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DECENTRALISATION AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: LEGAL STRUCTURES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Arunachal Pradesh is a relatively late entrant into the framework of decentralized governance in India. The state's engagement with modern political institutions, ideologies, and administrative mechanisms has evolved gradually in the post-independence period. Consequently, understanding the development of urban local government in Arunachal Pradesh requires a nuanced and context-specific analysis, as its road differs significantly from that of other Indian states with longer traditions of municipal governance. Urban local government in India serves as a crucial institutional framework for managing urban infrastructure, sanitation, public health, and essential civic services. In Arunachal Pradesh, this framework assumes added importance due to the state's distinct socio-political composition, difficult geographical terrain, and transitional stage of urbanization. As an emerging state in the North-Eastern region, it faces unique administrative challenges in strengthening urban governance.

The growth of urban centres such as Itanagar and Pasighat has increased the need for effective local institutions to manage infrastructure, land use, and public services. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, provides the constitutional basis for urban governance by mandating the establishment of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to promote democratic decentralization and local self-governance in areas such as urban planning, sanitation, and public health. This paper examines the evolution, institutional structure, and operational challenges of urban local government in Arunachal Pradesh. It highlights key issues including fiscal constraints, planning deficiencies, administrative limitations, behavioural changes, and the state's unique geographical conditions, and explores strategies for strengthening ULBs and promoting sustainable and inclusive urban development.

KEYWORDS: *Arunachal Pradesh, 74th Constitutional Amendment, Act, Municipal Governance, Urban Local Government.*

INTRODUCTION

Urban governance is a crucial component of modern administrative systems, ensuring the smooth management of urban areas by addressing issues related to infrastructure, public services, and civic administration. One of the key approaches to improve urban governance is decentralization, which involves transferring power and decision-making authority from the central government to lower levels, such as state and local governments. Decentralization allows local bodies to take charge of urban planning, development, and public service delivery, ensuring governance that is more responsive to the needs of the people. In a decentralized system, local governments are empowered to make decisions independently, leading to increased efficiency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance.

India follows a decentralized form of government, where power is distributed across three levels—central, state, and local. The Indian Constitution provides for a federal structure, but over time, there was a growing need to empower local governments to address region-specific issues effectively. Recognizing this, India introduced constitutional reforms to strengthen local self-governance. The Panchayati Raj system was introduced for rural areas, while urban local bodies (ULBs) were established for cities and towns. These local institutions play a crucial role in governance by handling responsibilities such as urban planning, water supply, sanitation, public health, and waste management. However, the effectiveness of decentralization depends on adequate financial resources, administrative autonomy, and active citizen participation.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, marked a significant turning point in India's decentralization journey. The 73rd Amendment focused on rural governance by institutionalizing the Panchayati Raj system, while the 74th Amendment provided a constitutional framework for urban governance by recognizing municipalities as self-governing institutions. The 74th Amendment mandated the establishment of three types of urban local bodies—Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Nagar Panchayats—based on population size and urbanization. Urban governance is a fundamental aspect of modern administrative systems, ensuring the efficient management of urban areas. In India, urban local governance has undergone significant transformations, particularly with the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, 1992, marked a significant turning point in India's decentralization drive. The 73rd Amendment focused on rural governance by institutionalizing the Panchayati Raj system, while the 74th Amendment provided a constitutional framework for urban governance by recognizing municipalities as self-governing institutions. 74th Amendment Act, amended article 243 and inserted the part-IXA and schedule-XII to the Constitution and provides for 18 subjects for urban local government. Therefore, through this Act the democratic decentralization has made possible with certain uniformity and standard across the country. Further, the Act, mandated the

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establishment of three types of urban local bodies—Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Nagar Panchayats—based on population size and urbanization levels. It also introduced reservations for women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs), ensuring inclusivity in governance. Furthermore, despite these reforms, challenges such as financial dependence on state governments, administrative inefficiencies, and lack of proper planning continue to hinder urban governance in many parts of India.

