

# NCERT Solutions Class 6 Social Science (Exploring Society India and Beyond) Chapter 11 Grassroots Democracy Part 2 Local Government in Rural Areas

## The Big Question (Page 163)

### Question 1. What are Panchayati Raj institutions?

**Answer:** Panchayati Raj Institutions are local self-government bodies in rural India, established to decentralize governance and empower local communities. They include the Gram Panchayat (village level), Panchayat Samiti (block level), and Zila Parishad (district level). Panchayati Raj Institutions are responsible for local administration, development, and addressing community needs, operating under the framework provided by the Constitutional.

### Question 2. What are their functions?

**Answer:** They handle local issues, including infrastructure, resource management and resolving disputes, ensuring community needs are met effectively.

### Question 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:

### Question 1. How do you think these old maps can be helpful for us? Can they tell us something about the past and the present?

**Answer:** Old maps offer insights into historical geography, showing how landscapes, boundaries, and settlements have evolved over time. They reveal past cultural, economic, and political contexts, helping us understand historical developments and their impact on the present. By comparing old and modern maps, we can trace changes and continuity in regions.

**Question 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, less 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:**

**Question 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. What issues will the Gram Sabha discuss? What challenges could it encounter? What solutions will it propose?**

**Answer: Gram Sabha can discuss following issues:**

- Lack of clean drinking water
- Poor condition of village roads
- Insufficient electricity supply
- Need for a new school building
- Waste management issues

**Challenges that may be encountered by the panchayat are as follows:**

- Limited funds
- Resistance from some villagers to change
- Lack of co-operation from local authorities
- Limited resources and expertise
- Balancing individual interests with collective needs

**Some of the solutions proposed at the panchayat were as follows:**

- Clean drinking water Install new water pumps and pipes and implement rainwater harvesting systems.
- Village roads Repair and maintain existing roads and build new roads to connect remote areas.
- Electricity supply Install solar panels or wind turbines and upgrade existing power infrastructure.

- New school building Raise funds through donations and grants and collaborate with local authorities for support.
- Waste management Implement recycling programs and build a community composting facility.

**Bal Panchayat's role is as follows:**

- Facilitate discussion and decision-making
- Allocate tasks and responsibilities
- Manage funds and resources
- Co-ordinate with local authorities and experts
- Ensure transparency and accountability

**Question 2. What similarities and differences do you notice between the governance system at the Central level and at the Panchayat level? (Page 170)**

**Answer:** The governance systems at the Central level and the Panchayat level in India have both similarities and differences in their structures, functions, and roles. Here's a detailed comparison:

**Similarities:**

- Both levels of governance operate on democratic principles, with elected representatives forming the government. Elections are conducted periodically to elect representatives.
- Both levels function within a decentralized framework, where powers and responsibilities are distributed across different levels of government. Panchayati Raj is a form of decentralization, aimed at bringing governance closer to the rural population.
- Both the Central Government and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are recognized by the Indian Constitution.
- Both levels have a structured hierarchy. At the Central level, there is the President, Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), and the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. At the Panchayat level, there is the Gram Sabha, the Panchayat Samiti, and the Zila Parishad.
- Both levels are involved in financial planning and budgeting. The Central Government has its budget, and Panchayats have their financial resources allocated through various schemes and grants.

## Differences:

- (a) The Central Government operates at a national level, dealing with issues that affect the entire country, such as defense, foreign policy, and national economic policies. Panchayats operate at the local level, focusing on issues specific to rural areas such as local infrastructure, education, and health.
- (b) The Central Government has extensive legislative powers under the Union List, Concurrent List, and Residual Powers. Panchayats have limited legislative powers primarily focused on local self governance and community development, as defined by state laws.
- (c) The Central Government has a broad range of executive powers, implemented through various ministries and departments. Panchayats have executive powers related to local administration and development projects within their jurisdiction.
- (d) The Central Government has a well-defined judiciary, including the Supreme Court, High Courts, and subordinate courts. Panchayats do not have judicial powers, although some states have provisions for Nyaya Panchayats to handle minor civil and criminal cases at the local level.
- (e) The Central Government has significant financial autonomy, with the ability to generate revenue through taxes, duties, and other means. Panchayats have limited financial autonomy and depend largely on grants and funds from the state and central governments.

Understanding these similarities and differences helps to appreciate the unique roles each level of governance plays in the overall administrative framework of India, ensuring both broad national governance and focused local development.

**Question 3. If you get an opportunity to meet a few Panchayat members, what questions would you like to ask them? Discuss in small groups to create a questionnaire. Meet some Gram Panchayat members or invite them to your school. Ask them the questions in your questionnaire and write a short report.**

**Answer: To create a questionnaire:**

- Identify Key Responsibilities: Ask about their main duties in the Panchayat.
- Addressing Needs: Inquire how they tackle village specific issues.
- Successful Projects: Request examples of effective initiatives.
- Challenges: Discuss difficulties faced in project execution.
- Transparency: Explore methods used to ensure accountability.
- Villager Involvement: Learn about villagers' roles in decision-making.
- Children and Education: Ask about handling issues related to children.
- Including Disadvantaged Groups: Find out how marginalised groups are involved.



- Collaboration with Higher Levels: Question their interaction with Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad.

### Questions, Activities and Projects (Page 171):

**Question 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, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad. The key functions of these three tiers are as follows

- Gram Panchayat (Village Level) The Gram Panchayat develops the village and provides basic needs like water, roads and sanitation. It also supports agriculture, health and education in the village.
- Panchayat Samiti (Block Level) The Panchayat Samiti co-ordinates the activities of the Gram Panchayats in its block. It implements development programs and monitors their progress.
- Zilla Parishad (District Level) The Zila Parishad oversees the activities of the Panchayat samitis in its district. It plans and manages resources and funds for the development of the district.

**Question 2. Write a letter to the Sarpanch regarding the issue of plastic bags lying on the roadside in the village.**

**Answer:** Do it yourself

**Question 3. In your view, what type of person should be a Gram Panchayat member?**

**Answer:** An ideal Gram Panchayat member should be dedicated to community welfare, possess strong leadership and communication skills, and understand local issues. They should be empathetic, honest, and willing to listen to villagers, ensuring that decisions serve the community's best interests.

**Question 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:** Solutions include constructing a pedestrian overpass, installing traffic signals, or building a footpath. The Gram Panchayat can address local needs, the Panchayat Samiti can coordinate and secure funds, and the Zila Parishad can oversee district-wide planning. Students can raise awareness and participate in local meetings.

