

A Comprehensive Study on Good Governance in Gaon Panchayats of Assam in year 2022-23



Participation

Rule of
Law

Transparency

Equity and
Inclusiveness

**GOOD
GOVERNANCE**

Consensus
Oriented

Responsive

Effectiveness
and
Efficiency

Accountability

অসম চৰকাৰ



**STATE INSTITUTE OF PANCHAYAT AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT (SIRPD), ASSAM
PANCHAYAT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**

Year of Publication : 2024



Acknowledgement

Panchayati Raj Institutions are the last mile connectivity at the democratic decentralization progress. The Indian Constitution has mandated Panchayati Raj Institutions to plan and implementation of economic development and social welfare programmes for the rural people. The Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1994, has also emphasised on the development of the rural area by planning, execution and monitoring of various rural development through Panchayati Raj Institutions. Over the years, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been implementing various rural development programmes for the betterment of the rural people of the state. Various schemes like Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, PMAY - G, Finance Commission Grants, NSAP, ASRLMS has been implemented by the Panchayati Raj Institutes in letter & spirit. The main motto of these programmes to make the Panchayati Raj Institutions to people's centric or in the sense of "Responsive Governance". The State Institute of Panchayat & Rural Development, Assam has imparting trainings on various courses on preforming of our Panchayati Raj Institutions as source of "responsive or good governance" in the service delivery system so as to Panchayati Raj Institutions could act as bridge between the People in one hand and the Government in other hand. With this background, the Institute has taken up a research study on how effective Panchayati Raj Institutions are as a source of Good Governance amongst the rural people of Assam.

We are very much grateful to our hon'ble Director, Shri Munindra Sharma, IAS for guiding to undertake this research study in time.

We are also very much thankful to Shri Pabitra Kalita, Joint Director for his valuable suggestions and timely guidance for development of questionnaire for the research study. His insightful taught and support helped the research team to collection of information from various Gaon Panchayats as well as evaluation of the information.

The support received from Shri Jyotishmoy Deka from Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF) has been highly appreciable. His command over the subjects and the concept note he developed on the topic is highly remarkable. Mr. Deka developed the questionnaires, data collection tools, coordinated with the respondents for data collection and also meticulously analysed the responses received and finally shaped the report. The Research Team also highly appreciated the overall support rendered by Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF), New Delhi.

The research team also offers thankfulness to Shri Jyoti Prasad Deka and Dr. Mridusmita Kashyap, Faculty Member for their valuable suggestions on preparation of the report.

Last but not least, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to all respondents particularly G.P. Secretaries, and Young Fellows who has supported in the data collection.

With regards,
Research Team

The Assam State at a Glance

Area and Demography	Local Governance and Elected Representatives
Area - 78438.59 km	Number of Gaon Panchayats -2197
Districts - 35	Total GP Members - 21970
PRI District *- 27	Number of Anchalik Panchayats -185
Autonomous districts* - 8	Total AP Members - 2197
Population (as per 2011 census) - 31,169,272	Number of Zila Parishads - 27
Male - 15,954,927	Total ZP members - 420
Female - 15,214,345	Total PRI members in State - 26784
Rural Population - 86%	Last PRI election held - December 2018
Urban Population - 14%	Number of VCDC/VDC in 6th schedule - 489
SC Population - 7.15%	Number members in VCDC /VDC -4890
ST Population -12.44 %	Number of development blocks -219
Average Population per GP - 9,173	Number of revenue circle -184
Density of Population (per sq. km) - 397	
Sex ratio (females per 1000 males) - 954	
Population in age (0-6%) - 14.47%	
Number of inhabited villages - 26393	

Source : Census 2011 & State NIC dashboard

* In Assam, the three tier Panchayati Raj districts extends to 27 districts except 8 autonomous districts under the sixth schedule of the constitution of India.





"Panchayat Raj represents true democracy realized. We would regard the humblest and the lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land".

-Mahatma Gandhi

The rationale for Panchayati Raj

Mahatma Gandhi envisioned villages as mini-republics and advocated that true democracy should begin with participation from the grass-root level by the people of every village. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment mandated the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to function as units of local self-government.

In India, with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act democratic decentralization has been introduced and a three-tier model has been adopted for rural areas called Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It was assumed to have many benefits of this decentralization including incorporating local needs in the planning, rationalization of central resources based on local demands and priorities, inclusion of women and social groups in decision making, etc. The aim was broadly to enable citizens to participate in democratic decision-making processes. If one examines closely most of the parameters for which it had been introduced were attributes to good governance.




Good governance by all means is a set of processes that ensures transparency, accountability, and participation at local level to achieve development goals. And so, to be effective, these PRIs always navigate towards incorporating such processes which make development inclusive and participatory. According to the report published by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) on Localization of SDGs (LSDGs), good governance has been kept as one of the major themes to be achieved and provided a detailed framework also. PRIs are advised to incorporate activities and processes which will strengthen the good governance aspects.

There is no doubt that PRIs have the special advantage of being closer to the community, they can prepare participatory development plans, differential planning for implementation, saturate the social security measures, vision for long term area development and so these processes are essential. There is also a need for these local governments to understand the citizen's needs and priorities, how they are perceiving their involvement in the processes etc. so that it could be improved and more inclusive.

This report is an attempt to assess the status of Good Governance processes in Local Governments Institutions of Assam and also assess the perception and experiences of citizen's around the efforts of these Local Governance. The data on the same has been collected on these aspects

1. Factors contributing to good governance
2. Assessment of current state of good governance
3. Status of transparency, accountability, and participation in local governance - perception of PRIs and citizens and data progress
4. Asses the key Infrastructure parameters that support PRIs to become providers of good governance
5. PRI members' and Citizen's feedback and perceptions on the same parameters mentioned from one to four

As per the Constitutional Provisions, PRIs are democratic local government institutions working towards good governance, social inclusion, gender equality and economic development. The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India has mandated the responsibility of local planning and developmental activities to the Panchayats and envisioned a people-led development at the grassroots level. The Panchayati Raj System was mandated with the twin objectives of ensuring economic development and social justice for the people living in the rural areas. The level of devolution of power, funds, functions and functionaries (3Fs) is mandated by respective State Governments and is uneven across various States.





Subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension. | 15. Non-conventional energy sources. |
| 2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation. | 16. Poverty alleviation programs. |
| 3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development. | 17. Education, including primary and secondary schools. |
| 4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry. | 18. Technical training and vocational education. |
| 5. Fisheries. | 19. Adult and non-formal education. |
| 6. Social forestry and farm forestry. | 20. Libraries. |
| 7. Minor forest produces. | 21. Cultural activities. |
| 8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries. | 22. Markets and fairs. |
| 9. Khadi, village and cottage industries. | 23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries. |
| 10. Rural housing. | 24. Family welfare. |
| 11. Drinking water. | 25. Women and child development. |
| 12. Fuel and fodder. | 26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded. |
| 13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication. | 27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. |
| 14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity. | 28. Public distribution system. |
| | 29. Maintenance of community assets. |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD) in Assam is working towards strengthening of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) by developing their institutional and delivery capacities. Since SIPRD is mainly engaged in training and capacity building, it is essential to understand the status of PRIs and assess their knowledge, skills and attitude on certain aspects/themes which need to be delivered by them. This is also an area where SIPRD has special focus on to assess effectiveness of training delivered by them, and particularly to assess the analysis of Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of PRIs. Transform Rural India Foundation (TRI) partnered with SIPRD to facilitate the institution in developing architecture for more effective decentralized training and capacity building and improved perspective of PRIs to have robust grassroots leadership.

SIPRD has also partnered with Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF) for enhancing local democracy through studies, assessments, and surveys to evaluate the current status and identify gaps between mandated practices and field realities. A comprehensive study was conducted in selected 496 Gaon Panchayats (GPs) of Assam to assess good governance. The study involved 496 PRI representatives, one from each panchayat across 27 PRI districts of Assam and 100 citizens from 44 Panchayats in 8 PRI districts of Assam. The questionnaire covered six sections: general information, factors contributing to good governance, current state assessment, transparency and accountability, challenges & opportunities, and recommendations. The study's objective was to assess the current state of governance, transparency, accountability, and participation in Assam's GPs, and to provide recommendations for improvement.

Demographic Insights - with regard to study outreach

The educational background of interviewed PRI representatives reveals that a majority are graduates (78%), followed by those with higher secondary education (9%), postgraduates (10%), and matriculates (3%). These representatives hold roles such as GP Secretary, GP Coordinator, GP President, and Tax Collector, with an average of 6.1 years of experience.

Among the citizen respondents, the majority (71%) have matriculate qualifications, while 29% have completed higher education (Higher Secondary, Graduate, and Postgraduate). The occupations of citizen respondents vary, including Anganwadi workers, farmers, teachers, homemakers, and private sector employees.

PRI ERs and Officials									
Designation	GP Presidents		GP Secretary		GP Coordinator		Tax Collector		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Post Graduates	0	2	26	9	9	1	1	0	48
Graduates	26	15	267	21	53	2	3	1	388
HSS (22+20)	12	17	9	3	0	0	1	0	42
Matriculates	4	7	6	0	0	0	0	1	18
Total	42	41	308	33	62	3	5	2	496

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

Citizens									
Qualification/ Categories	AWW	Farmers	Teachers	House wife	Business	Contractual employee	Tax Collector	Young Fellow	Total
Post Graduates	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
Graduates		2	3	1	1	1	1	0	9
HSS	1	7	0	5	3	0	0	16	0
Matriculates	0	16	0	31	4	20	0	0	71
Total	1	25	5	37	9	21	1	1	100

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

Data was collected from **496 PRI representatives and 100 citizens** representing 4,765 villages in 27 districts, covering a total population of 6,584,781. The average village population is approximately 1,382, with the 100 citizen respondents representing 44 Panchayats in 16 blocks of 8 districts.

Section : Factors Contributing to Good Governance

Key Findings on Factors affecting Good Governance in Gaon Panchayats: This section generated ratings by both ERs and Citizens around various aspects. In Leadership and Administration, the rating generated with the data indicate moderate effectiveness with room for improvement in both leadership and administrative functions as well as mandatory processes like regular Standing Committee Meetings. General recommendations of this section are to conduct awareness campaigns and workshops to encourage the participation of women members and develop a comprehensive training plan for Panchayat staff on governance and best practices around-

- **Promoting Transparency and Efficiency** by utilizing eGramSwaraj for better transparency and efficiency. Ensure Standing Committee meeting agendas and minutes are publicly accessible.
- **Improving Community Engagement** through organizing more inclusive community engagement strategies beyond traditional meetings. Ensure meetings are held at convenient times and locations to increase participation.
- **Strengthening Feedback Mechanisms:** Improve the use of invitation letters and suggestion boxes for feedback. Place suggestion boxes in prominent locations and ensure they are regularly checked.
- **Upgrading Infrastructure through** focus on constructing and repairing Panchayat buildings using available funds from state and central schemes. Ensure buildings are functional with provisions for meetings, information dissemination, and public use.

Findings from the data collected

1. Leadership

- Leadership effectiveness in promoting transparency and accountability received an average rating of 3.70 from Panchayat representatives and 2.89 from citizens (on a scale of 1-5 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest).
- Administrative efficiency in service delivery rated 3.68 by Panchayat representatives and 3.23 by Citizens.

2. Standing Committee Meetings:

- Increased number of meetings from 2021-22 to 2022-23: Average number of meetings have increased in the following manner from 2021-22 to 2022-23 - General Meeting increase from 6 to 9, Executive Meetings increase from 4 to 6. Standing Committee Meetings increase from 4 to 6 and average number of other meeting increase from 2 to 4.
- Majority of Gaon Panchayats (73.2%) conduct regular Standing Committee meetings as per the Act.
- Participation of women in these meetings is 76.8%, but can be further improved.

3. eGramSwaraj and Social Audit

- o High usage of eGramSwaraj (98%) and uploading of social audit processes (99%) indicate strong adherence to digital governance.
- o Actions taken on social audit observations are common, but there is room for improvement in addressing all issues raised.

4. Community Engagement

- o Moderate community participation in decision-making, with an average rating of 3.00 by Panchayat representatives and 3.18 by Citizens.
- o Significant increase in participation in Gaon Sabha meetings over the years, but there is still potential for higher engagement.

5. Feedback and Disclosure Mechanisms

- o Widely used methods include public information boards (80% by representatives, 88% by citizens) and notice boards (82% by representatives, 94% by citizens).
- o Less frequently used methods are invitation letters (57% by representatives, 30% by citizens) and suggestion boxes (55% by representatives, 69% by citizens).

6. Panchayat Bhawan Infrastructure

- o 8% Gaon Panchayats lack proper office buildings or have buildings in need of repair.
- o State governments are encouraged to use funds from various schemes like MGNREGA to improve Panchayat infrastructure.

Section: Assessment of Current State of Governance

This section presents a detailed analysis of governance practices in Assam's Gaon Panchayats (GPs), highlighting both challenges and opportunities for improvement. Governance encompasses decision-making, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and participation. Good governance aims to balance these elements to ensure the fair and responsible use of power.

This section covers on the one hand the perception of PRIs and Citizens on the overall status of Good Governance in their areas and on the other hand on their own understanding to make it more effective. Further the level of participation through participative planning, effectiveness of service delivery around key social security measures and finally their progress on the results have been covered under below mentioned sub-sections.

The study identified **several areas of improvement for effective governance in GPs**. These include limited capacity among PRI members for planning and implementation, leading to poor decision-making and service delivery. Financial constraints due to reliance on government grants, limited internet connectivity affecting e-governance initiatives, and low public awareness and participation were also significant issues. Social challenges like low literacy rates and child marriage further impeded access to government schemes. Corruption, lack of transparency, infrastructure deficiencies, and external factors such as political pressure and perennial floods obstructed local development efforts.

