

Chapter 4

Panchayati Raj

2MARKS

Q1: Explain the significance of a Gram Sabha.

Answer: The Gram Sabha is a crucial institution as it brings together all adults in a Panchayat area, allowing them to directly participate in decision-making. It acts as a forum for discussions on local issues, approves Gram Panchayat's plans, and ensures transparency and accountability in local governance.

Q2: Describe the composition of the Gram Panchayat.

Answer: The Gram Panchayat consists of elected representatives known as Ward Members (Panchs) and the Panchayat President (Sarpanch). The members of the Gram Sabha elect these representatives. Additionally, there is a Secretary, appointed by the government, who manages the proceedings and meetings of the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat.

Q3: How does the Gram Sabha address the issue of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list?

Answer: During the Gram Sabha meeting, concerns are raised about inaccuracies in the BPL list. People whisper and question the inclusion of individuals who may not be genuinely below the poverty line. The Gram Sabha discusses these concerns and ensures that deserving individuals are included in the BPL list.

Q4: What is the role of the Sarpanch during the Gram Panchayat meeting in addressing the water problem?

Answer: The Sarpanch suggests utilizing funds allocated for the maintenance of handpumps to address the water problem. This demonstrates the Sarpanch's role in providing solutions and making decisions during Gram Panchayat meetings.

Q5: How does the Gram Panchayat structure facilitate local governance? (2 marks)

Answer: The Gram Panchayat structure includes elected representatives (Ward Panchs and Sarpanch) and an appointed Secretary. This structure enables the implementation of development programs and ensures that decisions are made collectively, incorporating both elected representatives and government-appointed officials.

Q6: Explain the importance of the Gram Sabha in preventing misuse of power by the Gram Panchayat. (2 marks)

Answer: The Gram Sabha plays a crucial role in keeping the Gram Panchayat accountable. It acts as a check on the Panchayat's actions, preventing misuse of funds or favoritism. By overseeing the elected representatives, the Gram Sabha ensures responsible and transparent governance.

Q7: Discuss the alternative solutions proposed during the Gram Sabha to address the water problem in Hardas village.

Answer: During the Gram Sabha, alternatives such as piping water from the Suru river and constructing an overhead tank are suggested. However, the Gram Panchayat decides to focus on more cost-effective solutions, such as deepening handpumps and cleaning wells, to ensure a sustainable water supply for the village.

4marks

1. What problem did the villagers in Hardas village face? What did they do to solve this problem?

A:The water problem had become very acute. The hand pump water had gone well below the point, up to which the ground had been drilled. They hardly got any water in the taps. Women had to walk 3 km to get the water from the Suru river. They were planning to go ahead with watershed development.

2. What, in your opinion, is the importance of the Gram Sabha? Do you think all members should attend Gram Sabha meetings? Why?

A:Gram Sabha is of great importance because they elect the gram panchayat members. They keep a check on the activities of the gram panchayat so that funds are utilised in the right way and to make sure that all problems and solutions are discussed and solved in the right manner at the right time.

All members should attend the meetings. If not, a few people will not be able to find any solutions to the problems. When all the members are present, any wrongdoings of the gram panchayat can also be taken care of.

3. What is the link between a Gram Sabha and a Gram Panchayat?

A:Gram panchayat members are elected by the gram sabha. The gram panchayat is answerable to the gram sabha. Gram sabha can keep a check on the activities of members of the gram panchayat.

4. Take an example of any one task done by a Panchayat in your area/nearby rural area and find out the following.

a)Why it was taken up

b) Where the money came from

c) Whether or not the work has been completed.

A:Students need to do this task keeping in mind the respective areas where they live.

5. What is the difference between a Gram Sabha and a Gram Panchayat?**Solution 5:**

All members of gram panchayat are elected by members of the gram sabha. All adults above the age of 18 years are members of the gram sabha.

6. Read the following news item.

Nimone is a village on the Chaufula-Shirur Road. Like many others, this village has also been facing a severe water shortage for the last few months and villagers depend on tankers for all their needs. Bhagvan Mahadeo Lad (35) of this village was beaten with sticks, iron rods and axes by a group of seven men. The incident came to light when some villagers brought a badly injured lad to hospital for treatment. The FIR recorded by the police said that he was attacked when he insisted that the water in the tanker must be emptied into the storage tanks. The storage tanks were constructed as part of the water supply scheme by Nimone Gram Panchayat, so that there would be equal distribution of water. However, he alleged that the upper caste men were against this and told him that the tanker water was not meant for the lower castes.

