

Panchayati Raj In Bihar: Constitutional Promise, Institutional Practice, And The Next Frontier Of Decentralisation

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ABSTRACT

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment institutionalised democratic decentralisation across rural India by inserting Part IX (Articles 243 to 243-O) and the Eleventh Schedule into the Constitution, mandating elected Panchayats, regular elections, reservation for disadvantaged groups and women, and a framework for fiscal devolution through State and Central Finance Commissions. Bihar—one of India's most populous and poorest States—adopted and adapted this constitutional architecture through the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 2006 (BPRA, 2006). Over the past two decades, Bihar has undertaken far-reaching representational reforms, most notably reserving 50% of seats and leadership positions for women; expanded the three-tier institutional footprint to 8,000+ Gram Panchayats; and leveraged Finance Commission grants and programmatic funds to animate local planning, infrastructure, and service delivery. At the same time, Bihar's decentralisation journey is marked by classic challenges: uneven functional devolution, capacity constraints, fragmented accountability chains, periodic legal frictions over reservations (especially OBC/EBC quotas post K. Krishna Murthy and Vikas Kishanrao Gawali), and variably effective integration of line departments with Panchayats.

This paper situates Bihar's Panchayats within the national constitutional framework, traces their legislative and institutional evolution, analyses representational, financial, and functional devolution, and evaluates accountability and capacity systems. It uses primary statutes, official portals, Finance Commission documents, CAG and departmental reports, and binding Supreme Court doctrine. It concludes with a Bihar-specific reform agenda: codifying activity-mapping with enforceable service standards; completing Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan infrastructure; strengthening district planning and GDPD quality; professionalising finance and audit at GP level; operationalising data systems (eGramSwaraj/PRI MIS) for performance-linked grants; ensuring "triple-test"-compliant social-category reservations; and deepening women's leadership from descriptive to substantive representation.

Keywords: Panchayats; 73rd Amendment; Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 2006; women's reservation; Finance Commission; devolution; Gram Panchayat Development Plan; eGramSwaraj

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bihar is home to more than 12% of India's rural poor and has historically faced deficits in infrastructure, service delivery, and administrative reach. Democratically empowered local governments are therefore not a constitutional luxury but a developmental necessity. The 73rd Amendment gave rural local governments a justiciable architecture; Bihar's BPRA, 2006 supplied the State-level legal muscle. Today, 8,000+ Gram Panchayats (GPs), 530+ Panchayat Samitis (PSs), and 38 Zila Parishads (ZPs) form Bihar's three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), elected on a five-year cycle and responsible, at least on paper, for functions listed across the Constitution's Eleventh Schedule.

Yet, for decentralisation to deliver, three "Fs" must travel together: Functions (clear legal assignment of tasks), Functionaries (control over staff), and Finances (predictable, adequate, and usable money). The State's record is mixed: representation and election management have often been ahead of functional and fiscal empowerment; new investments (e.g., Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans) and Finance Commission grants have improved the enabling environment, but capacity and accountability are uneven across districts.

2. CONSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE: PART IX, ELEVENTH SCHEDULE AND THE BIHAR CONTEXT

Part IX of the Constitution (Articles 243 to 243-O) mandates the constitution, composition, reservation, powers, elections, and finance of Panchayats. It also prescribes quinquennial State Finance Commissions (SFCs) to recommend PRI devolution and envisages District Planning Committees (DPCs) for integrated district plans. The Eleventh Schedule lists 29 subjects (from agriculture and minor irrigation to health, education, roads, and poverty alleviation) that should inform functional devolution to PRIs.^{1 2}

Article 243D embeds reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (proportionate to population) and at least one-third of all seats (including chairperson posts) for women. States may enhance women's quota beyond one-third; Bihar was the first to legislate 50% reservation for women across Panchayats, a policy lever with deep social consequences.³

Two constitutional constraints are also salient. First, Article 243-O bars court interference in electoral matters except through election petitions after results, a rule regularly invoked to insulate the electoral calendar. Secondly, although the Eleventh Schedule lists functions, devolution remains in the State's legislative domain, so differences in "depth" of Panchayat empowerment across States are constitutional design features, not bugs.