The study identified several opportunities for improvement. Enhancing transparency through online publication of Panchayat information, community meetings, and grievance redressal systems can build trust and accountability. Addressing staffing shortages, empowering Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and holding regular Gaon Sabha meetings can increase public participation. Collaboration with government departments for infrastructure improvements and advocating for greater local decision-making power can further decentralize governance and improve service delivery.

Leveraging existing strengths, such as involving volunteers, local leaders, youth, and women's groups, and conducting skill training programs, can boost public participation. Utilizing PRIs as a bridge between Panchayats and the public, ensuring equitable fund allocation, and prioritizing services for vulnerable sections can foster collaboration and equity. Educating and involving youth in planning processes ensures long-term sustainability.

The study recommends several actions to address these challenges and leverage opportunities. These include using multiple communication channels to disseminate information about schemes and Panchayat activities, strengthening accountability mechanisms, organizing capacity-building workshops, prioritizing infrastructure development, and fostering cooperation between Panchayats and line departments. By implementing these recommendations and learning from successful models in other regions, Assam's Gaon Panchayats can create a more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and citizen-centric governance system, driving sustainable development and improving the lives of all residents.

Table: Actions to address the challenges and leverage of opportunities

Aspect	Present Status	Challenges	Opportunities
Overall Status of Good Governance	Perception varies, with concerns about effectiveness	Limited capacity of PRI members, financial constraints, low public awareness, social issues	Enhance transparency, increase participation, and collaboration with government departments
Decision-Making	Deficiencies in planning and implementation	Low literacy rates, lack of transparency	Capacity-building workshops, involving diverse groups
Rule of Law	Corruption, external pressures	Lack of accountability mechanisms	Strengthen grievance redressal systems
Transparency	Limited information sharing	Poor internet connectivity	Online publication of Panchayat information, community meetings
Accountability	Weak accountability mechanisms	Lack of public participation	Empowering Self-Help Groups (SHGs), regular Gaon Sabha meetings
Participation	Low public awareness, limited participation	Social barriers, lack of skills	Leverage volunteers, local leaders, youth, and women's groups, skill training programs

Governance and Leadership



- PRI representatives rated the leadership's effectiveness in promoting transparency and accountability at an average of 3.70 on a scale of 1 to 5, whereas citizens rated it at 2.89, indicating a perception gap.
- The administration structure's efficiency in service delivery received an average rating of 3.68 from PRI representatives and 3.23 from citizens, suggesting moderate effectiveness.

Standing Committee Meetings

- The Assam Panchayat Act, 1994, mandates the formation of various Standing Committees within Gaon Panchayats. These committees are essential for overseeing different functions, including development, social justice, and social welfare.
- Data from FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 indicate an increase in the number of meetings across all categories, suggesting a rise in activity or a focus on more frequent meetings within the Panchayats.
- Regularity of various meetings is high. However, there are areas for improvement in the participation of women with 115 respondents indicating a lack of participation.
- Meeting minutes are commonly recorded, and follow-up actions on decisions are usually taken, demonstrating a structured approach to governance.
- Awareness of roles and responsibilities among members is high, and record maintenance practices are satisfactory. However, it's been observed that there is further need for capacity building.

Table: Performance of Standing Committee Meetings in Assam Gaon Panchayats

Present	Challenges	Opportunities	Remarks	Suggestions	Acts/Policies
Increased number of meetings. Encourage active participation from all groups.	Encourage active participation from all groups	Low participation of women	Meetings held regularly, minutes recorded, follow-up actions taken	Implement training programs for committee members	Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 (mandates formation of Standing Committees)
High regularity of meetings	Limited staff training	Enhance capacity building for effective committee functioning	Awareness of roles & responsibilities satisfactory, record keeping practices acceptable	Provide training opportunities for Panchayat staff	Assam Panchayat Act, 1994




However, challenges remain, such as the need to improve participation from women members in Standing Committee meetings and the necessity for regular and rigorous training for staff and PRI members. Transparency could be enhanced by making meeting agendas and minutes publicly accessible.


To address these issues, the following recommendations are proposed: encourage greater participation from women members through awareness campaigns and capacity-building workshops; implement comprehensive training plans covering social audits and best practices; utilize eGramSwaraj for increased transparency and efficiency; diversify community engagement strategies and improve meeting accessibility; and address all social audit observations effectively while advocating for full implementation of online audit onboarding.

Section: Transparency, Accountability, and Participation

The section on Transparency, Accountability, and Participation in Gaon Panchayats presents a comprehensive analysis of current practices and citizen engagement in Assam's local governance. **The data indicates a positive trajectory towards transparency, albeit with room for improvement, particularly in financial transparency and citizen access to information.** While initiatives like eGramSwaraj aim to enhance transparency and efficiency, challenges such as digital infrastructure and capacity building persist and there is scope of improvement. Similarly, mechanisms for accountability, including the Right to Information Act and grievance redressal systems, are in place but require clearer communication and improved accessibility.



Regarding citizen participation, Gaon Sabhas serve as crucial platforms for engagement, but their effectiveness varies, with opportunities for improvement in both participation rates and inclusivity. Recommendations include enhancing transparency through accessible information channels, conducting awareness campaigns on citizen rights, strengthening grievance redressal mechanisms, investing in capacity building, and building inclusive decision-making processes. By implementing these recommendations, Gaon Panchayats can enhance transparency, accountability, and participation, leading to better development outcomes for communities in Assam.



Aspect	Present Status	Challenges	Opportunities
Transparency	Increasing, but room for improvement	Limited financial transparency, citizen access to information	eGramSwaraj for enhanced transparency and efficiency
Accountability Mechanisms	Right to Information Act, grievance redressal systems	Need for clearer communication and improved accessibility	Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms
Citizen Participation	Gaon Sabhas as platforms, varying effectiveness	Low participation rates, limited inclusivity	Enhance transparency, awareness campaigns on citizen rights

Section : Challenges and Opportunities

This section also addresses the significant challenges and potential opportunities for enhancing governance and service delivery in Assam's Gaon Panchayats (GPs) under the Panchayati Raj framework. Despite the framework's provisions, several obstacles impede effective governance. PRI members often need more skills for planning, budgeting, and project implementation, resulting in better decision-making and service delivery. Resource constraints are prevalent, as GPs rely heavily on central and state government grants, leading to financial limitations. Furthermore, limited internet connectivity in rural areas hampers e-governance initiatives like eGramSwaraj, reducing transparency and efficiency. Public awareness & participation are also low, as villagers often need to be made aware of their rights and roles, leading to insufficient engagement in Gaon Sabhas and other civic activities. Additionally, transparency issues cause mistrust and discourage public participation, while infrastructure deficiencies such as poor internet, inadequate Panchayat Bhawans, and limited road connectivity hinder effective communication and resource management. Social challenges, including low literacy rates, child marriage, and limited.

Challenges for Gaon Panchayat (GPs)

- **Limited Skills:** PRI members lack skills for effective planning, budgeting, and project implementation.
- **Resource Constraints:** Financial dependence on government grants limits development initiatives.
- **Limited Internet:** Poor rural connectivity hinders e-governance and transparency.
- **Low Awareness & Participation:** Villages lack knowledge of their rights and roles, leading to low engagement.
- **Corruption & Transparency Issue:** Mistrust discourages public participation.
- **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Poor internet, inadequate Panchayat Bhawans, and limited roads hinder communication and resource management.
- **Social Challenges:** Low literacy, child marriage, and limited awareness of schemes create barriers.

awareness of rights, further impede access to government schemes. External factors such as political pressure, frequent floods, and unaccountable higher authorities exacerbate local development issues.

Despite these challenges, GPs have significant potential to drive positive change. Transparency initiatives, such as publishing Panchayat information online, organizing community meetings, and establishing grievance redressal systems, can enhance transparency and accountability. Filling vacant positions through advocacy and exploring volunteer or temporary hires can address staffing shortages. Empowering Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to organize awareness meetings and holding regular Gaon Sabha meetings can boost public participation and citizen involvement in decision-making. Collaborating with government departments to secure funding for water supply, sanitation, and road infrastructure improvements can address basic needs. Advocating for greater local decision-making power and prioritizing infrastructure projects with community input can further decentralize governance and improve development outcomes.

Leveraging existing strengths, such as encouraging the active involvement of volunteers, local leaders, youth, and women's groups, and conducting skill training programs, can enhance public participation. Utilizing PRIs as a bridge between Panchayats and the public, ensuring balanced fund allocation, and prioritizing service delivery to vulnerable sections can foster collaboration and equity. Educating and involving youth in planning processes can ensure long-term sustainability.

To mitigate challenges and leverage opportunities, it is recommended to use multiple channels to disseminate information about schemes and Panchayat activities, strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure responsible behavior from PRI leaders, and organize workshops and programs to encourage citizen participation in Gaon Sabhas and decision-making processes. Prioritizing infrastructure development and resource allocation to address deficiencies in roads, water, electricity, and staffing, and fostering cooperation between Panchayats and line departments for efficient service delivery are also crucial. By addressing these challenges and implementing these opportunities, Assam's Gaon Panchayats can

Opportunities for Improved Governance :

- **Transparency Initiatives:** Online information, community meetings, and grievance redressal systems can build trust
- **Addressing Staffing shortages:** Advocacy, volunteer programs, and temporary hires can fill vacancies.
- **Empowering Citizen:** SHGs, regular Gram Sabha meetings, and skill training can increase participation.
- **Collaboration:** Working with government departments can secure funding for infrastructure projects.
- **Decentralization:** Greater local control and community-driven decision-making can improve development outcomes.
- **Leveraging Strengths:** Volunteer involvement, training programs, and focusing on vulnerable sections can foster collaboration and equity.
- **Communication & Capacity Building :** Multiple information channel, workshops, and programs can increase citizen engagement.
- **Infrastructure Development :** Prioritizing roads, water, electricity, and staffing can improve service delivery.

achieve more inclusive, accountable, and effective governance, driving sustainable development and improving citizens' lives.

Section: Recommendations



This section outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations for enhancing governance in Assam's Gaon Panchayats (GPs), based on input from PRI members. The primary focus areas include infrastructure development, transparency, participation, rule of law, job creation, and a skilled workforce. Recommendations emphasize the need for improved village infrastructure, including roads, water supply, sanitation, and community centers, as well as the transparent implementation of government schemes to encourage public participation in socio-economic development projects. Ensuring adherence to the rule of law and exploring job creation through initiatives like MGNREGS are also highlighted. Investing in training programs to create a skilled workforce and encouraging interdepartmental collaboration for holistic development are crucial. Additionally, exploring new revenue sources, promoting gender equality, advocating for increased fund allocation, and electing qualified leaders are key recommendations.

This section also highlights PRI representatives' and citizens' opinions regarding learning from successful models in other regions. Kerala's decentralized governance model, which emphasizes devolved power, financial autonomy, and grassroots democracy, and Gujarat's public-private partnership (PPP) approach, particularly in infrastructure and service quality enhancement, are cited as examples. Specifically, adopting Dabaliapara GP's renewable energy initiatives for sustainability is recommended. Citizens highlighted the importance of public awareness and participation, reduced political interference, improved tax generation, and efficient public service delivery. Engaging the public through awareness campaigns, minimizing political interference, exploring new tax revenue avenues, and focusing on timely and efficient service delivery are emphasized.

Table : Roadmap for Effective Governance : Recommendations by PRI Members and Citizens


Aspect	Recommendations from PRI Members	Recommendations from Citizens
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Infrastructure development (roads, water, sanitation, community centers)2. Transparency & participation in socio-economic development projects3. Rule of law - Job creation (MGNREGS & other initiatives)4. Skilled workforce training - Interdepartmental collaboration5. Revenue generation (beyond traditional methods) -	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reduced political interference2. Public awareness campaigns3. Increased citizen participation in programs4. Diverse community representation (women, youth)5. Improved communication & information dissemination6. Strengthened grievance redressal & anti-corruption measures7. Timely scheme implementation & equitable benefit distribution

	6. Gender equality & social inclusion 7. Increased central & state fund allocation 8. Elect qualified and knowledgeable leaders	8. Capacity building for PRI members & staff (governance, IT) 9. Resource mobilization & infrastructure development (roads, water, electricity) 10. Efficient & timely service delivery 11. Streamlined processes for PDS, MGNREGS, Orunodoi schemes 12. Stronger collaboration with line departments 13. Mobilize community support for development initiatives
Successful Models	1. Decentralized governance (Kerala model) 2. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP model - Gujarat) 3. Renewable energy adoption (Dabaliapara GP) 4. Village Secretariat (Andhra Pradesh)	1. Panchayats within Assam: Pachim Telahi, Pohumura, Singra, Chaboti 2. Models from Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra (citizen participation & women's empowerment) 3. Village Secretariat in Andhra Pradesh
Additional Suggestions	Explore tax generation options	1. Timely tax payment & collection 2. Clean & green initiatives 3. Gender equality & transgender inclusion 4. Upholding the rule of law & penalties for malpractice 5. Increased field staff 6. Digitization initiatives for administration 7. Regular public meetings 8. Engaging Gaon Sabhas 9. Diverse development plans 10. Functional devolution of power & coordination 11. Grooming elected representatives



Key themes for strengthening governance include empowering PRI members by reducing political interference, enhancing citizen participation, ensuring diverse community representation, improving transparency and accountability, and investing in capacity building for PRI members and Panchayat staff. Effective service delivery, prioritizing resource mobilization, infrastructure development, and streamlining social schemes like PDS and MGNREGS is crucial. Collaboration between Panchayats and line departments, community support for development initiatives, and learning from successful models within Assam and other states are also essential.

Additional suggestions include ensuring timely tax payment and collection, promoting clean and green initiatives, fostering gender equality and transgender inclusion, upholding the rule of law, increasing field staff for better service delivery, implementing digitization for efficient administration, and conducting engaging Gaon Sabhas. By implementing these recommendations and learning from successful models, Assam's Gaon Panchayats can create a more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and citizen-centric governance system, driving sustainable development and improving citizens' lives.



