



Assessing The Role Of Local Governance In Economic Development: A Study Of Palin, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

This study explores the critical role of local governance in fostering economic development in Palin, the administrative headquarters of Kra Daadi district in Arunachal Pradesh. Recognizing the unique socio-economic and geographical context of this remote region, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys, in-depth interviews with local officials and community members, and analysis of secondary data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of governance effectiveness. The study focuses specifically on the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and their capacity to plan, implement, and monitor development initiatives, manage local resources, and address the economic challenges faced by residents. Findings reveal that local governance has contributed positively to infrastructure development, employment generation, and livelihood improvement programs, thereby creating opportunities for enhanced economic well-being. However, the study also highlights several structural and operational challenges, including limited financial autonomy, insufficient capacity-building mechanisms for local representatives, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and the difficulties posed by the region's rugged terrain and dispersed population. These constraints often impede the optimal functioning of local governance institutions, limiting their ability to achieve sustained economic growth. The research underscores the need for targeted policy interventions that strengthen institutional capacity, enhance financial and administrative decentralization, and promote community participation in decision-making processes. By addressing these challenges, local governance can play a more effective role in driving inclusive and sustainable economic development in Palin and similar remote regions of Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords Local Governance, Economic Development, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Arunachal Pradesh, Palin, Kra Daadi District, Infrastructure, Livelihood Programs, Policy Recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Palin, located in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh, functions as the administrative headquarters and a significant economic hub for the surrounding region. The district, predominantly inhabited by the Nyishi tribe, is characterized by a rich cultural heritage, diverse traditional practices, and a predominantly agrarian economy. Despite its cultural vibrancy, Kra Daadi remains one of the more remote and geographically challenging districts in Arunachal Pradesh, with hilly terrain, dense forests, and limited connectivity posing considerable challenges to development.

Over the years, Palin has witnessed gradual infrastructural improvements, including road construction, electrification, and establishment of government institutions, which have contributed to the slow but steady economic growth of the region. Agriculture remains the backbone of the local economy, with a majority of households engaged in subsistence farming, horticulture, and animal husbandry. In addition, government-led initiatives such as rural livelihood programs, skill development schemes, and microfinance projects have begun to create new avenues for income generation, improving living standards in certain pockets of the district.

Local governance, particularly through the framework of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), plays a central role in planning, implementing, and monitoring these development initiatives. PRIs act as the primary interface between the government and local communities, tasked with resource management, service delivery, and addressing socio-economic challenges. Their role becomes even more significant in remote areas like Palin, where geographical isolation, limited access to markets, and socio-cultural specificities require context-sensitive governance approaches.

However, the effectiveness of local governance in promoting economic development is often constrained by several factors, including limited financial autonomy, inadequate capacity of elected representatives, administrative bottlenecks, and infrastructural deficits. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing policies that strengthen the capacity of local institutions and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the role of local governance in facilitating economic development in Palin, focusing on the functioning of PRIs, their impact on community livelihoods, and the challenges they face in fostering development in a remote and socio-culturally diverse setting.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design using a mixed-method approach. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques are employed to understand the role of local governance in economic development.

2.2 Primary Data

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 50 respondents from the Palin area. The survey covered socio-economic background, awareness and participation in local governance, perceptions of PRI effectiveness, impact on livelihood, transparency, and challenges faced by local governance.

2.3 Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from government reports, books, journal articles, and official statistics related to Panchayati Raj Institutions and regional development in Arunachal Pradesh.

2.4 Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using simple percentages and presented through tables and figures. Interpretative analysis was used to link survey findings with broader themes of local governance and economic development.

3.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETAIL OF THE RESPONDENTS.

TABLE 1: GENDER

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
FEMALE	26	52%
MALE	24	48%

Source: Field data

Table 1 shows that out of 50 respondents, **26 (52%) were female** and **24 (48%) were male**. The data reflects a **nearly balanced gender representation**, with a slightly higher proportion of female respondents. Such balance enhances the **representativeness of the study** and allows for a fair comparison of gender-based perspectives in the analysis.

TABLE 2: AGE

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25yrs	20	40%
26-35yrs	21	42%
36-45yrs	7	14%
46-55yrs	2	4%

SOURCE: Field data

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the **26–35 years age group (42%)**, followed closely by the **18–25 years group (40%)**. Together, these groups account for **82% of the total respondents**, showing a strong concentration of youth and young adults. The **36–45 years group (14%)** and **46–55 years group (4%)** are comparatively less represented, suggesting that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of a younger population.

TABLE 3: LANGUAGE/COMMUNITY

LANGUAGE/COMMUNITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Nyishi	48	96%
Others	2	4%

SOURCE: Field data

The table shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents belong to the **Nyishi community (96%)**, while only **4%** are from other communities. This indicates that the study is **predominantly representative of the Nyishi community**, making the findings particularly relevant to their socio-economic and cultural context.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Illiterate	00	00%
V-VIII	3	6%
Class-x	06	12%
Class-xii	03	6%
Graduate	19	38%
Post-Graduate	19	38%

SOURCE: Field data

Out of the total respondents, **0 (0%)** are illiterate. **3 respondents (6%)** have education up to V–VIII, **6 respondents (12%)** have completed Class X, and **3 respondents (6%)** have completed Class XII. A clear majority hold higher education degrees, with **19 respondents (38%)** being graduates and another **19 respondents (38%)** being post-graduates. Altogether, **38 respondents (76%)** possess graduate or post-graduate qualifications.