In Arunachal Pradesh, urbanization has been a gradual process, as the state has historically been predominantly rural. However, with the growth of towns such as Itanagar (the state capital) and Pasighat (oldest town), urban governance has become increasingly important. The establishment of urban local bodies has been a crucial step in supervision of the state's urban transition. In conformity with the 74th Amendment Act, 1992, the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Council Act, 2007 was enacted. Accordingly, two Municipal Council were set up in Arunachal Pradesh namely: Itanagar Municipal Council was set up on 14th August, 2013 with 30 wards and Pasighat Municipal Council was set up on 21st May, 2013 with 12 wards. Subsequently, first ever Municipal Election in the two urban areas; Itanagar and Pasighat was held in 2013 as per the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Council, Act, 2007.[1] Despite the implementation of the 74th Amendment, ULBs in Arunachal Pradesh faces several challenges, including limited financial resources, inadequate urban planning, lack of skilled personnel, and difficult geographical terrain. The state's unique socio-political and demographic landscape also poses challenges in governance. While the legal framework supports decentralized urban governance, effective implementation remains a challenge due to administrative and financial constraints. Addressing these issues requires policy reforms, enhanced financial autonomy, and greater community participation in urban development initiatives.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study has three primarily objectives**:**

- To trace and understand historical and constitutional development of urban local government in Arunachal Pradesh
- To analyze current context of urban local government of Arunachal Pradesh
- To strive for possible way forward for better governance through urban local government.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a descriptive research design, drawing upon both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure a systematic and comprehensive examination of the research problem. Primary data were collected through a combination of structured and unstructured interviews, supplemented by direct observation. Secondary data were sourced from relevant legislative enactments, government reports, official records, academic publications, and other pertinent published and unpublished materials. The principal research instrument comprised systematically designed open-ended questionnaires, administered through a stratified random sampling technique to secure representative participation. A total sample size of 100(hundred) respondents was selected, with 50(fifty) respondents drawn from the Itanagar Capital Complex and 50(fifty) from Pasighat, the headquarters of East Siang district. By integrating qualitative understandings from field-based data with documentary evidence from secondary sources, the mixed-method approach facilitated a comprehensive and well-substantiated analysis of the study.

4. HISTORICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The historical and constitutional development of urban local government in Arunachal Pradesh has evolved through various phases, shaped by regional, social, and political dynamics. Initially, the concept of urban local governance in the state was influenced by traditional tribal systems, where village councils held significant authority. With India's independence and the integration of Arunachal Pradesh into the Indian Union in 1972, governance structures began to modernize. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, which aimed to decentralize power and strengthen urban local bodies (ULBs), was a crucial step in the development of urban local governance. However, Arunachal Pradesh, with its unique tribal culture and administrative setup, initially faced challenges in implementing this law due to socio-political factors. In recent years, the state has made efforts to promote urban governance by establishing Municipal Councils while also adapting to the local traditions and needs of its diverse population. This process continues to evolve in line with the state's development goals.

4.1: Pre-Independence and Early Administrative Structures

Before India's independence, the region now known as Arunachal Pradesh was governed under various administrative nomenclatures and regulations, reflecting the British colonial approach to managing the frontier areas. Initially, it was labeled as the Non-Regulated Tract and later as the Backward Tract, Excluded Area, North East Frontier Tract, and eventually, the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). These regions were distinct from other parts of British India due to their geographical isolation, cultural diversity, and lack of formal governance structures. The British administration maintained limited control over the area, with governance primarily carried out through informal tribal systems. Local affairs, such as conflict resolution, resource management, and social organization, were handled by traditional tribal councils, which functioned as self-regulating bodies in the absence of formal state institutions. The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation of 1945 provided some legal framework for administering justice, but there were no structured municipalities or urban governance systems in place. The region remained

[1] *Government of Arunachal Pradesh (2009) The Arunachal Pradesh municipal election act, 2009 (Act No. 4 of 2009). Itanagar*

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predominantly rural, and the sparse, scattered settlements further hindered any significant urban development, maintaining the continuity of the traditional tribal governance system. Unlike other parts of British India, where colonial rule established more formal systems of urban governance, Arunachal Pradesh's remote geography and socio-political structure contributed to the region's reliance on tribal self-governance rather than a centralized urban administration.

