

**Democracy, Decentralisation and Development: A  
Study of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development  
Council and Panchayati Raj System of  
Kargil, Jammu and Kashmir**

**SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University  
(A Central University)**

**BABASAHEB  
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# Summary

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## Introduction

The state of Jammu and Kashmir geographically, culturally, racially, linguistically, and ethnically is not a homogenous entity. Being a multi-lingual state, it is composed of three socio-cultural, viable, and disparate units Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. The political and emotional divergence between regions had been growing over the years<sup>1</sup>. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was composed of three diverse units: Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Each region had distinct regional and political divergence. In each region, the diverse forces in the form of caste, creed, race, religion, regional feelings, and aspirations were dominating political thinking and behavior. Regionalism was the primary and most important expression of the multiplicity of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. In further, terms the importance of caste, region, religion, language, etc. can be generally focused on as the bases of inheritance behind regionalism and its politics<sup>2</sup>. The inter-regional tensions and diverse reactions from each region about the changing situation in the state have further complicated the inter-regional relations. The democratic institutions in Jammu and Kashmir somehow worked to widen the gap between the regions and led to inter-regional tensions. The political discontent that had been pervasive all over the state and is reflected at the regional and sub-regional levels is in many ways related to the fragility of democratic politics as well as the weakness of the federal institutions and processes.

The popular accusation of the political situation in Kashmir is therefore also directly linked with the instability of democratic processes, of which the lack of a tradition of competitive politics based upon the norm of healthy opposition and internal opposition remains the most significant. It is also linked with the available sense of discontent in the absence of interactive and participatory politics involving the mass of people. In the absence of democratic channels for popular political representation and voicing of popular grievances, popular resentment has been accumulating over the period. It was such resentment that came to be aggravated in the mid-eighties when the legitimately elected local government was removed in

1984 and in its place a government of defectors was installed, with the active connivance of the ruling party in the Centre. Later, the imposition of an unpopular alliance between the National Conference and the Congress in 1986, and the Assembly election in 1987 perceived to be the most rigged one - led to an exasperated political response among the people that by 1989 took the form of anti-India political upsurge. Although democratic and federal processes have failed in the whole state they have impacted different regions differently because of the uneven development of political forces within the state. The impact in Jammu and Ladakh regions has been felt differently – in the form of perpetual regional and sub-regional discontent.

The way the democratic power politics has operated in the state has led to the attentiveness of political control in the hands of a small political elite located in Kashmir leading to a feeling of deprivation among the elite of Jammu and Ladakh regions and sub-regions. The homogenized and non-competitive politics of the state has also resulted in a sense of non-participation and the political irrelevance of this regional and sub-regional political elite. Such politics has perpetuated the dominance of the single party having its base in Kashmir thereby obviating the role and significance of political parties based in any other region. The politics of Jammu and Ladakh, therefore, has come to be organized around the issues of regional imbalances that extend beyond political, economic, and developmental issues. In reality, in many ways, the regional discontent in Jammu and Ladakh reflects a lack of competitive space and almost an insignificant role for the political elite in power politics. The whole issue of regional discrimination emanates from the concentration of political power in one center. The elite politics of both Jammu and Ladakh regions, therefore, has been focusing on issues ranging from regional and sub-regional autonomy to the reorganization of state and its division into three distinct political units – the two states of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh. At the sub-regional levels, the pattern followed within Ladakh with separate hill councils for Leh and Kargil<sup>3</sup>.

The democratic decentralization in Ladakh was initiated in 1990 after a long struggle for autonomy in the Ladakh region regarding development and political empowerment, thus the central government under P.V Narsimha granted Autonomous Hill Council for Leh in 1995, this act came to be known as The Ladakh

Autonomous Hill Development Council, Act 1995 after the strategic and political importance<sup>4</sup>. This initiative boosts the ethos of democracy where decentralization is important for development. And the same initiative was implemented in Kargil in 2003. The Hill council aims to achieve greater development and regulation of local administration along with preserving its own culture and identity<sup>5</sup>. The Hill Council comprises 30 councillors, where 26 councillors are elected directly by the people while 4 seats are reserved for women and minorities. The council function with a Chief Executive Councillor and 4 Executive councillors, they have certain constitutional power in decision making and regulation of the district<sup>6</sup>. For gross root development, the government of the country implemented Panchayati Raj System in Jammu and Kashmir and Kargil for the First time went for a panchayat election in 2011. Jammu and Kashmir have a long history of the Panchayati system introduced by Maharaja Hari Singh. The Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 was introduced in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in April 1988 and passed in march 1989, this act provided Halqa Panchayat. The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment was not implemented in the state of J&K due to its special provision of article 370. This act was finally introduced in J&K in 2011 and after that Panchayati system functioned in the state bases on the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act 1992<sup>7</sup>.

