



The Gaon Buras

Why in News

Recently, the **Assam Cabinet announced that Gaon Buras**, village-level functionaries of the district administration, **will be called 'Gaon Pradhans'**.

- The government has reasoned that a number of young men (and women) become Gaon Buras, and thus, the word 'Bura' (meaning old in Assamese) is no longer appropriate.

Key Points

▪ About:

- Gaon Buras are the **village headmen**. They are the eyes, nose, ear of the district administration at the village level.
- There are **about 6,000 Gaon Buras in Assam**. **Women 'Gaon Buras' are not very common** and they take over, if their husbands die.

▪ A brief History:

- It **belongs to the colonial era**, when the British appointed the oldest person in the village as the head, who would oversee matters relating to land and revenue in a particular area.
- **Post-independence**, the government continued with the institution and **made the Gaon Bura a formal part of the Assam Revenue and Disaster Management department**, increasing his responsibilities, and eventually introducing a small honorarium for the role.
- In **Arunachal Pradesh, too**, the Gaon Buras (and Buris) are the most important village-level functionaries.

▪ Duties:

- Maintaining a **population register of the village**, maintaining **land records**, **helping police investigate crime**, etc.
 - It **involves now maintaining a log of Covid-19 cases in the village**, organising vaccination camps, functioning as booth-level officers during elections etc.
 - To issue a **'Gaon Bura certificate'**, a certificate that determines the permanent residency in a particular village.
- It became crucial during the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** for women to establish linkages with their husbands and parents.

Source: IE