TABLE 5: SOURCE OF INCOME

SOURCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Self-Employed	01	2%
Private Sector	00	00%
Public Sector	25	50%
Unemployed	24	48%

SOURCE: Field data

Table 5 indicates that **25 respondents (50%)** are employed in the public sector, forming the largest income group. A substantial proportion, **24 respondents (48%)**, are unemployed. Only **1 respondent (2%)** is self-employed, while **0 respondents (0%)** are employed in the private sector. Overall, the table shows a strong dependence on public sector employment alongside a high level of unemployment among the respondents.

TABLE-6; RELIGION

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	44	88%
Indigenous	4	8%
Others	2	4%

As shown in Table 6, the majority of respondents follow Christianity, comprising **44 respondents (88%)**. Indigenous religious followers account for **4 respondents (8%)**, while **2 respondents (4%)** belong to other religions. This indicates that Christianity is the dominant religion among the respondents, with indigenous and other religions forming a small minority.

TABLE-7; MARITAL STATUS

Marital status	frequency	percentage
Married	19	38%
Unmarried	31	62%
separated	00	00%

As shown in Table 7, **31 respondents (62%)** are unmarried, while **19 respondents (38%)** are married. There are **no separated respondents (0, 0%)** in the study. This indicates that a majority of the respondents are unmarried, suggesting a younger or early-career dominant sample population.

1.2 Research Problem

Despite numerous development initiatives undertaken in Palin and the wider Kra Daadi district, there remains a significant gap in empirical research assessing the effectiveness of local governance in promoting sustainable economic development. While Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are tasked with implementing programs and managing resources at the grassroots level, several challenges hinder their full potential. The research problem can be articulated through the following points:

1. **Limited Empirical Assessment:** There is a scarcity of systematic studies evaluating the actual impact of PRIs on economic development in Palin, particularly in terms of income generation, employment opportunities, and livelihood improvement.
2. **Effectiveness of Program Implementation:** Although various government programs and schemes are implemented through PRIs, the extent to which these initiatives translate into tangible economic benefits for local communities remains unclear.
3. **Resource Management Challenges:** PRIs often face constraints in managing financial, human, and natural resources efficiently, affecting their ability to plan and execute development projects effectively.
4. **Influence of Socio-Cultural and Geographical Factors:** Palin's remote location, challenging terrain, and unique socio-cultural dynamics, including tribal practices and traditional decision-making structures, may impact the performance of local governance institutions.
5. **Capacity and Autonomy of Local Governance:** The limited capacity of elected representatives, coupled with insufficient financial and administrative autonomy, often constrains the ability of PRIs to respond effectively to local economic needs.
6. **Need for Policy Insights:** Without a comprehensive understanding of these challenges, designing policies and interventions to strengthen local governance and promote inclusive economic growth remains difficult.

This study, therefore, seeks to address these gaps by critically evaluating the role of PRIs in economic development processes in Palin, identifying the factors that influence their success or failure, and offering insights for enhancing the effectiveness of local governance in remote and socio-culturally diverse regions.

1.3 Objectives

The study is designed to comprehensively examine the role of local governance, particularly Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), in promoting economic development in Palin. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. **To assess the structure and functioning of PRIs in Palin:**
 - Examine the organizational framework, hierarchy, and composition of PRIs at the village and block levels.
 - Analyze the decision-making processes, administrative responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms within PRIs.
 - Understand the extent to which PRIs engage with local communities and incorporate citizen participation in planning and development activities.
2. **To evaluate the impact of PRI-led initiatives on local economic development:**
 - Investigate the effectiveness of various government schemes and development programs implemented through PRIs, such as livelihood enhancement, skill development, and infrastructure projects.
 - Assess the tangible outcomes of these initiatives on income generation, employment opportunities, agricultural productivity, and overall community well-being.
 - Explore perceptions of local residents regarding the benefits and limitations of PRI-led interventions.
3. **To identify challenges faced by PRIs in implementing development programs:**
 - Examine structural and operational constraints, including financial limitations, human resource capacity, and bureaucratic bottlenecks.
 - Analyze the impact of geographical, socio-cultural, and logistical factors that affect program implementation in a remote and hilly region like Palin.
 - Identify gaps in training, knowledge, and skills among PRI representatives that hinder effective governance and development delivery.
4. **To provide policy recommendations for enhancing the role of PRIs in economic development:**
 - Suggest measures to strengthen institutional capacity, financial autonomy, and administrative efficiency of PRIs.
 - Recommend strategies to improve community participation, transparency, and accountability in local governance.
 - Offer policy insights aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Palin and similar remote regions of Arunachal Pradesh.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Local Governance and Economic Development

Local governance structures, particularly PRIs, are instrumental in the decentralized planning and implementation of development programs. Studies have shown that effective local governance can lead to improved infrastructure, better service delivery, and enhanced community participation in development processes.