### **Area of the Study**

Kargil Ladakh is a region arranged in the Trans-Himalayan scope of northern India between 32°57'- 34°45° North and 75°35° East of the upper east of Jammu and Kashmir. The complete geological area of 14,086 km<sup>2</sup> with an occupant of around 1,43,388 (census 2011) has a place with various ethnic gatherings with the huge populace of Purig Shia Muslim clan alongside a modest bunch of different groups of Muslim and Buddhist in enormous minorities<sup>8</sup>.

Ladakh politics was also helped by the fact that the Ladakh society in this early phase was not all that mobilized, certainly for less than in the subsequent decades. Political conflict mainly took the form of claims and counterclaims by rivalries, especially regional masses demanding a greater share of power and resources. These conflicts could have proven difficult but were successfully accommodated by creating a federal system that recognized separate districts. Kargil got autonomy in 1979 when Kargil made a separate district and Leh also has the

status of the district under the umbrella of the Ladakh Division. Decentralization of power between Leh and Kargil get a very impressive impact on Ladakh politics, now both districts function their administration under district administration. Things were not so calm in the early phase of the disintegration of Ladakh, the idea of bifurcation of Ladakh was not favored by Leh-based political leaders, they want to be a united Ladakh but the agitations on another hand leads to the creation of Kargil district<sup>9</sup>. Religion in Kargil is additionally a significant component of governmental issues. Kargil which have a greater part populace of the Shia group of Islam with minor different organizations of Islam close to Islam there is a huge minority of the Buddhist populace living in Kargil. The greatest obstructions need to find in the Shia people group in light of the fact that in Kargil there are two strong strict foundations i.e-ISK and IKMT both have a place with the Shia people group yet have philosophical contrasts<sup>1011</sup>. The politics of Kargil revolves around these two groups due to which the other minorities especially the Buddhist community have very less role in the politics of Kargil. They isolate themselves and seen more loyal to Leh due to religious faith. During the 1990s there erupted a large-scale protest by Buddhists of Kargil in favor of a greater share of their representatives in politics, which did not happen in this repercussion the all Kargil Buddhist association called for the Boycott of all elections which would happen in Kargil. But this initiative was not successful because many communities of Buddhists particularly Darshiks and Garkon did not follow this call and cast their votes in the election. At present the Buddhists in Kargil are not virtually involved in Kargil politics, the Buddhists of Zaskar are in favor of a separated district as well the Buddhists of Wakha and Mulbek also demand greater representation of locals in district administration. On ethnic grounds, the Buddhists of Darshiks and Garkon demanded a separate representative in the district hill council basis on minor ethnic group<sup>12</sup>. The impact of religion in the region of Kargil get a very negative impact on women also, the women's representation in local politics is very low, and in terms of social condition, the women of this particular area have certain bondages.<sup>1314</sup> The politics of Kargil is not aloof from the main politics of the State, the political interference of state political parties in recent times have to see involving the local politics in this district.

### **Statements of the Problem**

Kargil being a part of Ladakh and a district of erstwhile the State of Jammu and Kashmir, has remained invisible. About 85 percent of the district population is Muslim, and the majority are Shia Muslims; their Political development has also remained invisible. The proposed study intends, in particular, to throw light on the decentralized institutions functioning in the Kargil district, i.e., Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Panchayat Raj Institution, in the context of Democracy, Decentralization, and Development by making a focused study on the following aspects:

