

## **Mapping the Rural Parallel; A Review Study on the Correlation of Rural Governance Tradition of the Cholas with Practices of Current Rural Setting**

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### **Abstract**

There is no doubt that India/Bharat, once hailed as the “guiding beacon of the world in matter of governance/administration at every level” is struggling to uplift itself in current scenario to uplift itself back in this field as can be reflected from its improving position from various ranking by multiple organizations like; (EGDI) Ranking of 118th (2015) to 105th (2023-24) and retention of 3rd position in LGSCP Index from 2015 till 2024 etc. The reason is clear; centuries of catastrophic incursion from marauding forces of arid Middle East, Eastern and Western Asian steppes and its further aggrandizement by British; further leading to distortion of our intricately-designed workable knowledge tradition which was prevalent since ancient time including management of both rural and urban setup too. As evident from works of several historians such as K.A Nilakantha Shastry, Romila Thapar India indeed inherited a tightly-knit socialistic & self-sufficiency-oriented mechanism of rural administration the prime example of which can be seen in the Mandalam Kotu or Rural administration of the Chola Empire. But in today’s scenario: continuous ravaging by various invading agents over the ages have reduced these core administrative units of India to a den of practical-ignorance, socially-irrelevant practices and inter-sectional conflicts just as pointed by B.R. Ambedkar, but still by miracle many of its practices inherited from various empires such as the Mauryas, Cholas, Kakatiyas etc. since times immemorial have prevented their fall. And thankfully by NDA’s effort to re-energize the rural setting though various schemes PMAY-G, MGNREGA, PM-KISAN and strong emphasis to revive the ancient knowledge tradition on ground have led to revival of our village. Therefore, this review cum suggestion-oriented paper seeks to explore the chronological parallelism drawn between the tradition of Cholas and that of how its followed in today’s rural India to aid in its own revival.

**Keywords/Key phrase**-Mandalam Kotu, self-sufficiency-oriented mechanism, continuous ravaging, practices inherited, re-energize the rural setting, chronological parallelism.

### **INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND**

*“I believe and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages. We town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly ever paused to inquire if those poor*

*folk get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain”*

The above statement was quoted “in context of the sacrifices made by the rural region for the prosperity of the urban regions of the nation” by none other than the Father of our Nation Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi while addressing an interview taken by a correspondent of Read India magazine<sup>1</sup>. Basically, it also reflects the historically transiting relationship between the “rural” and “urban” region of our nation where the “former” transformed over the ages with dynamically changing socio-political and economic conditions; from a “self-sustaining unit of administration” to a vassal “dependent upon machinations of urban bodies” for satisfying its needs. And very often the needs of these vassals were sacrificed/ignored for the prosperity of the “urban hub” which is a crucial gear driving the development project of any nation in a majority of cases. However, in certain rare cases disaster-influenced counter migration<sup>2</sup> often forced people to shift their development model from core-periphery<sup>3</sup> to growth-pole<sup>4</sup> model and usually it resulted in accelerated development of the nation as our own historical text as well as its archaeological supplements themselves testifies it too.

As evident from the carefully-analyzed writings of historian K.A. Nilakantha Shastry such as *The Cholas (19355)*, *A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar (1955)* *The Pandyan Kingdom, from the Earliest Times to the Sixteenth Century (1972)* as well as those of other historians such as K.V. Raman, R. Nagaswamy, T.V. Mahalingam, it is evidently clear that India had a rich tradition of local governance where each rural sector “especially Southern regions” of the subcontinent was a self-sustaining unit in itself capable of supporting itself through all such situations up until invasions of *Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khilji (1296-1316)*; especially at a time when North India had started losing its prosperity after the invasion of *Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad ibn Sam (Muhammad Ghori) (1175-1206)* forcing large scale migrations down south. The village administration of the known prominent empires of ancient and pre-medieval times especially the *Northern Himalayan* regions, The *gana-rajyas* of the North-Western part of subcontinent, the *Sangam* and later *Sangam* dynasties such as the *Cheras*, *Pandyas* and especially the *Cholas* of the south were tailored to accommodate both the horizontal and vertical level of governance in order to meet the objectives fashioned in accordance with the regional conditions of the bygone past, such as

- To ensure a steady flow of revenue.
- To reduce administrative burden on the central government and empower local communities.
- To maximize agricultural output and prevent droughts or food shortages.
- To ensure justice and security at the village level.
- To integrate the sanctums of faith into administration and strengthen cultural unity.