Adapted from Indian Express, May 1, 2004

a. Why was Bhagvan beaten?**Solution a:**

He wanted the tanker water to be emptied into the storage tanks, as a part of the water supply scheme by Nimone Gram Panchayat.

b. Do you think that the above is a case of discrimination? Why?**Solution b:**

It was a clear case of caste discrimination, as he was beaten up by people belonging to an upper caste, who insisted that lower caste people did not have the

rights over the tanker water.

7. Find out more about watershed development and how it benefits an area?

Solution 7:

Watershed development helps conserve water, and it recharges the water in an area. It can even transform the landscape of a place from a barren land to a green meadow in a couple of years.

7 MARKS

Q1: Explain the significance of the Gram Sabha in the Panchayati Raj system. How does it contribute to local governance, and what role does it play in decision-making?

The Gram Sabha, as an integral part of the Panchayati Raj system, holds immense significance in fostering grassroots democracy and ensuring participatory governance. It serves as a forum where all eligible adult residents, possessing the right to vote, come together to discuss, deliberate, and make decisions on matters concerning their village or Panchayat. This inclusive approach to decision-making embodies the essence of democracy, giving every individual a voice in local affairs.

The Gram Sabha contributes to local governance in various ways. Firstly, it acts as a check on the elected representatives, such as the Sarpanch and Ward Members, ensuring accountability and transparency in their actions. By providing a platform for residents to express their concerns, propose solutions, and question the decisions of the Gram Panchayat, the Gram Sabha creates a system of checks and balances crucial for effective governance.

Moreover, the Gram Sabha plays a pivotal role in decision-making. It is the space where plans for the Gram Panchayat's work are presented to the people. This collaborative approach ensures that the decisions made align with the needs and aspirations of the community. The Gram Sabha's role is not limited to approving the Gram Panchayat's work but extends to actively shaping the agenda, policies, and developmental initiatives.

In essence, the Gram Sabha is the embodiment of local democracy, emphasizing the power of community participation in governance. It prevents the misuse of funds, favors, and resources by keeping a vigilant eye on the elected representatives. By fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among the

residents, the Gram Sabha becomes a driving force for sustainable and inclusive development in the Panchayati Raj system.

Q2: Discuss the water-related problems faced by the villagers in Hardas village. Analyze the proposed solutions during the Gram Sabha meeting and the subsequent decisions made by the Gram Panchayat. Do you think these measures are effective in addressing the issue?

Hardas village, like many rural areas, grapples with acute water scarcity, creating significant challenges for its residents. The discussion during the Gram Sabha meeting shed light on the severity of the water-related problems, such as depleting groundwater levels, insufficient water in hand pumps, and the need for women to travel long distances to fetch water from the Suru river.

Various solutions were proposed during the Gram Sabha meeting to address these challenges. Suggestions ranged from piping water from the Suru river and constructing an overhead tank to deepening hand pumps and cleaning wells. The Gram Panchayat, in its subsequent meeting, decided to take immediate actions, such as deepening two hand pumps and cleaning one well, to ensure the village does not go without water.

Additionally, the Sarpanch suggested utilizing funds allocated for the maintenance of hand pumps to complete this work promptly. The Gram Panchayat also demonstrated foresight by considering long-term solutions, such as watershed development, and decided to seek more information on the scheme from the Block Development Officer.

The effectiveness of these measures depends on their thorough implementation. The decision to address immediate needs, like deepening hand pumps, reflects a pragmatic approach to alleviate the immediate crisis. However, the success of long-term solutions, such as watershed development, relies on community participation, proper planning, and coordination with relevant authorities.

In conclusion, while the proposed measures showcase a proactive response by the Gram Panchayat, their effectiveness will be determined by the execution of these plans. Sustainable solutions require a comprehensive approach, including community involvement, proper utilization of funds, and ongoing monitoring to ensure the lasting resolution of the water-related issues in Hardas village

Explain the concept of watershed development mentioned in the text. How does it contribute to solving water-related issues in rural areas, and what are the key components of a successful watershed development program?