- To examine the political history of the region.
- To understand the participation of people in electoral politics.
- To understand the genesis, structure, and functions of LAHDC and PRI.
- To understand the challenges faced by LAHDC and PRI.
- To find out the Central development programs are undertaken and the role of LAHDC and PRI.
- To identify the beneficiaries of various schemes.
- To know the impact of LAHDC and PRI in the district. Research Gap

Kargil being a part of Ladakh, has remained invisible. About 80 percent of the population is Muslim, and most are Shias. The politics of Ladakh revolves around the Buddhist-dominated Leh district under the leadership of the Ladakh Buddhist Association. However, Kargil has been feeling the pinch of neglect of governmental policies. The problem of Kargil can be seen in terms of its double marginalization. Firstly, it is marginalized as a part of the backward area of Ladakh, which has remained neglected by the dominant leadership of the state for decades together. Besides this, the marginalization of Kargil is in the context of its being internally marginalized within the politics of Ladakh. For a long time, Kargil had merely the status of a tehsil. But after the 1980s, the area got district status; in 2003 granted, to Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, and in 2011 implemented, one tier of Panchayati Raj Institution. So my study covered this invisible district where very little research has been done. My research mainly focused on the political history

and the functioning of the Decentralized Institution of LAHDC and PRI in Kargil in the context of Democracy, Decentralization and Development. The above pieces of literature help me to find out the right direction to conduct this research on the isolated district.

### **Objectives**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the administrative and electoral history of Kargil district in the Context of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To examine the structure, powers, and functions along with comparison and challenges of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Panchayat Raj Institution in the Kargil district.
3. To identify the beneficiaries of various Central sponsored development schemes implemented in Kargil districts.
4. To understand the role of LAHDC and PRI in regulating developmental schemes.
5. To obtain political and social stakeholder views regarding the working of LAHDC and PRI and the relationship between the two.

### **Hypothesis**

1. Decentralisation of powers, responsibilities, and resources to local government promotes good governance and better service delivery.
2. Decentralising powers deepens democracy and boosts the political system's legitimacy for promoting development at the subunit of the state.
3. Democracy and Decentralisation also promote transparency and participation of people in decision-making.

## **Research Methodology**

The proposed study used the historical method to understand the background of the political history of the Kargil district along with the experience of LAHDC and PRI. Besides the Empirical method, the document analysis method has also been adopted to evaluate the study covering the powers and functions of the LAHDC and PRI along with the issues faced by these institutions and the Rural Development Programs and their beneficiaries. This study evaluation has reflected the jurisdiction of work between LAHDC and PRI and the frictions of everyday working between them. A study was also conducted to obtain the views of the political stakeholder of the Kargil district on the performance of LAHDC and PRI and the relationship between them. The sociological method of interview, observation, and discussion with the elected LAHDC and PRI members.

For these purposes, the methodology that has been used these sources of study:-

The study involves both primary and secondary data collection. Among the primary sources, the study collects formal and informal interviews, discussions with Government Officials, and field visits were used. Besides secondary sources, including various Government reports, Acts, Gazettes, Documents, Books, and a host of Articles from various Journals, Magazines, visuals, and Newspaper clippings were used. An exhaustive interview was undertaken based on the Schedule prepared in the light of the study. Open-ended questions were used in the Schedule. Within the scope of the interview, the BPL (Below Poverty Line) beneficiaries for whom the LAHDC and PRI have been working were interviewed. The selection of the samples for the purpose was random. Out of 96 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of the 3 sub-divisions of Kargil, 6 GPs were selected for a study taking 2 from each sub-division. The selection of the GPs was purposive, keeping in mind the relative level of development. A sample of beneficiaries was randomly selected from these 6 GPs for an interview to determine whether development work under various development schemes was being implemented at the grassroots level. Whether the beneficiaries aware of the development work being implemented under various development schemes in their areas? Whether the benefits were reaching the beneficiaries or not? Were the beneficiaries satisfied with these development works done under multiple

development schemes? What difficulties do beneficiaries face while enjoying the development schemes? Whether the beneficiaries have suggestions for improvement of these development schemes? In addition to the selected area, Gram Panchayat Elected Members were also included in this study to understand their role and functions in their respective constituency.

