CHAPTER IV

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION
Panchayat Raj has been as an important political innovation for the establishment of grassroot democracy. In a country like India whose eighty percent of the population dwells in over five lakh seventy five thousand villages the significance and relevance of Panchayati Raj is self-evident. No system of democracy will be strong unless it has strong roots at the local level. The present system of Panchayati Raj has its roots in the village Panchayats - the oldest political institution of ancient India which has functioned almost like "little republics". The introduction of the Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems of land tenure by the British had the effect of reducing the autonomy and influence of the erstwhile village Panchayats.

The British introduced local government institutions in their style. The provincial governments under the Government of India Act 1919 established the village Panchayats in many parts of the country. Things improved under the Act of 1935 which granted autonomy to the provinces. In 1946 when popular ministries resumed office, there was a spate of legislation on village Panchayats.

Gandhiji also pleaded for the revival of the village Panchayats with necessary modifications. Ever since independence, development of the vast rural population of India through democratic channels has become a matter of first priority.
This inspired the framers of the Indian constitution to include Article 40, as a directive to the states to organise village Panchayats as active units of self-government. In pursuance of this directive, the states were called upon to enact laws to establish Panchayats.

Most of the states and union territories though vested with full powers regarding the Panchayat Raj institutions took little initiative in the matter till Salwantray Mehta team, submitted its report in 1957 suggesting a three tier pattern of Panchayati Raj institutions throughout the country.

Actually, the history of Panchayat Raj dates back to the Community Development Programmes inaugurated on 2nd October 1952. The date was deliberately chosen to synchronise the programme with the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation - Mahatma Gandhi. The Ford Foundation and the U.S. government were involved in the working of the community development programme in the initial stages. The programme laid stress as an integrated approach to rural development. With identical aims National Extension Service was inaugurated so as to cover the entire country in a relatively short period. In practice the community programmes and the National Extension Service merged and their main achievement was the establishment of a permanent network of blocks. When all hopes through these community development plans etc. were belied by experience,
the National Development Council suggested the appointment of Balwantray G. Mehta in January 1958 primarily to suggest measures for the better working of the community Development Programme and the National Extension Service.

One of the findings of the committee was that the Community Development programmes resulted in a waste of public expenditure due to insufficient public response. In order to mobilise rural masses more effectively, a scheme of democratic decentralisation was envisaged. It included a three tier system of rural local government known as Panchayat Raj for better implementation of community development programme. This thrust on decentralisation of democracy at grassroot level was intended to shift decision centres close to the people to enable their participation and to put the bureaucracy under local popular control. On 12th January 1958, the National Development Council endorsed the recommendations made by the Balwantray Mehta Committee. Parliament passed necessary legislation urging the states to adopt the pattern of Panchayat Raj system as recommended by the Mehta committee with minor variations, if necessary to suit local conditions. The states have evolved patterns of Panchayat Raj suitable to local conditions in the light of these principles. Panchayat Raj has revolutionised administration and called for a new codes of administrative relationship and
behaviour. The entire approach is pragmatic as Panchayat Raj is a growing concept and there is no finality or rigidity about the pattern or system evolved at any time.

Soon Panchayat Raj institution emerged in different states with some variations in the timing and structure. Following the lead given by Rajasthan by October 1959, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujrat, Tamil Nadu, Maharastra, West Bengal, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh respectively. Almost all states and union territories are now having Panchayat Raj institutions in some form or other. Everywhere Panchayat Raj was introduced with great fanfare, and it constitution the most conspicuous measure of reform in the system of governance in Independent India.

Thus Panchayat Raj was devised as a means for evaluation of the community programmes. Both community development places and Panchayat Raj institutions were integrally connected with each other. Community Development Programmes which were wholly managed by officials could now be shared by non-officials. Panchayat Raj made it possible for officials and non-officials to work together. At each level village block and district there has to be a link between the administrative officials and the elected representatives. The Panchayat Raj therefore emerges from the twin necessities of having to plan all developmental activities from below and having to entrust such
planning to the local people. In Arunachal Pradesh, the community development programme was ushered in, for the first time, with the establishment of an Agricultural Research Institute at Pasighat in 1950. The first community development project was also introduced in the Pasighat area of the Siang Frontier Division in 1952. And the first National Extension Block was set up in Namsang area of Tirap Frontier Division in the same year. By the end of 1956, there were six community blocks in each division covering 206 villages with a total population of a little over 60,000. By 1966, the number of community blocks rose to 41, thus bringing the entire region within the compass of the community development programme. Some of the Blocks were located in inaccessible areas beyond the reach of any administrative centre. In total there were 19 National Extension Blocks by the end of second five year plan and 22 more community Blocks were added raising the total to 41. In order to give effective coverage to all Blocks 4 more community development Blocks were projected under Fourth five year plan. The community development Blocks were divided into two categories that as A and B, on the basis of population.

Any Block with the population of above 5000 and provided with the services of 8 Grama Sevaks was treated as "A" grade of Blocks. "B" type of Blocks consisted of population less than 5000 and only five Grama Sevaks were attached to each of them. The Grama Sevaks were necessarily tribesmen themselves. 3

The community development programmes' major emphasis was on cottage industries followed by consumer cooperatives. Under each Block Development Officer, technical hands for Agriculture, Veterinary, Animal Husbandry, Engineering, Cottage industries and cooperatives were stationed. Like any other part of India, in Arunachal the community Blocks were made coterminous with the administrative centres and the circle officers served in the capacity of Block Development officers. 4

DYING ERING COMMITTEE 1

A four member committee popularly known as Ering Committee was constituted on 11th April 1964 by the Governor of Assam to consider the expansion and development of local self government in NEFA. In making its recommendations the committee was to take into consideration the scope and pattern of authority and functions exercised by indigenous tribal institutions at the level of villages and above. It was also

