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No proposal to implement Panchayat system in Sixth Schedule areas of Assam



- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha that “presently, there is no proposal to implement panchayat system in **Sixth Schedule** areas of Assam”.

Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

- It protects tribal populations and provides autonomy to the communities through creation of autonomous development councils that can frame laws on land, public health, agriculture and others.
- Presently, 10 autonomous councils exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

- **Specified tribal areas of Assam:** North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong and the Bodoland Territorial Area
- **Specified tribal areas of Meghalaya:** Khasi Hills, Jaintiya Hills and Garo Hills
- Tribal Areas in Tripura
- **Specified tribal areas of Mizoram:** Chakma, Mara and Lai districts

Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill, 2019

- In January 2019, the Union Cabinet approved amendments to increase the financial and executive powers of the autonomous councils.
- The Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill, 2019, was subsequently introduced in the Rajya Sabha in February 2019, that provides for elected village municipal councils.
- The Bill that is still active proposes that the State Election Commissions would hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils.

Powers of Autonomous Councils under Sixth Schedule

Executive and legislative powers

Under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the autonomous district councils have the power to make laws, rules and regulations in the following areas:

- Formation of village councils
- Village and town level policing

- Public health
- Sanitation
- Agriculture and cultivation
- Water resources
- Land management
- Forest management
- Appointment of traditional chiefs and headmen
- Social customs
- Marriage and divorce
- Property Inheritance
- Mining and minerals
- Money lending and trading

Judicial powers

The Autonomous district councils can form courts to hear cases where both parties are members of Scheduled Tribes and the maximum sentence is less than 5 years in prison.

Taxation related powers

The Autonomous district councils can levy taxes, fees and tolls on land, buildings, vehicles, boats, bridges, roads, ferries and on the entry of goods into the area for the maintenance of roads and schools. They can also levy employment, income and general taxes.