Based on another interview Schedule (where open-ended questions along with closed-ended questions with multiple choices were used), the political leaders, administrators of LAHDC and PRI, professionals, and people representing different Associations and Organizations were covered. These people were interviewed to obtain their views on these matters:- limitation of the powers of LAHDC; performance of LAHDC; whether LAHDC was successful in bringing about development in the Kargil district; measures that could have made LAHDC successful; the relationship between LAHDC and PRI. The relationship between LAHDC and State government and District administration in the Kargil. Since government institutions/agencies/organizations cannot work in a vacuum, the people who are associated with them in one way or another were interviewed to understand the working of LAHDC and PRI and the relationship between them.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The limits of the current review are as per the following.

1. The study is confined only to the political history with greater emphasis on Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Panchayat Raj Institution in the context of Democracy, Decentralization, and development.
2. Only Six Gram Panchayat, two from each Sub-division Kargil district, are selected for this research study.

### **Significances of the study**

The findings will provide valuable information that will help policymakers, planners, implementers, teachers, researchers, and ordinary people. The results will help understand the administrative system and the local governments and how it operates. It is also expected that the data of this study will serve as bases for follow-up studies in this field by future researchers.

## **Concluding Observations**

The central purpose of the study was the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Panchayati Raj Institution of Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir in the context of democracy, decentralization, and development. The study's objectives were to acquire different means and ends, administrative and political history in the context of Jammu and Kashmir, powers and functions, comparison and challenges, and prospects of LAHDC and PRI. Beneficiaries of central schemes under LAHDC and PRI and people's opinions on the performances of LAHDC and PRI in the District.

Despite separate constitutional mechanisms, Jammu and Kashmir, as normal Indian states and other states, followed the union government's footsteps in bringing good governance. A literature review supported the knowledge and experience of local governments worldwide; in every country, local governance is important to fulfil the people's needs. From the theoretical and conceptual chapters, it can be concluded that how theory is a component in the wheel to move the ideas. The ideas of prominent personalities have given inner envisaged on strengthening local governance. In India, the mechanism of local governance through Panchayati Raj Institutions, PESA, and local autonomous bodies like Autonomous District Councils in North East and Ladakh are the silver lining of diverse India. In the case of Ladakh, LAHDC, as an extra tier, is working autonomously to monitor, govern, and regulate the local policies in both districts of the Ladakh region. The working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is also framing, monitoring, and implementing policies and schemes in the District under the supervision of LAHDC.

The Jammu and Kashmir State have always been a distressed region since 1947. The struggle-ridden State has been running through the devaluation of Jammu and Kashmir from statehood to union territory with the legislative assembly for Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory for Ladakh region announcement on 05 August 2019 in Lok Sabha. In the case of Ladakh, every historical step has proved the region's growth in micro-level development and administration fields from single line administration, LAHDC, Divisional status, and Union Territory status.

### **Major findings of the study**

The study's findings achieved an analysis of all objectives of the research. The findings part of the study below paragraph described how political development emerged in Ladakh after the Independence of India. The finding also described how functional the system of LAHDC and PRI performance is in the context of democracy, decentralization, and development. Overall description of the study from input to output analysis about the working nature of LAHDC and PRI.

The administrative and electoral history of the Kargil district can only understand in the context of the Ladakh region as a whole because the administrative history of Kargil revolves around the Leh-centric politics after Independence. The political development in Kargil remained invisible for three decades in 1979 when the Jammu and Kashmir governments divided the Ladakh region into two districts, i.e., Leh and Kargil. Kargil was granted a district status, and the District slowly developed its political development in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the politics of Ladakh. 1989 turmoil in Ladakh created a sense of differences between the two districts of the region based on religion. The voice for U.T. to Ladakh at the beginning of the 1990s was mainly vocal Leh-centric, and the Kargil district remained silent on this issue on the ground that Muslims boycotted 1989, which remained for the next three years. This agitation laid the formation of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council in 1995. This Act was implemented firstly in Leh district in 1995 and Kargil district in 2003. This Act granted a provision of self-autonomy for the Ladakh region.