2.2 Challenges in Tribal Regions

Tribal areas like Arunachal Pradesh face unique challenges, including geographical isolation, limited infrastructure, and cultural barriers, which can impede the effectiveness of local governance. Addressing these challenges requires tailored strategies that consider the socio-cultural dynamics of the region.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Structure and Functioning of PRIs in Palin

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Palin operate at the village (Gram Panchayat) and block (Block Panchayat) levels, serving as the primary units of local governance. These institutions are responsible for planning, resource allocation, and monitoring of development initiatives. However, their effectiveness is influenced by several factors:

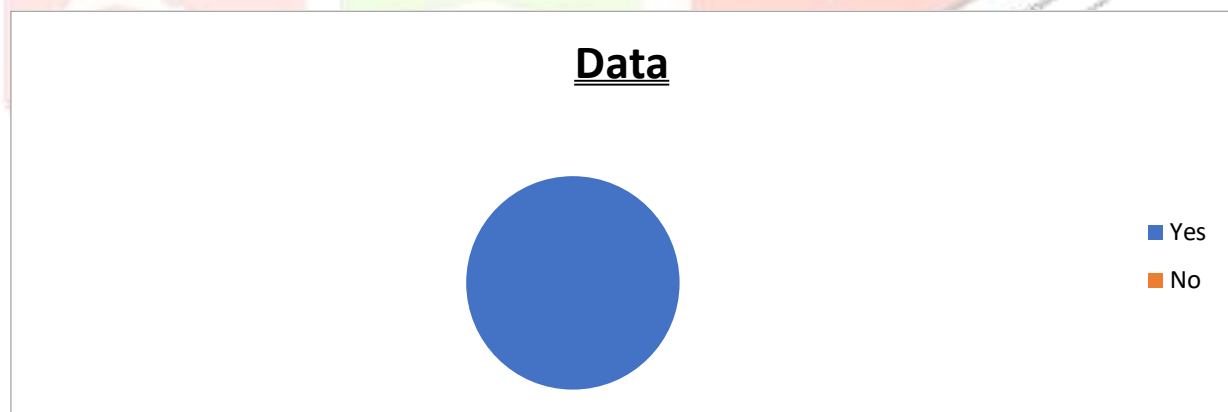
- **Coordination with Higher Authorities:** While PRIs have formal decision-making authority, they heavily rely on state and district-level departments for funds, technical support, and approvals. Delays in approvals often slow down project implementation.
- **Limited Community Participation:** Although there is nominal involvement of community members in Gram Sabha meetings, actual participation is low, particularly among women, youth, and marginalized tribal households. Cultural norms and lack of awareness about rights and responsibilities contribute to this gap.
- **Decision-making Dynamics:** Decision-making is sometimes dominated by senior or influential members, which can affect equitable planning and prioritization of projects.

These factors indicate that while the institutional framework exists, its effectiveness is contingent on both administrative support and active community engagement.

4.1.1 Community Awareness and Participation (Targeted Survey 2024–2025)

1. Are you aware of the local governance institutions in your area (e.g., Gram Panchayat, Village Council, etc.)?

Figure-1

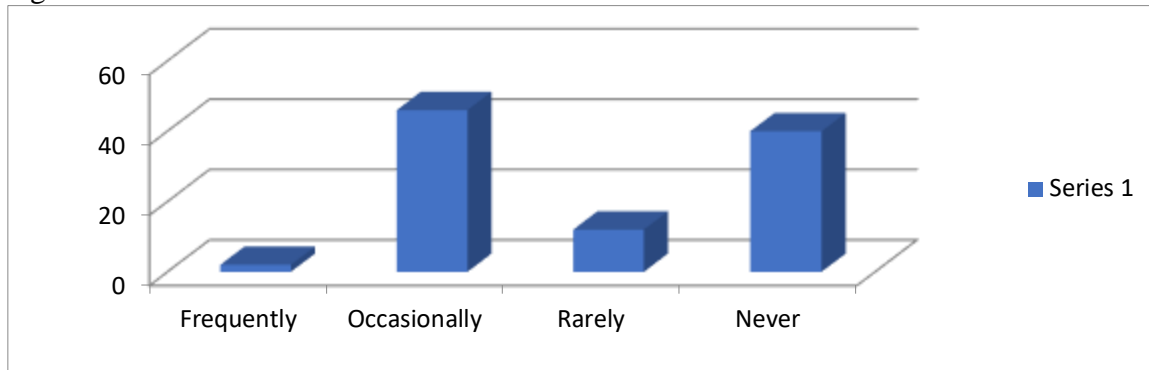


SOURCE- field data

Figure 1 shows that all respondents demonstrate awareness of local governance institutions, with **50 respondents (100%)** answering “Yes.” This reflects complete institutional awareness among the respondents.

2. Have you ever participated in local governance meetings or consultations?

Figure-2

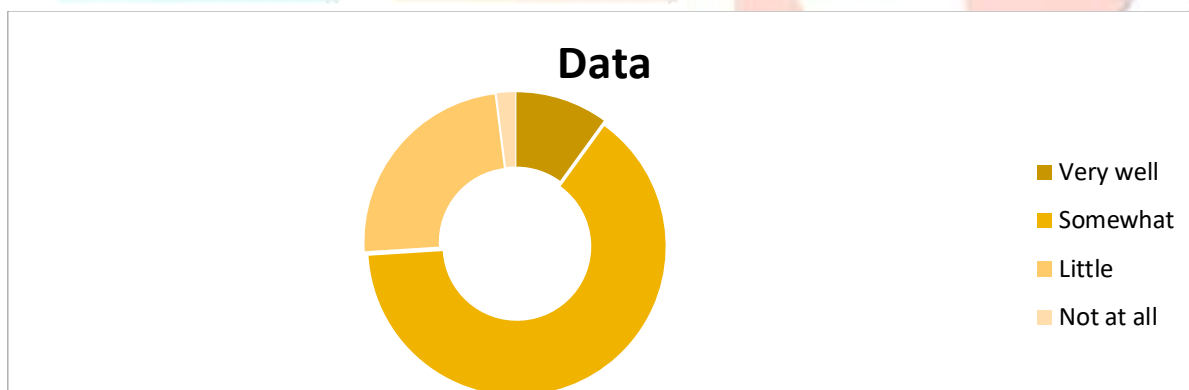


SOURCE- field data

Figure 2 indicates different levels of participation in local governance meetings. Only **2%** of respondents participate frequently, **46%** participate occasionally, **12%** participate rarely, and a substantial **40%** have never participated. This shows that while occasional participation is common, a large proportion of respondents remain completely uninvolved in local governance meetings.