4.2: Post-Independence Developments

After India gained independence, Arunachal Pradesh continued to be administered as part of Assam under the designation of the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), and governance in the region remained largely centralized. The primary focus of administration was on rural development, tribal welfare, and maintaining border security, given the strategic location of the state. Consequently, urban governance structures remained largely underdeveloped, as the emphasis was placed on managing rural affairs and the integration of various tribal communities. However, over time, urbanization gradually began to take root, driven by increased trade and the expansion of administrative functions. This led to the emergence and growth of key urban centres, including Itanagar, Naharlagun, and Pasighat, which began to take on greater importance in the region's administrative and economic landscape. The granting of Union Territory status to Arunachal Pradesh in 1972, introduced a range of administrative reforms, further accelerating the pace of development. By 1987, when the state of Arunachal Pradesh was formed, urban expansion intensified, and with it came a growing recognition of the need for structured urban governance. The state began transitioning towards formal municipal systems to meet the needs of its expanding urban localities and to ensure well urban planning and management. This shift marked a crucial step in the development of urban governance in the state, aligning it with broader national trends in urbanization and administrative reform.

4.3: Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment, Act, 1992

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 brought transformative changes to urban governance in India by establishing a clear framework for the creation and functioning of Urban Local Bodies It aimed to decentralize power, promote democratic self-governance, and ensure better management of urban areas. Key provisions are enshrined in Article 243**,** which outlines the structure and functions of municipalities and municipal corporations, granting them greater autonomy in managing local affairs. The Amendment is further detailed in Part IXA**,** which sets out the organization, elections, and powers of ULBs, and in Schedule XII**,** which enumerates the functions to be performed by these bodies, such as urban planning, infrastructure maintenance, and public services. Overall, the Amendment marked a shift towards strengthening urban local governance by ensuring that municipal bodies had the authority and resources to address the needs of rapidly growing urban populations. This amendment gave ULBs constitutional recognition, empowering them in urban planning, service delivery, and infrastructure development. Arunachal Pradesh adopted this framework through the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Act, 2007. However, implementation has been slow due to geographical and socio-political challenges.

4.4: Contemporary Developments

Arunachal Pradesh has made notable progress in establishing Urban Local Bodies with key developments such as the formation of the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) in 2021, which stands as the state's only municipal corporation. The IMC plays a crucial role in urban planning and infrastructure management in the state's capital, Itanagar. Additionally, the Pasighat Municipal Council, one of the oldest ULBs in the state, is responsible for managing urban services in Pasighat. Several other towns in Arunachal Pradesh have been designated as Nagar Panchayats, which serve as local governing bodies for smaller urban areas. However, despite these advancements, the full functionality and scope of ULBs are still limited in many regions.

Despite efforts to establish urban governance structures, many towns in Arunachal Pradesh continue to rely on traditional systems of governance, which poses challenges for urban development. The slow pace of municipal development has hindered effective infrastructure planning and the delivery of urban services. Many of the designated Nagar Panchayats still lack the resources and authority to carry out comprehensive municipal functions, leading to gaps in service provision and urban planning. As a result, the state's urban governance remains fragmented and underdeveloped, affecting the overall growth and sustainability of urban areas.

4.4.1. Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Act, 2007

The Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Act, 2007, serves as the legal framework that governs the functioning of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the state. It outlines the structure and composition of municipal corporations, municipal councils, and Nagar Panchayats, thereby defining their roles and responsibilities. The Act also mandates direct elections for the selection of representatives in these local bodies, with specific provisions for reservations to ensure the participation of Scheduled Tribes (STs), women, and other underrepresented groups. This ensures a more inclusive approach to urban governance. Furthermore, the Act grants ULBs the authority over various urban services, including urban planning, taxation, sanitation, water supply, and infrastructure development, thereby enabling local governance structures to address the needs of urban populations more effectively. Some the common features of Arunachal Municipal Council Act, 2007 are:

a) **Municipal Council***:* It shall consist of elected councilors for five years. The councilors further elect their Chief Councilor, Vice Councilor and Standing Committee from amongst the elected councilors. Every Municipal Council shall group their entire ward in such manner that each group consists of not less than three adjacent wards.
b) **Ward Committee:** It consists of elected Councilors who are not member of standing committee.

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c) **Oath**: The District Magistrate or officer in charge shall administer the oath of Municipal Councilors.
d) **Provision of Recall:** Any Councilor can be recalled and 3/4th of councilors support required initiating recall process.
e) **Current status:** There is one Municipal Corporation; Itanagar Municipal Corporation was set up on 21st May, 2013 and upgraded in 2021 with 30 wards and Municipal Council, Pasighat.