- To integrate rural economies with long-distance trade.

This tradition of local governance as discussed above was prevalent across the country ever since the dawn of *Sangam Era* (3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE) till the dawn of 12<sup>th</sup> Century CE when it was totally wiped out from the North Indian scenario all owing to;

- Turko-Mongol and Arabic incursion in the Northern part of subcontinent.
- Arrival of Islamic style of centralized-ruling with the invaders.
- Its further blending with the homogeneity of the Indian society at that time.

Thus, during the time-span of Muslim rule over the nation from early 12<sup>th</sup> Century CE till its decline in 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE, rural units especially in Northern part of India were reduced to the position of mere vassals meant to fuel only the growth of urban landscape of the sub-continent, even though they were the actual economic growth engine of the nation at that time *en masse*. While the villages of Southern India still retained their self-dependant characteristic as inherited from the Cholas as the classical Sanatanist belief of *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha* indirectly aided democratic character of these village to persist over the ages till the onslaught of Muslim rulers by mid-12<sup>th</sup> century CE. Also, despite the validity of this fact, there were no efforts of salvaging these arterial rural areas from the central authority of the prevailing medieval empires. After the formal takeover of “power to rule over nation” by the British since 1858, some degree of effort was made to restore the original functionality and self-dependency factor of the rural zones such as

- The Bengal Village Chowkidari Act (1870)-It strengthened law and order in rural areas under the control of the British administration by introducing a system of village watchmen (Chowkidars) which is to be funded by a tax on villagers.
- The Local Self-Government Act (1882)-Otherwise known as Ripon’s Resolution, it introduced local self-governance in villages through local boards (district, taluk, and village levels) responsible for managing manage sanitation, education, and infrastructure. This act marked the beginning of decentralization of power to rural areas.
- The Bengal Tenancy Act (1885)<sup>5</sup>- It provided some rights to tenants, preventing arbitrary eviction by landlords. It also Introduced occupancy rights for tenants who had cultivated land for more than 12 years.
- The Government of India Act (1919)-It introduced the concept of dyarchy, with local self-government as a transferred subject. It gave provincial governments more control over local rural administration.
- The Government of India Act (1935)-This Act established provincial autonomy, giving provinces the power to legislate on rural governance thus expanding local governance structures in rural areas, including panchayats.

However, the effect of these acts amounted to near-negligible and remained so even the year 1947 up until 1991-92 when the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts were officially enforced after accepting the recommendations from Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), G. V. K. Rao Committee (1985), National Commission on Urbanization (1986), L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986), Thungon Committee (1988) and C. M. Singhvi Committee (Nagarpalika Committee) (1989) thus formally restoring the “right to self-rule” of both rural and urban areas. But even after 32 years of their enforcement, though the principle of “*political responsibility of rural sector in the building of a state*” was restored as advocated by the ancient pioneers of local governance, The Cholas, the economic spirit of “self-dependency” and “true driver of a country’s GDP” is yet to be restored fully. There were efforts in this direction which yielded results that testified the growth of nation on-ground through co-ordination of rural activities such as;

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (proposed 1991) (enacted 2006) is responsible for boosting the overall employment percentage via increasing the LFPR parameter in rural sector by 15-25% via creation of 4583 crore person-days of work from 2006-2025 thus lowering the overall national unemployment curve by 10-15%.
- The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, (2006) Its objective is to strengthen the MSME sector, including rural and traditional industries and this is currently done by providing incentives, tax benefits, and easier access to credit for small industries and supporting rural artisans, handicrafts, and small manufacturers with technology and skill development. According to the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises' Annual Report for 2022-23, out of an estimated 63.388 million MSMEs in India, approximately 32.488 million (51.25%) are located in rural regions.
- The PM Vishwakarma Scheme, 2023 (Announced in 2022) Its objective is to support traditional artisans and craftspeople in rural areas. This is done by
  - Focuses on traditional rural skills such as carpentry, weaving, and blacksmithing.
  - Encourages branding and digital marketing for rural crafts.
  - Providing financial support, skill training, and market access to artisans.
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) (2016)<sup>6</sup> was implemented to provide crop insurance against natural disasters, pests, and diseases. As up until to-date farmers have been paid approximately ₹32,440 crore in premiums, and insurance claims totalling over ₹1.64 lakh crore have been disbursed to them.
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)<sup>7</sup> has successfully constructed over 772,000 kilometres of rural roads across India.