Panchayati Raj : Empowering Communities

1. Introduction

The **State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD)** in the state of Assam is developing institutional capacities and mechanisms so that it can support the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the state in building their knowledge, skills and perspectives to strengthen the local democracy. Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF) is supporting SIPRD in some of the capacity building initiatives, studies, assessments and surveys to assess the present status and understand the gap between what is mandated as per the Act and practices on the field.

Governance refers to the system of rules, practices, and processes by which a country, organization, or institution is directed and controlled. It encompasses several key aspects which includes decision making, rule of law, transparency, accountability and participation. Good Governance aims to strike a balance between these elements, ensuring fair and responsible use of power to achieve common goals. It's a dynamic concept that can be applied at different levels, from national governments to local organizations like Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India.

In this regard, SIPRD with support from TRIF, undertook a comprehensive study on good governance in selected Gaon Panchayats (GP) of Assam. Questionnaires were developed on Good Governance to understand the perspectives of PRI representatives and Citizens of the Panchayats. The collection of the data was done through interviews with two categories of respondents that includes 496 Panchayat representatives and 100 Citizens and from the selected GPs and data was collated and analyzed digitally.

The questionnaires were designed into 6 sections to get an overall view of the prevailing practices related to good governance and the areas which we need to work on to improve the current situation. The following sections in which the questionnaire was designed is given below.

Section 1 : General and Demographic Information

Section 2 : Factors contributing to good governance

Section 3 : Assessment of Current State of Good Governance

Section 4 : Transparency, Accountability and Participation

Section 5 : Challenges and Opportunities

Section 6 : Recommendation

The questionnaire for both the categories was on the same lines except some additional information for the following section was taken from the PRI representatives which may be referred to the table given below.

Table No 1: Additional Specific Information for PRI Representatives

Section	Description
1. General & Demographic Information (applicable to both categories)	This section likely covers general information applicable to both PRI and non-PRI representatives.
2. Factors contributing to good governance PRI Specific Information (for PRI representatives)	This section covers aspects specifically relevant to PRI representatives, including: * Number of meetings conducted as per the provisions of state act * Effectiveness of Standing Committee and their functions as referred in the Assam Panchayat Act
3. Assessment of Current State of Good Governance Fund Utilization (for PRI representatives)	This section covers fund utilization aspects relevant to PRI representatives, including Utilization of funds under 15th Finance commission and Gaon Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). Provisions related to different social schemes (MGNREGA, PMAY-G)
4. Transparency, Accountability and Participation Annual Budget (for PRIs)	This section covers aspects related to the annual budget, likely for PRIs.

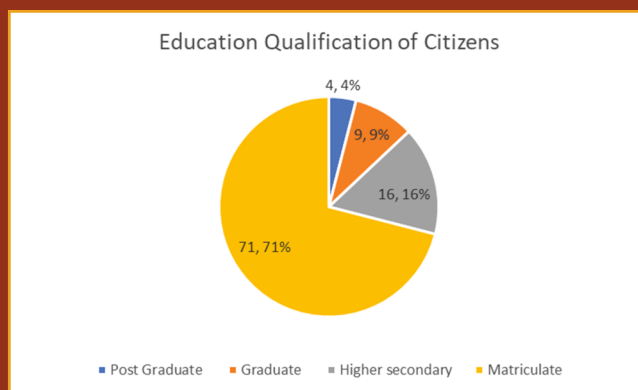
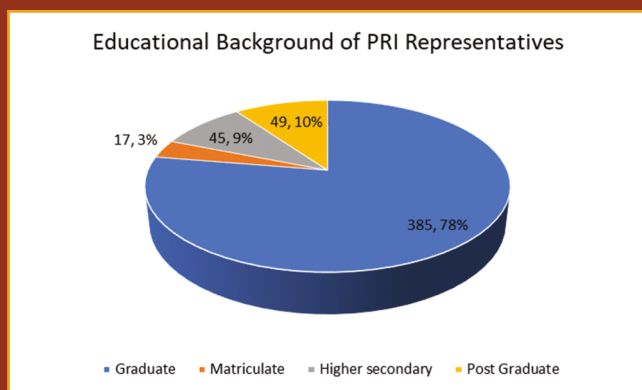
1.1 Objectives of the Research Study

- To identify the key factors that contribute good governance in Gaon Panchayats of Assam
- To assess the prevailing state of good governance in Gaon Panchayats in Assam
- To assess the level of transparency, accountability, and participation in the functioning of these Gaon Panchayats
- To identify the challenges and opportunities for improving good governance in Gaon Panchayats in Assam
- To develop recommendation for improving good governance in Gaon Panchayats

General & Demographic Information

The general and demographic information is essential for effective Panchayat Governance on several parameters. It helps us to know the demographics of the PRI representatives and Citizens (age, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) which helps us to understand the needs and priorities of the community and how effective the PRI representatives are in addressing those needs for the community. Overall including general and demographic information in the research study will provide a more nuanced understanding of good governance within the PRI system.

The data covers 4,765 villages with a total population of 6,584,781 across 27 districts which are represented by 496 PRI representatives. The average population per village is approximately 1,382 whereas the 100 citizens have covered the sub-set of 44 Panchayats in 16 blocks of 8 districts. The education background among the PRI members the graduates constitute the largest group 385 - (78%), followed by those with higher secondary education -45 (9%), post graduates -49 (10%), and matriculates - 17 (3%) with the following roles GP Secretary, GP Coordinator, GP President, and Tax Collector with the average of 6.1 years of experience to serve the public.



Source : Primary data collected by the research team

In the Citizen's category majority of the respondents of the have (71) have a Matriculate qualification. A fair number (29 Citizens) have completed higher education (Higher Secondary, Graduate, and Postgraduate). The educational background of the respondents leans towards secondary education. Majority of the respondents come from a diverse range of occupations including Anganwadi workers, farmers, teachers, homemakers, and private sector employees.

This information will be helpful in understanding the perspectives of PRI representatives and citizen respondents as well as assessing the respondents across both the categories of the survey sample. Overall, this data provides a starting point for understanding the demographics of those who participated in the survey.

Factors Contributing to Good Governance

This section covers the information on various factors contributing to good governance as we understand that strong leadership and efficient administration are the backbone of good governance.

The primary objective of establishing the third tier of government Panchayati Raj Institutions is to increase democratic participation in governance to better articulate local needs and priorities and to ensure a more efficient use of local resources along with greater accountability and transparency. Consensus oriented and Participation are the two important pillars of Good Governance and the PRI helps in ensuring both these pillars. For example, the Gaon sabha is a channel to include the less privileged section of society and ensure their participation in the village level governance wherein they can advocate their developmental aspirations. This bottom up approach is meant to reflect the needs of various stakeholders.

Good governance has a direct correlation to service delivery and progress. The 5T pillars framework of teamwork, technology, timeline, transparency, and transformation are essential for good governance. It centers around the responsibility of Gaon panchayats to serve the people by delivering all citizen services in a timely, efficient, and transparent manner. A village with good governance must necessarily have a very vibrant, strong, and active Gaon Sabha wherein there is a large popular participation, informed discussion, and inclusive decision making. Better public service delivery, better asset and financial management through use of information technology, and regular audit of government programs implemented in the village and submission of actions taken reports to the Gaon Sabha within stipulated period are some of the integral features of the village with good governance. This all happens through the involvement of vibrant leaders in the Panchayats

Leaders make well-informed decisions based on a thorough understanding of issues, considering diverse perspectives, and weighing potential consequences. This is crucial for ensuring policies and programs are effective and address the needs of the population. Leaders effectively communicate ideas, plans, and challenges to various stakeholders. This section mainly covers below mentioned factors of good governance and analysis of the data received from ERs and Citizens. (i) Leadership (ii) Standing Committee meeting (iii) eGramSwaraj and Social audit (iv) Community engagement

3.1 Leadership

The provided data indicates that the leadership in Gaon Panchayat is perceived to be somewhat effective in promoting transparency and accountability, with an average rating of 3.70 on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (most). Similarly, the administration structure is viewed as moderately effective in ensuring efficient service delivery, with an average rating of 3.68 on the same scale.

This data section looks at factors that influence good governance in Gaon Panchayats by the citizens of the Panchayat.

The average rating for leadership promoting transparency and accountability is 2.89 (on a scale of 1-5), suggesting there's room for improvement. The average rating for the administrative structure's effectiveness in service delivery is 3.23 (on a scale of 1-5), indicating moderate efficiency.

Table No 2: Summarizing the ratings on different Administrative structure by the PRI representatives and Citizens

Sl. No	Aspect	Average rating by PRI representative on the scale of 1-5	Average rating by Citizens on the scale of 1-5
1.	Transparency Promotion by Leadership	3.70	2.89
2.	Service Efficiency of Administration	3.68	3.23

(1 -Least, 5 - Most)

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

It's important to consider that these ratings are based on perceptions and may not necessarily reflect the actual level of transparency, accountability, or efficiency. Further analysis of specific strengths and weaknesses may be referred to in the subsequent section.

3.2 Standing Committee Meetings in Assam Panchayats

The Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 (Act No. 12 of 1994), outlines the structure and functioning of Panchayats in Assam, including provisions for Standing Committee Meetings. A Gaon Panchayat shall have powers to do all acts necessary for or incidental to the carrying out of the function entrusted, assigned or delegated to it and, in particular and without prejudice to the foregoing powers, to exercise all powers specific in this **Act. Every Gaon Panchayat shall constitute the following Standing Committees by election from amongst the elected members of the Gaon Panchayat.**

- Development committee for performing functions relating to agricultural production, animal husbandry and rural industries and poverty alleviation programs,
- Social justice committee for performing functions relating to: (a) Promotion of educational, economic, social, cultural and other interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward classes; (b) Protection of such castes and classes from social injustice and form of exploitations; (c) Welfare of women and children.
- Social welfare committee to perform functions in respect of education, public health, public works and other functions of the Gaon Panchayat.

Each committee shall consist of not less than three or more than four members including **the President or the Vice-President, as the case may be. The President of the Gaon Panchayat shall be Ex-Officio member and Chairman of all the three committees.** Provided that the social justice committee shall consist of one member who is a woman and one member belonging to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes as the case may be. The Gaon Panchayat

shall be competent to co-opt to each committee, the members of Agriculture Field Management Committee, Mahila Samitee, Yubak Samittee and other similar bodies recognized by the Government such co-option should be decided by the Gaon Panchayat by resolution with majority support.

The Act doesn't prescribe a specific meeting frequency. However, it's implied that committee meetings should be held regularly to discuss and make recommendations related to their assigned areas. Each Standing Committee performs functions related to its specific mandate, with the authority to:

- Discuss and recommend proposals for the Panchayat's consideration.
- Monitor and supervise the implementation of Panchayat programs within their domain.
- Identify and address issues related to their specific area of responsibility.

The committee meetings and recommendations are likely documented and presented before the Panchayat for further discussion and decision-making. Standing Committees play a vital role in supporting effective governance by Panchayats in Assam. By understanding their legal framework and their collaborative role through the lens of Panchayat Representatives, the below indicators show the number of meetings conducted in FY 21-22 & FY 22-23 and their contribution to the development is mentioned below.

The data provided shows the number of meetings conducted by Gaon Panchayats in 2021-22 and 2022-23, categorized by meeting type. Here's a breakdown of the meeting counts:

Table No 3: No of Meeting conducted in 2021-22 & 2022-23

Year	2021-22		2022-23	
Types of Meeting	No. of meetings	Average meetings in 496 GPs	No. of meetings	Average meetings in 496 GPs
General Meeting	3055	6	4344	9
Executive Meeting	2013	4	2903	6
Standing Committee	2071	4	2964	6
Other Meetings	1153	2	1973	4

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

It appears that the **number of meetings conducted have increased across all categories in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22**. This suggests a potential rise in activity or a focus on more frequent meetings within the Panchayat.




3.2.1. Analysis of Standing Committee Meetings in Gaon Panchayat

The provided data offers insights into the functioning of Standing Committee meetings in 496 Gaon Panchayats on certain performance indicators:

- **Meeting Regularity:** A significant majority (363) responded "Yes" to whether meetings are conducted regularly, suggesting adherence to the act's provisions.
- **Women Participation:** While participation exists (381 for women, a considerable number (115) responded "No," indicating potential areas for improvement.
- **Meeting Minutes:** Recording minutes seems to be a common practice (420 responded "Yes").
- **Follow-up Actions:** A substantial number (396) responded "Yes" to having a system for follow-up actions on decisions.
- **Member Awareness:** Most members seem aware of their roles and responsibilities (420 responded "Yes").
- **Record Maintenance:** Record maintenance within Standing Committees appears satisfactory (390 responded "Yes").
- **Staff Training:** Staff training seems to at a decent percentage, with some more scope of improvement with 480 responding "Yes" and 16 responding "No."

3.3. eGramSwaraj and Social Audit

eGramSwaraj and Social Audit are two key initiatives working in tandem to strengthen transparency and accountability in Panchayats across India, including Assam. **eGramSwaraj is a national e-governance platform aimed at digitizing Panchayat processes, promoting transparency and efficiency.** It provides online access to Panchayat profiles, plans, budgets, and meeting minutes.



Social Audit is a grassroots-level process involving community members in scrutinizing Panchayat activities and finances. It is conducted by Gaon Sabhas with the help of external auditors, for review of Panchayat accounts, records and project implementation where citizens discuss any irregularities and discrepancies. It promotes community ownership and participation and provides synergy between eGramSwaraj and Social Audit. eGramSwaraj provides a platform Social Audit validates data. Together, eGramSwaraj and Social Audit create a robust system for promoting transparency and accountability in Panchayats.