4Ibid., p. 259.
to be examined how far the existing indigenous system was adequate and how best it could be modified or enlarged to introduce democratic working in the fields of Judiciary, local development and administration. The committee was to give due consideration to the stage of advancement in respect of each tribe and the committee was requested to propose regarding

1. the type of democratic bodies suitable at the village level and above,

2. the extent and nature of jurisdiction of these bodies

3. the phases in which the recommendations of the committee might be put into force having regard to the varying stages of development of the differing tribal groups.5

The committee was headed by Shri Dying Ering, then parliamentary Secretary and included Shri B.D. Pandey, then Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Brigadier D.M. Sen, former legal Advisor and Shri L. Thanga, the then Development Commissioner in NEFA. The committee started its work in May 1964 and finally submitted its report in January 1965.6


6Dying Ering Committee was constituted as per the Notification No. PLA 10/64 dated May 14, 1964 issued by the Adviser to the Governor of Assam, Shri Pandey and Shri Sen were its members, Shri Thanga and Shri Ering were as convenor and Chairman respectively.
The committee had its first meeting at Shillong which was also attended by the Governor of Assam. It had made an extensive tour of the NEFA and interviewed people and officials at various levels.

The Ering committee report has not been made available for public scrutiny. The committee suggested some drastic changes in existing administrative structure and in traditional village councils. It was also recommended that non-external and indigenous system should be retained and that election to the councils should be conducted according to tribal customs.

Ering committee report listed the following recommendations:

The administration of union territories is with the Ministry of Home Affairs and hence it is appropriate for administrative matters relating to NEFA to form a part of the Ministry of Home Affairs rather than the Ministry of External Affairs. This has been done immediately with effect from August, 1965.

The members of Parliament from NEFA should be elected in some other way rather than being wholly nominated. For the election of M.P. the committee said that formation of an electoral college representing people of all parts of NEFA territory should be done. As a whole democratic decentralisation

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7Dying Ering Committee Report 1965, pp. 53-59.
8Ibid., p. 55.
was strongly recommended. Formation of following bodies at the village, circle, districts and Agency level was suggested:

- **Village** - Gram Panchayat
- **Circle** - Anchal Samiti
- **District** - Zilla Parishad
- **Territory** - Agency Council.

(a) At village level, there shall be a village council. The tribal councils should be recognised. In matter of election to village councils, customary laws should have precedence. Village council should be allowed to function with existing powers. Each village council may have a paid secretary, where ever possible. A local person who is educated could be appointed to the post. Nowhere committee recommended replacement of the traditional village councils but suggested some changes in its composition and functioning.9

(b) At circle or block level there shall be Anchal Samitis. The Officer-in-Charge of the sub-division should be ex-officio chairman of the Anchal Samitis in their respective jurisdiction. If major function should be developmental and its strength may be between 20 and 30 members. In advance areas a non-official chairman may be appointed. Except for adjudication of inter-village disputes referred to it, an Anchal Samiti should not have any judicial function to perform.10

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9Ibid., pp. 40-42.
10Ibid., pp. 45-47.
(c) At district level, there shall be Zilla Parishad consisting 24 to 30 members in lieu of the development committee. This effective district body should also comprise one to three elected members from each Anchal Samity and six members should be nominated in the initial stages to secure representation of backward and unrepresented areas of tribes. It was suggested that the growth of an area consciousness as district from a purely tribal affinity will be possible only if multiracial area institution are developed.\(^{11}\) This body should be empowered to deal with the problems related to land, exploitation of natural resources and local taxation etc. The Zilla Parishad would be generally an advisory body and should be consulted before any new developmental activities are taken up. The committee further proposed that certain funds should be placed at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner who was to be Chairman of their Zilla Parishad.\(^{12}\)

The fund should be spent according to the discretion of Zilla Parishads on developmental programmes.

(d) At territory level, there should be an Agency Advisory council consisting of 20 to 30 members, representing four selected members from each district. It would be generally

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\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 49.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 51.
an advisory body. The member of Parliament from NEFA would be ex-officio member. The council should meet once or twice a year. It would discuss in detail the five year plans for NEFA as also the annual budget, proposals and allocations of funds. 13

In the Ering committee report the term Panchayati Raj was not used even for single time but the bodies suggested and its structural framework were on all India pattern of Panchayat Raj. Besides the All India pattern of three tier system of Panchayat Raj the suggestion for Agency council liked and locked with Panchayat Raj system. It was an epoch making recommendation as the Agency council was to function more or less some sort of a legislature though named as Panchayat Raj body.14

The recommendations of Ering committee were accepted by the Government of India. The President of India in exercise of powers conferred by Article 240 of the constitution read with sub-paragraph (2) of the paragraph 18 of the constitution of India, promulgated the North East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation (Regulation 3 of 1967, with effect from 2nd October 1968, incorporating the scheme of Ering committee with

13Ibid., p. 52.
minor modifications. Seppa-sub-division the eastern part of the Kameng district and the Miao-Vijaynagar area of Tirap district were left out of the scope of the Regulation. 15

Panchayati Raj introduced in NEFA generally follows the All India pattern. Now among the North Eastern states, only Arunachal Pradesh retains the three tier system of rural government. In Assam, the three tier Panchayati Raj system was reduced to two tier by jettisoning the middle tier. In Manipur and Tripura only Gram Panchayats are functioning. Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram have only tribal councils and no Gram Panchayats. 16 Panchayati Raj in Arunachal has heralded a new era in the political development of the territory.

Under the Regulation, the NEFA village councils, were accorded the status of Gram Panchayats. The regulation also provided constitution of Anchal Samiti, Zilla Parishad and Agency council. The Governor of Assam formally inaugurated the Panchayati Raj in NEFA at Shillong on December 3, 1969. Regulation 3 of 1967 aims at establishing the Panchayat system of local self-government and investing the various bodies constituted under the provisions of the Regulation with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to

15 As in such areas chieftaincy was prevalent they would nominate from among themselves Representatives for the district level body ensuring that the best and most representative people are selected.

