



# **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Success in Bringing Development: A Case Study of Kargil District of Ladakh**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The long-running unrest in Ladakh is caused by two factors: one, the issue of ethnic, religious, political, and linguistic identity, which is seen as being threatened by persecution under the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the other, the region's economic backwardness. To deal with these issues the Central and State government brought the provision through an Act called Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council that deals with the administrative system of the hilly tribal areas in a state of Jammu and Kashmir. The objective behind were to protect the unique ethnic identities of the tribal people, faster economic development of these areas, which remained backward than other parts of India due to the (a) harsh geographical location, (b) State policy of exclusion of this tribal dominated region. After 15 years since the policy was adopted, there are two Autonomous District Council in the Union Territory of Ladakh. Keeping this background, this paper makes an attempt to study the Kargil Autonomous District Council in Ladakh to understand success of the LAHDC Act areas in bringing development with an objective of suggesting corrective step to attain this goal.

**Keywords:** *Autonomous District Council, Democracy, Development, Ladakh, Union Territory.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION.**

India's northern region comprising of six states and three Union Territories amongst them the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir located on the top most point of the north and home of numerous schedule tribes lives in the far flung and hilly areas of the State, which is 11.9 % of India's tribal population. The inhabitant of the region speaks numerous Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic languages and Tibeto- Burman predominantly speaks in Ladakh region [1]. Ladakh which was earlier part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir bifurcated on 05 August 2019 and on 31 October 2019 granted the status of U.T and becoming newly U.T Ladakh in India. The U.T of Ladakh which is

predominantly population belongs to Schedule tribes belongs to different ethnic communities. The main religious groups in the U.T are Muslim majority (Shia) 46%, Buddhist (Tibetan Buddhist) 40% Hindus 12 % and other 2 % [1]. The large portion of the region is international border on the northern its share border with Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively and on the eastern side its shares with China beside the Region shares its border with other states like Jammu and Kashmir on west and Himachal Pradesh on south. The Zojila pass is the main source of connectivity to Ladakh which remains closed for almost half of the season due to snow and the area remained cut off from the rest of the country. The region is also prone to conflict over issues like externally border dispute with China and Pakistan, many war were fought between the two in this region beside these internally like issues on right of the land, language, identity and demographic change etc. The Autonomous District Council had its origin in the early state of Jammu and Kashmir's isolationist policies, which marked the hilly tribal habitat areas as 'excluded' or 'partially excluded' meaning these areas were outside the preview of the rules and regulations over the region which they belong. This policies and unique feature of the region greatly hampered development of these areas. During this large period of time under the administration of the Jammu and Kashmir the tribal region Ladakh were remained backward in comparison to rest. Keeping in mind the long isolation of the region, the central government passed an Act with focus on protection of the tribal areas and interest by allowing self-governance through constitutional institutions at the district level. These institutions are entrusted with twin task of protecting tribal cultures and customs and undertaking development errands [2].

## II. KARGIL DISTRICT.

Kargil district earlier known as Purig as a District was established in 1979 after bifurcating United Ladakh into two district (a) Leh (b) Kargil. It is surrounded by Baramullah, Srinagar and Doda Districts in the South-West, Leh District in the East, Himachal Pradesh in the South and Pakistan in the North-West. The district is divided into four high level natural Valleys namely the Suru Valley, the Drass Valley, the Indus Valley and the Upper Sindh Valley of Kanji Nallah Valley. The district covers the geographical area of 14036 Sq. km mainly Purig community belong to Shia sect of Muslim beside them there are number of other religious and ethnic communities reside in the district like Boto, Mon, Balti, Shina, Brokpa, Garra, Argon and small number of families of Hindus and Sikh. The long-awaited demand of autonomy for the district came into existence in 2003, Kargil was granted autonomy by making Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) with Strength of 30-Councilors, out of which 26 are elected and 04 are nominated [3]. On October 31st 2019, the Parliament of India passed J&K reorganization Act 2019, that contains provisions to make Kargil a district of the new union territory of Ladakh. The district consists of 05-Sub-Divisions, 07-Tehsils, 15-Administrative Blocks, 127-Villages (02-Un-inhabitted) and 95-Panchayats. According to the 2011 census Kargil district has a population of 140,802, comprised of 124464 rural & 16338 urban

populations, male-77785 and female - 63017 Nos. The district has a population density of 10-persons per square kilometre. Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 18.02%, and a sex ratio of 810-females per 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 71.34 [1].