3 How well do you understand the roles and responsibilities of local governance in economic development?

Figure-3



SOURCE- field data

Figure 3 reflects respondents' understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local governance in economic development. **10%** of respondents understand these roles very well, **64%** have some understanding, **24%** have little understanding, and **2%** do not understand them at all. This indicates that while a majority have at least a basic understanding, in-depth knowledge remains limited.

4.2 PRI-Led Development Initiatives

The PRIs in Palin have been instrumental in implementing several development initiatives aimed at improving economic conditions and social welfare. The study identifies three major domains:

1. Infrastructure Development

- **Projects:** Construction of rural roads, bridges, water supply systems, and sanitation facilities have improved connectivity and access to basic amenities.
- **Impact:** Improved road networks have reduced transportation costs for agricultural produce and facilitated access to health and education services.

2. Livelihood and Skill Development

- **Programs:** Agricultural extension programs provide inputs, technical guidance, and training to farmers. Self-help groups (SHGs) and small-scale entrepreneurship schemes, supported by PRIs, have enabled community members—especially women—to engage in income-generating activities such as handicrafts, poultry farming, and horticulture. Vocational training initiatives target youth and unemployed individuals, equipping them with marketable skills.
- **Impact:** These programs have diversified income sources and reduced dependence on subsistence agriculture.

3. Health and Education Programs

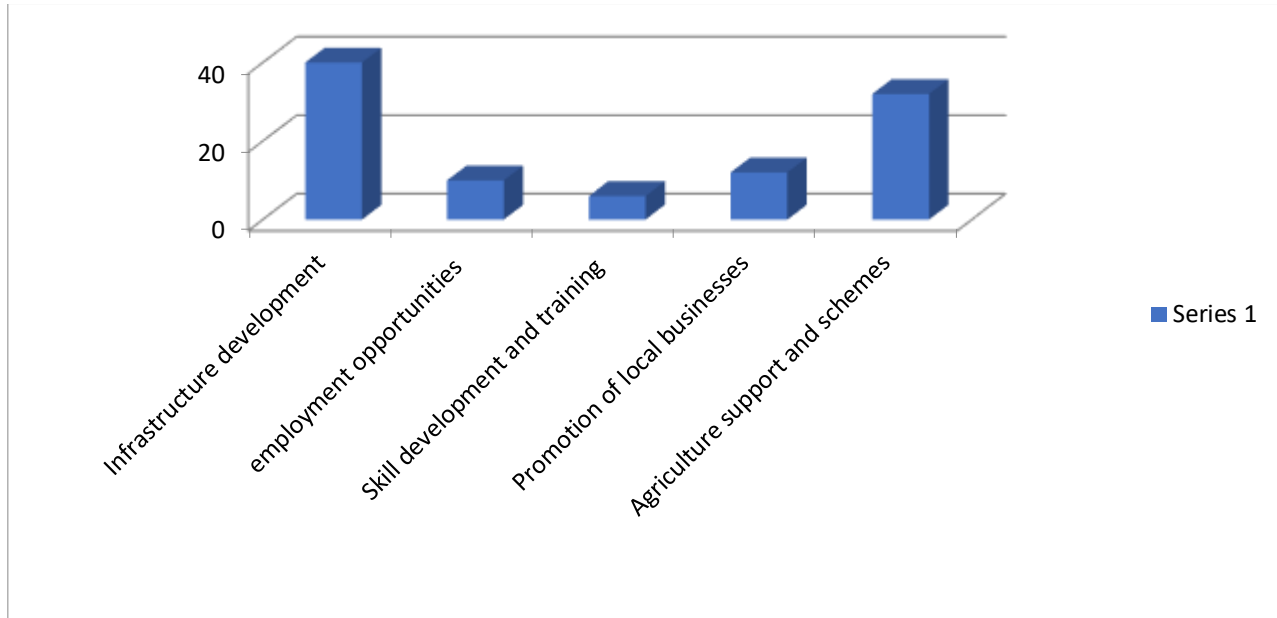
- **Initiatives:** PRIs have supported school improvement projects, vaccination drives, and awareness campaigns related to nutrition, hygiene, and health.
- **Impact:** These programs indirectly contribute to economic development by improving human capital and reducing health-related productivity losses.

Quantitative findings reveal that over 60% of surveyed households have benefited from at least one PRI-led program in the past three years. Beneficiaries report tangible improvements in household income, accessibility, and quality of life, reflecting the positive impact of grassroots governance in the region.

4.2.1 Perceived Contributions of Local Governance (Targeted Survey)

6. Which of the following areas has local governance contributed to in your community? (You may select more than one)

Figure-4



SOURCE- field data

Figure 4 presents respondents' views on areas where local governance has contributed. **40%** noted infrastructure development, **10%** cited employment opportunities, **6%** mentioned skill development and training, **12%** highlighted promotion of local businesses, and **32%** recognized support for agriculture and related schemes. This indicates that infrastructure and agricultural support are seen as the primary contributions of local governance in the community.

