

Gaon Bura of Assam

July 26, 2021

In news- Recently the Assam Cabinet announced that Gaon Buras (village headman), village-level functionaries of the district administration, will henceforth be called 'Gaon Pradhans'.

Key updates-

- The institution of Gaon Bura in Assam dates back to the colonial era, when the **British appointed the oldest person in the village as the head.**
- The responsibilities initially included **recording births, deaths, revenue collection, settling disputes, notifying circle officers if there is any encroachment on land, helping police investigate crime,** etc...
- Post-independence, the government continued with the institution and made the Gaon Bura a **formal part of the Assam Revenue and Disaster Management department.**
- His responsibilities were increased, and eventually a small honorarium for the role was introduced.
- The Gaon bora became central to rural, village life and inevitably featured in a number of writings including novels and plays of the 19th century.
- **Assamese litterateur Padmanath Gohain Baruah's** popular social play is called 'Gaon Bura'.
- Though it was **earlier a hereditary position,** today it is a sought-after position that undergoes a **competitive recruitment interview held by the district administration.**
- A Gaon Bura is paid a monthly honorarium of Rs 9,000.
- One needs to be a **Class X pass,** and as per the new Cabinet decision, a **minimum of 30 years of age (upper limit 65)** is required to apply for the post.
- There are about 6,000 Gaon Buras in Assam, which include several women too.
- He/she is the one who can issue a **'GaonBura**

certificate', a certificate that determines one's permanent residency in a particular village.

- During the updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the GaonBura certificate became crucial for women (who had no other documents) to establish linkages with their husbands and parents.
- The state 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.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, too, the Gaon Buras (and Buris) are the most important village-level functionaries.