- **e-GaonSwaraj Usage:** Usage of e-GaonSwaraj is indicated (488 responded "Yes" and 8 responded "No").
- **Social Audit:** Uploading the social audit process online seems to be a common practice (490 responded "Yes" and 6 responded "No").
- **Social Audit Action:** Taking action on social audit observations appears prevalent (486 responded "Yes" and 8 responded "No"). However, the specific proportion of addressed observations requires further analysis (average 4 observations addressed per Panchayat suggests room for improvement).
- **Online Audit Onboarding:** Onboarding for online audit seems partially implemented (450 responded "Yes" and 46 responded "No").

Table No 4: Response of PRI representative on the functioning of Gaon Panchayats

	Response	Total	Yes (%)	NO (%)
Standing Committee (responses are in percentages- denominator 496)				
1.	Regularity of Standing Committee meetings (as per the provisions of the act	496	73.2	26.8
2.	participation of women in the Standing Committee meetings	496	76.8	23.2
3.	Minutes of these meeting recorded	496	84.7	15.3
4.	System for follow up action on the decisions taken by the Standing Committee meeting	496	79.8	20.2
5.	Committee members aware of their roles and responsibilities?	496	84.7	15.3
6.	Maintenance of records at Standing Committees?	496	78.6	21.4
GPDP and eGramSwaraj				
7.	Training attended by the staff?	496	96.8	-
8.	GPDP/basic orientation/thematic raining imparted?	496	98.8	-
9.	Whether e-GaonSwaraj is used in the GP?	496	98.3	-
Social Audit and Audit online				
10.	Social Audit process uploaded in the online portal?	496	98.8	98.8
11.	GP take actions on the Social Audit observations by the Auditors?	496	98	-
12.	Number of observations reported by auditor	496	1827 (4 Per GP)	
13.	Is audit online onboarded for the GP?	496	90.7	9.3
14.	Whether actions were taken to address the observations in the Social Audit?	496	94.2	5.8
15.	Proportion of observation in the Social Audit that were addressed	416	12% were addressed	416
	Total number of observation resolved/ Total number of observations	416		

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

3.4 Areas for Improvement

Firstly, we must encourage greater participation from women in Standing Committee meetings. Secondly, we need to invest in more regular rigorous training for staff and PRI members to improve efficiency and knowledge. Thirdly to promote transparency the standing committee meeting agendas and minutes are publicly accessible.

3.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations may be adhered contributing for good governance

- Conduct awareness campaigns and capacity building workshops to encourage women member participation.
- Develop a comprehensive training plan for staff to cover relevant topics (Social Audits,) and best practices.
- Explore ways to utilize eGramSwaraj for increased transparency and efficiency.
- Youth groups may be trained to support GPs in using digital tools
- Analyze social audit data to identify areas needing improvement and develop strategies to address all observations effectively.
- Advocate for full implementation of online audit onboarding for enhanced accountability.

3.6 Community Engagement in Gaon Panchayat

The Gaon Panchayat plays a crucial role in rural development in India. Effective community engagement is essential for the Panchayat to function well and meet the needs of the villagers. The Panchayats get valuable insight into local issues and priorities when villagers participate in discussion. This gives ownership of development projects and ensures their success. Open communication between Panchayat and community builds trust and reduces the risk of corruption. Gaon Sabha, different committees and working groups, public meetings, and awareness campaigns are the key platforms for engagement. Here the electorate can voice their opinions, discuss specific issues, government schemes and programs.

The data provides insights into community engagement and participation in Gaon Panchayat by the **PRI representatives**.

Community Participation: The average rating for community participation in decision-making is 3.00 (on a scale of 1-5), indicating moderate satisfaction. This suggests there's improvement.

Gaon Sabha Meetings: A high number of meetings were held across categories (Mandatory Gaon Sabha, GPDP Gaon Sabha, and Special Gaon Sabha) in both years (2021-22 and 2022-23). There's a gradual increase in the number of participants over the years, suggesting a potential rise in community engagement. The average number of participants per meeting is moderate (ranging from 53 to 75).

The above details may be referred from the table given below.

Table No 5: Response of PRI representative on the functioning of Gaon Panchayats

Mandatory Gaon Sabha	Number of events	Number of participants	Average No of Participants per meeting
Year 2021-22	2801	147475	53
Year 2022-23	2837	168,883	60

GPDP Gaon Sabha	Number of events	Number of participants	Average No of Participants per meeting
Year 2021-22	1638	110861	68
Year 2022-23	1732	113069	65

GPDP Gaon Sabha	Number of events	Number of participants	Average No of Participants per meeting
Year 2021-22	1615	113749	70
Year 2022-23	1735	129325	75

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

3.7 Observation

While there seems to be some level of community engagement through Gaon Sabha meetings, there's potential to improve the overall participation and satisfaction level.

Here data provides insights into community engagement and participation in Gaon Panchayat by the **Citizens on the same parameters.**

Community Engagement: Citizen participation in decision-making received a moderate average rating (3.18 on a scale of 1-5).

Gaon Sabha Meetings: A good number of Gaon Sabha meetings were held across categories (Mandatory, GPDP, Special) in both years (2021-22 and 2022-23). The average number of participants per meeting remained consistent across all meeting types (around 133-140) as shared by the Citizens of the Panchayats.

Table No 6: Community Engagement in Gaon Sabha, GPDP Gaon Sabha and Special Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22 & 2022-23

Mandatory Gaon Sabha	Number of events	Number of participants	Average No of Participants per meeting
Mandatory Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	255	13538	135
Mandatory Gaon Sabha held 2022-23	264	13171	133
GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	113	13305	133
GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	134	14067	140
Special Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	134	6313	63
Special Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	152	7168	71

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

3.8 Recommendations

- **Increase Awareness:** Organize awareness campaigns to educate the community about the importance of participating in Panchayat decision-making processes.
- **Diversify Engagement Strategies:** Explore alternative methods for community engagement beyond just Gaon Sabha meetings. This could include community needs assessments, focus group discussions, or citizen surveys.
- **Enhance Accessibility:** Consider holding meetings at convenient times and locations to ensure wider participation, especially for women, marginalized communities, and people with disabilities.
- **Improve Transparency:** Clearly communicate meeting agendas, decisions taken, and action plans to ensure transparency and foster trust.
- **Address Specific Needs:** Identify and address the reasons behind the moderate satisfaction rating to improve the effectiveness of community engagement.

By implementing these recommendations, Gaon Panchayats can create a more inclusive and participatory environment, leading to better-informed decisions and improved development outcomes for the community.

3.9 Mechanisms for Feedback and disclosures

Gaon Panchayats are required to adopt transparent methods to keep the community informed and gather feedback. Some of the feedback and disclosure mechanism are public information board, notice board in Panchayat Bhawan, complaint box, invitation letter, suggestion box, public announcement through miking.

The feedback and disclosure methods used by the Panchayats and the percentage of Panchayats using each method are summarized in the following table by the PRI representatives.

Table No 7 : Disclosure mechanism to facilitate communication and feedback mechanism

Mechanism	No. of Panchayats	Percentage of GPs having the mechanism
Public Information board/ hoarding	399	80%
Notice board in Panchayat Bhawan	407	82%
Complaint box	358	72%
Invitation letter	282	57%
Suggestion box	271	55%
Public announcement through miking	406	82%

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

The above table shows that the most widely used disclosure methods are notice boards (in 82.06% of Panchayats) and public announcement through miking (in 81.85% of Panchayats). Invitation letters (56.85%) and suggestion boxes (54.64%) are used less frequently.

The Information Sharing Mechanisms as shared by the Citizens shows the same trend with Public information boards (88%), notice boards (94%), and complaint boxes (89%) are widely used. Invitation letters (30%), suggestion boxes (69%), and public announcements (78%) are used to a lesser extent.

The below table gives the comparative percentage of both PRI representatives and the citizens.

Table No 8: Disclosure mechanism to facilitate communication and feedback mechanism

Disclosure Mechanism	PRI Representatives (%)	Citizens (%)
Public Information board/ hoarding	80%	88%
Notice board in Panchayat Bhawan	82%	94%
Complaint box	72%	89%
Invitation letter	57%	30%
Suggestion box	55%	69%
Public announcement through miking	82%	78%

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

Here are some observations and recommendations based on the data

The Panchayats seem to be making good use of traditional disclosure methods such as notice boards and public announcements. This ensures that important information reaches a wide audience in the community. The use of invitation letters and suggestion boxes could be improved. These methods can be particularly useful for reaching out to specific individuals or groups and for gathering feedback from the community. The Panchayats could consider investing in more user-friendly invitation letter templates and making sure that suggestion boxes are placed in prominent locations and emptied regularly.

By making these improvements, the Panchayats can ensure that they are using a variety of disclosure methods to reach all members of the community and to give them multiple ways to get involved.

3.10 Analysis of Panchayat Bhawan Infrastructure and Technology

Gaon Panchayat Bhawan functions as the office of the Gaon Panchayats for discharging assigned functions like **issuing of certificates, permits, licenses, etc.** It can also be used as a central point for all functions like holding of **Gaon Sabhas, place for providing information** etc. However, many Gaon Panchayats do not have their own office buildings. Others are in a dilapidated condition and in need of repairs.

The prime responsibility for providing Panchayat infrastructure including GP building vests with State Government, & States will be expected to obtain funds for GP buildings with /and community hall from various sources, However, where funds cannot be accessed from other schemes, financial assistance on a limited basis for construction/repairing of GP buildings with community hall will be provided based on proposals from States.

Since the provision under this head is inadequate, States are advised to ensure effective convergence of funds on other schemes e.g. MGNREGA etc. for construction of Gaon Panchayat Bhawans as far as possible. Preference will be given to Panchayats who can demonstrate effective and vibrant functioning. Efforts should be made to ensure a functional building, with provisions for seating of public, meetings of Gaon Sabhas, provision of "information walls" multifunctional rooms, trees for shade etc., in order to ensure that the building as well as open areas are used effectively for carrying out the functions of the GPs.

Common Service Centres (CSCs): The CSC is an approved project under the National e-Governance Programme (NEGP). The key objective of CSCs is to deliver various citizen centric services. States and Panchayats can explore the co-location of CSCs in GP offices to promote single point delivery of citizen centric services.

The data provides insights into the availability and functionality of various infrastructure and technology resources within Panchayat Bhawans (village administrative buildings). Here's a summary of key observations:

Overall Functionality

- A significant portion of infrastructure (around 10-20%) is reported as "Available but not functional." This indicates a need for maintenance and repair efforts.
- Internet connectivity and generators have the lowest overall availability.

Key Infrastructure

- Panchayat Bhawans have a high availability (>90%).
- Basic amenities like toilets, drinking water, electricity, and boundary walls show good availability (>80%).
- Public Information Boards and Complaint Boxes also have high availability.
- Meeting halls, breastfeeding rooms, and Common Service Centers have lower availability.

Table No. 9 : Facilities available at Panchayat Bhawans : PRI Representatives' perspectives

Sl.No	Facilities available at Panchayat Bhawan (in %)	Available (in %)	Available but Not Functional (in %)	Not Available (in %)
1	Panchayat Bhawan Building	92%	2%	6%
2	Panchayat Bhawan on Own Land	93%	-	7%
3	Toilet with Water	91%	4%	5%
4	Drinking Water Facility	83%	3%	14%
5	Electricity Connection	93%	2%	7%
6	Boundary Wall	82%	4%	14%
7	Computer/Printer/Scanner	77%	5%	18%
8	Internet Connectivity	15%	20%	65%
9	Generator	10%	2%	88%
10	Public Information Board	85%	2%	13%
11	Meeting Hall with Seating	73%	3%	24%
12	Complaint Box	82%	1%	17%
13	Breastfeeding Room	2%	-	98%
14	Common Service Centre	29%	-	81%

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

The data provides a comprehensive picture of infrastructure availability across various categories in Gaon Panchayats by the Citizens of the GPs. Here's a list down of the infrastructure:

Panchayat Bhawan Infrastructure

- All Panchayats have Panchayat Bhawans located on their own land.
- Most Bhawans have toilets with water (92%), electricity (97%), and boundary walls (92%).
- A significant portion has computers/printers/scanners (85%) and public information boards (77%).
- Availability of internet connectivity, generators, meeting halls with proper seating, and complaint boxes is moderate (around 80-90% have them).
- Facilities like breastfeeding rooms and functional websites are scarce (less than 5% availability).

Table No 10 : Facilities available at Panchayat Bhawans : Citizens' perspectives

Sl.No	Facilities available at Panchayat Bhawan	Available (in %)	Available but Not Functional (in %)	Not Available (in %)
1	Panchayat Bhawan Building	100%	-	-
2	Panchayat Bhawan on Own Land	100%	-	-
3	Toilet with Water	92%	7%	1%
4	Drinking Water Facility	75%	9%	16%
5	Electricity Connection	97%	-	3%
6	Boundary Wall	92%	-	8%
7	Computer/Printer/Scanner	85%	4%	11%
8	Internet Connectivity	9%	86%	5%
9	Generator	4%	96%	-
10	Public Information Board	77%	7%	16%
11	Meeting Hall with Seating	82%	1%	17%
12	Complaint Box	85%	1%	14%
13	Breastfeeding Room	2%	-	98%
14	Common Service Centre	70%	-	30%

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

3.11 Information of Educational & Other Public Facilities in Gaon Panchayats

Gaon Panchayats play a vital role in providing **essential infrastructure for their communities**. **Schools offering quality education** are fundamental for breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering social mobility. They equip children with the skills and knowledge to contribute to the community's development. **AWCs provide crucial early childhood care and education for children under the age of six.** This promotes cognitive development, improves school readiness, and breaks the cycle of malnutrition. **Easy access to healthcare facilities, especially maternal healthcare, empowers women and improves overall family well-being.** Access to banks allows villagers to open savings accounts, receive loans, and utilize financial services.

This promotes financial security and fosters entrepreneurship. Banks act as channels for disbursing government benefits and subsidies, ensuring their timely and transparent delivery to the intended beneficiaries. Markets, fertilizer shops and other public utilities provide easy access to the citizens. A functional GP website can bridge the digital divide and empower citizens by providing transparent information and essential services.