3. BIHAR'S LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: THE BIHAR PANCHAYAT RAJ ACT, 2006

Bihar replaced earlier laws with the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 2006, which consolidates the three-tier structure, defines composition, reservation, powers and functions of GPs/PSs/ZPs, lays down election machinery (State Election Commission), prescribes financial provisions (budgets, audits, taxes), and provides for standing committees and Gram Sabhas.^{4 5} The Department of Panchayati Raj operationalises the BPRA, 2006 through rules, circulars, capacity-building, and integration with State and Union schemes. The law also aligns with Article 243D's reservation architecture; Bihar has sustained 50% women's reservation and reserved seats for SC / ST and EBC/OBC categories in accordance with judicially evolved guardrails (discussed later).

4. INSTITUTIONAL FOOTPRINT AND ELECTIONS

As per the Government of Bihar's Panchayati Raj Department, the State has 8,053 Gram Panchayats, 533 Panchayat Samitis, and 38 Zila Parishads.⁶ Recent election cycles have largely adhered to the five-year mandate, with a comprehensive election in 2021 (in eleven phases, September–December 2021).^{7 8} The State Election Commission (SEC), Bihar issues electoral notifications, supervises delimitation, and conducts polls under BPRA, 2006 and the Constitution.⁹

Bihar's decision to reserve 50% of seats and leadership roles for women since 2006 has measurably altered the demographic composition of local governments, several cycles have returned women majorities in many Panchayats, moving descriptive representation towards a new social normal.¹⁰

5. REPRESENTATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE SUPREME COURT'S "TRIPLE TEST"

Two Supreme Court decisions shape reservation design in local bodies:

1. **K. Krishna Murthy v. Union of India (2010)** upheld State power to provide OBC reservation in local bodies but insisted that (a) reservations must be backed by contemporaneous empirical data on local-body backwardness, (b) upper ceilings must respect the 50% aggregate cap for SC/ST/OBC seats, and (c) rotation and other design choices must not vitiate equality.¹¹

2. **Vikas Kishanrao Gawali v. State of Maharashtra (2021)** tightened compliance, prescribing a "triple test": (i) a dedicated commission to conduct contemporaneous empirical inquiry into OBC backwardness in local bodies; (ii) specification of proportion of reservation local body-wise, in light of data; and (iii) compliance with the 50% aggregate cap on SC/ST/OBC reservation.¹²

These guardrails bind Bihar as well. Where States (including Bihar) have expanded or re-notified OBC/EBC quotas, they have had to demonstrate triple-test compliance, often requiring fresh empirical commissions and data-driven calibration. Failure to do so risks judicial invalidation or interim stays. The policy bottom line is that reservation must be dynamic and evidence-based, even as Bihar's 50% women's quota (anchored in Article 243D) continues to operate.

6. FUNCTIONAL DEVOLUTION: ACTIVITY MAPPING AND THE "3F" PROBLEM

The Eleventh Schedule's 29 subjects remain a compass for devolving functions. Bihar's Department of Panchayati Raj affirms entrustment of functions and duties across these subjects and issues standard operating directions.¹³ At the Union level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj reports that Bihar has undertaken activity mapping exercises to assign functions to

appropriate tiers (GP/PS/ZP), although execution varies by department.¹⁴

However, as comparative assessments repeatedly show, India's States, including Bihar, exhibit uneven transfer of Functions, incomplete control over Functionaries (especially line-department staff), and constrained, scheme-bound Finances at the Gram Panchayat level.^{15 16} In Bihar, line-department primacy persists in sectors like health, education, irrigation, and water supply, even where GPs prepare Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs). The result is delegation rather than devolution in several domains, limiting Panchayats' ability to set priorities, supervise staff, and enforce service standards.¹⁷

District Planning Committees (DPCs)-constitutionally intended to harmonise rural and urban plans, are notified but have historically struggled to produce integrated, bottom-up district plans that drive State budgeting. Strengthening DPCs is a first-order institutional reform if Bihar wants GPDPs to influence actual expenditure patterns.