Along with this LAHDC, the panchayat system was also regulated in the administrative setup of the region; the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act of 1989 was implemented in the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir but did not function well till 2011 due to distress in the State. However, in the districts of Ladakh, we saw that people participated in the election of 2001 and 2006 but remained invisible due to the Kashmir Issue. The 2011 election was considered a real panchayat election in the State, and Kargil also had a full term of a one-tier Panchayati system. In 2018 two important administrative setups formed in the Ladakh region; one was the setup of Divisional status in Ladakh; another was the formation of the Second-tier of PRI in the region. Finally, the ultimate development in the administrative setup in Ladakh was on 5 August 2019, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two

U.T.s of Ladakh and Jammu and

Kashmir. Electoral politics in Ladakh has always been very high regarding voter turnout against the other regions of Jammu and Kashmir. People enthusiastically participate in the election and electoral politics, whether it is Parliamentary, Assembly, LAHDC, or PRI. The LAHDC Kargil, in its four terms of tenure, hardly completed one tenure smoothly rest of the tenure showed the topple of the existing Government by a new government or new alliances. The reason for this fluctuation in LAHDC was the politics of the State; whenever there was a different party in the State and LAHDC; there was always a tussle between the two bodies of the party at both levels study shows that the functioning of LAHDC was cordial and smooth.

LAHDC exists after autonomy demands for self-determination in the Ladakh region, and Panchayati Raj Institutions exist through Constitutional Act. LAHDCs actively work on almost all sections, and PRIs are limited to implementing governmental schemes. People are more concerned with Councillor for decision making, demands, and other grievances redressal issues than Sarpanches in the Ladakh region. Councillors and Sarpanches have a similar head in a district that is Chief Executive Councillor, but the Councillor is more accountable to CEC than Sarpanch. This research explored that Panchayat Raj in the Ladakh region is a snail pace movement toward grass-roots governance. From secondary works of literature, it is also explored that Jammu and Kashmir State are facing huge problems in the devolution of power and practices in every field. In Ladakh, the developments of Panchayat Raj have been partial achievements in every section.

The essence of Panchayat Raj is to bring initiative and involvement of people in governance and empower themselves in generating local resources, implement the self-sustain village affairs, where dependency upon others would be minimized. The outcomes of this research are unveiled in the dimensions of Frameworks, Functions, Functionaries, Funds, Training and Capacity Building, and Accountability. Primarily, the region's unique socio-economic status and physical structure indicate the direction of the aspiration of the people of Ladakh, which is considered a special category upon application of every rule and regulation from the Indian mainstreams pattern. The strategic location of the place also amplifies border studies and understands the role of civilians on the border in the context of governance and nation-building. People in the Ladakh region have been facing problems in every aspect, from living a simple life to

administrative and developmental work. Although, human civilization is an exemplary role in addressing the height of human potential and existence. It is a challenge to the administration how a good administrator could establish the best way of serving attitude for the development of society, whether it is a nation-state or a global State. The study found that the linkage between LAHDC and PRI Acts has a huge gap in application parts. The allocation and demarcation of powers and functions are in the initial stages where institutions run in a power vacuum. The apex body of the Ladakh region LAHDCs has many roles played in the development of the districts directly or indirectly. LAHDCs have been knitting their relation with every agent from the Government to non-government in planning and development in the Ladakh region. LAHDCs can best monitor all agents in the Ladakh region, including PRIs.

The capacity of the Panchayat Raj under J&K has been limited to 14th Department; eleven schedules of the Indian Constitution have 29 subjects that were inapplicable. The function of the Panchayat is mostly limited to MGNREGA; the agenda of the meeting is mostly related to MGNREGA. The involvement of the Sarpanch in other activities is minimal than the Councillors. The shortage of funds in Sarpanch mostly confined the Panchayat meeting and agenda to MGNREGA. The mechanisms of circulations are practised orally in both districts. The settings of dates are more on leaders' or officials' conveniences than people's requirements or guidelines. The department related to Public Work Development, Social Welfare, Fisheries, Agriculture, Sheep, Animal, Schools, Forest, Health & Family, Horticulture, Revenue Department and Consumer, etc. are engaging with Councillors Sarpanch. Despite the continued existence of the Panchayat, people were giving minor importance to Sarpanch due to the scarcity of funds for other political leaders. Sarpanch is involved in soil conservation, water management, and irrigation works through MGNREGA. Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council is an autonomous status for Jammu and Kashmir.

