

The national webinar with the theme “Rural Local Bodies in Sustaining Rural Economy” held on **October 6, 2020**, featured two distinguished resource persons:

1. **Prof. Jayalakshmi**, a renowned academic with expertise in the field of rural development and planning. She had served faculty position in the NIRD, Government of India.
 - She has contributed significantly to the understanding and advancement of sustainable solutions, particularly in rural contexts.
2. **Dr. H. Laldinmawia**:
 - Dr. H. Laldinmawia is a respected figure in the academic and research community. His work extends to Political Geography, Planning, Climatology, Disaster Management and rural development. His contributions have likely centered around **empowering rural communities**, preserving indigenous knowledge, and fostering socio-economic development in the region.

The webinar emphasized the pivotal role that **local bodies** play in uplifting and sustaining the rural economy of India. Let’s delve into this topic further:

- **Local Bodies in India:**

- In India, rural local bodies refer to the administrative units responsible for governing and providing various services to rural areas. These bodies are also known as **panchayats** and are established and governed by the provisions of the Constitution of India and state panchayat laws².
- Their significance lies in their ability to address local needs, promote development, and ensure effective governance at the grassroots level.

- **Role of Rural Local Bodies:**

- **Socio-Economic Development:** Rural local bodies are instrumental in socio-economic development. They facilitate the implementation of development plans, schemes, and initiatives tailored to the specific needs of rural communities³.
- **Decision-Making and Empowerment:** By involving people in decision-making processes, local bodies empower citizens and ensure better resource utilization. They bring governance closer to the people, making it more responsive and accountable.
- **Infrastructure and Services:** Local bodies are responsible for providing basic amenities such as water supply, sanitation, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development in rural areas³.
- **Good Governance:** The democratic decentralization model, known as **Panchayat Raj**, ensures that local bodies operate as instruments of democracy and socio-economic

progress. Mahatma Gandhi envisioned village swaraj (self-governance) where villagers actively participate in their own governance³.

In summary, the webinar shed light on how local bodies, through their grassroots presence, contribute significantly to uplifting and sustaining the rural economy of India. Their role extends beyond governance—it encompasses community development, empowerment, and the well-being of rural citizens.