7. FISCAL FEDERALISM AND PANCHAYAT FINANCE IN BIHAR

1. Finance Commission Grants

Since the Thirteenth Finance Commission (TFC), Union Finance Commissions have made untied and tied grants to Rural Local Bodies (RLBs), with the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) sharply scaling up the quantum (to ~4.5% of the divisible pool) and the Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC) sustaining large outlays with performance and service-level conditionalities (e.g., sanitation, drinking water).^{18 19} In FY 2024–25, the Union Government reported disbursement of XV-FC untied grants to all 38 ZPs, ~530 PSs, and ~8,052 GPs in Bihar that met mandatory conditions, an important liquidity line for basic services and small works.²⁰

At the State level, SFC recommendations should determine the share of the State's own taxes assigned/transferred to PRIs. Bihar has constituted SFCs and provides transfers accordingly, but CAG's finance reports flag predictability and timeliness issues typical across States.²¹

2. Own-Source Revenues (OSR) and Budget Practices

OSR in Bihar's GPs remains low, constrained by narrow tax handles, weak assessment/collection capacity, and political economy limits. Bihar, like most States, is reliant on grants (Union FC, State SFC, and scheme funds). Systematic professionalisation of PRI accounting, asset registers, procurement, and internal control is essential to absorb rising grant volumes.

3. Infrastructure for Governance: Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans

Bihar has adopted a policy to construct Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan (PSB) in every GP to provide a visible, accessible, multi-service governance hub. The State maintains a live dashboard tracking PSB physical/financial progress; recent announcements emphasise completing PSBs in all GPs before the next assembly election cycle and empowering GPs to execute departmental schemes up to specified thresholds to utilise Finance Commission funds.^{22 23 24}

8. ELECTIONS, WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The 50% women's reservation has had profound effects: it normalised women's presence in local politics and, in Bihar's context, intersected with SHG-led livelihoods (e.g., JEEViKA) to create a pipeline of politically experienced women. Observers estimate Bihar often sees women constituting near or above half of PRI members, with second-generation women leaders more assertively exercising authority.²⁵ Yet, challenges remain: proxy leadership by male relatives, social intimidation, and limited access to administrative levers. Targeted capacity-building and peer networks can shift descriptive into substantive representation.

9. ACCOUNTABILITY: GRAM SABHAS, AUDIT, AND TRANSPARENCY

Bihar's legal framework identifies the Gram Sabha as the cornerstone of participatory democracy at the grassroots level. It is envisaged not merely as a consultative forum, but as the primary arena where citizens collectively deliberate on development priorities, approve Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), scrutinise lists of beneficiaries under welfare schemes, and oversee implementation through mechanisms such as social audits. In essence, the Gram Sabha is expected to act as the institutional expression of community will, ensuring that Panchayats remain transparent, inclusive, and responsive.

In practice, however, the functioning of Gram Sabhas across Bihar has been uneven. While certain villages have demonstrated meaningful participation and active involvement of women, Scheduled Castes, and other marginalised groups, many Gram Sabhas continue to struggle with low attendance, inadequate dissemination of information, and

perfunctory approval of plans without substantive discussion. The quality of deliberation often varies depending on literacy levels, social hierarchies, and the willingness of Panchayat leaders to open decision-making to wider participation. Strengthening Gram Sabha effectiveness therefore requires institutional support in the form of prior public notification of agendas, facilitation by trained officials, and wider community awareness about its legal powers.

A second dimension of accountability lies in financial oversight. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has repeatedly emphasised the need to strengthen Panchayat accounting, reconciliation, and audit practices in Bihar. Despite statutory provisions for annual audits, delays in submission of utilisation certificates, weak reconciliation processes, and inadequate compliance with audit observations have remained persistent concerns. To address this, the state has increasingly sought to use digital tools such as *eGramSwaraj* and the PRI Management Information System (PRI-MIS), which allow near-real-time entry of receipts, expenditures, and other financial data.²⁶ If effectively implemented, such platforms can significantly improve transparency by enabling both oversight authorities and local citizens to track fund flows and monitor Panchayat-level finances with greater accuracy.