### III. SIXTH SCHEDULE

The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution that include Articles 244(2) and 275(1) deal with the provisions of the administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. District Councils are entrusted with the administration of an autonomous district. These Councils are endowed with legislative, judicial, executive and financial powers. Sixth Schedule areas are mini states within a state [4].

Normally, a Council consists of 30 members and can have a maximum of 4 nominated members; however, numbers vary with different district councils; for example-Bodoland Autonomous District Council has 46 members. Members are elected through adult suffrage for a period of 5 years from the date for the first meeting after the general elections to the Council. Nominated members can hold office only at the pleasure of Governor [4].

Under Sixth Schedule, Governor of the state is empowered to determine the administrative areas. States Governors can make regulations, prohibition or restricting transfer of land from tribal to non-tribal. Interestingly, many of the laws passed in the Parliament and in the state, legislatures are not application in the areas governed by District Council as it enjoys autonomy provided by the Constitution. Governor is entrusted with powers to adapt with the laws for the Schedule areas [4].

**Table 1. The Sixth Schedule Area of Assam**

<p><b>ASSAM</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Dima-Hasao District</li> <li>2. The Karbi-Anglong District</li> <li>3. The Bodoland Territorial Area District</li> </ol>	<p><b>MEGHALAYA</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Khasi Hills District</li> <li>2. The Jaintia Hills District</li> <li>3. The Garo Hills District</li> </ol>
<p><b>MIZORAM</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Chakma District</li> <li>2. The Mara District</li> <li>3. The Lai District.</li> </ol>	<p><b>TRIPURA</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tripura Tribal Areas District</li> </ol>

Source: NCST

The provision of Sixth Schedule with time extends to other part of the country i.e., Darjeeling hill on 06 December 2005, the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was the semi-autonomous body that looked after the administration of the hill district of Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal India. DGHC has

regulated authority over three sub-division of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and some parts of Siliguri sub-division. Due to this provision granted to Darjeeling many tribal areas from different states demand the constitutional safeguard on the ground of Sixth Schedule to them. Amongst them the demand from Ladakh is mainly in news where they demand this Schedule of the constitution from very long after the formation of U.T the demand raises new height. The same demand for Sixth Schedule also raises in Arunachal Pradesh where the state assembly collectively passes a resolution in favour of the provision of sixth Schedule for the whole State. This demand of provision passes from one state to another in the recent time[5].

#### IV. LADAKH AUTONOMOUS HILL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

Ladakh was granted the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in 1995 through a Presidential Order. Under the provision of The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act 1997, the executive powers of the State Government relating to the management, control and supervisory of the important departments mainly covering development functions and activities have been transferred to the Autonomous Hill Council [6]. The LAHDC Act 1997, outlined matters to be under the control and administration of the General Council. Later some more Powers, Functions and departments were transferred to the Autonomous Hill Council by The LAHDC (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2018. The Act came to be known as the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997 and its extents to the whole region of Ladakh in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Act also entrenched an Inter-District Advisory Council in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir and it shall be considered to have come into force with effect from 1st June,1995. LAHDC consists of thirty members twenty-six elected and four nominated members, a Chief Executive Councillor and Four Executive Councillors elected amongst the councillors. Subject to the provisions of this Act and any other law for the time being in force in the State and any general or special direction by the Government, the Council shall have executive powers in the district in relation to the below [6].

**Table 2. Subjects of LAHDC Act.**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. allotment, use and occupation of land vested in the Council by the Government under this Act;</li> <li>2. formulation of development programme for the district in respect of District Component Schemes as notified by the Government and Centrally Sponsored Schemes and indicate priorities for various schemes and consider issues relating to the speedy development and economic upliftment of the district;</li> <li>3. periodical review of the progress and achievements of developmental plans and schemes;</li> <li>4. formulation and finalisation of the Budget (Plan and Non-Plan);</li> <li>5. laying down guidelines for implementation of schemes at gross root level;</li> <li>6. special measures for employment generation and the alleviation of poverty;</li> </ol> |
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7. promotion of co-operative institutions;
8. supervision and constitution of notified area committees;
9. formulation of periodical and annual plans for the district;
10. promotion of languages and culture of the area;
11. management of un-demarcated forests;
12. use of canal or water courses for the purpose of agriculture;
13. desert development;
14. public health and sanitation, hospitals and dispensaries;
15. Tourism;
16. vocational training;
17. construction and maintenance of roads except highways;
18. preservation, protection and improvement of livestock and prevention of animal diseases;
19. cattle ponds and the prevention of cattle trespass;
20. education;
21. works, lands and buildings vested in or in the possession of the Council;
22. management of burials and burial grounds, cremation and cremation grounds;
23. preservation of the environment and ecology of the area;
24. local road transport and its development;
25. fisheries;
26. small scale and cottage industries;
27. non-conventional energy;
  - 27-a) Science and Technology (LAHDC AMEND. ACT 2018, 27 a-e)
  - 27-b) promotion and development of traditional Amchi System of medicine
  - 27-c) food, civil supplies and public distribution
  - 27-d) rural development
  - 27-e) power development
28. any other matter within the executive power of the State which may be entrusted by notification in the Government Gazette to the Council by the Government.