Panchayati Raj Institutions evolved through various phases of amendment from 1935 in Jammu and Kashmir and constitutionalized in 1989. LAHDC is not a permanent body like Panchayati Raj Institutions, and its powers are flexible. There are similarities and duplicity in the implementation of power and functions of LAHDC and PRI. LAHDCs are playing extra tiers in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, particularly at the block level. LAHDC is smoothly functional due to the partial

functioning of PRI in Jammu and Kashmir. LAHDC, as a monitoring body of the District, has been allocated with plan and non-plan budget, land transfer, and holding power; LAHDC can make deals with any stakeholders for the development of Ladakh. Still, Panchayat Raj works as per the guidelines of PRI.

The sources of finance for the Hill Council are more diversified; in reality, due to the intervening role of the State Government, they are generally starved of funds, but the Panchayati bodies, on the other hand, have been protected from this predicament through the provision for the establishment of the quinquennial Financial Commission. The challenges that the LAHDC and PRI face in many contexts are, firstly, the relationship between the LAHDC and PRI, which is superior-subordinate; the PRI has to follow the instructions of the LAHDC. The issue was raised when the State of Jammu and Kashmir implemented the second tier of Panchayat Raj in the whole State in 2018; this decision did not favour the LAHDC; they argue that it weakened the LAHDC by establishing the parallel local Government at the block level. Since the formation of BDC, the politicizing of the PRI has been increasing daily. The main challenges between the LAHDC and PRI are that the chairman of BDC belongs to a different party and the LAHDC Councillor of the area belongs to another party. This difference creates a sense of conflict between the two bodies at the village level. The second challenge is the relationship between the LAHDC and the state government, which was always in a skirmish in the past regarding financial and legislative power. Due to this, the voice for the Sixth Schedule provision to Ladakh emerged just after the formation of LAHDC, which is also a challenge. The Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution have more power provisions than the LAHDC.

The researcher observed that these six Gram Panchayats showed positive responsiveness related to Central Government Schemes; almost every household gets some benefits from these schemes. The schemes like NREGA, PMGSY, AAY, PMUY, ICDS, and SSA are the most significant and successful in the rural areas of Kargil. The beneficiaries of these schemes mainly belong to the BPL family. The role of LAHDC and PRI in regulating the developmental schemes in this study is very cooperative to date. The developmental schemes in the District fall under the LAHDC regulation, and the LAHDC fully decentralizes these developmental schemes to regulation via PRI. The G.P. and newly set up BDC implement and monitor the

schemes at the grass-root level. The Councilor of the area is the Ex-Officio of the PRI, and he also presented at the Panchayat meeting at both tiers. He also highlighted the issues of the area at the council house. These schemes also show very positive results in the development of rural areas; along with this, they also empowered women, reducing poverty, and panchayat development in certain areas reduced worker migrations. Social audit is an important part of performing the functions of Panchayat in India, but the respondents from Kargil have completely unaware of social audit and its mechanism. The respondents have blurred the budget and amount spent on the gram panchayat. Even though there was no official notification, budget presentation practices were minimal. The social audit practices are not from Councillor, MLA, and M.P. to the people. RTI is a new phenomenon practised in the town of Kargil, and the rural areas of Kargil still believe in the faith system, the inquiries about the funds, grievances, and personal problems are addressed personally to the leaders through official procedures. There were almost no services on the RTI functioning at the gram panchayat level.

Most of the respondents have a very positive opinion regarding the working of LAHDC and PRI. These respondents share their views on the District before and after the implementation of LAHDC; the developmental scale of the District rapidly increased after the formation of LAHDC. With the minimum fund, maximum development was done within a short period. On the social, economic, cultural, and educational front, LAHDC was successful to a large extent, it did many good works, but there was no adequate publicity for it. Several Respondents responded that in certain areas like Rural Development, Tourism, Education, and Communication, LAHDC had performed good work, and its function in other areas was average. Every Government that came to power would have its share of success and failure. So, to an extent, LAHDC was successful, but that overall development was still awaited, and LAHDC had a lot more to do.

In the analysis of this study regarding the powers, functions, and departments of LAHDC and PRI, the study also indicates the following broader conclusions that there has been:

1. Partial transfer of powers/functions/departments to LAHDC and PRI.
2. No clear-cut transfer of powers/functions/departments to LAHDC and PRI.