Educational Facilities

Primary schools have near-universal availability, while higher educational institutions (middle, high, higher secondary) show decreasing availability with each level. Private schools seem to have good availability.

Other Public Facilities

- Public amenities like community halls, markets, ponds, and water resources have good availability (>80%).
- Bank branches, ATMs, and fertilizer shops have moderate availability (around 60-70%).
- Healthcare facilities like dispensaries and private clinics have moderate availability, with a significant portion needing repairs.

Table No 11: Availability of Other Infrastructure - Health centers, Schools, AWCs, Banks : PRI Representatives' perspectives

Facilities	Available (in %)	Available but Not Functional (in %)	Not Available (in %)
Health sub-centre	16%	-	84%
Primary Health Centre	69%	1%	30%
Village Library	37%	2%	61%
Primary School	99%	1%	1%
Middle School	95%	1%	4%
High School	89%	1%	10%
Higher Secondary School	52%	1%	47%
Private Schools	83%	1%	16%
Private Clinics/Hospitals	29%	1%	70%
Community Halls	88%	1%	11%
Village Market	84%	2%	16%
Public Pond	85%	1%	14%

Facilities	Available (in %)	Available but Not Functional (in %)	Not Available (in %)
Public Water Resources	80%	1%	19%
Bank Branches	47%	1%	52%
ATMs	40%	1%	59%
Fertilizer Shops	62%	1%	38%
Dispensary	52%	1%	47%
Functional GP Website	17%	4%	79%
Anganwadi Centers (Own Building)	90%	-	10%
Other Important Infrastructure	Yes (Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra, ITI college, temple, SPIRD training center)		

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

3.12 Other Infrastructure details from the Citizens

- Availability of Health Sub-Centers (74%), Primary Schools (97%), and Middle Schools (83%) is good.
- Higher educational facilities like Primary Health Centers (22%), High Schools (73%), and Higher Secondary Schools (40%) are less prevalent.
- A sizable number of villages have private schools (52%) and private clinics/hospitals (22%).
- Public amenities like community halls (38%), village markets (56%), and public ponds (30%) are present in less than half of the Panchayats.
- Public water resources (33%), bank branches (41%), ATMs (50%), and fertilizer shops (22%) are available to a moderate extent.
- Dispensaries and functional Panchayat websites are very limited.



Table No 12: Availability of Other Infrastructure - Health centers, Schools, AWCs, Banks : Citizens' perspectives

Facilities	Available (in %)	Available but Not Functional (in %)	Not Available (in %)
Health Sub Centre	74%	1%	25%
Primary Health Centre	22%	-	78%
Village Library	25%	4%	71%
Primary School	97%	1%	2%
Middle School	83%	-	17%
High School	73%	-	27%
Higher Secondary School	40%	-	60%
Private Schools	52%	-	48%
Private Clinics/Hospitals	22%	-	78%
Community Halls	38%	-	62%
Village Market	56%	2%	42%
Public Pond	30%	4%	66%
Public Water Resources	33%	1%	66%
Bank Branches	41%	1%	58%
ATMs	50%	2%	48%
Fertilizer Shops	22%	1%	77%
Dispensary	10%	-	90%
Functional GP Website	2%	28%	70%
Anganwadi Centers (Own Building)	800 Nos	-	-
Other Important Infrastructure	Joyhing Veterinary college, Lakhmipur Medical Hospital, FCI Farmers producer unit		

The figures represent both in number and percentage in the table



3.13 Data Limitations

- Data for Anganwadi centers in own building is not as per the question
- Regarding important infrastructure particular to the GP these were the few options shared by the respondents - Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra, ITI college, temple, SPIRD training center, etc.
- "Available but not functional" category doesn't specify the reason for dysfunction.

3.14 Recommendations

- Focus on repairs and maintenance to improve functionality of existing infrastructure,
- Prioritize improving internet connectivity and generator availability.
- Investigate the reasons behind non-functional infrastructure and address them accordingly.
- Analyze the need and feasibility of building more meeting halls, breastfeeding rooms, and higher educational institutions.
- Ensure proper availability of healthcare facilities and essential services like banks and ATMs.
- By addressing these infrastructure gaps, Gaon Panchayats can create a more conducive environment for citizens and enhance their overall well-being.

Assessment of Current State of Good Governance - PRI Members

The Government of India has envisioned multi-pronged strategies to address the core issues of rural poverty, inequality, poor human development indices and unemployment. In recent years there has been a significant increase in public expenditure through Panchayats. It also provides funds through the State Finance Commission to implement centrally sponsored schemes such as MGNREGA, PMAY and others. The significant rise in available resources within the Panchayats need to be matched with improved service delivery and tangible impact at the local level. An important concern is regarding the inadequate capacity of Panchayats in devolving more programs.

Under the 15 Finance Commission it has created an enormous opportunity at the GP level by transferring considerable amounts of resources to them. It also necessitates the urgent empowerment of the GPs to be able to deliver their mandate in respect of delivery of basic services effectively and efficiently.

4.1 Gaon Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

Article 243G of the Constitution of India mandated Panchayats to plan for economic development and social justice. As local governments, Panchayats are expected to lead the process by engaging local people in participatory planning and decision making for holistic local development and address vulnerabilities of the poor and marginalized. This can only be achieved through implementation of well thought out plans through efficient and responsible utilization of available resources. Hence, an efficient and robust planning process as part of GP's core functioning becomes imperative. A GP development plan should match local needs and priorities with available resources, and should be prepared through an inclusive, transparent and participatory process. The focus should be on local perception of needs and priority linked with SDGs, local analysis of problems, solutions and resources, and aligned with a collective local vision. Under GPDP, it is envisioned that Gaon panchayats would develop five yearly and annual plans for the development of villages. GPDPs need to be prepared through participatory processes and converging available resources.

Table 4.1 : Comparative views of PRI and Citizens on the theme of Overall Governance and Proactiveness

Sl.No	Theme	PRI Representatives Ratings/Percentage	Citizens Rating
1	Overall Governance	69.5%	62%
2	Proactiveness	50%	33%

Source : Primary data collected by the research team

Effective implementation of GPDP will ensure provision of social goods and services to the rural community. The convergence of schemes and their monitored implementation will reduce poverty and provide health, sanitation, drinking water, nutrition, food security, sustainable livelihoods, housing, electricity, gender equality and social justice. A comprehensive GPDP will not only contribute to participatory planning but also institutionalizing democracy at the grassroots level and in the long run, prove to be an important anchor for the development of villages in the country.

Below is given the Overall Governance Analysis in Gaon Panchayats by the PRI representatives. The data offers insights into the state of governance in Gaon Panchayats:

- Overall Rating: The average rating for overall governance is 69.5 (on a scale of 1-5), which comes to around 69.5 indicating a moderate satisfaction level.
- Proactive PRI Leaders: A majority considers PRI leaders to be somewhat proactive (183 responded "4" and 69 responded "5" to question 3.1.2).

This section presents Citizen perceptions and observations on governance within Gaon Panchayats.

- Overall Rating: The average rating for the overall state of governance is 62 (on a scale of 1-5), which comes to around 62 indicating a neutral sentiment with room for improvement.
- Proactive PRI Leaders: Citizen opinions are divided on the proactiveness of PRI leaders (33 consider them proactive, while 42 don't).
- Only 24% respondents observed discussions on progress and fund utilization in Gaon Sabha meetings, suggesting a communication gap.

4.2 The Citizens perception on Discussions on Progress and Fund Utilization

1. Works Undertaken by GPs in 2022-23

- Positive initiatives include road infrastructure development, Anganwadi center renovation, school maintenance, ration card assistance, facilitating the Orunodoi scheme, PMAY (housing), MGNREGA job cards, self-help group (SHG) production centers, and Panchayat Bhawan construction.

2. Essential Works Not Undertaken

- Citizens feel crucial areas like drinking water facilities, electricity supply, libraries, toilets, functional health sub-centers, solar street lights, good connecting roads, MGNREGS development work for livelihood generation, playgrounds, and waste management systems haven't received enough attention.
- 4.3 The following recommendations for Improvement is given below
- Address citizen concerns about inactive PRI members and lack of transparency in scheme implementation.
- Organize capacity building programs for PRI leaders to enhance their proactiveness and effectiveness.
- Improve communication and information dissemination about government schemes and Panchayat activities.

- Ensure regular discussions on progress, fund utilization, and development plans during Gaon Sabha meetings.
- Prioritize citizen-identified essential works like drinking water, sanitation, healthcare infrastructure, clean energy solutions (solar street lights), and livelihood opportunities through MGNREGS.

4.3 Strengths & Weakness of PRI Governance: From TRI representatives' Perspective

Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) offer a unique system of governance in India with both strengths and weaknesses. The views shared by the PRI representatives is given below

On the positive side, the decentralized structure empowers local communities to make decisions about their development needs. This allows for faster information dissemination, as local leaders are directly connected to the issues faced by villagers. Additionally, a well-functioning PRI can lead to smoother implementation of activities like infrastructure projects or social welfare programs.

However, PRI governance also faces challenges. Political interference can skew decision-making away from what truly benefits the community. Partiality and inactive members further hinder progress. Irregularities, non-cooperation, and a lack of participation in meetings can create a dysfunctional system. Another hurdle is the shortage of human resources and internet facilities, which can limit the efficiency of the Panchayats. Furthermore, some PRI members may have limited education, potentially hindering effective decision-making.

Citizen participation is crucial for good governance. **Interestingly, the high estimated proportion of women participants in Gaon Sabha meetings (63%) is a positive sign.** This active involvement from women can bring diverse perspectives to the table and ensure the needs of the entire community are considered.

4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of PRI Governance as stated by Citizens : From citizens' perspective

The Strengths mentioned include **sincere PRI leaders and active participation of women in Gaon Sabha meetings** (98% responded yes) whereas the weaknesses highlighted are inactive PRI members, lack of information about government schemes, poor Anganwadi centers and road conditions, and potential discrimination in service delivery.

4.5 Regarding Utilization of 15th Finance Commission Funds

Utilization of funds under the 15th Finance Commission is satisfactory (reported as 87%), the GPDP (Gaon Panchayat Development Plan) seems to be well-managed and approved by Gaon Sabha (495 responded 'Yes'). 491 PRI representatives have responded "Yes" regarding GPDP uploading on the portal.

Around 60% of planned works and activities are being implemented. The completion rate is pegged at 83% for implemented works which is good progress and fund utilization are displayed on the portal at a high percentage (88%). 494 responded positively that progress and fund utilization are discussed in the meetings. Geo-tagging of works is extensive (82.5% of works and 79% of assets) and the own source revenue of Panchayats has also increased significantly (110% increase).

4.6 Recommendations for Improvement

- Address political interference and ensure fair and inclusive decision-making.
- Motivate inactive PRI members and encourage participation from all community groups.
- Improve communication and address irregularities.
- Invest in human resource development and internet facilities for Panchayats.
- Implement capacity building programs for PRI members on effective governance.
- Develop strategies to increase citizen participation in meetings and decision-making.
- By addressing these weaknesses and maintaining the strengths, Gaon Panchayats can achieve even better governance outcomes.

4.7 Service Delivery Effectiveness in Gaon Panchayats

This section delves into the effectiveness of service delivery within the Gaon Panchayats. Analyzing citizen feedback through average ratings (on a scale of 1-5) allows us to assess how well Panchayats are performing in various crucial areas.

The analysis covers essential services like issuing certificates, managing infrastructure development, and ensuring access to necessities. By understanding citizen satisfaction levels, we can identify areas where Panchayats are excelling and areas requiring improvement to deliver better services for the community.

The data provides insights into the effectiveness of service delivery across various areas in your Gaon Panchayats. Here's the list of service delivery of the average ratings (on a scale of 1-5):

- **Issuing Certificates:** Moderate satisfaction (3.34)
- **Registering Deaths:** Moderate satisfaction (3.38)
- **Issuing Licenses/Permits:** Moderate satisfaction (3.47)
- **Drinking Water:** Moderate satisfaction (3.72)
- **Street Lights:** Moderate satisfaction (3.37)
- **Connecting Roads:** High satisfaction (3.82)
- **Housing for Houseless:** Moderate satisfaction (3.69)
- **School Infrastructure:** Moderate satisfaction (3.78)
- **Anganwadi/Creche Infrastructure:** Moderate satisfaction (3.59)
- **Health Sub-Center Services:** Moderate satisfaction (3.41)
- **PDS (Public Distribution System):** Moderate satisfaction (3.67)
- **Burial Grounds:** High satisfaction (4.14)

4.8 Recommendations for Improvement

The area with high satisfaction is for burial grounds and all other service delivery has moderate satisfaction with a room for improvement. Below are the following recommendations for effective service delivery in Gaon Panchayats.

- Identify reasons for moderate satisfaction ratings in most areas. Conduct citizen surveys or focus group discussions to gather feedback.
- Address specific bottlenecks in service delivery for each area (e.g., long wait times, lack of staff, infrastructure issues).
- Implement citizen-centric reforms to improve efficiency and transparency (e.g., online applications, grievance redressal mechanisms).
- Invest in capacity building for Panchayat staff to enhance service delivery skills.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate service delivery performance using key metrics.

By focusing on these areas, Gaon Panchayats can significantly improve citizen satisfaction with service delivery.

4.9 Public Perception of Service Delivery in Gaon Panchayats

This section reflects on how citizens perceive the effectiveness of service delivery in their Gaon Panchayats. By analyzing average ratings (on a scale of 1-5), valuable insights into areas are gained where Panchayats are meeting community needs and areas requiring improvement.

The data reveals a mixed picture. While citizens express high satisfaction with **school infrastructure (4.25)** and Anganwadi/creche infrastructure (4.07), indicating a strong focus on educational facilities and childcare, other areas present challenges. **Street lighting (2.24)** and the **Public Distribution System (PDS) (2.54)** receive notably low satisfaction scores, highlighting a need to address these essential services.