4.3 Impact on Local Economic Development

The research indicates that PRIs have directly and indirectly contributed to local economic growth in several ways:

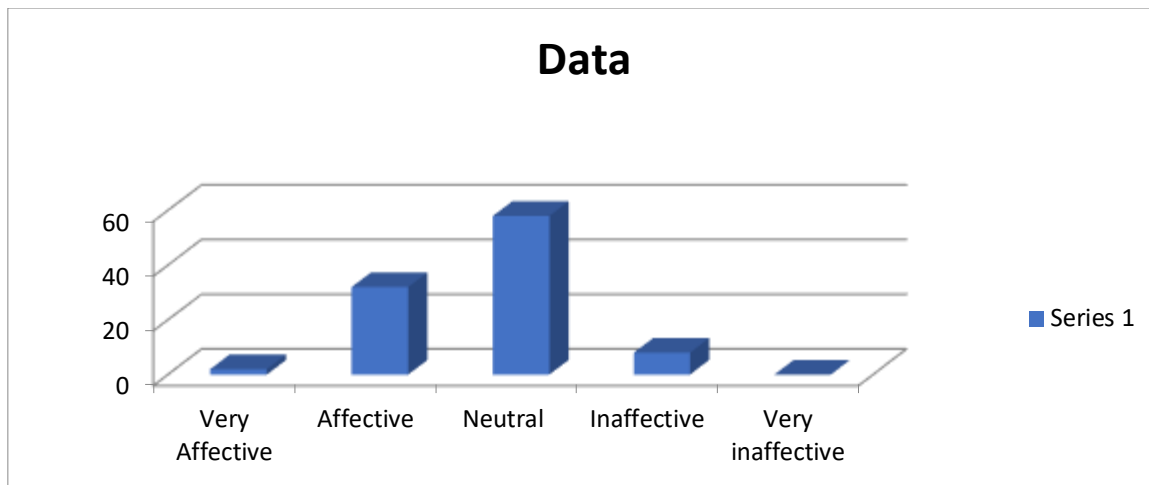
- **Agricultural Productivity:** Technical guidance, improved seeds, and irrigation facilities provided through PRI programs have increased yields and crop diversity.
- **Employment Generation:** Infrastructure projects create short-term and seasonal employment opportunities, while skill development programs open avenues for small businesses.
- **Income Diversification:** SHGs and vocational training have enabled households to earn supplementary income, reducing dependence on subsistence agriculture.
- **Social Capital Development:** Participation in PRI-led programs strengthens community networks, promoting cooperative efforts in economic activities.

Despite these positive impacts, the study highlights structural limitations: logistical challenges, limited access to distant markets, dependence on seasonal agriculture, and inadequate follow-up mechanisms for programs reduce long-term economic sustainability.

4.3.1 Household-Level Impact and Effectiveness (Targeted Survey)

5. In your opinion, how effective are local governance institutions in promoting economic development?

Figure-5

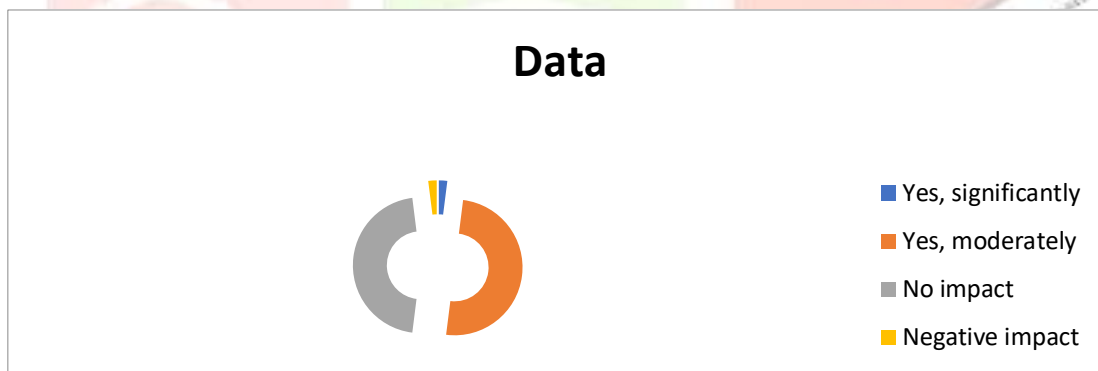


SOURCE- field data

Figure 5 shows respondents' opinions on the effectiveness of local governance institutions in promoting economic development. **2%** consider them very effective, **32%** effective, **58%** neutral, **8%** ineffective, and **0%** very ineffective. This indicates that while some respondents recognize effectiveness, the majority remain neutral, reflecting moderate confidence in local governance performance.

10) Has the local governance positively impacted your income or livelihood in the past 5 years?