3. No logical and scientific transfer of powers/functions/departments to LAHDC and PRI.
4. Half-hearted, haphazard, and vague transfer of powers/functions/departments to LAHDC and PRI.

There is an Act of Council, but it lacks proper jurisdiction between Councilor, Department, and Sarpanchs, gaps exist in the relation in it, the incomplete document of Act cannot enjoy LAHDC Kargil its power accordingly. The equivalent ranking of CEC power with state Cabinet Minister remains on a protocol to date. There is yet not a proper demarcation among Sarpanch, BDC, and Councilor in its role to play in the implementation of many policies and programs, due to that the tussles occurred many times in recent past, which led to delay the tasks. Almost all the department comes under LAHDC except for the case of law and order. Still, it is said that no departments willingly follow LAHDCs order, consequently deteriorating the relationship between the Councilor and the department's official. Further, the deeper findings come up with other issues as LAHDCs are always facing fund shortages and lack of scope in fund generation in the Kargil region to date, due to scattering, harsh terrain, and rugged mountainous region with cold dessert facing the proper implementation of every policy with proper times and space.

The people said that Politics is both pro and cons work done, sometimes it negatively impacts on people if government official or Sarpanch actively involved in the politics with the favour which witnessed in recent past after the formation of BDC. The politicization of work has appeared in every task, as respondents and government officials said. One of the most difficult tasks is to make people aware of new schemes and programs and other governmental benefits to the public. The increasing corruption is due to a lack of knowledge about government programs and the people.

In democratic decentralization, development depends upon participation, coordination, and cooperation among people, Government, and leaders. Since the State is composed of the rural population, the development of the Council and Panchayat is an equation with the level of participation and the performance of a task to get things done as per guidelines as well as the direction of the society.

Yes, there are many shady areas in the formulation of powers, functions, and departments transferred to the LAHDC and PRI in the District, yet the functioning of the LAHDC and PRI is smooth at the grass-root level to date. These two institutions are very new to the District, and it takes time to realize the people and representatives' proper functioning and regulation of these institutions.

### **Result of the research hypothesis**

To some extent, the tentative hypothesis related to each other is that democracy and decentralization boost development, participation, and good governance at the local level. This study finds that devolution of power to the local level positively impacts the people at a certain level. In many areas, the local Government's performance is impressive, proving a better service provider. Due to decentralization, people's involvement in political affairs is also increasing, ultimately promoting transparency in governance. However, many hindrances are obstacles to the functioning of democracy, decentralization, and development, which need to be determined as soon as possible so that the local institutions will work smoothly to promote democracy, decentralization, and development.

### **Suggestions for the improvement of the LAHDC and PRI**

1. **An appropriate framework should be framed for the better functioning of these Institutions.** The LAHDC and PRI Act are creating a kind of dual functionary at the grass-root level. Both institutions are empowered with similar subjects over which they have ultimate authority; these similarities create a tussle between them. This tussle emerged very extremely after the formation of BDC. The interference of political parties and the State in local politics leads to groupism at the PRI level, which ultimately demands the full fledged independent governing body. In recent times we witnessed a very secret gathering at the BDC level in the District where the members of the LAHDC were not invited to the meeting; this led to a suspicion in the mind of many, particularly the LAHDC, about the intention of PRI members to date PRI work under the supervision of LAHDC. The haphazard and vague transfers of power to these two institutions by the State create a parallel government at the local level in which ultimate authority lies in the State's hand. To overcome these unscientific

power transfers, the newly established administration of U.T. Ladakh should amend both acts and frame a scientific structure for local governance. The District Council may be made a more effective democratic body by incorporating representational features from the 1992 Act, 73rd Amendment Act. A Committee should start working as democratically as possible and report on synthesizing the District Councils with the 1992 Amendment Act. The report should be publicly circulated and discussed before finalizing the patterns and modes of self-government in the Ladakh region; if possible better to abolish the two tiers of the PRI and, in its place village council at the village level and the councillor work at the block level under the supervision of LAHDC which is functioning in the sixth scheduled region of northeast India.