Despite the clear legal provisions, the implementation of the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Act faces significant challenges. One of the primary hurdles is resource constraints, which hinder the ability of ULBs to fully exercise their powers and functions. Many municipalities struggle with inadequate financial resources to maintain essential services or carry out urban development projects. While the Act allows ULBs to collect revenue through taxes and fees, municipalities remain heavily dependent on state and central government funding, which limits their financial autonomy and capacity for independent growth. Additionally, weak administrative structures and a lack of capacity within local governance bodies further impede the effective implementation of the Act. Public awareness about the roles and responsibilities of ULBs is also limited, leading to a lack of citizen engagement in the urban governance process. As a result, despite the legal framework in place, the full potential of ULBs to drive sustainable urban development and governance remains largely unrealized.

4.4.2. Arunachal Pradesh Municipality (Election) Rules, 2011

The Arunachal Pradesh Municipality (Election) Rules, 2011, were enacted to provide a legal framework for conducting municipal elections in the state. The rules were passed to regulate the electoral process, including the delimitation of wards, voter eligibility, election procedures, and dispute resolution. These provisions aimed to ensure fair, transparent, and democratic elections for urban local bodies in Arunachal Pradesh. One of the key aspects of these rules is to ensure that each ward is represented proportionally and fairly in the municipal elections. Additionally, the rules establish clear guidelines for voter eligibility, electoral procedures, and mechanisms for dispute resolution, thereby aiming to streamline the electoral process and safeguard the integrity of elections. These provisions are integral to maintaining a democratic framework in which local representatives are chosen through transparent and well-regulated elections.

However, despite these efforts to ensure democratic governance through elections, challenges remain in terms of voter awareness and participation. Low voter turnout and limited public knowledge about the electoral process have been ongoing concerns. Many citizens, especially in rural or remote areas, may not be fully informed about the importance of municipal elections or the procedures for casting their votes. As a result, the potential for elections to reflect the true will of the people is often compromised. Additionally, low voter participation undermines the legitimacy of the elected local bodies and can hinder the overall effectiveness of urban governance. To address these issues, there is a need for increased voter education and awareness campaigns to encourage higher participation and engagement in the electoral process.

5. THE CURRENT STATES OF URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The urban local government system in Arunachal Pradesh is gradually evolving, but it faces several challenges that hinder its effective implementation. These challenges stem from the state's geographical isolation, which makes infrastructure development and service delivery difficult, especially in far-off areas. Additionally, the region's cultural diversity presents complexities in governance, as different communities have varying needs and priorities. Limited political empowerment further complicates the situation, as many local bodies lack the autonomy and resources needed to make significant decisions. These structural and functional issues create barriers to the full realization of urban governance in the state.

5.1: Limited Institutional Capacity: The Urban Local Bodies in Arunachal Pradesh face significant challenges due to a lack of skilled personnel, digital governance mechanisms, and institutional expertise. The shortage of trained staff limits the ability of local governments to effectively manage urban services and implement development projects. In the absence of modern digital tools, the ULBs struggle to streamline administrative functions, leading to inefficiencies in service delivery, such as slow response times for public grievances, disorganized waste management, and delays in infrastructure development. Moreover, the lack of institutional knowledge and expertise hinders the planning and execution of essential urban development initiatives, often resulting in poorly managed urban spaces and underdeveloped infrastructure. These limitations contribute to a significant gap in government services and development, affecting the quality of life for residents. To address these challenges, there is a critical need for capacity building, training programs, and the adoption of digital solutions to enhance governance and service delivery in urban areas.

5.2: Financial Constraints: ULBs are heavily reliant on state government so the state government on central government for financial stability, which limits their autonomy and ability to fund essential services and infrastructure development. This dependence often leads to delays in the execution of urban projects and inadequate service delivery, as local bodies lack the necessary resources to maintain or expand urban infrastructure. Furthermore, the revenue generation for these bodies is largely confined to property taxes, user charges, and service fees, which often yield insufficient income. These limited revenue streams hinder the capacity of ULBs to invest in critical urban services like waste management, sanitation, water supply, and transportation. Consequently, financial constraints prevent ULBs from meeting the growing demands of urban populations, leading to gaps in infrastructure and a reduced quality of life for residents. Strengthening local revenue generation methods is crucial for enhancing the sustainability of urban governance.