It's important to note that some moderate satisfaction ratings, like drinking water (3.68), might mask underlying disparities. While some residents may have access to clean water, others might face difficulties. This analysis provides further investigation and targeted improvements. By understanding Citizen's priorities, Gaon Panchayats can work towards more effective service delivery and enhance the overall well-being of their communities.

This data provides insights into how citizens perceive service delivery across various areas in Gaon Panchayats. Here's a breakdown of the average ratings (on a scale of 1-5):

- Issuing Certificates: Moderate satisfaction (average 3.08)
- Registering Deaths: Low satisfaction (average 2.04)
- Issuing Licenses/Permits: Moderate satisfaction (average 3.20)
- Social Security Services (Electronic Delivery): Moderate satisfaction (average 3.06)
- Drinking Water: Moderate satisfaction (average 3.68) (Note: This rating might have contrasting opinions. While some might have good drinking water, others might not)
- Street Lights: Low satisfaction (average 2.24)
- Connecting Roads: High satisfaction (average 3.88)
- Housing for Houseless: Moderate satisfaction (average 2.92)
- School Infrastructure: High satisfaction (average 4.25)
- Anganwadi/Creche Infrastructure: High satisfaction (average 4.07)
- Health Sub-Center Services: Moderate satisfaction (average 3.18)

- PDS (Public Distribution System): Low satisfaction (average 2.54)
- Burial Grounds: High satisfaction (average 3.33)

Only 40% of respondents reported receiving benefits from pension schemes. There are 42 Material Collection Facilities (MCFs) and 116 Mini Material Collection Facilities (MMCFS) across the Panchayats. Based on the data, here are areas where service delivery needs improvement:

- Registering Deaths: Streamline processes and improve responsiveness to ensure efficient death registration.
- Street Lights: Address issues like non-functional lights and ensure proper maintenance.
- Public Distribution System (PDS): Investigate reasons for low satisfaction and improve transparency and efficiency in ration distribution.
- Social Security Services: Enhance awareness and accessibility of electronic services for social security beneficiaries.

Continue focusing on maintaining good service delivery in areas with high satisfaction ratings like connecting roads, school infrastructure, Anganwadi/creche infrastructure, and burial grounds. The overall recommendations are given below.

4.10 Overall Recommendations

- Conduct citizen-centric service delivery reviews to identify specific bottlenecks and improvement areas in each service category.
- Implement citizen feedback mechanisms to gather real-time insights and address grievances promptly.
- Invest in capacity building for Panchayat staff to enhance their service delivery skills and responsiveness.
- Promote transparency through clear communication and information dissemination about available services, procedures, and eligibility criteria.

By focusing on these areas, Gaon Panchayats can significantly improve public satisfaction with service delivery and enhance the overall well-being of citizens.

4.11 MGNREGS, Pensions, PMAY-G, and Material Collection Facilities in Gaon Panchayats

Gaon Panchayats are essentially the point of last-mile convergence for the majority of government schemes and programs. Panchayats across the country have been preparing development plans based on local needs and priorities. It is crucial to ensure that these plans are prepared by converging available resources, include activities for local development, and address vulnerabilities of poor and marginalized people. Hence it becomes imperative that Panchayats work towards converging benefits and resources from MGNREGA, SBM, NHM, NRLM, FFC, SFC, etc. to create a positive impact on the lives of the poor and vulnerable.

The below-collected data from the PRI representatives reveals the following about these schemes in the selected Gaon Panchayats:



a. MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme):

- An average of 2630 job cards were issued per Panchayat (total of 1301753).
- There's an average of 2061 active job cards per Panchayat (total of 1020311).

b. Pension Schemes:

- An average of 774 people benefited from pension schemes per Panchayat (total of 383341).
- An average of 292 people is yet to be covered under pension schemes per Panchayat (total of 142446).

c. PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gaonin):

- An average of 741 people benefitted from PMAY-G per Panchayat (total of 366876).
- An average of 506 people are yet to receive benefits from PMAY-G per Panchayat (total of 250557).

d. Material Collection Facilities:

- There's an average of 3 Material Collection Facilities (MCFs) per Panchayat (total of 1443).
- There's an average of 7.9 Mini Material Collection Facilities (MMCFS) per Panchayat (total of 3909).

e. Analysis:

- **MGNREGS seems to have a good reach based on the number of job cards issued.**
- The number of active job cards suggests moderate participation in the scheme.
- There's a significant gap between those covered under pension schemes and those who are not. Efforts might be needed to identify and enroll eligible beneficiaries.
- **PMAY-G has reached a considerable number of beneficiaries, but a waiting list remains.**
- The presence of Material Collection Facilities (MCFs and MMCFS) can support construction activities under MGNREGS and PMAY-G.

4.12 Recommendations

- Analyze the reasons for inactive job cards under MGNREGS and encourage citizen participation.
- Identify and enroll those eligible for pension schemes through targeted outreach programs.
- Explore ways to expedite benefits for people on the PMAY-G waiting list.
- Ensure proper maintenance and functionality of Material Collection Facilities.



Transparency, Accountability & Participation

Gaon Panchayats, the village-level institutions in Assam, play a vital role in rural development and good governance. Three key principles underpin their effectiveness: transparency, accountability, and participation.

- **Transparency:** This involves ensuring clear and accessible information about Panchayat activities, finances, records & documents on the portal and decision-making processes. This could include public meetings, budget disclosures, and right-to-information (RTI) mechanisms.
- **Accountability:** Panchayats are responsible for their actions to the citizens they serve. This means answering for their decisions, addressing grievances, and utilizing funds effectively. Tools for accountability include officials in the GP held responsible for their accounts and established system for citizens to report malpractice
- **Participation:** Active involvement of citizens is crucial for effective Panchayats. This includes participation in Gaon Sabhas (village assemblies), decision-making processes, and monitoring Panchayat activities. Mechanism in place to ensure diverse community representation in the decision-making process.

These principles are intertwined. Transparency fosters accountability, and both are strengthened by active citizen participation. When all three work effectively, Gaon Panchayats can function as democratic and responsive institutions, promoting good governance in Assam's rural areas.

5.1. Transparency

The data indicates a generally positive trend towards transparency in Gaon Panchayats by the PRI representatives. Regarding the financial transactions and decision-making process, the average rating for financial transparency is 3.41 (on a scale of 1-5), suggesting moderate satisfaction. The citizen's response regarding this question received a neutral rating of 3.05 (on a scale of 1-5) There's room for improvement. The PRIs response opine that financial reports seem to be easily accessible - 97% (481) responded to Yes whereas the citizens response is other way stating that 92% of respondents indicated that they face difficulty in accessing financial reports.

eGramSwaraj is a national initiative aiming to bring transparency and efficiency to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across India, including Gaon Panchayats in Assam. It enhances transparency by providing online access to the following aspects

- Panchayat profiles with details on members, activities, and plans.
- Budget information, including receipts and expenditures.
- Meeting minutes and resolutions.

It can improve accountability by making financial transactions more transparent and traceable and allowing citizens to monitor Panchayat activities online. However, the effectiveness of eGramSwaraj in Assam depends on several factors:

- **Digital Infrastructure:** Access to computers and internet connectivity in rural areas is crucial for both Panchayats and citizens to utilize the platform effectively.
- **Capacity Building:** Panchayat members and staff may require training to navigate the eGramSwaraj platform and upload relevant information.
- **Local Language Support:** Interface availability in Assamese can improve accessibility and citizen engagement.

Regarding **eGramSwaraj (<https://eGramSwaraj.gov.in/>) usage by PRI representatives**, financial accounts are being closed annually in eGS (494 responded "Yes" to question 4.1.3) and updated accounts are visible on the portal (483 responded "Yes" to question 4.1.4). Records and documents are generally available on the portal (477 responded "Yes" to question 4.1.5). The citizens responded that for them public documents accessibility through portals is limited (17 responded yes). A high number of RTI applications were received (2113) and most were responded but nearly half of the Citizens respondents (47) are aware of filing RTI applications.

While financial reports are accessible, the average transparency rating suggests a need to improve citizen understanding of financial processes and decision-making. We can consider citizen awareness campaigns to strengthen the transparency process.

Overall, eGramSwaraj has the potential to be a valuable tool for promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in Assam's Gaon Panchayats. However, addressing digital access and capacity building challenges is crucial for its successful implementation.

5.2 Accountability in Gaon Panchayats

There is an established system for citizens to report corruption or malpractice in gaon panchayat. One such system is the right to information (RTI) Act, which allows citizens to request information from public authorities, including panchayat regarding functioning and decisions. Additionally, citizens can report corruption or malpractice to the gaon vigilance department or the anti-corruption bureau, which investigate such allegations and take appropriate action. Moreover, many panchayats have grievance redressal mechanisms where they can lodge complaints directly with panchayat authorities/Block officials or through designated channels (toll free number, raising the issue in Gaon sabha). These complaints are typically investigated, and necessary action are taken to address the issues raised by the citizens

The Citizens' views are that regular audits can detect the misuse of funds, Gaon Sabhas provide a platform for citizens to raise their concerns regarding misappropriation of funds, serious misconduct can be addressed through legal channels/ Block development office to take action against errant officials.

5.3 Recommendations

- Clearly define and communicate the process for citizens to report corruption or malpractice. This could be through designated complaint boxes, a public grievance redressal system, or an ombudsman.
- Ensure accessibility and responsiveness to these reporting mechanisms.




5.4 Participation in Gaon Panchayats

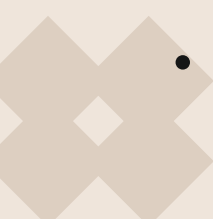
The Panchayati Raj Act emphasizes participatory democracy at the village level through Gaon Sabhas. All adult villagers whose names are included in the electoral rolls for the Panchayat can attend Gaon Sabha meetings. Gaon Sabhas are platforms for villagers to actively engage in discussions, raise issues, and suggest ideas. The community is empowered to discuss and approve development plans prepared by the Panchayat as well as monitor Panchayat activities and finances. Gaon Sabhas provide a direct channel for villagers to interact with Panchayat members. Villagers can raise concerns, seek clarification on decisions, and hold Panchayats accountable. The Panchayati Raj Act through reservations and women's participation aims for inclusive decision making to ensure regular opportunities for participation,

The data provides insights into citizen participation by the PRI representatives are as follows

- Gaon Sabha Meetings: The average rating for citizen participation is 3.65 (on a scale of 1-5), indicating moderate participation. There's potential to improve.
- Public Access: The average rating for public access to the Panchayat is 3.88 (on a scale of 1-5), suggesting good accessibility.
- Citizen Charters: Only 329 Panchayats have a Model Citizen Charter (refer to question 4.3.3).
- Participatory Decision-Making: While most responded "Yes" to participatory decision-making (446), details are needed.
- Diverse Representation: Mechanisms for diverse representation exist in some Panchayats (371 responded "Yes" to question 4.3.5), but details are lacking. Mahila Sabhas (women's meetings) and Bal Sabhas (children's meetings) were held in many Panchayats (refer to questions 4.3.6 and 4.3.7). Women's participation in Gaon Sabhas appears to be significant (averaging 67% based on limited data).



The views regarding the Participation, access and representation by the Citizens of Gaon Panchayats are as follows

- Citizen participation in Gaon Sabha meetings received a moderate average rating (3.38 on a scale of 1-5).
 - Public access to Panchayats also received a moderate average rating (3.44 on a scale of 1-5).
 - Only a quarter (24) responded positively to the existence of a Model Citizen Charter.
 - Less than half (35) believe decision-making is participatory, and mechanisms for diverse representation are lacking (19 responded yes).
 - Mahila Sabhas (women's meetings) and Bal Sabhas (children's meetings) were rarely conducted (20 and 16 responded yes, respectively).
 - Women's participation in Gaon Sabha meetings is around 24%.
- 



5.5 Recommendations for Improvement

- Enhance transparency by making financial reports, meeting minutes, and other relevant documents easily accessible online and offline.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to educate citizens about RTI filing procedures and their right to information.
- Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure prompt and effective resolution of citizen complaints.
- Invest in capacity building for Panchayat officials to improve their responsiveness and accountability.
- Foster a culture of participatory decision-making by actively involving citizens in Gaon Sabhas and discussions.
- Develop and implement a Model Citizen Charter outlining service delivery standards, grievance redressal mechanisms, and citizen participation processes.
- Organize regular Mahila Sabhas, Bal Sabhas, and meetings with diverse community groups to ensure inclusive participation.

By implementing these recommendations, your Gaon Panchayats can become more transparent, accountable, and participatory, ultimately leading to better development outcomes for the community.

Challenges & Opportunities

6.1 Challenges

Despite the framework of the Panchayati Raj Act, several challenges hinder good governance and effective delivery of services in Assam's Gaon Panchayats. The contributing factors may include limited capacity of PRI members for effective planning, budgeting and project implementation. This can lead to poor decision making and inefficient service delivery systems. Gaon Panchayats often face resource constraints, relying heavily on central and state government grants. Limited access to technology and the internet in rural areas can hinder the implementation of e-governance initiatives like eGramSwaraj, impacting transparency and efficiency. Lack of awareness among villagers regarding their rights and roles can lead to low participation in Gaon Sabhas. These challenges can have a cascading effect on the delivery of essential services in villages which leads to delay in delivery of services, development of basic infrastructure, unequal access, leakages of funds and delay in service beneficiaries.

The data collected and analyzed regarding the perspectives of PRI representatives is presented below.

- ❖ **Corruption and Lack of Transparency:** This creates mistrust and discourages public participation, hindering effective resource allocation and project completion.
- ❖ **Limited Employees and Low Attendance:** This leads to inefficiency, delays in services, and incomplete projects.
- ❖ **Low Public Participation:** Without active citizen involvement, identifying needs, planning, and monitoring development programs become difficult.
- ❖ **Basic Infrastructure Issues:** Poor internet connectivity, Panchayat Bhawan, and limited road connectivity hinder communication, resource management, and service delivery.
- ❖ **Social Issues:** Low literacy rates, child marriage, and limited awareness of rights make it challenging for citizens to access government schemes and programs.
- ❖ **External Factors:** Political pressure, perennial floods, and lack of accountability from higher authorities is further hindering local development efforts.