16 India 1986, Yearbook, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
function as units of self-government. It offers opportunity to the people to take effective part in development and administration of NEFA. The Panchayati Raj regulation envisaged a four tier system. In brief, the composition, powers and functions of each tier are as follows:

**GRAM PANCHAYAT:**

Gram Panchayat is an electoral college for the purpose of Anchal Samiti. It has got hardly any function except helping the executive Agency from time to time in development activities in respect of their constituencies and mobilising the people for such purposes. As per Panchayat Raj Regulation 1 of 1967 the "Gram Panchayat" means a village authority constituted under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1971 (4 of 1971) it substituted the earlier meaning that a "Gram Panchayat means a body of persons elected according to the tribal customary methods by the residents of any village as the Deputy Commissioner may specify". Further the provision added "if the exigencies of circumstances so warrant such

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17 Panchayat Raj in Arunachal in its present form and content operates under the NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation No. 3 of 1967 and as amended by the North East Frontier Agency (Administration) supplementary Regulation No. 4 of 1971. Other changes have been incorporated subsequently by


18 Schedule II of the NEFA (Administration) supplementary Regulation 1971.
Election may be conducted by a secret ballot system vide Panchayat Raj amendment 1987. Thus Gram Panchayat institution was separated from village authorities and indigenous governing institutions. Gram Panchayat is constituted for a village or group of villages having a population of not less than five hundred. In exceptional cases the Administrators approval is obtained to constitute "Gram Panchayat" having a population of less than five hundred. The ratio between the number of member of the Gram Panchayat and the population of village or group of villages shall be two person for every 100 in case the population is more than 150 in a particular village. Thus election system in the village Panchayats was introduced which has ended the era of chief's hereditary leadership.

All persons who are adults and are ordinarily resident in the area of Gram Panchayat are eligible to enlist as voters and can contest the election.

Thus this Gram Panchayat, the lowest body serves only as an electoral college to the Anchal Samities.

Under the provision of Panchayat Raj rules the Deputy Commissioners of the districts are required to prepare the list of all the eligible adults of each village and published in the respective offices of the Deputy Commissioners/Additional Deputy Commissioners/Extra Assistant Commissioners.

19 Earlier it was one person. It has been increased to two persons by Panchayat Raj Amendment Act 1987.
and circle Head Quarters inviting objections and claims within a stipulated date and thereafter a final list is prepared and a date is fixed by the Deputy Commissioner concerned deputing some of the Junior Officers as presiding/polling officers of the Gram Panchayat election.

The village authority appointed under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1 of 1945 consists of village elders who are selected or nominated by the Deputy Commissioner's under the aforesaid Regulation. As a symbol of appointment to the office they are given "Red Coat" which denotes the authority. They are empowered to take up petty cases of criminal nature and fine up to Rs. 50/- In regard to civil suits they enjoyed wider powers. But under the provision of Panchayat Raj Regulation 1967, Gram Panchayats have been formed to function as an electoral college. The Gram Panchayat members are elected in a democratic way and are never appointed by the Deputy Commissioner. This is the basic difference between village authorities and Gram Panchayat under Regulation 1 of 1945 and Panchayat Raj Regulation 1967. Gram Panchayats and indigenous self government institutions of different tribes are two separate institutions guided and governed by two separate regulations. Practically in all the districts, each group of tribals have their own indigenous form of village authority. These village authorities used to decide all the petty cases both civil and criminal according to their customary
After the introduction of Panchayat Raj in the area, the village authorities have declined in importance.

**ANCHAL SAMITI**

An Anchal Samiti is constituted by notification of the Governor vide section 4 of the Regulation 3 of 1967 declaring contiguous areas in a district as he deems fit to be a block for the purposes of this regulation and may specify the Gram-Panchayats in the block. This is the only elected body having funds, powers and right of execution of the schemes analogous to community development blocks, (as the area under Anchal Samities is co-terminus with that of a community development block) in respect of its territory, village and population.

**COMPOSITION AND CONSTITUTION OF ANCHAL SAMITIES**

The Anchal Samiti is constituted for such contiguous areas in a district as are termed as a block. It is an unit of self government at the block level. An Anchal Samiti consists of the following members:

1. One representative elected by the members of each Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction in a block. An Anchal Samiti comprises a specified number of Gram Panchayats.

2. One representative from the co-operative societies situated within the blocks as ex-officio member.

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Chapter II of the Regulation 3 of 1967 deals with composition, powers and functions of the Anchal Samities.
(3) Five persons nominated by the Deputy Commissioner from the members of the unrepresented tribal communities.

(4) The sub-divisional officer of the subdivision in which the block situated as ex-officio member.

Besides the above members, the Deputy Commissioner may appoint such officers as ex-officio members of an Anchal Samiti without the right of vote as may be deemed necessary.

MEMBERSHIP OF ANCHAL SAMITI:

As per the Regulation, a person would be disqualified for being chosen a member of an Anchal Samiti, if he:

(a) is not a citizen of India or
(b) is not twenty-five years of age; or
(c) has been dismissed from the Service of Government or an Anchal Samiti or any other local authority for misconduct unless a period of five years has elapsed from such dismissal; or
(d) holds any office of profit under Government or an Anchal Samiti or any other local authority.

(e) has directly or indirectly any share or monetary interest in any work done by, or to, the Anchal Samiti or in any contract or employment with, under, or by or on behalf of the Anchal Samiti; or

(f) is an undischarged insolvent; or
(g) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or

(h) has been convicted by a criminal court of any offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than six months and five years have not elapsed since his release.

Provided that the disqualifications specified in clauses (d), and (e) shall not apply to an ex-officio member.