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5.3: Urban Planning and Infrastructure Deficits: Unregulated urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh, combined with the weak enforcement of urban planning regulations, has led to significant infrastructure deficits and environmental concerns. Rapid, unplanned growth and activities such as unscientific earth cutting and construction has strained existing setup, resulting in inadequate roads, floods, landslides, drainage systems, and sanitation facilities, which negatively impact urban living conditions. The lack of effective regulation has also contributed to severe environmental issues, including air pollution from increasing vehicle emissions, dust particles and industrial activities, water pollution due to improper waste disposal and untreated sewage, noise pollution from construction and traffic congestion, and land pollution caused by illegal dumping of waste and earth cutting. These environmental concerns not only degrade the quality of life but also pose long-term health risks to residents and eco-system. Addressing these issues requires stronger urban planning policies, better enforcement of regulations, and sustainable development practices to ensure the balanced growth of urban areas while safeguarding the environment.

5.4: Lack of Public Awareness: Lack effective public awareness campaigns and cleanliness programs, which hinders equitable urban development. This absence of outreach makes it difficult to engage the community in important urban initiatives such as waste management, sanitation, and sustainable urban practices. In some cases, officials may be unwilling to conduct such programs due to a lack of resources or prioritization, while in other instances, the public remains uninformed or uninterested, as policies may seem irrelevant to their immediate concerns. As a result, these initiatives fail to generate meaningful participation or foster a sense of responsibility among the residents. This gap in public engagement and awareness leads to ineffective implementation of policies, contributing to poor service delivery and an overall lack of progress in urban development. Strengthening public awareness efforts is crucial to ensuring that policies resonate with the community and encourage active participation.

5.5: Behavioral Changes: The people of Arunachal Pradesh, many of whom belong to tribal communities, are currently transitioning from rural to urban lifestyles. They are still in the process of fully adopting modern scientific practices of hygiene and sustainability. Therefore, behavioural change is essential for successful urban development, particularly in the context of waste management and environmental preservation. Individuals must understand the harmful impact of littering, improper disposal of garbage, and household waste on the environment. Unfortunately, it is evident in state that people often lose sight of the importance of these issues, due to a lack of awareness or disregard for ethical values, leading to harmful practices such as illegal dumping or careless waste disposal. This not only worsens environmental conditions but also creates significant obstacles for effective governance and sustainable urban growth. Without a shift in behaviour, even the best policies and programs will fail to achieve their goals. To foster urban development, it is critical to need a public education and awareness campaigns that emphasize personal responsibility and the importance of maintaining a clean and sustainable environment for future generations.

5.6: Geographical Landscape: Arunachal Pradesh's mountainous terrain, limited connectivity, unprecedented Monsoons and location within a seismic zone pose significant logistical challenges to effective urban governance. The state's infrastructure is underdeveloped, which hampers the effective delivery of essential services such as water supply, sanitation, and waste management. In many localities, there is a lack of proper pavement, drainage, drinking water, electricity connection, etc. makes it difficult to access urban canter's, further complicating the execution of development projects. These geographical barriers also hinder the movement of resources, materials, and personnel, delaying infrastructure improvements and the provision of basic services. Overcoming these challenges requires substantial investments in infrastructure, better communication networks, and innovative solutions to ensure that urban services reach even the least advantaged people.

5.7: Problems of Revenue: A major challenge faced by urban local governments in Arunachal Pradesh is their financial dependence on the state government. Municipalities and Town Development Committees (TDCs) in the state have limited capacity to generate their own revenue, which makes them heavily reliant on state allocations and central grants to fund urban development projects and essential services. This financial dependence often leads to delays in project implementation and inadequate resources for maintaining urban infrastructure. The revenue-generating mechanisms available to these local bodies, such as property taxes, user fees, and service charges, are insufficient to meet the growing needs of urban areas. As a result, urban local bodies struggle to achieve financial autonomy, which hinders their ability to plan, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure and services. This reliance on external funding also makes urban governance vulnerable to political and budgetary changes at the state and national levels, limiting long-term planning and development efforts. Nevertheless, despite distinct problems and challenges, ULGs in Itanagar and Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh comply with nations' policies and programs to improve the standard of urban living through sustained efforts, implementing various programs and policies from time to time.

6. URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Several national and state policies have played a significant role in shaping urban governance in Arunachal Pradesh. The Smart Cities Mission, for instance, selected Itanagar for urban infrastructure development, with a focus on improving digital governance and modernizing the city's infrastructure. Similarly, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) aims to enhance essential urban services, such as water supply, sanitation, and sewage management, to improve the quality of life for urban residents. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) has also been instrumental in promoting waste management and urban cleanliness initiatives across the state. However, the implementation of these programs in Arunachal Pradesh faces considerable

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challenges due to the region's difficult landscape and logistical complexities, which hamper the effective conveyance of services and infrastructure projects. Several national and state policies have shaped urban governance as cited above are:

a) **Smart Cities Mission:** The Smart Cities Mission is a national initiative launched by the Government of India to transform selected cities into sustainable, citizen-friendly, and digitally enabled urban centers. Itanagar, the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, was selected under this mission to receive funding and support for urban infrastructure development and digital governance improvements. The goal of the Smart Cities Mission in Itanagar is to enhance the quality of life for its residents by leveraging technology, improving public services, and creating an integrated urban development framework. Key areas of focus in Itanagar include the modernization of infrastructure, such as smart traffic management, improved public transportation, and the development of smart parks and public spaces. Additionally, efforts are being made to enhance digital connectivity, improve waste management, and promote sustainable urban practices. Through this initiative, Itanagar aims to become a model of smart governance, using technology to streamline municipal services, enhance civic engagement, and create a more sustainable and livable urban environment for its residents.

b) **AMRUT** (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation): The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) is a national initiative aimed at improving urban infrastructure and services across India. In Arunachal Pradesh, AMRUT focuses on enhancing key urban services, particularly water supply, sewage management, and sanitation. The mission seeks to ensure that cities and towns in the state have access to adequate and sustainable basic infrastructure, thereby improving the overall quality of life for urban residents. By focusing on creating green and sustainable urban spaces, AMRUT aims to support the state's urban transformation, though challenges like financial constraints and geographical difficulties hinder its full implementation.

c) **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban):** The Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) launched by the Government of India aims to promote cleanliness, waste management, and sanitation in urban areas across the country. In Arunachal Pradesh, the mission has been a vital initiative to improve urban hygiene and waste management practices. The primary focus of the program in the state includes the construction of individual household latrines, community toilets, and improving waste collection and disposal systems. The mission also promotes the segregation of waste at the source, recycling, and composting to reduce the environmental impact of solid waste. In addition, public awareness campaigns are conducted to encourage citizens to maintain cleanliness in their surroundings and adopt healthier sanitation practices.

However, the implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission in Arunachal Pradesh faces significant challenges due to the state's difficult terrain, scattered settlements, and logistical hurdles. These factors make waste collection and transportation particularly challenging, especially in remote and hilly areas. Limited infrastructure and financial constraints also deter the development of efficient waste management systems. Despite these challenges, the mission has led to improvements in urban cleanliness, but for it to be fully successful, there needs to be a stronger focus on enhancing infrastructure, capacity building, and increasing public participation. While initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT, and Swachh Bharat Mission have made strides in improving urban governance in Arunachal Pradesh, their success has been constrained by several financial and administrative challenges. Limited financial resources and inadequate funding often hamper the execution of projects, leading to delays and subpar implementation. Additionally, administrative inefficiencies, including a lack of skilled personnel and weak governance structures, have slowed down the progress of these initiatives. The state's geographical constraints, such as remote and difficult terrain, further complicate logistical operations, especially for waste management and infrastructure development. To address these issues, there is a need for better resource management, ensuring that available funds are utilized efficiently and effectively. Strengthening local institutions by improving administrative capacity, training staff, and enhancing coordination among different levels of government is crucial. Furthermore, greater public engagement and awareness campaigns can foster community involvement, ensuring the sustainability of urban development efforts in the long run.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded with several recommendations for achieving good urban governance, emphasizing the need for improved financial autonomy for urban local bodies, enhanced capacity building for officials, better infrastructure planning, increased public awareness, and the adoption of digital governance solutions to streamline services and ensure sustainable urban development. Such as;

a) **To Strengthen Financial Autonomy:** Strengthening financial autonomy is essential for effective urban governance. A well-structured taxation system, diversified sources of revenue, and appropriate user charges are necessary to generate adequate funds for urban local bodies. Such financial mechanisms enable them to deliver improved and efficient public services to the local population of the state.