Thus, the paper seeks to establish a parallel co-relation between the current scenario of improvement of rural areas as undertaken by today's central authority with the schemes of improving rural economy and administration undertaken by Cholas in the past.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Elucidation of core concepts of rural administration practices of the Cholas which could be in correspondence with the ways in which rural administration is improved today.
2. Establishment of co-relation of the ancient Chola practices with the current scenario of rural improvement via showing the grounds of similarity.
3. Suggesting what further practices from "ways of the old" can be adapted to optimize with the current parameters of "how a rural region on the right path of development".

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The key literatures that were considered for the drafting of this research paper are as follows

##### Primary Sources

- Uttamerur Inscription (920 CE)
- Thirukkivilur Inscription (985-1014 CE)
- Anbil Copper Plates & Esalam Copper Plates (1018–1054 CE))
- Thiruvidadimarudur Inscriptions (1070–1122 CE)

##### Secondary Sources

- The Cholas by K.A.Nilakantha Shastry (1950)
- A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar (1955)
- T.V.Mahalingam's South Indian Polity (1955)
- Political and Cultural History of South India by R. Sathianathaier (1924)
- Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar" by T.V. Mahalingam (1975)

##### Contemporary Sources

Mostly homepages of websites managed directly by the Cabinet of Labor, MSMEs, Rural Development and Finance were used for referring of current age schemes in the paper and supplementing them with statistically accurate data collected from:

- Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy.
- Periodic Labor Force Participation Rate jointly issued by ministry of Broadcasting, Media relations and the cabinet ministry of labor on the website of AIB.

- Popular yet selective Journalist forums who conducted their own investigations such as the Times of India, The Hindu, The Business Talks, India Today etc.

## METHODOLOGY

The parameters which are kept as the focal point of the entire research paper are as follows:

1. Maximum focus laid upon the mentioning of archaeologically accurate facts on the practices of rural governance by the Cholas as can be derived from translatory analysis of the Tamil-Sanskrit inscriptions.
2. Stating about the derivative archaeological sources.
3. Drawing up a parallel co-relation with today's practices of local governance via elucidation of its salient yet crucial features and supplementing them with validated numerical and statistical data collected by various organizations and associations before and after the programme's implementation.

Thus, the core issue of the paper is designed as such

1. Practices followed by Chola empire for administering the rural zones.
2. Archaeological testimonies to the above-mentioned practices.
3. Elucidation of the current-day schemes implemented for improving the economic, political and social aspect of the rural areas.
4. Points of similarity

The manner of research followed while drafting the paper is qualitative and descriptive in nature.

## DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CHOLAS FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ITS CONJUNCTION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRENT DAY SCHEMES FOR IMPROVING RURAL AREAS:

### **1. Division of power**

#### • **Cholas**

A. Village Assemblies-The village administration was primarily managed by local assemblies known as *Sabhas* (in Brahmin villages) and *Ur* (in non-Brahmin villages). *Sabha* was an assembly of adult males in Brahmin villages (*agrahara* villages). It was a more formal and elite body, often consisting of learned Brahmins and dealt with day-to-day affairs of their own village thus being called *Perumakkal*. *Ur* was a general assembly of all adult males in non-Brahmin villages (an equivalent of Sabha in a way). It was more inclusive and dealt with the day-to-day affairs of the village thus being called *Urar*.