Social audits, particularly under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), constitute another layer of accountability. Bihar has institutionalised these processes, enabling villagers to review muster rolls, worksites, and payment records in open forums. These audits have exposed leakages and irregularities, but their integration into Panchayat decision-making cycles remains incomplete. Too often, findings remain confined to the audit process without leading to corrective action, disciplinary measures, or adjustments in future GPDPs. Embedding social audits into the Panchayat's annual planning and review mechanisms would give them greater relevance and ensure that identified gaps are systematically addressed.

Finally, broader accountability extends to electoral and anti-corruption mechanisms. The Bihar State Election Commission enforces the Model Code of Conduct during Panchayat elections, ensuring fairness in the electoral process. Beyond elections, however, monitoring responsibilities are fragmented among line departments, vigilance agencies, and district administrations. For ordinary citizens, this creates confusion about where to raise complaints or seek redressal. Establishing a consolidated Panchayat accountability platform at the district level, integrating audit reports, grievance redressal, and vigilance mechanisms, could provide a single accessible window for citizens to hold Panchayats to account.

Together, these mechanisms, Gram Sabha deliberations, financial audits, social audits, and oversight by electoral and vigilance bodies, represent the multiple pillars of accountability in Bihar's Panchayati Raj system. Yet their effectiveness depends on proper coordination, follow-up, and citizen engagement. Unless these accountability streams are strengthened and better integrated, the democratic promise of Panchayati Raj will remain only partially realised.

10. PROGRAMMATIC CONVERGENCE: FROM GPDPs TO SECTOR OUTCOMES

Bihar's Panchayats sit atop dense programmatic ecosystems: MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Mission–G, Jal Jeevan Mission, PMAY-G, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (JEEViKA), and State schemes (e.g., PSB construction, rural roads). Effective PRIs align GPDPs with scheme cycles, co-finance small works with XV-FC untied grants, and use Gram Sabha forums to prioritise beneficiaries and sites. The Mukhiyas' sanction limit under MGNREGA has been doubled (₹5 lakh → ₹10 lakh) to accelerate small works, a pragmatic move to reduce administrative friction.²⁷

11. CONTEMPORARY POLICY UPDATES (2024–2025)

Recent policy signals include: (a) continued release of XV-FC grants to qualifying Bihar PRIs;²⁸ (b) enhanced allowances for PRI representatives; (c) higher MGNREGA sanction limits for Mukhiyas; and (d) an administrative push to complete PSBs statewide.^{29 30} These are directional investments in the Panchayat operating environment and need complementary reforms in capacity, staffing, and audit to translate into service gains.

12. PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

Uneven Devolution and Staff Control: Despite activity-mapping, many Eleventh Schedule functions remain department-controlled; Panchayats lack effective command over frontline staff.

Fragmented Planning: DPCs are under-powered; GPDPs often become wish-lists without assured convergence funding.

13. Fiscal Predictability: While XV-FC grants help, SFC-based devolution requires greater predictability; OSR remains nascent.

Capacity Deficits: Professional accounting, procurement, and M&E skills at GP level need scale-up; IT systems adoption is inconsistent.

Reservation Compliance: OBC/EBC reservation must be continually aligned to the *Krishna Murthy–Gawali* jurisprudence (triple test, 50% aggregate cap).

Women's Substantive Empowerment: Training, safety, and administrative support are needed to prevent proxy capture and enable real decision-making.

Transparency and Audit: Strengthen internal audit; ensure timely CAG-aligned audits; institutionalise social audit findings into GP sanction cycles.

13. A BIHAR-SPECIFIC REFORM AGENDA

(A) Lock in Functions and Service Standards. Notify an enforceable Activity-Mapping Code tier-wise (GP/PS/ZP) for all 29 subjects with service standards (e.g., time-bound approvals, water-supply uptime, minor-irrigation O&M cycles). Publish responsibility matrices and grievance pathways.

(B) Professionalise PRI Finance. Deploy block-level finance cells (Accountant + MIS + Procurement Associate) serving clusters of GPs; enforce eGramSwaraj accounting and real-time dashboards; link portion of State grants to timely accounts, bank reconciliation, and asset registers.

(C) Finish PSB Rollout and Co-locate Services. Use PSBs as one-stop governance hubs: common service centres, front offices for key departments, Gram Sabha halls, records rooms, and grievance counters-prioritise GPs with high backwardness indices.