This section combines **citizen perspectives** on the major challenges hindering good governance for improvement

- ❖ **Communication Gap:** Citizens lack information about government schemes and Panchayat activities.
- ❖ **Inactive/Irresponsible PRI Leaders:** Some leaders are inactive, unaccountable, or prioritize personal gain over community development.
- ❖ **Low Community Participation:** Limited citizen engagement in Gaon Sabhas and decision-making processes.
- ❖ **Infrastructure and Resource Deficiencies:** Lack of basic infrastructure like roads, water, electricity, and inadequate staff hinder service delivery.

- ❖ **Low Participation of Line Departments:** Collaboration with other government departments is crucial for effective service delivery but might be lacking.

6.2. Opportunities

Gaon Panchayats hold immense potential for driving positive change in rural areas. Here are some key opportunities stated by PRI representatives on the transparency initiatives, fill vacant staff positions, empower community-based organizations on public participation, and infrastructural development. It also possesses inherent strengths that can be leveraged to significantly improve their effectiveness.

- **Transparency Initiatives**

- Publish Panchayat information online (if internet allows) and on notice boards.
- Organize community meetings to explain budgets, projects, and progress.
- Establish a grievance redressal system for complaints and feedback.

- **Filling Vacant Positions:** Advocate with higher authorities to fill vacant staff positions and explore options for volunteers or temporary hires if needed.

- **Public Participation**

- Empower Self Help Groups (SHGs) to organize awareness meetings on government schemes and public rights.
- Hold regular Gaon Sabha meetings to discuss local issues and encourage citizen participation in decision-making.

- **Addressing Basic Needs**

- Collaborate with government departments to secure funding for improving water supply, sanitation facilities, and road infrastructure.

- **Decentralization:** Advocate for greater decision-making power at the Panchayat level to address local needs efficiently.

- **Infrastructure and Social Service Maintenance:** Ensuring proper operation and maintenance of health centers, Anganwadis, toilets, and drinking water facilities.

- **Streamlining Social Schemes:** Improving access and transparency in distributing PDS, MGNREGS, and Orunodoi benefits.

- **Improved Road Connectivity:** Building better roads to facilitate overall development.

- **Empowering Citizens:** Electing responsible PRI leaders and raising awareness about Panchayat Raj systems and citizen rights.

6.3 Leveraging Existing Strengths

- **Public Participation**

- Encourage active involvement of volunteers, local leaders, youth, and women's groups in Panchayat activities.

- Conduct skill training programs to empower citizens to participate meaningfully.

- **Collaboration and Equity**

- Utilize PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) as a bridge between the Panchayat and the public.
- Ensure balanced allocation of funds across various departments to address community needs inclusively.

Prioritize service delivery to the most vulnerable sections of society.

- **Youth Engagement**

- Educate and involve youth in the planning process to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Utilizing skilled youth, educated population, and tax collection effectively for development activities.

By capitalizing on these opportunities and leveraging existing strengths, Gaon Panchayat can build stronger governance practices that are transparent, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the community. This will lead to better resource allocation, improved service delivery, and ultimately, a more empowered and developed village.

The opportunities explored and leveraging existing strength is provided by the Citizens

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Recommendations

7.1. Based on the information provided by PRI members, here's a summary of recommendations for improving governance in Gaon Panchayats.

General Recommendations:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Focus on overall village infrastructure development, including roads, water supply, sanitation, and community centers.
- **Transparency and Participation:** Implement government schemes transparently and encourage public participation in socio-economic development projects.
- **Rule of Law:** Ensure adherence to the rule of law for effective governance.
- **Job Creation:** Explore ways to maximize job creation through MGNREGS or other initiatives.
- **Skilled Workforce:** Invest in training programs to create a skilled workforce for efficient service delivery.
- **Interdepartmental Collaboration:** Encourage mandatory participation of employees from various departments to ensure holistic development.
- **Revenue Generation:** Explore options for increasing revenue sources beyond traditional methods.
- **Gender Equality:** Promote gender equality and social inclusion in decision-making processes.
- **Fund Allocation:** Advocate for increased allocation of central and state funds to address local needs.
- **Leadership Qualifications:** Strive to elect qualified and knowledgeable leaders for effective governance.

7.2 Successful Models from Other Regions

- **Decentralized Governance (Kerala Model):** Learn from Kerala's experience in devolving power, financial autonomy, and promoting grass-roots democracy for improved service delivery and citizen participation.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (Gujarat Model):** Explore PPP models like those in Gujarat to address infrastructure gaps and enhance service quality in water supply, sanitation, and healthcare.
- **Village secretariat (Grama Sachivalayam- Andhra Pradesh):** Grama Sachivalayam (also known as Village Secretariats) are local government facilities set up in Andhra Pradesh to decentralize the administration by making services and welfare services of all government departments available at one place.



Specific Example:

- Dabaliapara GP (Barpeta): Consider adopting Dabaliapara GP's approach of using renewable energy sources for a sustainable future.

Additional Comments and Suggestions:

- Public Awareness and Participation: Actively engage the public through awareness campaigns and encourage their participation in Panchayat programs.
- Reduced Political Interference: Minimize political interference in certain sectors to ensure objective decision-making.
- Tax Generation: Explore ways to generate more tax revenue through efficient collection and exploring new avenues.
- Public Service Delivery: Focus on efficient and timely delivery of public services to the community.

By implementing these recommendations and learning from successful models, your Gaon Panchayat can work towards achieving greater transparency, accountability, and improved service delivery for the community.

7.3 Recommendations for strengthening Gaon Panchayat governance in Assam by Citizens

Key Themes:

- **Reduced Political Interference:** Empower PRI members and minimize political pressures to ensure independent decision-making.
- **Enhanced Citizen Participation:**
 - Increase public awareness about Panchayat functions and schemes.
 - Facilitate active citizen participation in Gaon Sabhas and decision-making processes.
 - Ensure diverse community representation (women, youth, etc.) in Panchayats.
 - Address the communication gap by using multiple channels (public announcements, meetings, local media) to disseminate information about schemes and Panchayat activities.
- **Transparency and Accountability:**
 - Improve communication and information dissemination about Panchayat activities and finances.
 - Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms and address corruption effectively.
 - Ensure timely implementation of schemes and equitable distribution of benefits.
- **Capacity Building:**
 - Invest in training programs for PRI members and Panchayat staff on various



aspects of governance.

- Equip Panchayats with skilled human resources and better infrastructure (including IT).
- **Effective Service Delivery:**
 - Prioritize resource mobilization and infrastructure development (roads, water, electricity).
 - Ensure efficient and timely service delivery across all sectors.
 - Streamline processes for social schemes like PDS, MGNREGS, and Orunodoi.
- **Collaboration and Support:**
 - Foster stronger collaboration between Panchayats and line departments for effective service delivery.
 - Mobilize community support for Panchayat activities and development initiative.

7.4 Learning from Successful Models

- Citizens highlighted Panchayats within Assam like Pachim Telahi, Pohumura, Singra, Chaboti, etc., as potential models for good practices.
- Some respondents suggested studying models from Kerala, West Bengal, and Maharashtra, particularly regarding citizen participation and women's empowerment in Panchayats.

7.5 Additional Suggestions

- Ensure timely payment and collection of taxes.
- Promote clean and green initiatives within the Panchayats.
- Foster gender equality and transgender inclusion in governance.
- Uphold the rule of law and impose penalties for malpractices.
- Increase the number of field staff to improve service delivery reach.
- Implement digitization initiatives for efficient administration.
- Organize regular public meetings regarding Panchayat activities and finances.
- Conduct Gaon Sabhas as engaging forums for community participation.
- Include diverse needs in development plans and consider those beyond BPL categories.
- Ensure functional devolution of power and proper coordination between Panchayati Raj members, officials, and citizens.
- Groom elected representatives to be more effective leaders and reduce political influence.

By implementing these recommendations and learning from successful models, Gaon Panchayats in Assam can create a more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and citizen-centric governance system that drives sustainable development and improves the lives of all residents.





ANNEXURES



Annexure-1

Questionnaire : Good Governance in Gaon Panchayats for PRI representatives

Section 1: General & Demographic Information

1.1.1. Name of Respondent:

1.1.2. Gender of the Respondent:

Select only one option

☐

Male

☐

Female

1.1.3. Educational Background of the Respondent:

Select only one option

☐

Till Matriculate

☐

Till Higher Secondary

☐

Graduate

☐

Post-Graduate & above

1.1.4. Designation/Role in Gaon Panchayat (if applicable):

1.1.5. Number of Years in Current Role (if applicable):

1.1.6. Gaon Panchayat Name:

1.1.7. LGD Code of Panchayat:



1.1.8. GPS of Gaon Panchayat	
latitude (x.y °)	
.....	
longitude (x.y °)	
.....	
altitude (m)	
.....	
accuracy (m)	
.....	
1.1.9. Number of villages in the GP:	
1.1.10. Total population in the GP:	
1.1.11. Block Name:	
1.1.12. District Name:	



Section 2: Factors Contributing to Good Governance

2.1. Leadership and Administration

2.1.1. To what extent does the leadership in your Gaon Panchayat promote transparency and accountability?

(1- Least, 5- Most)

1 | | | | 5

2.1.2. How effective is the administrative structure in ensuring efficient service delivery?

(1- Least satisfactory, 5- Most satisfactory)

1 | | | | 5

2.1.3. Number of Meetings conducted in (as per the provisions of the State Act)

2021-22

2022-23

No. of General Meetings conducted

*

*

No. of Executive Meetings conducted

*

*

No. of Standing Committee Meetings conducted	*	*
Mention if any other meetings conducted	*	*
2.1.4. - 2.1.14. Answer in Yes or No	Yes	No
2.1.4. Is the Standing Committees meeting conducted regularly (as per the provisions of the State Act)? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.5. Is there participation of women in the Standing Committees meetings? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.6. Are the minutes of these meetings recorded? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.7. Is there a system for follow up action on the decisions taken by the Standing Committee meeting? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.8. Are members of these committees aware of their roles and responsibilities? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.9. Maintenance of records at Standing Committees? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.10. Training attended by the staff? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.11. GPDP/basic orientation / thematic training imparted? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.12. Whether e-GramSwaraj is used in the GP? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.13. Is the Social Audit process uploaded in the online portal? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.14. Did the GP take actions on the Social Audit observations by the Auditors? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.1.15. No of observations reported by auditor in the Social audit. *		
.....		
Answer in Yes or No.	Yes	No
2.1.16. Is audit online onboarded for the GP? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.17. Whether actions were taken to address the observations in the Social Audit? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.18. Proportion of observation in the Social Audit that were addressed *		
<i>Total number of observation resolved/ Total number of observations</i>		
.....		
2.1.19. What is the number of staff positions sanctioned in the GP? *		
.....		
2.1.20. What is the number of staff actually placed in the GP? *		
.....		
2.2. Community Engagement		
.....		
2.2.1. Rate the level of community participation in decision-making processes within the Gaon Panchayat. *		
<i>(1- Least satisfactory, 5- most satisfactory)</i>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; width: 20%; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 0; left: 0; right: 0;">1</div> </div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; width: 20%; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 0; left: 0; right: 0;"></div> </div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; width: 20%; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 0; left: 0; right: 0;"></div> </div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; width: 20%; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 0; left: 0; right: 0;"></div> </div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; width: 20%; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 0; left: 0; right: 0;">5</div> </div> </div>		
.....		
Community engagement and participation:	Number of events	Number of participants
.....
2.2.2. Mandatory Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	*	*
.....