The members of an Anchal Samiti would hold office for a term of three years. However, in special case, the Governor may extend the term for another two years at the maximum. The term of office of the members commences from the date of the first meeting of the Anchal Samiti, which is fixed by Deputy Commissioner. The term of office of an ex-officio member shall continue so long as he holds office by virtue of which he is such a member. Any member other than an ex-officio member loses his office, if he remained absent, for three consecutive ordinary meetings of Anchal Samiti without sufficient cause. A member is eligible for re-election or renomination. The Governor reserves the right of removing any memuer at any time found undesirable in the public interest under section 61, a member of Anchal Samiti with the previous sanction of President of Anchal Samiti may inspect any work or institution, maintained at the expense of the Anchal Samiti
and accounts or other documents belonging to or in possession of the Anchal Samiti.

PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT AND OTHER OFFICIALS OF ANCHAL SAMITI:

The sub-divisional officer, appointed by Deputy Commissioner as ex-officio member of the Anchal Samiti, acts as a President of the Anchal Samiti. Other junior officer, not below the rank of circle officer, preferably BDO, is appointed as executive officer. He will act as Secretary of Anchal Samiti. He carries out decisions of Anchal Samiti. Anchal Samiti can also appoint such other officers and employees subject to such rules as may be made in his behalf.

President is elected by the member of the Anchal Samiti from amongst themselves in the first meeting of the Anchal Samiti. The President continues to hold his office so long as he holds the office of sub-divisional officer and ex-officio membership of the Anchal Samiti. The Vice-President can be removed from the office by a no-confidence motion passed by not less than two-third majority. The Governor can remove the Vice-President at any time.

MEETINGS OF ANCHAL SAMITI:

The time and place of meeting of Anchal Samiti and the procedure at such meeting were such as would be prescribed. Any member of Anchal Samiti is competent to move resolutions and put questions on matters connected with the administration
of the Anchal Samiti. No resolution of Anchal Samiti can be modified, amended, varied or cancelled within a period of three months from the date of its passing except by a resolution passed by two third of the total members of Anchal Samiti.

Anchal Samiti can appoint as many committees as it thinks fit from amongst its members, with its president and vice-president as the chairman and vice-chairman respectively. In such committees the executive officer will act as the ex-officio member, for the purpose of assisting it in the discharge of any general or specific function. The committees may exercise the powers of Samiti for smooth and effective Anchal Samiti may temporarily associate a non-member with any committees for his special experience or knowledge about any subject dealt with by a committee. Such person or persons would have the right to take part in discussion of the committee, but would not have the right to vote. The President of Anchal Samiti is empowered to convene a general meeting of all the members of the Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction to review the action taken by the Anchal Samiti during the preceding year and to present the working plan of the Anchal Samiti for the succeeding year.

All members of the Anchal Samiti, who are not in government service, are entitled to avail travelling allowance and dearness allowances from the Anchal Samiti for attending
meetings of Anchal Samiti.

POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF ANCHAL SAMITIES:

The Anchal Samiti, the jurisdiction of which is

counterminous with the area of a block, is an important unit

of planning and development. It is the organ through which

various developmental and welfare activities are channelised

at inter-village level. It has vast powers and has a vital

role to play in the area of developmental administration. The

NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation 1967 has vested the Anchal Samiti

with important functions in regard to the matters specified

in the second schedule of the Regulation. Anchal Samities are

empowered to assign to any Gram Panchayats falling within its

jurisdiction any of its functions enlisted in the said schedule.

The study of said schedule reveals that an Anchal Samiti may

take any measure which is likely to promote the health, safety,
education, comfort, convenience or social or economic well

being of the residents of the area in short of raising the

quality and standard of life of the people of the Anchal Samiti.

A brief summary of second schedule which entails the scope of

functions of Anchal Samities, is as follows—

(1) In sphere of sanitation and public health: cleaning

up the area, supplying drinking water, improving sanitation,

preventing public nuisance, medical relief, preventing infections
diseases, maternity and child welfare.

(2) Public works including:

(a) Construction, maintenance and repair of building waterways, public roads, drains, embankments, culverts, bunds and bridges and

(b) construction and maintenance of minor irrigation works, management of community lands, and regulating hats, minor bazars and fairs.

(3) Education and culture relating inter-alia to

(a) Establishment and maintenance of schools, library, reading room, club or other places of recreation and games and

(b) spread of education to middle English and middle vernacular standards and above those standards.

(e) Organising celebration of native and public festivals.

(4) Self-defence and village defences:

(5) Administration which includes:

(a) Maintenance of records relating to agricultural procedure, census of village industries, population census, cattle census spinning wheels and weaving machine census, census of unemployed persons or persons having no economic holding or such other statistics as may be necessary.
(b) Registration of births, deaths, marriages, and maintenance of registers for the purpose

(c) Drawing up of programmes for increasing the output of agricultural and non-agricultural produce in the village.

(d) Preparation of a statement showing the requirement of the supplies and finance needed for carrying into rural development schemes,

(e) Preparation of plans for the development of the village and

(f) Acting as agent for the government for developmental works within the area where funds for specific purposes are provided

(g) Reporting to proper authorities complaints which are not removable by Anchal Samiti.

(h) Welfare of the people which includes:

(a) Organisation of welfare activities among women and children and among illiterate sections of the community and welfare of backward classes.

(b) Or arising voluntary labour for community works and works for the uplift of the village, and

(c) Relief to people affected by floods, droughts and other natural calamities.
(7) Agriculture and preservation of forest comprising:

(a) Improvement and development of agriculture and horticulture

(b) Production and use of improved seeds and

(c) Promotion of co-operative farming

(b) Breeding and protecting cattle

(9) Promotion, improvement and encouragement of cottage and village industries.

An Anchal Samiti may assign to any Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction some of its specified functions.