Source- Jammu and Kashmir LAHDC Amendment Act. 2018 [6]

## V. SUCCESS OF HILL COUNCIL KARGIL.

Before we highlight the achievement of LAHDC there are few issues that arises from time to time in the local politics of Ladakh. Firstly, the women political empowerment and secondly the corruption and nepotism, in context of women-ChimetLadol “Politically women are far behind men. In Ladakh the centre of the decision-making system is male dominated. There are no women among current executives in councils of both Leh and Kargil. 2 out of 30 members are women (1:15) in Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh and there is not a single woman in the district administration of Kargil (LAHDC-Leh, Kargil official website). There is no department looking into issues of women. The government records of the elected panchs and sarpanchs of Leh district

for 2011 shows that there is not a single female sarpanch from the nine blocks and the number of women panchs is 199 out of 588 elected (List of elected sarpanchs/panchs, District:Leh, Election Authority, Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir) [7]. How influentially and freely can the elected women representatives act be further determined by the men. Still, no one talks about the marginalisation of women because the powerful maintain the status-quo, and those who are victimised feel too weak to raise their voices". Secondly, corruption and nepotism are widespread in Autonomous District Council Kargil and is a major cause for lack of development by some sources. Although, the district gets grants for various development projects but development activities hardly be accountable. In 27 March 2021, LAHDC of Leh and Kargil failed to submit accounts for audit since its creation says CAG. In 2018-19 it is said that LAHDC-Kargil got a grant of 597.95 crores but the finance distribution and accountability is in question [8].

Status of development indicators including health, education and communication is studied to assess success of the District Council in Kargil Ladakh in bringing development.

## V.I. HEALTH

**Table 3. Names and Numbers of hospitals, health centres and doctors in LAHDC Kargil in the year 2019-2020.**

Hospital, Health Centres and Doctors	Numbers	Beds
District Hospital	01	267
Sub-Divisional Hospital	01	
T.B Hospital	01	15
Doctors	67	
PHC/CHC	20	20
Sub-Centres	123	
NTPHC	10	
New Centres	17	

Source: District statistics & Evaluation Office Kargil [9]

The health department in the district function very positively all facilities are provided in the Hospital and Health centres for the public. The district hospital is in service 24\*7 and treated every possible cases. Beside this district hospital a new hospital building is in final touch to inauguration. Number beds increased in District hospital and PHC's which accommodated and benefitted the general people. The hospital and beds charges are very low and several tests like urine test, blood test, cough test and X-ray are done with small amount of fees which benefitted the poor general. Numbers of Hospitals, Rural Health Units, Block Primary Health Centres and Sub Centres have been increased. Regular Immunization schemes under LAHDC are going on, beside this every year numbers of medical camps

conducted in the far-flung area and general seminar on health conducted with Specialist were invited as speaker in the program which further groom the health sector of the district. According to records the district hospital in Kargil which is 267 bed is equipped all major medical equipment and specialist doctors.

## V.II. EDUCATION

**Table 5. Literacy rate in the year 2001 and 2011 Kargil.**

Literacy Rate	Male	Female	Total
2001	73.58	40.96	58.21
2011	83.15	56.30	71.34

Source. Census of India [1]

**Table 6. Number of Schools, students and Teachers in Kargil district (2019-20).**

1. Number of Schools	2019-2020
➤ Primary school	210
➤ Middle school	261
➤ High school	49
➤ Higher secondary school	19
➤ Total	543
2. Number of students enrolled in this schools	16860
3. Number of teachers in the school	2607

Source. District statistics & Evaluation Office Kargil [9]

Education was given priority. Number of Primary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools had increased. Maximum effort was put by LAHDC to increase the number of schools and to upgrade schools' example from High School to Higher Secondary and so on. The aim of having at least one Higher Secondary School in each of the 26 constituencies of Kargil district followed by having a greater number of Higher Secondary Schools wherever possible were fulfilled. Adhoc teachers in Higher Secondary School were appointed by LAHDC thereby improving education as well as providing employment. The pickup in education was good the results produced were good

so standard of education was good. There are Industrial Technical and Polytechnic Colleges functioning in the district under LAHDC and more vocational institutions needs to be established. The functioning and positive impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by providing primary education in every village of the district. The respondent also acknowledges the mid-day meal providing in this school for the students.