(D) Strengthen DPCs and Convergence. Mandate DPC-vetted district plans annually; require each line department to publish a Panchayat-wise scheme roster with quarterly release calendars, enabling GPDPs to be realistic and fund-linked.

(E) Reservation Governance. Constitute a standing local-bodies reservation commission to keep triple-test data current; publish local-body-wise OBC/EBC reservation percentages and ensure the 50% aggregate cap is never breached.

(F) Women's Leadership 2.0. Fund women-Mukhiya fellowships, peer mentoring networks, legal aid for harassment/intimidation cases, and targeted leadership modules (budgeting, works, contracts, conflict resolution). Tie some untied funds to women-led works.

(G) Social Accountability. Institutionalise mandatory Gram Sabhas (minimum quarterly) with quorum and agenda templates; publish decisions on PSB notice boards and online; merge social audit findings into next-quarter GP sanction pipelines.

(H) Data and Performance-Linked Grants. Expand **performance grants** (XV-FC model) at State level for Panchayats achieving audited accounts on time, OSR growth, and service-delivery KPIs (e.g., functional household tap connections maintained, SWM coverage).

14. CONCLUSION

Bihar's journey in strengthening its Panchayati Raj institutions represents one of the most significant experiments in decentralized governance in India. From the early 1990s, when Panchayats were largely ceremonial and lacked both authority and resources, the state has progressed to a robust, elected local government network that spans villages, blocks, and districts. This evolution has not been merely administrative; it has fundamentally reoriented the relationship between the state and rural citizens, bringing governance closer to the grassroots and embedding democratic processes into everyday rural life. The creation of a large-scale Panchayati Raj system in Bihar reflects a conscious effort to decentralize power and responsibility, making local institutions not just forums for representation but instruments for meaningful development.

The constitutional vision of Panchayati Raj, self-governance with sufficient authority, elected representatives, and financial autonomy, has been partially achieved. Representation has become significantly more inclusive. The introduction of reservations for women and marginalized groups has shifted the composition of local governance bodies, ensuring that a broader spectrum of society can participate in decision-making. Regular and transparent electoral processes have strengthened the legitimacy of Panchayats and enhanced continuity in governance. Additionally, the transfer of resources through Finance Commission allocations has improved the financial standing of these bodies, giving them the potential to undertake development initiatives independently and responsibly. Collectively, these advancements have created the foundational elements necessary for empowered local governance.

However, the realization of these constitutional promises remains incomplete. While Bihar has built the skeleton of a democratic and representative local governance structure, the system's functional capacity, its "muscle", remains uneven. Panchayats often face operational challenges in planning, executing, and monitoring development projects. Many local bodies struggle to convert resources into tangible outcomes due to gaps in administrative capacity, professional management, and accountability mechanisms. The next critical step is to convert this structural framework into an operationally effective system where Panchayats can exercise genuine autonomy, oversee frontline functionaries, manage finances prudently, and engage citizens effectively.

Effective planning at the Panchayat level requires not only awareness of local needs but also a systematic approach to setting priorities, allocating resources, and monitoring outcomes. Evidence-based planning and participatory decision-making are essential to ensure that development initiatives reflect local aspirations and achieve desired results. This requires

a shift from ad hoc project implementation to strategic, long-term planning that integrates social, economic, and infrastructural development objectives. Equally important is the ability of Panchayats to supervise frontline functionaries such as health workers, teachers, and rural development officers. Without the authority and capacity to monitor these personnel, the implementation of government programs remains fragmented and less effective. Strengthening oversight mechanisms is therefore essential to ensure that citizens experience tangible improvements in services and infrastructure. Financial management is another cornerstone of effective Panchayati Raj governance. While Bihar has made substantial progress in channeling funds to local bodies, the professional management of these resources is still developing. Panchayats need robust budgeting processes, accurate accounting, and timely auditing to ensure transparency and fiscal responsibility. Adequate financial oversight allows local bodies to use funds more efficiently, prioritize projects that generate maximum impact, and prevent misallocation or misuse of public resources. In conjunction with financial capacity, administrative clarity is critical. Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures ensure that decisions made by elected representatives translate into action on the ground.