Thus all works of local importance are entrusted to the Anchal Samities. The Anchal Samiti possesses certain executive and financial powers for taking up any schemes for the improvement of health and hygienic roads and communication, education and culture of the people. It is entitled to grants obtaining from the government.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

The Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967 provides for a fund for each Anchal Samiti for discharging its functions effectively. The Regulation lays down that the following shall

21 The sources of income of the Anchal Samiti are mentioned in detail in section 37 of Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967.
be credited to and form part of the Anchal Samiti funds, namely,

(i) the proceeds of any tax, fees, licence fees, cess and surcharge levied under this regulation;

(ii) the collection charge of tax or revenue due to Govt.

(iii) any grants and contributions made by the Governor or any local authority or other persons;

(iv) all sums received by way of loan or gift;

(v) the income from or the sale proceeds of, any property of Anchal Samiti;

(vi) the sale proceeds of all dust, dirt, dung or refuge collected by the employees of the Anchal Samiti;

(vii) all sums received in aid of or for expenditure on, an institution or service, maintained, managed or financed by the Anchal Samiti;

(viii) any other sums paid to the Anchal Samiti.

An Anchal Samiti has the power to raise loans for discharging its functions properly and to make repayment of such loans from sinking fund.

Besides all this, an Anchal Samiti is empowered to levy taxes on certain specified items prescribed under section
In this context, under section 65, "Deputy Commissioner may at any time call for the records of Anchal Samiti relating to taxes or fees levied within its area and may make suggestions for alteration, addition or modification of any tax or fee so levied or the rate thereof".

Anchal Samiti fund shall be applied for payments in the following order, namely:

(a) payment of interest on loans raised under section 38, and payments into sinking fund, if formed;

(b) payment of salaries, allowances and other remuneration of the officers and other employees of the Anchal Samiti;

(c) payment of expenses incurred by Anchal Samiti in the discharge of its functions under this regulation;

(d) payment of such other administration expenses of the Anchal Samiti as may be prescribed".

In case of necessity, the Governor may direct an Anchal Samiti to levy any of the taxes or fees specified in section 40 of the Panchayat Raj regulation 1967, or increase the rate at which any such tax or fee is levied. If Anchal Samiti fails to levy tax or fee or enhance the rate of any tax or fee as required, the Governor may by notification, levy, or increase
the rate of such tax or fee. Every Anchal Samiti and Gram Panchayat receiving contributions from an Anchal Samiti, are legally obliged to maintain an accounts of its receipts and expenditure. Apart from this, Anchal Samiti has to prepare annually a budget estimate of its income and expenditure for the next financial year and if necessary it can also prepare a supplementary budget estimate at any time during a financial year. These budget reports are to be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner and after being approved by him, on expenditure beyond this budget estimate can be incurred by Anchal Samiti.

Notable investments made by Anchal Samities in creating assets are as follows.\(^{22}\)

1. The tourist Rest House at Dirang/Seijosa/Likabali

2. Shopping centre at Kalaktang/Ziro/Along/Changlang/Namsai/Tezu/Chowkham/Teaang/Lekang/Cersi/Roing/Chayang-Tajo.


4. Lodging house at Along.

5. Bachelor’s barrack at Roing/Naharlagun/Wakro.

\(^{22}\)Department of Panchayats, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.
6. Field hostel at Tezu and Pasighat

7. Mini cottages at Pasighat/Naharlagun/Changlang/Tezu.

8. S/P type buildings at Tezu for hiring to private parties.

9. Cattle shed at Tezu/Along

10. Stall at Tezu/Along/Seppa.

11. S/P type residential and non-residential building at Chayang-Taile/Pangchau/Pangin/Bamong/Seppa for renting out to SBI.

The Anchal Samities have also financed and operated mini bus services as follows.

(a) 1975-76 : Daporijo, Ziro, Kalaktang

(b) 1976-77 : Tawang, Dirang, Kalaktang, Seppa, Doimbuk, Along, Basar, Pasighat, Roing.

(c) 1977-78 : Doimbuk, Naga, Along, Yingkiong.

(d) 1978-79 : Tawang, Ziro-I, Dambuk-Roing.

(a) 1979-80 : Doimbuk, Pasighat, Tezu, Namsai-Choukham Khonsa.
CONTROL OF THE GRAM PANCHAYATS AND ANCHAL SAMITIES

Under section 60, Chapter V of the regulation the Governor is empowered to inspect, supervise and control over the performance of the functions of Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samities. He can also appoint an officer to act as inspector of local works for one or more sub-divisions; who can not only inspect but also advise in regard to the construction or repairs of any property under the control and administration of any Gram Panchayat or Anchal Samiti. Section 63 says it at any time it appears to that Deputy Commissioner that any member, officer or employee of Anchal Samiti has made wilful or persistent defaults in the performance of any duty imposed under this regulation the Deputy Commissioner may fix a period for performance of that duty, and if the duty is not performed within the prescribed period, the Deputy Commissioner can by order appoint person to perform the said duty and direct that the expenses of the performance of the duty shall be paid by the defaulting Anchal Samiti. Under section 64, of the Regulation, the Deputy Commissioner is if in the opinion that

23 Chapter V of the Regulation 3 of 1967 deals with control of Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samities.
execution of any order or resolution of an Anchal Samiti or
the doing of an act is causing or likely to cause public
disaffection or annoyance leading to the breach of peace he
may by order suspend the execution of that order or resolution
or prohibit the doing of that Act while submitting a report
to the Governor of the circumstances in which the order was
made.

In regard to control of Gram Panchayats and Anchal
Samities Governor enjoys two vital powers as follows.

(1) if in the opinion of the Governor an Anchal Samiti
(a) exceeds or abuses it's powers, or
(b) is incompetent to perform or makes wilful and
persistent defaults in the discharge of the functions imposed
on it by or under this regulation or any other law for the
time being in force, or

(c) persistently disobeys the order of the Deputy
Commissioner or the office under sub-section (1) of section 63.