- B. Source-First 5 lines of Uttamerur Inscription (920 CE)
- Current Day equivalent
  - a. The rural administration is structured into three levels:
    - Gram Panchayat (Village Level)- The Gram Sabha (a general body of all adult citizens in the village) acts as the foundation of local governance. The Gram Panchayat, elected by the Gram Sabha, is responsible for village administration. The Sarpanch (head of Gram Panchayat) is elected by the villagers to oversee governance.
    - Panchayat Samiti (Block Level)- This is an intermediary body that coordinates the functioning of multiple Gram Panchayats within a **Block or Taluka**. It implements development programs at a broader level and distributes government funds to villages.
    - Zila Parishad (District Level)-The highest tier of rural administration, responsible for the overall development of the district. It supervises Panchayat Samitis and coordinates government schemes and policies.
  - b. Source- Articles 243 to 243(O) introduced during 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act (1992).
- 2. ***Election process;***
  - ***Cholas***
    - A. Qualifications for Membership- Members of the village assembly (Sabha) had to meet specific qualifications:
      - I. Ownership of land (at least 1/4 veli of taxable land)
      - II. Residence in the village
      - III. Age between 35 and 70 years
      - IV. Knowledge of the Vedas and Shastras (for Brahmin villages).
      - V. Good moral character and conduct.
    - B. Disqualifications included:
      - I. Involvement in crimes or immoral activities
      - II. Failure to pay taxes.
      - III. Association with outcastes or heretics.
    - C. Selection by Lot (Kudavolai System):

I. The members of the Sabha were chosen through a process called Kudavolai (lottery system).

II. Names of eligible candidates were written on palm leaves (kudavolai) and placed in a pot.

III. A young boy or a priest would draw the lots to select the members

D. Source-Translation from Uttamerur Inscription (920 CE)<sup>9</sup>

I. *“To qualify, a candidate must be a landowner who paid taxes, must have a house built on tax-paying land, must be between the ages of 35 and 70, and must be well-versed in the Vedas and administrative skills. He should not have committed any sinful act, theft, or bribery, nor should he be associated with low moral conduct. Those who had served previously in the Sabha or their close relatives were disqualified from contesting again for some years, ensuring a rotation of power.”*

II. *“The **election process** followed a **Kudavolai system**, in which the names of eligible candidates were **written on palm leaves** and placed inside a pot. A young boy, chosen randomly, would pick out the names from the pot in the presence of the entire village assembly. The selected members would then take an oath and assume their roles.”*

• **Current Day equivalent**

A. Gram Panchayat (Village Tier)-Level I

1) Gram Sabha (Village Assembly)-It comprises all registered voters in the village. The members are not elected, but automatically included. They approve development plans and oversee the Gram Panchayat.

2) Sarpanch (Head of Gram Panchayat)-He/She is directly elected by the villagers through local elections. The concerned member serves as the executive head of the village administration.

3) Panch (Ward Members of Gram Panchayat) The members are directly elected by the people of each ward in the village. Each member represents their respective wards in the Gram Panchayat.

B. Panchayat Samiti (Block Level)-Level II

1) Members of Panchayat Samiti-While some members were directly elected by voters in the block from different constituencies but some members are nominated by the state government (e.g., MPs, MLAs, and officials)

2) Chairperson of Panchayat Samiti-He/she is indirectly elected by the elected members of the Panchayat Samiti. He/she leads the administration at the block level.

3) Block Development Officer (BDO)-A government-appointed officer, not elected. Supervises and implements development projects.

C. Zila Parishad (District Level)-Level III

1) Members of Zila Parishad-They are directly elected by the people of the district from various constituencies. The consortium includes MLAs, MPs, and representatives of Panchayat Samitis as ex-officio members.

2) President of Zila Parishad-He/she is indirectly elected by the elected members of the Zila Parishad. The discussed member acts as the head of district administration under Panchayati Raj.

3) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zila Parishad-An IAS officer or senior bureaucrat, appointed by the state government for this position. Manages finances, coordinates development programs, and ensures governance.

D. Source-Part IX [Articles 243(A) to 243(O)] of the Constitution as governed by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992).

