

Grassroots Democracy Part 2 Local Government in Rural Areas

Chapter-11

The Big Ques (Page 163)

Ques 1. What are Panchayati Raj institutions?

Answer:

Panchayati Raj Institutions are a local-self democratic government in rural/village level. They are mainly to solve problems at village -level and enhance the participation of local people in democratic process. The Panchayati Raj Institutions functions at three tiers/levels: villages, block, and district.

- Gram Panchayat—at village level,
- Then Block level—at the block and
- Zila Parishad—at district level.

Ques 2. What are their functions?

Answer:

Panchayats takes democracy to local level addressing local challenges and encouraging local participation of people. Collectively, these institutions manage a wide range of responsibilities within the district, including agriculture, housing, road maintenance, water resource management, education, healthcare, social welfare, and cultural activities.

Ques 3.

Why are they important in governance and democracy?

Answer:

Panchayats are vital in governance and democracy because they take democracy to local level addressing local challenges and encouraging local participation of people. Panchayati Raj institutions are essential for tackling local challenges, fostering development, and ensuring that government programs and welfare schemes benefit communities at the grassroots level. It has open the doors to women's participation at large scale and strengthened grassroot democracy.

Think About It

Ques 1.

How do you think can these old maps be helpful for us? Can they tell us something about the past and the present? (Page 167)

Answer:

Old maps can be a help us to and how they have changed over time. They depict some important historical events happened and people moved from one place to others. They can help us to compare the nature of soil, rivers, population size and density. Moreover, if there is a dispute between villagers over ownership of a land, then these maps are quiet useful to sort out the dispute.

Ques 2.

Why do you think it is important for the government to pay more attention to the needs and problems of the disadvantaged sections of society? (Page 170)

Answer:

The government should pay more attention to the needs and problems of the disadvantaged sections of society because the basic philosophy of government is to ensure that everyone lives a decent life. The poorer sections have less resources, lees education, less skills and does not get an equal chance to earn and succeed in life. The disadvantaged sections are not able to provide even basic education and healthcare to their children which further leads to their poverty.

Under such scenario it becomes the moral duty of government to take care of these people and uplift them from poverty . Government should also create conditions for their prosperity, then only India will succeed and develop.

Let's Explore

Ques 1.

As a class activity, let four or five students form a Bal Panchayat and the rest of the class imagine they are the villagers,

- (a) What issues will the Gram Sabha discuss?
- (b) What challenges could it encounter?
- (c) What solutions will it propose? (Page 169)

Answer:

(a) Some important issues for discussion could be:

- Dropout of children from school especially girls.
- Evening classes of senior citizens.
- Cleanliness of village and proper disposal of garbage.
- Depletion of pastureland for animals.
- Drought and floods.

(b) The main challenges villagers could encounter are:

- Absence of support from villagers for girl child education, due to poverty and other reasons:
- Absence from motivation and hesitancy from senior citizens.
- Limited resources and manpower.
- Lack of knowledge
- Absence of support from local authorities.

(c) Possible solutions could be as follows:

- Resource mobilisation from villagers and raising awareness.
- Informing villager about benefit of education.
- Regular meetings of elders of the village.
- Making small expert group consisting of elders, children and women.
- Involving and taking support from local authorities.

Ques 2.

What similarities and differences do you notice between the governance system at the Central level and at the Panchayat level? (Hint: refer back to Chapter 10 if required.) (Page 170)

Answer:

Similarities between the governance system at the Central level and at the Panchayat level.

1. The members at the both levels are elected after every five years. Everyone gets an chance to contest election.
2. Both the government works for the welfare of people. They are responsible for providing all kind of services to people, like education, basic and primary, healthcare, drinking water etc.
3. They make policies for the betterment of poorer and disadvantaged section of the societies.

The main difference between them are:

- Central government makes policies for entire nation, while Panchayat makes for one particular panchayat or group of villages.
- Central government has huge resources at their disposal and deals with foreign affairs and security of the entifie nation. Panchayat has limited resources.

Ques 3.

If you get an opportunity to meet a few Panchayat members, what Ques would you like to ask them? Discuss in small groups to create a Quesnaire. Meet some Gram Panchayat members or invite them to your school. Ask them the Ques in your Quesnaire and write a short report. (Page 170)

Answer:

The Quesnaire for Panchayat members could be:

- Who all the members of the Gram panchayat?
- What are the roles and functions of the panchayat members?
- How are the resources collected for development process?
- Give any recent project completed by the panchayat.
- What challenges were faced in executing the project.
- What are the roles of women members?
- What are the future programmes and policies of the panchayat?
- How are local people in working of the panchayat?
- Who coordinates with government officials?
- How can we become part of the panchayat?

Ques, Activities and Projects (Page 171)

Ques 1.

Test yourself—without looking at the text above, can you name the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system? What are the key functions of each of the three tiers?

Answer:

The three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system are:

- Gram Panchayat— at village level, Block Panchayat/Panchayat
- Samiti/Mandal Parishad—at the block level
- Zila Parishad—District level.

The Key Functions are The Gram Panchayat:

- Running of primary schools and primary healthcare system.
- Providing clean water, collection and disposal of garbage and maintaining sanitation in the village.

Block Panchayat / Panchayat Samiti / Mandal Parishad:

They help in preparing developmental plans and collect details across Gram Panchayats and put them together to the District or State levels respectively. This helps them to get funds for development.

Zila Parishad:

It overall makes development plans for the entire district.

Ensures that they get the fund from the state or central government, depending on the project.

Ques 2.

Write a letter to the Sarpanch regarding the issue of plastic bags lying on the roadside in the village.

Answer:

To,

The Sarpanch,

Sapta Village Madhya Pradesh

Subject: Request to look into the issue of plastic bags lying on the roadside in the village.

Respected Sarpanch Ji,

I hope this letter finds you in great health and happiness. I am writing this letter to highlight the increasing number of plastic bags lying on the roadside.

The number of plastic bags lying on the roadside has been increasing day by day. It has become a serious threat to health and environmental to people and animals alike. They can also block drainage system. It is important that gram panchayat takes up this issue on urgent basis and finds a better solution of disposal and replacing the plastic bags with ecofriendly cotton and jute bags.

I have full faith in your leadership, that you along with the other members will sort out these issues at the earliest and make our village neat and clean. It will set an example for other villages.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

Prayan

Ques 3.

In your view, what type of person should be a Gram Panchayat member?

Answer:

The member should be honest, hardworking, good leader, a problem solver, visionary and emphatic.

Ques 4.

Let us suppose that you study in a village school. The school is located next to a highway and students find it difficult to cross the road when they come to school or leave at the end of the day. What are the options to solve this issue? Which institutions in the Panchayati Raj can help you? What can the students do?

Answer:

There may be several options to solve the issue of crossing the highway:

- Construction of speed breakers or zebra crossing.

- Appoint guard to help children cross the road.
- Halting traffic for 10 minutes for children to cross the highway.
- Making of pedestrian crossing.

Since the matters are concerning with Highway (State or National Highway), the Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat along with the Principal of the school can forward this issue to BDO-at the Block level. The BDO can take up this issue to DM-the administrative head of the Zila parishad who can coordinate with state government to solve this issue.

Students can raise this issue through school authorities by making poster, writing letter and raising awareness.