The Governor may by order in writing dissolve the
Anchal Samiti and direct that it shall be reconstituted in
the manner provided in this regulation and can appoint any
person or persons as the administrator on his behalf, to
discharge the functions of the Anchal Samiti
(2) In regard to the disputes between local authorities, the regulation provides that if any dispute arises between two or more Anchal Samities and a Gram Panchayat or between two or more Gram Panchayats it shall be referred to the Administrator and his decision thereon shall be final.

ZILLA PARISHAD:

The Zilla Parishad\(^2\) is the highest unit of local self govt. at the district level and each zilla parishad for each district is to be constituted by the notification of the Governor. Zilla Parishad is the supreme body in finalising the plans and programmes of district. All the heads of departments of development are taken as ex-officio members of the zilla parishad for sponsoring the schemes on a resolution adopted in the Zilla Parishad meeting. The Zilla Parishad consists of the following members:

1. The Vice-President's of all the Anchal Samities in the district as ex-officio members;

2. One representative of every Anchal Samiti in the district who is elected by the members from amongst themselves;

3. Not more than six persons to the nominated by the Governor from out of the tribes which have not secured

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2\(^4\) Chapter III of the Regulation 3 of 1967 deals with composition, powers and functions of Zilla Parishads.
(4) The Deputy Commissioner in charge of the district as ex-officio president of the Zilla Parishad.

PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS:

Deputy Commissioner acts as the ex-officio President of the Zilla Parishad. The Vice-President is elected by the members from amongst themselves and remains in office for three years. If a casual vacancy occurs in the office of Vice-President, the members elect another Vice-President amongst themselves, who will hold his office only for the remaining period of the term of the Vice-President on whose place he was elected.

Other members, the Vice-Presidents of Anchal Samities and elected representatives of Anchal Samities of the Zilla Parishad, would cease to be such members on their ceasing to be Vice-Presidents or members as the case might be of the Anchal Samities. The term of these members is three years. The Vice-President of the Zilla Parishad is elected by the members on the initial day of the meeting. In absence of the President, the Vice-President is to conduct the proceedings of the meetings on the assistance of the secretary of the Zilla Parishad, who is the SDO or the officer in charge of the Development branch of the district administration.

Zilla Parishad is the supreme body in finalising the plans and programmes of the districts. For this all heads of
the development departments are taken as ex-officio members of the Zilla Parishad.

The Zilla Parishad is an advisory as well as coordinating body. It advises the Governor on all matters concerning the activities of the Gram Panchayat and Anchal Samities situated within the district.

POWER AND FUNCTIONS:

Zilla Parishad is the supreme body in the district having supervisory capacity for sponsoring all the development schemes. The Zilla Parishad is advisory as well as coordinating body. The functions of zilla parishad is to advice the Governor on all matters concerning the activities of the Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samities within the district. The Zilla Parishad has to make recommendations to the Governor in respect of

(i) the budget estimates of the Anchal Samities;

(ii) the distribution and allocation of funds and grants to the Anchal Samities;

(iii) the co-ordination and consolidation of the plan proposed by the Anchal Samities and drawing up of the district plan.

(iv) the co-ordination of the work of the Gram Panchayat and Anchal Samities; and
(v) Land settlement and raising of revenues for the Anchal Samities.

(b) to review the working the Anchal Samities from time to time;

c) to advise on such other matters as may be referred to it by the Governor.

The Zilla Parishad also makes a review of the working of the Anchal Samiti from time to time and gives advice on such other matters as may be referred to it by the Governor.

MEETINGS:

The Zilla Parishad shall meet as often as necessary to transact business of its own jurisdiction. There should not be a gap of more than six months between two meetings of Zilla Parishad. In the absence of both President and Vice-President, any member nominated by the President presides over the meeting of Zilla Parishad. All decisions are taken by majority of votes of the members present and in case of tie, the matter is decided by the second or casting vote of the President of the meeting. According to the 1987 amendment of the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj 1972 act amendment we find "that the presiding officer shall have no right to cast his vote in case of a tie. In the event of a tie, there shall be re-election and if again there is a tie, then it shall be decided by toss".
Chapter IV, Section 57 of the NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation 1 of 1967 envisaged an Agency Council as an advisory body for the entire NEFA area to be constituted by notification of the Governor. The Agency council consisted of the following members:

(i) the Governor;

(ii) the member of Parliament representing the NEFA;

(iii) the Vice-President of the Zilla Parishads;

(iv) three representatives from each of the Zilla Parishads to be elected by its members from amongst themselves in the prescribed manner;

(v) the Advisor to the Governor, ex-officio.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS:

The Agency Council may be consulted by the Governor in regard to:

(a) matters of administration involving general questions of policy relating to the NEFA in the state field;

(b) the five year plan and the annual plan proposals for the development of the NEFA;

(c) the estimated receipts and expenditure pertaining to the NEFA to be credited to, and to be made from the consolidated
(d) proposals for undertaking legislation with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the state list in the seventh schedule to the constitution;

(e) any other matters which the Governor may refer to it for advice.

MEETINGS:

(1) The Agency Council shall meet as often as may be necessary and not more than one year shall elapse between one meeting of the Agency Council and another meeting.

(2) The Governor shall preside at the meetings of the Agency Council.

(3) Meetings of the Agency council shall be regulated by such procedure as may be prescribed.

(4) Subject to rules regulating the procedure of the Agency council, and subject to the discretion of the Governor to refuse to give information or to allow discussion on any subject in the public interest, a member of the Agency council shall have the right to ask questions on matters of public interest relating to the NEFA.

The Panchayat Raj institution was introduced in erstwhile NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) on the 2nd day of October, 1968 in
a three tier Panchayat Raj system with Gram Panchayats at the grass root level, Anchal Samitis for handling the finance and implementation of the schemes. The Gram Panchayats serve only as an electoral college to the Anchal Samitis. The Apex body viz. the Zilla Parishad functions as advisory body at the district level for the overall development of the district.