Figure-6

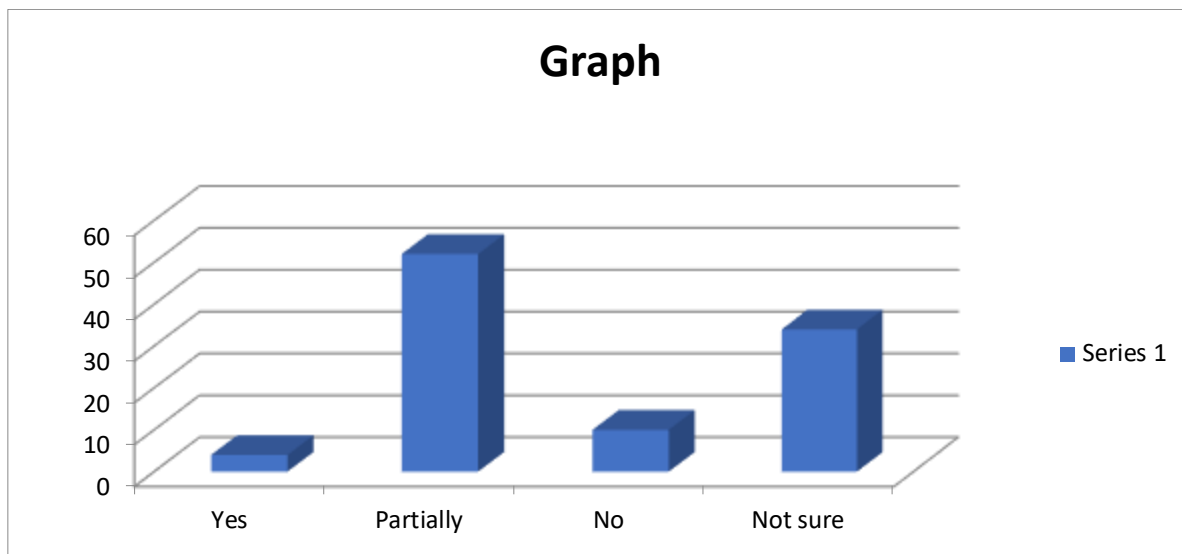


SOURCE- field data

Figure 6 presents respondents' views on the impact of local governance on their income or livelihood over the past five years. **2%** reported a significant positive impact, **50%** a moderate positive impact, **46%** experienced no impact, and **2%** reported a negative impact. This indicates that while half of the respondents perceive some benefit, a substantial portion sees little to no improvement in their livelihoods.

11) Do you feel local governance helps in reducing economic inequality in the community?

Figure-7



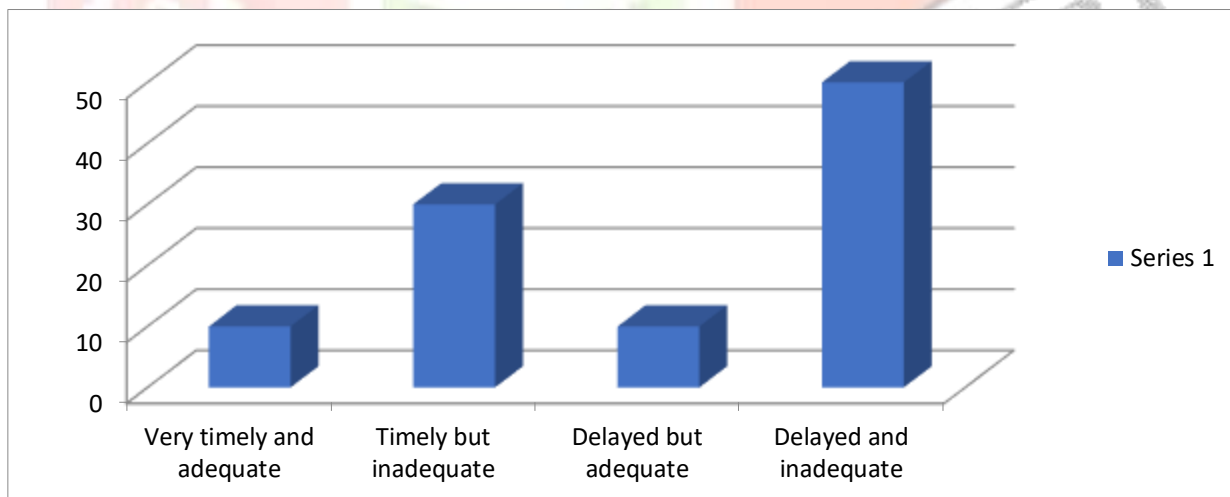
SOURCE- field data

Figure 7 shows respondents' perceptions of local governance in reducing economic inequality. **4%** believe it helps, **52%** feel it helps partially, **10%** say it does not help, and **34%** are not sure. This indicates that while some respondents see partial progress, there is considerable uncertainty about local governance's role in addressing economic inequality.

4.3.2 Project Delivery, Accessibility and Transparency (Targeted Survey)

7. How timely and adequate are the economic development projects initiated by local governance?

Figure-8

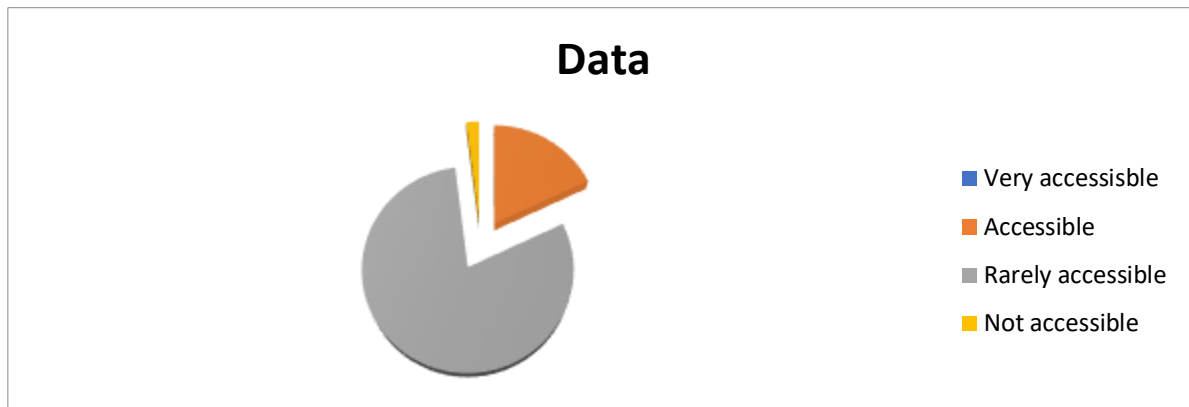


SOURCE- field data

Figure 8 shows respondents' perceptions of the timeliness and adequacy of economic development projects. **10%** consider them very timely and adequate, **30%** timely but inadequate, **10%** delayed but adequate, and **50%** delayed and inadequate. This indicates that half of the respondents perceive local development projects as both delayed and insufficient, highlighting issues in project implementation.