2.2.3. Mandatory Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23		*		*
2.2.4. GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22		*		*
2.2.5. GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23		*		*
2.2.6. Special Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22		*		*
2.2.7. Special Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23		*		*
2.2.8. What mechanisms are in place to facilitate communication and feedback between the Panchayat and the local community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. Public Information board/ hoarding <input type="checkbox"/> b. Notice board in Panchayat bhawan <input type="checkbox"/> c. Complaint box <input type="checkbox"/> d. Invitation letter <input type="checkbox"/> e. Suggestion box <input type="checkbox"/> f. Public announcement through miking 				*
2.3. Infrastructure and Technology:		Available	Not available	Available but not functional/dilapidated
2.3.1.1. Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.2. Panchayat Bhavan in own land	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.3. Toilet with Water in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.4. Drinking Water Facility in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.3.1.5. Electricity connection in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.6. Boundary Wall in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.7. Computer / Printer / scanner in Panchayat bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.8. Internet connectivity in Panchayat bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.9. Generator in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.10. Public Information Board in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.11. Meeting Hall with adequate sitting arrangements in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.12. Complaint Box in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.13. Breast Feeding Room in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.14. Common Service center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.15. Health Sub-Center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.16. Primary Health Center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.17. Village Library	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.18. Primary School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.19. Middle School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.20. High School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.21. Higher secondary school	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.22. Private Schools	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.23. Private Clinic/hospitals	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.24. Community hall	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.3.1.25. Village market	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.26. Public Pond	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.27. Public water resources	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.28. Bank branches	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.29. ATMs	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.30. Fertilizer shops	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.31. Dispensary	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.32. Functional website of the GP	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.33. No. of Anganwadi Centers in own buildings in the GP				
2.3.1.34. Any other important infrastructure particular to the GP and its status				

Section 3: Assessment of Current State of Good Governance

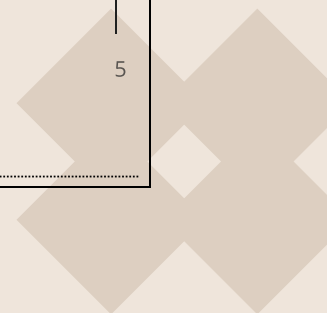
3.1. Overall governance

3.1.1. How would you rate the overall state of governance in your Gaon Panchayat?

(1- Least satisfactory, 5- most satisfactory)

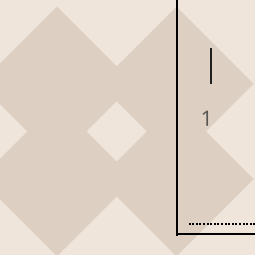
1				5
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3.1.2. Do you consider your PRI leaders to be Pro-active? (Rate 1-Least satisfactory,5- Most Satisfactory)			*
1			5
3.1.3. What, in your opinion, are the strengths and weaknesses of the PRI governance system?			*
3.1.4. Proportion of women participants in gram sabha meetings. (Total women participants/Total participants)			*
3.1.5. Utilisation of funds available under 15th Finance Commission in 2021-22			*
3.1.6. Utilisation of funds available under 15th Finance Commission in 2022-23			*
Regarding GPDP	Yes	No	
3.1.7. Whether the GPDP is approved in the Gram Sabha?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.1.8. Whether the GPDP is uploaded in the portal?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.1.9. Whether discussion on progress of works & utilization of fund were held in GP meeting?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.1.10. What percentage of works implemented, out of the total works in the GPDP?			*
3.1.11. What percentage of activities taken up out of the total number of activities as per GPDP?			*
3.1.12. What percentage of works is completed out of the total number of works taken up by GP?			*

68



3.2.1.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Issuance of licenses/permits *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Welfare services like social security pensions - electronic delivery of services. *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.4. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Drinking Water *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.5. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Street light *				
1				5
<hr/>				





3.2.1.6. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Connecting roads *



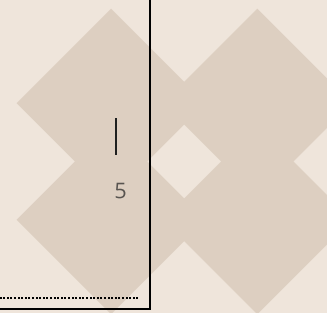
3.2.1.7. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Housing for houseless *



3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: School infrastructure *

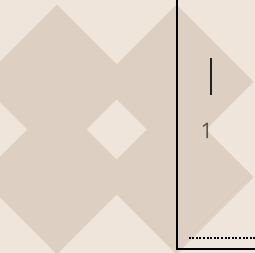


3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Angawadi/creche infrastructure *





3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Health Sub- Centre within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: PDS within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: PDS within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Burial Ground *				
1				5
<hr/>				



3.2.2. Number of Job cards issued by the GP	*
3.2.3. Number of active job cards	*
3.2.4. Number of beneficiaries of pension schemes	*
3.2.5. Number of people yet to be covered under pension schemes	*
3.2.6. Number of beneficiaries who benefitted from PMAY-G	*
3.2.7. Number of people yet to receive benefits from PMAY-G as per the waitlist	*
3.2.8. Number of Material Collection Facility (MCF) in the GP?	*
3.2.9. Number of Mini Material Collection Facility (MMCF) in the GP?	*

Section 4: Transparency, Accountability, and Participation

4.1. Transparency

4.1.1. How transparent are the financial transactions and decision-making processes in your Gaon Panchayat?

1

5

Transparency level assessment	Yes	No
4.1.2. Are financial reports easily accessible to the public? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.3. Whether Annually account book is closed by the GP in eGS? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.4. Whether updated accounts of the panchayat visible on the portal? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.5. Are the records and documents available on the portal? *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.7. Whether the GP prepared their annual budget in 21-22? *		
4.1.8. Whether the GP prepared their annual budget in 22-23? *		
4.1.9. Number of RTI applications received *		
4.1.10. Number of RTI applications responded *		
4.2. Accountability		
4.2.1. How are officials in the Gaon Panchayat held accountable for their actions? *		
4.2.2. Is there an established system for citizens to report corruption or malpractice, and if yes what is that? *		
4.3. Participation:		

4.3.1. Assess the level of citizen participation in Gram sabha meetings *

1- Least, 5 - Most

1					5
---	--	--	--	--	---

4.3.2. Rate the level of public access to the Panchayat *

1-Least accessible, 5- Most easily accessible

1					5
---	--	--	--	--	---

Assessing participation levels

Yes

No

4.3.3. Is the Model Citizen Charter prepared and in place?

*

☐
☐

4.3.4. Is decision making participatory in the GP?

*

☐
☐

4.3.5. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure diverse community representation in decision-making?

*

☐
☐

4.3.6. Whether Mahila Sabha was conducted by the GP during the appraisal year (2022-23)

*

☐
☐

4.3.7. Whether Bal Sabha was conducted by the GP during the appraisal year (2022-23)

*

☐
☐

4.3.8. Proportion of women participants in gram sabha meetings in the GP	*
4.3.9. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure diverse community representation in decision-making?	*

Section 5: Challenges and Opportunities

5.1. Challenges	
5.1.1. Identify the major challenges hindering good governance in your Gaon Panchayat.	*
5.1.2. How have these challenges impacted the delivery of public services?	*
5.2. Opportunities	
5.2.1. Identify potential opportunities for improving governance practices.	*
5.2.2. How can existing strengths be leveraged for better governance?	*

Section 6: Recommendation

6.1.1. Based on your experience, what specific recommendations do you have for improving governance in Gaon Panchayats in Assam?	*
6.1.2. Are there successful governance models from other regions that could be applied to your Gaon Panchayat? If yes, please elaborate.	*
6.1.3. Please provide any additional comments, insights or suggestions regarding improving good governance in your Gaon Panchayat.	*

Annexure-2

Questionnaire : Good Governance in Gaon Panchayats for General Public Respondent

Section 1: General & Demographic Information

1.1.1. Name of Respondent:

*

1.1.2. Gender of the Respondent:

*

Select only one option

☐

Male

☐

Female

1.1.3. Educational Background of the Respondent:

*

Select only one option

☐

Till Matriculate

☐

Till Higher Secondary

☐

Graduate

☐

Post-Graduate & above

1.1.4. Occupation of the respondent:

*

1.1.5. Gaon Panchayat Name:

*

1.1.6. LGD Code of Panchayat:

1.1.7. GPS of Gaon Panchayat

latitude (x.y °)

longitude (x.y °)

altitude (m)

accuracy (m)



1.1.8. Block Name:

1.1.9. District Name:

Section 2: Factors Contributing to Good Governance

2.1. Leadership and Administration

2.1.1. To what extent does the leadership in your Gaon Panchayat promote transparency and accountability?

(1- Least, 5- Most)

1

5

2.1.2. How effective is the administrative structure in ensuring efficient service delivery? *

(1- Least satisfactory, 5- Most satisfactory)



2.2. Community Engagement

2.2.1. Rate the level of community participation in decision-making processes within the Gaon Panchayat. *

(1- Least satisfactory, 5- most satisfactory)



Community engagement and participation:	Number of events attended	Number of participants as per observation	If not attended any, share the reason
2.2.2. Mandatory Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	*	*	
2.2.3. Mandatory Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	*	*	

2.2.4. GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	*	*	
2.2.5. GPDP Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	*	*	
2.2.6. Special Gaon Sabha held in 2021-22	*	*	
2.2.7. Special Gaon Sabha held in 2022-23	*	*	
2.2.8. What mechanisms have you seen in place to facilitate communication and feedback between the Panchayat and the local community?			*
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Public Information board/ hoarding <input type="checkbox"/> b. Notice board in Panchayat bhawan <input type="checkbox"/> c. Complaint box <input type="checkbox"/> d. Invitation letter <input type="checkbox"/> e. Suggestion box <input type="checkbox"/> f. Public announcement through miking			
2.3. Infrastructure and Technology:	Available	Not available	Available but not functional/dilapidated
2.3.1.1. Panchayat Bhavan *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.2. Panchayat Bhavan in own land *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.3. Toilet with Water in Panchayat Bhavan *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.4. Drinking Water Facility in Panchayat Bhavan *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.3.1.5. Electricity connection in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.6. Boundary Wall in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.7. Computer / Printer / scanner in Panchayat bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.8. Internet connectivity in Panchayat bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.9. Generator in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.10. Public Information Board in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.11. Meeting Hall with adequate sitting arrangements in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.12. Complaint Box in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.13. Breast Feeding Room in Panchayat Bhavan	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.14. Common Service center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.15. Health Sub-Center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.16. Primary Health Center	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.17. Village Library	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.18. Primary School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.19. Middle School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.20. High School	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.21. Higher secondary school	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.22. Private Schools	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.23. Private Clinic/hospitals	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.24. Community hall	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.3.1.25. Village market	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.26. Public Pond	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.27. Public water resources	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.28. Bank branches	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.29. ATMs	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.30. Fertilizer shops	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.31. Dispensary	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.32. Functional website of the GP	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3.1.32. No. of Anganwadi Centers in own buildings in the GP				
2.3.1.33. Any other important infrastructure particular to the GP and its status				

Section 3: Assessment of Current State of Good Governance

3.1. Overall governance

3.1.1. How would you rate the overall state of governance in your Gaon Panchayat?

(1- Least satisfactory, 5- most satisfactory)

1

5

3.1.2. Do you consider your PRI leaders to be Pro-active? *

(Rate 1-Least satisfactory,5- Most Satisfactory)

1

5

3.1.3. What, in your opinion, are the strengths and weaknesses of the PRI governance system? *

3.1.4. Have you observed women participating in the gram sabha meetings?

Regarding GPDP

Yes

No

3.1.5. Whether discussion on progress of works & utilization of fund were held in GP meeting? *



3.1.6. What are some of the works taken up by GP in 2022-23 that you have observed? *

3.1.7. What are some of the work that you feel is essential, but has not been taken up by the GP ? *

3.2. Service delivery

3.2.1.1. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Issuance of certificates *

1

5



3.2.1.2. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Issuance of supporting documents for applications of registration of death *

1 | | | | 5

3.2.1.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Issuance of licenses/permits *

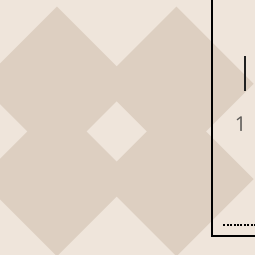
1 | | | | 5

3.2.1.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Welfare services like social security pensions - electronic delivery of services. *

1 | | | | 5

3.2.1.4. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Drinking Water *

1 | | | | 5





3.2.1.5. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Street light *



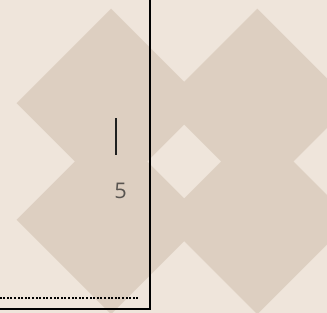
3.2.1.6. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Connecting roads *



3.2.1.7. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Housing for houseless *

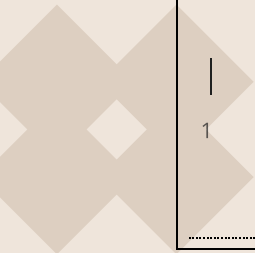


3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: School infrastructure *





3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Angawadi/creche infrastructure *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Health Sub- Centre within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: PDS within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				
3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: PDS within the Panchayat *				
1				5
<hr/>				



3.2.1.8. Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery: Burial Ground *

1				5

3.2.4. Have your family members received benefit of any of the pension schemes *

3.2.8. Number of Material Collection Facility (MCF) in the GP? *

3.2.9. Number of Mini Material Collection Facility (MMCF) in the GP? *

Section 4: Transparency, Accountability, and Participation

4.1. Transparency

4.1.1. How transparent are the financial transactions and decision-making processes in your Gaon Panchayat? *

1				5

Transparency level assessment

Yes

No

4.1.2. Are financial reports easily accessible to the public? *

☐
☐

4.1.3. Are the records and documents available on the portal? *

☐
☐

4.1.4. Do you know that you can file RTI at your GP?

Answer in 'Yes' or 'No'

4.1.5. Do you know of any incidents where the person filing RTI didn't receive any response from your GP? If 'Yes' please elaborate.

4.2. Accountability

4.2.1. How are officials in the Gaon Panchayat held accountable for their actions? *

4.2.2. Is there an established system for citizens to report corruption or malpractice, and if yes what is that? *

4.3. Participation:

4.3.1. Assess the level of citizen participation in Panchayat meetings and local governance initiatives. *

1- Least, 5 - Most

1 | | | | 5

4.3.2. Rate the level of public access to the Panchayat *

1-Least accessible, 5- Most easily accessible

1 | | | | 5

Assessing participation levels		Yes	No
4.3.3. Is the Model Citizen Charter prepared and in place?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3.4. Is decision making participatory in the GP?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3.5. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure diverse community representation in decision-making?	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3.6. Whether Mahila Sabha was conducted by the GP during the appraisal year	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3.7. Whether Bal Sabha was conducted by the GP during the appraisal year	*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3.8. Proportion of women participants in gram sabha meetings in the GP as per your observations		*	
4.3.9. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure diverse community representation in decision-making?		*	
Section 5: Challenges and Opportunities			
5.1. Challenges			
5.1.1. Identify the major challenges hindering good governance in your Gaon Panchayat.			
5.1.2. How have these challenges impacted the delivery of public services?			
5.2. Opportunities			
5.2.1. Identify potential opportunities for improving governance practices.			
5.2.2. How can existing strengths be leveraged for better governance?			

Section 6: Recommendation

6.1.1. Based on your experience, what specific recommendations do you have for improving governance in Gaon Panchayats in Assam? *

6.1.2. Are there successful governance models from other regions that could be applied to your Gaon Panchayat? If yes, please elaborate. *

6.1.3. Please provide any additional comments, insights or suggestions regarding improving good governance in your Gaon Panchayat. *



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