### V.III. ROAD CONNECTIVITY

**Table 7. Total Length of Road maintained by LAHDC PWD- Division 2019-2020.**

S. No	Road maintained	Kms
1.	Black topped	56.42
2.	Metalled	40.20
3.	Singled	0.00
4.	Fair Weather	181.63
5.	Jeepable	0.00
6.	Total	278.25

Source. District statistics & Evaluation Office Kargil [9]

LAHDC Kargil just after its commencement have a very clear vision that is development and for this development rural development is very need as to work for better development of rural areas the road connectivity is very essential. The far-flung areas of Zanskar, Taisuru, Sankoo, Drass and Batalik sector were did not had proper or regular road connectivity at very large extent to success to build road connectivity. Earlier the Sick people in these areas had to be carried by men to health centres, now vehicles carried these worked on the road. Roads were constructed in remote rural villages which were once inaccessible to Motor Vehicles. Roads have facilitated students, farmers, sick people, tourists, etc and have led to overall development of these areas e.g.,Karchay region consisted of three blocks (Taisuru, Sankoo and TSG) once were very remote and backward has now become a model village with roads, electricity, schools. guest-houses, fish ponds etc. The Central Scheme of Pradhan Mantri GraminSadak Yojana (PMGSY) become a game changer in the development of road sector area. Every village in the district get benefitted of this scheme hardy few areas in the rural areas of the district remain aloof from this scheme is due to its geographical circumstance otherwise it's been very vital for the area. Beside this scheme another Central Scheme of Border Area Development Program (BADP) carried out many developmental programs in this area because this district of Kargil locates at Line of Control (LOC) on Indo-Pak border. The villages fall under this scheme have witnessed ample

of development work in the area and road connectivity to every border village is the main aspect of this scheme in the area.

The table below is a survey result of a study undertaken by District Statistical and Evaluation Office to assess development of the Kargil district is self-explanatory of the status of development in the district.

**Table 8. Development Deficit in Kargil Hill District**

S. NO	SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATOR	KARGIL	INDIA	DEFICIT
1.	Rate of literacy	71.73	74.04	-2.31
2.	Rate of female literacy	56.30	65.46	-9.16
3.	Work participation rate	36.84	50.60	-13.76
4.	Female work participation rate	11.6	20.3	-8.7
	<b>BASIC AMENITIES INDICATOR</b>			
1.	Percentages of pucca houses	76	55	21
2.	Percentages of household with access of safe drinking water	9.08	43.23	-34.15
3.	Percentage of household with sanitary toilet	92	98.21	-6.01
4.	Percentage of electrified household	100	96.7	3.3
	<b>HEALTH INDICATOR</b>			
1.	Percentages of fully vaccinated children	85	65	20
2.	Percentage of institutional delivery	97	89	12

Sources: census 2011, DSEOKargil [9]

## VI. SUGGESSTION

Smooth governance is critical for accelerated development. As a result, training and capacity building for members of the Autonomous District Council will be required in order to increase governance efficiency. It is necessary to take steps to establish a permanent watchdog, such as a Lokayukta, with the authority to order investigations and take action when violations are uncovered. Coordination with the state government and the district council is essential to avoid policy duplication, which can stymie execution when jurisdictional issues arise. District councils should establish policies that promote inclusive development and grass-root democracy, as this will lead to power devolution.

## VII. CONCLUSION.

In this regard, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Kargil has been a success in protecting the tribal people's tradition and culture to some extent. The Autonomous District Council has also made progress in sectors such as education, although it is still lagging behind in many other areas. Corruption, resource constraints, lack of effective policy planning, a complex political and administrative environment, and the effects of violence are all factors that contribute to the Autonomous District Council areas' backwardness. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons for the Autonomous District Council's development shortfall. However, this study offers a few initiatives that could be taken to help the Autonomous District expand more quickly and with greater governance.

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