b) **To provide Capacity Building Programs**: Capacity building plays a vital role in strengthening urban governance, as it enhances the skills, knowledge, and administrative efficiency of municipal officials, enabling them to perform their responsibilities more effectively at the grassroots level. However, public accountability among officials appears to be relatively weak, which constitutes a significant challenge in ensuring effective governance. In the context of modernization, the adoption of digital governance has become increasingly essential, as it offers mechanisms that promote transparency, minimize bureaucratic delays, and improve the efficiency of service delivery at the local level.

c) **Scientific Urban Planning and Regulation**: Both the Itanagar Municipal Corporation and the Pasighat Municipal Council continue to face challenges in providing effective urban governance due to a variety of structural and administrative constraints.

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Scientific planning and efficient management are essential for achieving sustainable urban growth, infrastructure development, and the effective administration of urban affairs. Such planning ensures that cities and towns are systematically structured, properly organized, and developed in a manner that minimizes environmental degradation. Urban planning generally encompasses aspects such as zoning regulations, transportation planning, land-use management, and environmental sustainability. However, these key components of systematic urban planning remain at an early stage of development in Arunachal Pradesh and therefore require substantial strengthening and more rapid implementation to ensure effective urban governance and sustainable development.

d) **To enhance Public Participation**: Urban localities governed by Urban Local Governments in Arunachal Pradesh are inhabited by people from diverse tribal communities across the state. As a result, building collective consensus and public awareness becomes a significant challenge, often affecting effective public participation in local governance. Nevertheless, public motivation and participation are essential for the successful implementation of policies and programs. Municipal authorities must consider the voices, interests, and grievances of local residents, and policies should be implemented in accordance with the needs of the people to promote greater responsiveness and community engagement at the local level.

e) **To Monitor Public Policy Implementation:** After the formulation and implementation of a policy, effective monitoring and evaluation are crucial to ensure the attainment of its intended objectives. Regular assessments are necessary as they help identify existing gaps and facilitate appropriate modifications to enhance policy outcomes. Such evaluation mechanisms also help prevent the recurrence of loopholes and shortcomings in future policy implementation.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of urban local governance in Arunachal Pradesh represents a gradual shift from traditional tribal councils to a formal municipal governance structure. Historically, local tribal institutions played a crucial role in decision-making and community management, and while these traditional systems continue to exist in some areas, the introduction of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, has significantly influenced urban administration in the state. This amendment laid the foundation for the establishment of Urban Local Bodies enabling decentralized governance and providing a constitutional framework for urban development. Further, the enactment of the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Act, 2007, strengthened this framework by defining the roles, functions, and responsibilities of municipal institutions in the state. These legal provisions aimed to enhance urban governance by improving service delivery mechanisms and ensuring greater public participation in decision-making processes. However, the effectiveness of these reforms has been constrained by various structural and operational challenges that continue to delay the efficient functioning of Urban Local Bodies.

Notwithstanding these legal and policy advancements, urban governance in Arunachal Pradesh faces persistent challenges that impact its effectiveness. Financial constraints remain a major obstacle, as ULBs rely heavily on state and central government grants due to limited revenue-generation capacity. Geographical and infrastructural challenges further intensify governance issues, as the state's mountainous terrain and scattered urban settlements make the provision of public services difficult. Moreover, low public awareness and participation hamper the democratization of urban governance, while administrative inefficiencies and lack of technical expertise further weaken the capacity of municipal bodies. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach that includes enhanced financial autonomy, improved resource mobilization, better infrastructure planning, and stronger institutional capacity-building measures. Moreover, increasing public engagement through awareness campaigns, participatory governance models, and digital governance tools can improve transparency and accountability. Moving forward, a more strategic and well-coordinated approach is essential to ensure that urban local governance in Arunachal Pradesh becomes more resilient, inclusive, and effective in addressing the state's unique urbanization challenges. The study though planned with meticulous details, however, may suffer from inherent drawbacks. The study is confined to the objectives and scope set for the subject undertaken. The present study is limited to the secondary sources and primary data collected from some selected respondents. There are also certain limitations like non-availability of resources, difficulty in contacting desired informants for personal interview, etc., in spite of these limitations, the work is accomplished with utmost caution and the findings reveal the purpose for which the study was conducted and drafted.

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