2. **A good relationship between Autonomous District Council, PRI, and the State Government.** The District Council, PRI, and the State government must work hand in hand to bring out the desired, balanced, and harmonious growth and deliver goods in the right direction. No progress can be made without proper coordination and cooperation between the District council, PRI, and the State government.
3. **Enhancement of Financial Powers of District Councils.** While the PRI has its financial commitment, the District Council's flow of funds from the State government to the Council is complicated and uncertain. It has been detected that the State Government have been trying to control the District Council or its autonomy by manipulating the quantum of fund meant to be placed at the disposal of the Council. Unless the flow of funds to the Council is adequate, no development project can be initiated or completed. A provision should be made that mandatory obligation on the part of the State government is required to make funds available to the District Council for its estimated expenditure. The rules for the management of the District Council fund payment and withdrawal of amounts of money should be made by the District Council and not the Governor. The existing situation allows the state government ample scope to put obstacles to the functioning of the District Council. The Council should prepare annual plans for the District without any interference from the State. District Council should be given more and broader autonomy and power to impose taxes within the District.

4. **Enhancement of women representatives in the local Government.** The already existing governing institutions in the District show that women's representation in the LAHDC and PRI is too less. The Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat act 2011 granted that 1/3 of the Sarpanch should be women, and LAHDC Act also empowered women by reserving two seats for women. While having this kind of provision, the representation of women in electoral politics is almost nil. The LAHDC of both districts of Ladakh elected does not have any elected women representatives. The nominal women representative are politically driven candidates who failed to empower women's representation in the District. The elected women sarpanch are too random and less motivated. Thus there should be a valid policy or regulation to empower women's participation in day-to-day political activities in the District.
5. **A nomination should be reserved for an expert.** A seat should be reserved for someone with good knowledge of local governance and policy-making. We witnessed this kind of policy framer not included in the meeting or during the District's preparation plan. So there should be a nominated expert who fully indulged in the working of the LAHDC.
6. **Setup of Minorities Cell at District Council.** The two nominated reserved seats for minorities in the District Council are always in the question of their existence. It is said that these nominated representatives are the politically-driven candidate who failed to uplift their main cause. The minority side raises several issues in the District for sharing more seats with them in the District Council, which also spark a sense of demand amongst the different ethnic and religious groups to have their representation in the Council. So it is better to set up a cell whose main function is to uplift or remove the grievances of the minorities.
7. **Benefits of the District Council and PRI flow to the poor. Train the members of the District Council and PRI for their Constitutional Roles.** Training and capacity development programs are the basic and most important elements in the decentralization process. If the benefits of the Council and PRI have to flow to the poor and if the poor are to be enabled to participate in the Council's and PRI activities, their position must be strengthened by various means such as an efficient public distribution system, giving the right to

work to the poor to ensure the minimum employment and incomes to live on, redistribution of aids in favour of the poor by implementing land reforms and encouraging organization of the poor and recognizing the role of voluntary agencies in rural development. It will also provide opportunities for many persons to participate in decision-making. Another pre-condition for the success of the District Council is to train the members of the Council and PRI for their roles. We witnessed that in recent initiatives like sending the local representatives to learn the affairs of local governance to the States where the local Government functions well. Such initiatives should be adopted at the very beginning of the elected body till the representatives fully mature about their power.

- 8. The development of self-reliance is essential for sustainable development in every sector.** An argument was developed that welfare takes away men's strongest reasons for working: survival, and we can develop the poor. The concept of welfare is necessary where development possibilities are trapped for certain reasons. In Ladakh, the concept of the welfare phenomenon has been functioning due to the unavailability of necessities.

The trend of dependency has gradually developed in society, and every phenomenon is expected of Governmental agents to resolve. The aims and objectives of the LAHDC and PRI are to bring a self-reliant society to India. It is ironic to observe in India, including Kargil, that even local leaders affair for central and State Government funds to develop the local region. The challenges of the LAHDC and PRI are how to imbibe in the public mind that local leaders have to vigilance on local resources, and generating local resources will equally strengthen the nation. The prospect of the LAHDC and PRI in Kargil, these institutions would be more powerful and bring communal harmony to society when they should be maintained as a politically neutral body.