Except for the village councils or Gram Panchayats, all other bodies are elective. The structure of Panchayat Raj at the end of 1969 and the present existing structure of Arunachal Pradesh is shown by the following tables.
TABLE 15

AGENCY COUNCIL

The Governor, the Advisor to the Governor, the M.P. representing NEFA, the Vice-President of each Zilla Parishad and three representatives from each Zilla Parishad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Subansiri Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Siang Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Lohit Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Tirap Zilla Parishad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Subansiri Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Siang Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Lohit Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Tirap Anchal Samities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Subansiri Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Siang Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Lohit Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Tirap Zilla Parishad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Subansiri Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Siang Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Lohit Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Tirap Anchal Samities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Subansiri Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Siang Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Lohit Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>Tirap Zilla Parishad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameng Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Subansiri Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Siang Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Lohit Anchal Samities</td>
<td>Tirap Anchal Samities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, there were 5 Zilla Parishads; 38 Anchal Samities and 938 number of Gram Panchayats.

There were 44 Anchal Samities and 5 Zilla Parishads in 1972 when the second election of Panchayat Raj Bodies was held and Pradesh Council was constituted.
### Table 16

#### Present Panchayat Raj Set Up in Arunachal Pradesh

**Arunachal Pradesh**

*constituency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of District</th>
<th>No. of Zilla Parishad</th>
<th>No. of Zilla Parishad members elected</th>
<th>No. of Zilla Parishad Nominated of Zilla Parishad</th>
<th>Total No. of Anchal Samiti member elected</th>
<th>No. of Anchal Samiti elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>West Kameng</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>East Kameng</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>West Siang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>East Siang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dibang Valley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4+2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tirap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>136</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>862</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 16
PRESENT PANCHAYAT RAJ SET UP IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

**ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

* constituency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of ASM</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>No. of Gram Nominated</th>
<th>No. of Gram</th>
<th>No. of Panchayat * covered</th>
<th>No. of ASH</th>
<th>No. of ASH Nominated</th>
<th>Name of District (Sl.No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>West Kameng</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>212</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>East Kameng</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>329</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>363</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>West Siang</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>593</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>East Siang</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>592</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>469</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dibang Valley</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>335</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tirap</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>701</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
<td><strong>948</strong></td>
<td><strong>860</strong></td>
<td><strong>3091</strong></td>
<td><strong>4692</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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27 Department of Panchayat, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar. According to India Year Book 1986. There are 206987 village Panchayats, 4043 Panchayat Samities and 340 Zilla Parishads in India.
In order to make the working of the Panchayat Raj bodies really effective and efficient, certain amendments in the existing provisions of Panchayat Raj regulation are suggested from different sections of society and government as well:


2. Reconstruction of Anchal Samities and enhancement of power of taxation and levy of licence fees.


4. Reconstruction of Zilla Parishads and reduction of official dominance in it. There is still too much administrative control over Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad. Anchal Samiti President is Sub-Divisional Officer and Zilla Parishad President is Deputy Commissioner which jeopardises democratic nature. Dying Ering report suggested that within 5 years the posts of President of Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad should be elected.

5. To impart training for the member-Vice- PRESIDENTS of Anchal Samities and Zilla Parishads in collaboration with the All India Panchayat Parishad, New Delhi - on all Indie basis, etc.
Some urgent and basic clauses in the Panchayat Raj Regulation have already been removed in 1987 in the light of the suggestion made by the Panchayat Raj regulation amendment committee 1985. Other matters are in active consideration of the Department.

An Advisory Committee headed by the Panchayat Raj Minister has been constituted recently to propose modifications in the system.²⁸

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

The Government is providing funds each year under Grants-in-aid to the Anchal Samities for remunerative schemes like maintenance of Mini Buses, Cattle farm, Field hostels, hotels, barracks, residential and non-residential buildings for renting out to the State Bank of India/Insurance Company and other private and Public undertakings etc., thus to earn revenues for the Anchal Samiti funds. So far the Anchal Samities have accrued a revenue of ₹23.00 lakhs (approx.) in their fund from the remunerative schemes. The Panchayati Raj Institutions will have their own power of taxation only after promulgation of the Bye-laws, which have been framed and in the process of finalisation for Government approval.

The Bye-laws as soon as finalised will empower the Panchayats, their own powers of taxation and tax laying taxes on buildings, shops, cinema halls, bazara, ferry ghat fairs and festivals, sales of goods, hotels, tea stalls, book stalls, ears, cycles, etc., falling within the area of Anchal Samities. The revenue so earned will be diverted for building up remunerative community assets.

REVENUE:

The Anchal Samities have accrued so far Rs. 20.00 lakhs (approx.) as revenue out of the Grants-in-Aid schemes sanctioned to them so far and few districts have already taken up development schemes out of their funds instead of depending on Government or any other sources.

The expenditure pattern of the Panchayat Raj bodies is explained in the table given below.
### TABLE 17

Showing abstract expenditure of Panchayat Raj bodies (Rs. in lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of schemes sanctioned with expenditure</th>
<th>Non-Plan</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10.23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 Department of Panchayat, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.
Nearly 20 years have elapsed since the introduction of Panchayat Raj in Arunachal Pradesh. During the period, Panchayat Raj elections were held in 1960, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1987. The elections to the Gram Panchayats were held by the customary method, whereas elections to the Anchal Samities and Zilla Parishads took place by secret ballot. In the years to follow all elections including those of Gram Panchayats are to be held by secret ballot. The tenure of the elected Panchayat bodies is 3 years which can be extended by Administrator (Governor) for another 2 years. Provision for special representation from unrepresented tribes and women has also been provided under rules. There is no provision for party system in Panchayat Raj elections in Arunachal Pradesh. Symbols like Bow and Arrow, Bundle of corn, Hornbill, spear and Dao are assigned to the candidates contesting elections only for Anchal Samiti membership. But party politics could not be wished away from Panchayat Raj elections. In practice, parties play a big role in the elections though the names and symbols of parties may not figure openly. Today Panchayat Raj elections become a pointer to the ensuing Assembly election because at the grass-roots level the position and popularity of every political party is reflected. The result of Panchayat Raj election also helps the political parties to
finalise their candidates and work out a strategy for Assembly elections. Even Ex-MLA's contest the elections to the Panchayat Raj bodies. Arunachal is the only state in the country when the timely elections of various Panchayat bodies have been ensured after the expiry of their 3 year terms. 30