Citizen engagement, particularly through Gram Sabhas, is another essential dimension of accountable local governance. Gram Sabhas provide a platform for villagers to discuss priorities, monitor ongoing projects, and hold elected representatives accountable. However, the effectiveness of these forums in Bihar is variable. Attendance is often limited, discussions are sometimes superficial, and follow-up mechanisms are weak. Strengthening these participatory processes, both through social mobilization and procedural support, can transform Gram Sabhas into powerful instruments of local oversight. When citizens are actively involved in governance, transparency increases, local priorities are better reflected, and trust between communities and institutions is strengthened.

Beyond operational and administrative challenges, Bihar's Panchayati Raj system holds immense potential to serve as a developmental engine for the state. Well-functioning Panchayats can drive local economic growth, improve social services, and enhance infrastructure at the village level. They can serve as laboratories for innovative approaches to health, education, sanitation, and livelihood programs, tailoring interventions to local conditions and monitoring their effectiveness in real time. The combination of participatory planning, professional management, and accountable execution transforms Panchayats from mere democratic entities into catalysts for social and economic development.

The transformation of Bihar's Panchayati Raj system requires a phased, purposive approach. First, institutional consolidation must be prioritized, codifying responsibilities, clarifying roles, and establishing accountability mechanisms that ensure both elected representatives and administrative functionaries deliver results. Second, capacity-building must extend beyond elected members to include frontline staff, ensuring that local government teams possess the technical, financial, and managerial skills necessary for effective governance. Third, technology can play a pivotal role. Digital platforms for financial management, project monitoring, and citizen engagement can improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability if integrated properly and supported by capacity development.

Importantly, decentralization in Bihar must be viewed not as an end but as a means to achieve resilient, inclusive rural governance. True decentralization requires local bodies to be empowered, capable, and accountable simultaneously. Panchayats must plan with credibility, oversee the execution of programs, manage finances professionally, and report to citizens regularly through Gram Sabhas and audits. This comprehensive approach ensures that the principles of democracy translate into real-world improvements in the lives of citizens.

If Bihar successfully implements these reforms, the state will witness a transformation in governance at the grassroots level. Panchayati Raj institutions will emerge as more than training grounds for democratic participation; they will become engines of rural development that integrate planning, execution, and accountability. Through this transformation, Bihar can achieve a model of governance in which citizens are not passive recipients of services but active participants in shaping their development trajectories. In doing so, Panchayats will fulfill their dual promise: providing democratic education to citizens and generating measurable improvements in social, economic, and infrastructural outcomes.

The future of Bihar's Panchayati Raj system depends on completing the consolidation of institutional capacity. This requires:

- **Institutional Strengthening:** Clearly defined roles, enforceable accountability structures, and performance monitoring systems for elected representatives and functionaries.
- **Capacity-Building:** Training programs for Panchayat members and staff to develop skills in planning, financial management, and governance.
- **Financial Management:** Professional budgeting, transparent accounting, and systematic auditing to ensure effective resource utilization.
- **Citizen-Centric Governance:** Strengthened Gram Sabha processes, participatory decision-making, and mechanisms for responsive local oversight.

- **Technology Integration:** Leveraging digital platforms to enhance transparency, monitor performance, and facilitate citizen engagement.

When these components are successfully implemented, Panchayats will transcend their role as democratic classrooms. They will become fully operational development units that plan credibly, execute efficiently, manage resources professionally, and remain accountable to citizens. Such a transformation ensures that decentralization is not merely a constitutional formality but a tangible driver of rural development.

In conclusion, Bihar has made significant strides in its Panchayati Raj journey over the past three decades. Representation is stronger, resources are more substantial, and institutions are well-established. Yet, the future lies in strengthening operational capacity, deepening accountability, and professionalizing governance processes at the local level. By doing so, Bihar can ensure that its Panchayati Raj system is not only a framework of democratic representation but also a powerful instrument of rural development and inclusive governance. When Panchayats plan credibly, manage resources professionally, engage citizens actively, and oversee service delivery effectively, they evolve into the developmental engines envisioned in the constitutional design of decentralized governance.

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