8. How accessible are local governance officials when you need support or assistance for economic activities?

Figure-9

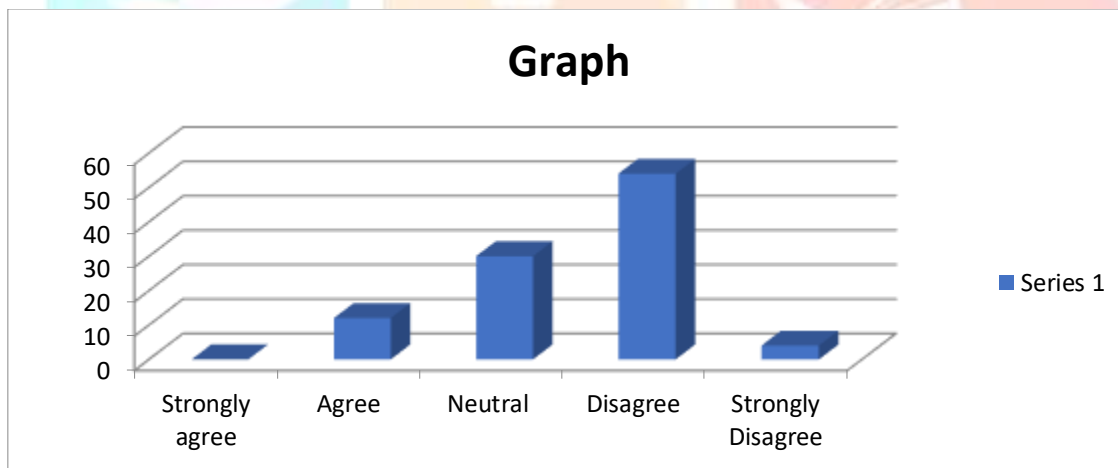


SOURCE- field data

Figure 9 illustrates the accessibility of local governance officials for economic support. **0%** of respondents find them very accessible, **18%** accessible, **80%** rarely accessible, and **2%** not accessible. This indicates that most respondents face difficulty in reaching local officials for assistance, reflecting limited accessibility.

9. Do you believe that local governance promotes transparency in economic decision-making and fund allocation?

Figure-10

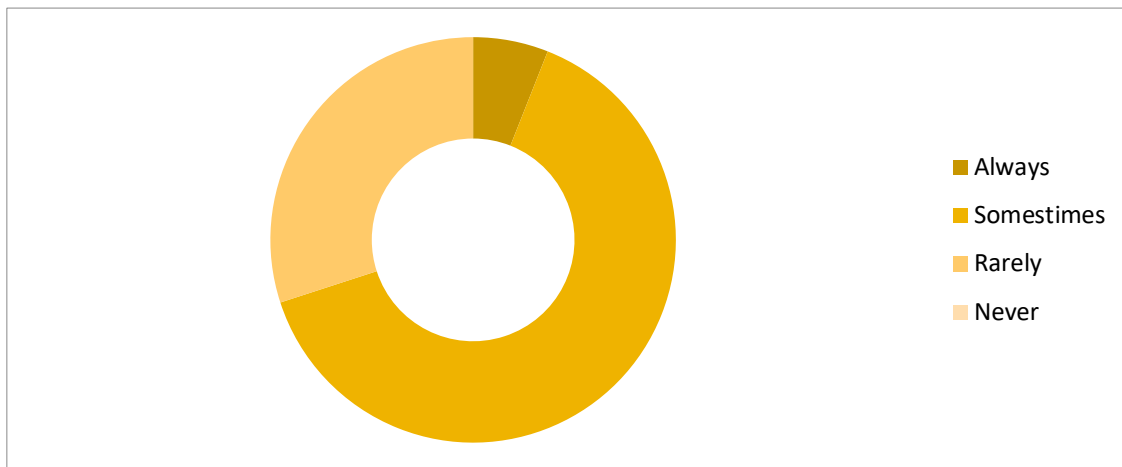


SOURCE- field data

Figure 10 shows respondents' perceptions of transparency in local governance economic decision-making. **0%** strongly agree, **12%** agree, **30%** are neutral, **54%** disagree, and **4%** strongly disagree. This indicates that a majority of respondents perceive local governance as lacking transparency in economic decisions and fund allocation.

4) Do you feel that local governance seeks public opinion before implementing development projects?

Figure-11



SOURCE- field data

Figure 11 shows respondents' perceptions of whether local governance seeks public opinion before implementing development projects. **6%** believe it is always done, **64%** feel it is sometimes done, and **30%** think it is rarely done, while **0%** responded "never." This suggests that public consultation occurs inconsistently rather than regularly.

4.4 Challenges Faced by PRIs

The effectiveness of PRIs is constrained by multiple challenges:

1. Financial Constraints

- **Issues:** PRIs often face insufficient funds and delayed release of resources from state or central government. Limited autonomy in mobilizing local revenue reduces their ability to respond flexibly to community needs.