**3. Committee formation and responsibilities**

• **Cholas**

a. The Sabha was divided into several committees, each responsible for specific administrative functions:

- Annual Committee (Samvatsara Variyam): Responsible for general administration and oversight.
- Tank Committee (Eri Variyam): Managed irrigation tanks and water distribution.
- Garden Committee (Totta Variyam): Oversaw the maintenance of gardens and orchards.
- Temple Committee (Devariyaam): Managed temple affairs, including festivals and donations.

b. Funding & Resource Collection for Economic Projects

- Revenue from Land Taxes (*Kadamai* and *Kudimai*)-Inscriptions reveal that the primary source of funds for economic projects was land tax. The

- collected revenue was earmarked for infrastructure development, including irrigation.
- Donations & Endowments-Wealthy individuals, temple authorities, and traders donated land or money for public works. The Anbil inscription (10th century CE) mentions a village donating land for the maintenance of irrigation tanks.
  - Temple Involvement in Economic Projects-Many Chola-era temples were landlords that financed irrigation projects. The Thiruchirappalli inscription states that temple lands and funds were used for repairing tanks and canals.
- c. Execution of Economic projects. For instance; **irrigation projects**
- Construction & Maintenance of Water Tanks and Canals-The Cholas built massive reservoirs, tanks, and canals to improve agricultural productivity. The Veeranam Tank (built under Rajaditya Chola) and Grand Anicut (Kallanai Dam) (improved by Rajendra Chola I) are notable examples.
  - Community Labor and Collective Responsibility-Village assemblies mobilized local labour for digging and maintaining irrigation tanks. The Kanyakumari inscription mentions how villagers were responsible for desilting canals before every monsoon.
  - Water Management & Regulation-The Eri Variyam (Tank Committee) ensured equal distribution of water to fields. The Brihadehswara Temple inscription (11th century) mentions fines for those who misused water resources.
- d. Long-Term Maintenance & Accountability
- Regular Inspections by Sabha & Officials Inscriptions state that inspections were conducted by local sabhas to check the condition of tanks and canals. The Thiruvallangadu inscription records penalties for negligence in water management.
  - Records & Documentation Chola inscriptions mention that detailed accounts were maintained of irrigation expenses and repairs. The Uthiramerur inscription suggests public accountability, where officials could be removed for corruption.
- e. Source-passage from Anbil Inscription (1018-1054 CE)

*"In the reign of the glorious **Parantaka Chola I**, who ruled over the vast lands of the Tamil country, a noble act of charity and public welfare was undertaken in the village*

of **Anbil**. A generous donation of land was made by a prominent local chieftain and approved by the village assembly (**Sabha**) for the construction and maintenance of a **temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu**. This land was to be used to support **daily worship, rituals, and offerings** for the deity, ensuring the prosperity and spiritual well-being of the people. Furthermore, the grant included provisions for **an irrigation tank and water channels** to sustain agricultural fields in the region. The village assembly, in consultation with the temple authorities, allocated resources to maintain **water reservoirs and canals**, ensuring a continuous supply of water for farming. It was decreed that the revenue generated from the donated land would be utilized for the **repair and upkeep of irrigation structures**, preventing any shortage of water. To maintain **accountability and transparency**, specific regulations were established. The inscription records that village elders and temple trustees were responsible for supervising the **proper use of funds and resources**. Anyone who misused the grant or failed to maintain the irrigation facilities would be subject to penalties imposed by the local administration. The villagers collectively took an oath to protect and preserve the land, recognizing its importance for both **spiritual and economic prosperity**".

- **Present day equivalent steps of planning**
  - Planning & Approval by Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha-The Gram Sabha (village assembly) discusses local irrigation needs and approves the project. The Gram Panchayat (elected village body) prepares a detailed project plan, estimating costs, resources, and implementation strategies. Funds are sought from district or state government schemes like MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) or PMKSY (Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana).
  - Funding Allocation from Government Schemes-Financial support comes from Union, State, and Local Governments under various schemes: PMKSY (for irrigation infrastructure). MGNREGA (for labour-intensive irrigation projects like canal digging and pond construction).
  - State government water resource funds-District Planning Committee (DPC) reviews and finalizes funding allocation.
  - Execution by Rural Development Agencies & Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)-The Panchayat Samiti (Block-level body) oversees execution with the help of Block Development Officers (BDOs). Technical assistance is provided by government engineers, irrigation departments, and agricultural officers. Local labourers and farmers are employed for the project under schemes like MGNREGA, ensuring employment generation.
  - Monitoring and Quality Control-The Zila Parishad (District-level Panchayat), along with state irrigation officials, inspects the project. Regular audits are conducted to

prevent corruption and mismanagement. Social audits by Gram Sabha ensure transparency and public accountability.

