

Concept note on Strengthening Governance System from Grassroots upward.

The Village Development Board in Nagaland is governed by the VDB Model Rules, 1980 (Revised), conferred under sub-section 1 of Section 50 of the Nagaland Village & Area Council Act, 1978. These Rules extend to the whole of Nagaland whereby empowering the Village Development Board to implement developmental activities at grass-root level, fostering local initiatives and ensuring equitable access to resources. This includes promoting transparency, accountability and participation in decision making at the village level.

Presently, there are 76 RD Blocks and 1338 Government recognized VDBs in the State with 2,50,315 tax-paying households. Fund under this programme is allocated on the basis of number of tax-paying households @ Rs.1000/- for implementation of developmental activities. This is the only programme which ensures the participation of womenfolk in the activities of VDBs by earmarking of 25% of the fund for Women Programme, 20% of the fund is also earmarked for Youth Programme and another 55% of the fund is earmarked for General Development in all the villages. Likewise, under Grand-in-Aid to the VDBs, Fixed Deposit forms an integral part of the VDBs with three main components namely, Fixed Deposit (Normal), VDB Welfare Fund and Matching Cash Grant which are implemented to improve the upliftment of the rural people.

Key aspects of strengthening Village Governance in Nagaland

1. Village Development Boards (VDBs)

VDBs are primary grass-root level establishment responsible for planning and implement developmental activities at grass-root level, promoting local initiatives and ensuring equitable access to resources.

2. Village Council

The Village Council is a traditional establishment and is given legal status and functions alongside the VDB to ensure effective Governance and development at the village level. Therefore, any developmental activities undertaken within the village has to be done in line with the village plan or annual action plan of the village.

3. Grants from the Government

The Village Development Boards receive funds through the Grand-in-Aid programme on the basis of number of tax-paying households. This enables the VDBs to implement developmental schemes/programmes based on the local needs of their respective village.

4. Transparency and accountability

Establishing clear procedures for financial management and coverage. At the same time, providing avenues for villagers to raise their concerns, which simultaneously, helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the governing procedures.

5. Capacity building

Providing training and development opportunities for VDB Members and village leaders can enhance their skill and knowledge, enabling them to better manage and implement development programmes.

6. Technology Influence

Utilizing technology for information dissemination, citizen engagement and service delivery can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of village governance.

7. Addressing Challenges

Recognizing and addressing potential challenges such as inter-village conflicts, resources management issues, through collaborative efforts and conflicts resolution mechanisms can further strengthen village governance.

8. Incorporation with State-Level-activities

By bringing into line Village-Level Development Plans with State-Level Initiatives and programmes, it ensures that local initiatives are supported and complemented by broader Government efforts. ally

Therefore, by focusing on these key aspects, Nagaland Village Development Boards (VDBs) can continue to strengthen its Village Governance framework, empowering communities and fostering sustainable development at the grass-root level and upward.