The NEFA Panchayat Raj regulation 1967 laid the foundations of Panchayat Raj system in Arunachal Pradesh. But it has different aims and objectives. Basically decentralisation is the objective of Panchayat Raj in other states but in Arunachal Pradesh it seeks to bring uniform political practice by integrating the varied tribal councils into the unified pattern of Panchayat Raj.

The main objectives of Panchayat Raj in Arunachal Pradesh may be explained thus. First, Panchayat Raj in NEFA is expected to be the prime agency for rural development. It will provide a sound basis for economic and political growth. Secondly, it will provide a workable medium through which the rural people would be able to express themselves on various problems of the area and also to evolve an integrated community approach for solution of problems that concern the entire agencies. The Panchayat Raj will therefore not only be a

---

decentralised form of administration, it would be much than that.

The basic objective of Panchayat Raj in context to Arunachal Pradesh is to give a distinct political identity, and to develop a new political culture based on the motivation and voluntary participation of the inhabitants. In true democratic spirit it seeks to integrate the small and varied tribal groups into an organised society.

Although the Panchayat Raj regulation was an administrative arrangement, it paved the way for constitutional change and consequent elevation of the territory into a full-fledged state. The Agency council, at the territory level, though an advisory body, it could pilot any legislation for NEFA. It was a forum to ventilate public grievances and a symbol of the unity of the territory and people of Arunachal Pradesh. Verrier Elwin, who was all for retention of tribal ways, saw in the proposal to introduce statutory Panchayats a threat to traditional tribal councils and had forewarned against. But it was a necessary step to promote the development of a unified constitutional structure with which to integrate even the democratic institutions of the people. Panchayat Raj Regulation was an administrative arrangement and did not signify any

---

constitutional change, rather it prepared the ground and 
environment which made constitutional development of the 
territory smooth and harmonious. At present elections to the 
Panchayat Raj are contested on party basis, though unofficially 
and the election results are examined critically by the political 
parties to assess their party position and to chalk out the 
strategy for the ensuing Assembly election. Thus the introduction 
of Panchayat has brought politics in NEFA. But it has given 
certain advantages also. First, leadership has been harnessed 
to the political process in a more modern way. Second, Agency 
council deliberations taught and trained the people in modern 
legislative business and procedure. Thirdly though government 
has been anxious to maintain the tribal indigenous institutions/ 
bodies, but certain difficulties were experienced in it. To 
plug these loop holes and fill such gap Panchayat Raj was 
introduced.

Thus in the name of protecting the customary rights and 
traditions of the NEFA people in their village councils, a 
uniform system of Gram Panchayats all over NEFA could not be 
introduced till 1969. It was feared that it would upset the 
age old political equilibrium in the society. When the 
untouched village governing institutions were tampered with, 
it might lead to a new hybrid variety of Panchayats. That is 
why, introduction of Panchayat Raj in NEFA was done without
disturbing the tribal councils. But by a natural process the tribal councils began to lose their influence and accordingly Panchayat Raj bodies gained in importance and were assimilated without resulting in any disharmony or discontent.

As Dr. Elwin was for retention of all tribal ways and conceived the introduction of statutory Panchayat as threat to traditional councils, he forewarned against them. Thus it became necessity for the government to see that in no way the tribal village councils were disturbed.

The Panchayat Raj system introduced in 1967 has proved to be a unique democratic institution, which has played vital role in the social economic emancipation of the people. The system has helped Arunachal a great deal to maintain the traditional values of a classless and beggerless society unlike other states of the country. So said Sri Todak Basar the Parliamentary Affairs Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj minister Shri Todak Dulom remarks further that the implementation of the welfare schemes mainly depended on the Panchayat bodies at the grass roots. These can work as watch dogs in this context.32

32Echo of Arunachal (Weekly Newspaper) Itanagar, 10th October 1988, pp. 1-6.
The Pyramid type of Panchayat Raj network system of NEFA has proved effective as the popular participation in the administration at the grassroots level has been growing over the years and the edifice of representative government has been strengthened.

To integrate and assimilate all NEFA villages and their self-governing institutions, the Panchayat Raj was evolved as an administrative arrangement to fill the gap, inducing linkage among villages themselves and with the territory as a whole. The Panchayat system in fact X-rayed the viability of the whole NEFA local polity for prescribing the future doses for democracy.

Once the Panchayat Raj Regulation is amended suitably restoring the real states to the elected Panchayat at bodies for which demand is gradually increasing and gaining momentum the whole political atmosphere will be changed. The Panchayat Raj officials will excrete a great deal of influence over society as polity as there will be one Zilla Parishad President whereas there will be many MLA's from the same district.

The Panchayat Raj Regulation while respecting the perpetuation of village authorities as laid down in section 22 and 44 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945 has proposed an organisational structure at the Anchal, district and the Agency levels. The Panchayat Raj was
not intended to weaken the indigenous authorities, whose recognition is clearly acknowledged in the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945. The section 22 and 44 of this regulation states that the village authorities will continue to function in accordance with the traditional practice. This recognition paved the way for continuity in the management of local affairs and yet prepared the people for adopting a more rational form of local self government. In fact, the people are now demanding a more uniform pattern of Panchayat Raj, if necessary through legislation.