture	VLW Centre	Agricultural support and implements schemes related to farmers welfare
ARDD	ARDD Sub-Centre	Development of livestock sector
SWSE	Anganwadi Centre	Focuses on child care, nutrition, pre-school education, and women's empowerment.
Health	Health Sub Centre	Delivering basic healthcare services
Education	Primary School/JB School	Providing formal education at the elementary level
Cooperation	LAMPS/PACS	Function as cooperative institutions
Revenue	Tehsil Office	Manages land revenue records, property registrations, and handles revenue collection and settlement issues
Fishery	FA Circle	Promotes fish farming
Forests	Forest Beat Office	Responsible for the protection, management, and sustainable utilization

		of forest resources
Department of Post	Rural Post Office/ Sub-Post Office	Provides essential postal and financial services

The above list is indicative, and in addition to these offices, other government facilities and services may also be functional at the village level. Only if all these facilities collaborate with the local governance structure can comprehensively service delivery and sustainable development at the grassroots level be ensured.

11. Conclusion

The Panchayati Raj System in Tripura is one of the distinctive models of decentralized governance India that accommodates both the constitutional provisions of the 73rd Amendment and the special administrative provisions under the Sixth Schedule. The coexistence of Gram Panchayats in non-ADC areas and Village Committees under the TTAADC reflects the State's commitment to democratic participation, inclusiveness, and regional diversity. The Rural Development (Panchayat) Department and TTAADC plays a pivotal role in strengthening these institutions through administrative support, policy formulation, and financial assistance.

While Tripura has made significant progress in institutionalizing local self-governance, challenges remain in the areas of effective devolution of powers, fiscal autonomy, infrastructure barriers, and capacity building of elected representatives and functionaries. The convergence of centrally and state-sponsored schemes through Panchayats and Village Committees has improved service delivery and grassroots development, yet there is ample scope for enhancing coordination among the inter and intra departmental stakeholders, transparency, and participatory planning.

Overall, the rural local bodies of Tripura continue to serve as vital instruments for rural transformation, community empowerment, and democratic decentralization. Strengthening these local bodies through greater functional autonomy, digital integration, and infrastructure support will further consolidate the vision of self-reliant and inclusive rural governance in the State.

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