2. Capacity Issues

- **Challenges:** Many elected representatives lack formal training in planning, budgeting, and project management, which affects program execution. Technical expertise for agriculture, engineering, and social welfare is often outsourced, leading to delays.

3. Geographical Barriers

- **Constraints:** The hilly terrain, scattered settlements, and poor road connectivity increase project costs and implementation time. Remote villages may remain underserved due to logistical challenges.

4. Socio-Cultural Factors

- **Influences:** Tribal customs sometimes influence decision-making, creating conflicts with formal PRI procedures. Gender norms limit women's participation, reducing inclusivity in development planning.

5. Administrative Bottlenecks

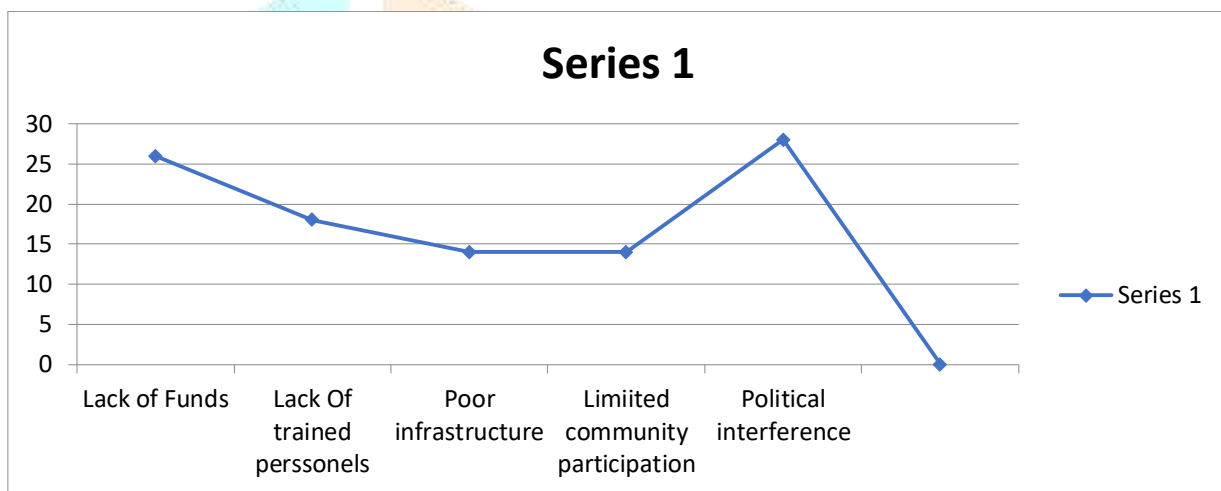
- **Issues:** Coordination gaps between PRIs, district administration, and state departments often lead to delays in approvals, procurement, and reporting.

These challenges underline the complex interplay between institutional, cultural, and geographical factors affecting local governance in remote tribal regions.

4.4.1 Community-Perceived Challenges (Targeted Survey)

13) What challenges do you think local governance faces in promoting economic development in your area?

Figure-12



SOURCE- field data

Figure 12 shows respondents' perceptions of challenges faced by local governance in promoting economic development. **26%** cited lack of funds, **18%** lack of trained personnel, **14%** poor infrastructure, **14%** limited community participation, and **28%** political interference. This indicates that political interference and funding constraints are seen as the major obstacles to effective local governance.

4.5 Policy Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings, several measures can enhance the effectiveness of PRIs in promoting economic development:

1. Capacity Building

- **Recommendations:** Regular training programs for PRI members in governance, financial management, planning, and project monitoring. Workshops and orientation programs to improve knowledge of government schemes and administrative procedures.

2. Financial Autonomy

- **Suggestions:** Empower PRIs with decentralized fund management and the authority to generate local revenue. Ensure timely release of state and central funds to avoid project delays.

3. Community Participation

- **Strategies:** Strengthen inclusive decision-making, particularly encouraging women, youth, and marginalized communities to actively participate. Organize awareness campaigns to educate citizens about PRI roles, rights, and responsibilities.

4. Infrastructure and Connectivity

- **Proposals:** Improve road and transport networks to connect remote villages, reducing logistical challenges for development programs. Enhance communication facilities and access to digital services to facilitate information flow and administrative efficiency.

5. Integration with Traditional Governance

- **Approach:** Harmonize formal PRI structures with tribal customary institutions to increase acceptance and effectiveness. Leverage traditional decision-making networks to improve community engagement and conflict resolution.

By implementing these recommendations, PRIs in Palin can become more effective agents of sustainable economic development, balancing formal governance mechanisms with local socio-cultural realities.

What steps do you think local governance should take to further enhance economic development in your area?

Table-8

Data	Percentage
Focus on infrastructure development	48%
Awareness and skill training	28%
Financial Support	12%
Transparency in governance	12%

SOURCE- field data

The respondents suggested several measures for enhancing economic development. **48%** emphasized focusing on infrastructure development, **28%** recommended awareness and skill training, while **12%** each highlighted the need for financial support and greater transparency in governance. This indicates that improving infrastructure and capacity-building are considered the most crucial steps by the community.

6. Conclusion

Local governance, through PRIs, plays a pivotal role in the economic development of Palin, Kra Daadi district. While there have been notable achievements, addressing the identified challenges is crucial for realizing the full potential of these governance structures. Implementing the recommended policy measures can significantly enhance the effectiveness of PRIs in promoting sustainable economic development in the region.

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