- Maintenance & Sustainability- Once completed, the irrigation project is handed over to the Gram Panchayat for regular maintenance and operation. Water User Associations (WUAs), comprising local farmers, manage water distribution and minor repairs. State irrigation departments provide technical support for long-term sustainability.
- Review & Impact Assessment-The government conducts periodic assessments to check the project's impact on agriculture, water conservation, and livelihoods. Modifications or expansions are planned based on feedback from farmers and panchayat leaders. The success of the project influences future funding allocations and policy decisions for rural development.

Example-Allocation of ₹837 crore for the fiscal year 2021-26 for National Handicrafts Development Programme led to the creation of jobs for 6 million people. MGNREGA has provided around 4,583 crore person-days of work from 2006 to 2025. A total of ₹299.59 crore was allocated, ₹159.44 crore released, and ₹129.20 crore utilized for Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme which led to 8-10% reduction in chemical fertilizer use and a 5-6% increase in productivity due to distribution of 11.69 crore soil health cards since 2020. With the allocation of ₹19000 crore for PMGSY so far 771,641 km has been covered connecting 25000 unconnected highways.

#### **4. Judicial processes**

- **Cholas**

- 1) The judicial process during the Chola period was always carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down in the Dharmashastras. The process elucidated in here as follows:
  - Filing a Complaint-A dispute or complaint was brought before the Sabha or Ur by the affected party. The complaint could be related to land disputes, inheritance, water rights, or other local issues.
  - Preliminary Investigation-The Sabha or Ur would conduct a preliminary investigation to determine the validity of the complaint. Witnesses and evidence were collected to assess the case.
  - Hearing and Deliberation-The case was heard in an open assembly, where both parties presented their arguments. The Dharmasana<sup>8</sup> Members and other officials listened to the arguments and examined the evidence.

Deliberations were conducted in a transparent manner, often in the presence of village elders and community members.

- Judgment-Based on the evidence and arguments, the Dharmasana Members would deliver a judgment. The judgment was guided by the principles of Dharma (righteousness) as outlined in the Dharmashastras and local customs. The decision was recorded in writing and inscribed on temple walls or copper plates for public reference.

II) Source-Uttamerur inscription (updated in the year 907-955 CE)

- ***Present day equivalent***

- I) Nyaya Panchayats for local dispute resolution- established under Article 40 of the Constitution covering Directive Principles of State Policy.
- II) Gram Nyayalayas-established under Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008.
- III) If a person is dissatisfied with the verdict of a District Court, they can appeal to the respective High Court.
- IV) The Supreme Court of India (Article 32 & Article 136) acts as the highest appellate authority and can intervene in rural judicial matters if there is a violation of fundamental rights, a case involves a significant legal question or there is a special leave petition (SLP) filed for urgent intervention.
- V) Free legal aid to economically weaker sections through the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) under Article 39A.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION:**

- i. Allowing the Panchayats to collect and use certain taxes independently for local development projects rather than relying on external grants.
- ii. Implementing the **stronger audit mechanisms** at the Gram Panchayat level to **prevent corruption** and ensure proper use of funds.
- iii. Strengthening the Gram Sabhas by making their decisions legally binding and ensuring higher attendance in village meetings.
- iv. Increasing the financial and administrative autonomy of Gram Panchayats to make them more self-reliant.

Hence the descriptive review paper can be concluded with a fact of certain sociological validity related to core-periphery model of settlement growth that it is the most efficient way for any nation to grow at a longer pace, irrespecting of whether it is mono-ethnic or multi-ethnic. And the best way to start this growth model is to inculcate the democratic values from the very lower

level of administration itself such as development of collective conscious for welfare of all, feeling of equality both in matter of resource sharing and governance of one's right, free and fair treatment for all in case of deliverance of justice just as how the Cholas taught us, which helped the former establish and preserve one of the glorious empire of Indian history that ran over 1500 years.

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