Answer:

Watershed development is a comprehensive approach aimed at managing and conserving water resources in a specific geographical area, often referred to as a watershed. In rural areas facing water-related challenges, this strategy involves activities such as planting trees, constructing check-dams, and creating tanks to enhance water conservation and recharge. The government often provides financial support for such initiatives.

The primary goal of watershed development is to address water scarcity issues by maximizing rainwater harvesting and minimizing water runoff. Key components of a successful watershed development program include afforestation to increase green cover, construction of structures like check-dams and tanks to capture rainwater, and soil conservation measures to prevent erosion. Community participation, proper planning, and sustainable agricultural practices are crucial for the program's success.

Q4 Describe the three levels of Panchayats in the Panchayati Raj System. How do these levels interact with each other, and what roles do they play in local governance?

Answer: The Panchayati Raj System comprises three levels of Panchayats: Gram Panchayat (village level), Panchayat Samiti or Janpad Panchayat (block level), and Zila Parishad or District Panchayat (district level). These levels form a hierarchical structure, and each level has specific functions in the system.

Gram Panchayat: It is the basic or village-level Panchayat where residents elect representatives like the Sarpanch and Ward Members. The Gram Panchayat is responsible for local governance within the village, addressing issues such as water supply, roads, and education.

Panchayat Samiti or Janpad Panchayat: Operating at the block level, the Panchayat Samiti oversees several Gram Panchayats. It coordinates development activities, allocates funds, and ensures uniformity in resource distribution among the Gram Panchayats under its jurisdiction.

Zila Parishad or District Panchayat: At the district level, the Zila Parishad oversees the functioning of the Panchayat Samitis. It plays a crucial role in planning and implementing development projects across the district. The Zila Parishad ensures coordination and resource allocation among Panchayat Samitis.

These levels interact through a coordinated planning and execution process. The decisions made at the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat levels are scrutinized and further supported by the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad, ensuring a streamlined approach to local governance.

Q 5: Discuss the role of the Gram Sabha in maintaining transparency and accountability in the Gram Panchayat. Provide examples from the text that illustrate how the Gram Sabha acts as a check on the power of elected representatives.

Answer:

The Gram Sabha acts as a crucial mechanism for maintaining transparency and accountability within the Gram Panchayat. It serves as a forum where residents can question, scrutinize, and influence the decisions and actions of their elected representatives.

In the text, the discussion around finalizing the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list exemplifies the Gram Sabha's role in ensuring accountability. When discrepancies were noted, individuals like Sukhi bai and Soorajmal raised concerns about the inclusion of individuals who did not meet the criteria for being below the poverty line. This open discussion, prompted by the Gram Sabha, compelled the Sarpanch to investigate and take corrective measures, illustrating the Gram Sabha's power to hold elected representatives accountable.

Moreover, the Gram Sabha prevents misuse of funds and resources by keeping a vigilant eye on elected representatives. The example of Saroj raising the issue of Amirchand's influence and questioning the inclusion of Natwar and Birju in the BPL list demonstrates how the Gram Sabha serves as a check on the power dynamics within the Gram Panchayat.

In essence, the Gram Sabha, through its participatory nature, ensures that the Gram Panchayat remains responsive and responsible to the needs and concerns of the community, fostering a culture of transparency and accountability in local governance.

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWERS

1.What is the primary objective of watershed development in rural areas?

- A. Enhancing industrial growth
- B. Managing and conserving water resources
- C. Promoting urbanization
- D. Expanding agricultural land

Answer: B. Managing and conserving water resources

2.Which level of Panchayat oversees several Gram Panchayats and coordinates development activities at the block level?

- A. Gram Panchayat
- B. Panchayat Samiti or Janpad Panchayat
- C. Zila Parishad or District Panchayat
- D. Gram Sabha

Answer: B. Panchayat Samiti or Janpad Panchayat

3.How does the Gram Sabha contribute to maintaining transparency and accountability in the Gram Panchayat

- A. By concentrating power in the hands of a few individuals
- B. By limiting discussions to elected representatives only
- C. By discouraging community participation
- D. By providing a forum for residents to question and influence decisions

Answer: D. By providing a forum for residents to question and influence decisions

Q4:What role does the Gram Sabha play in the Panchayati Raj System?

- A. It manages day-to-day activities of the Gram Panchayat
- B. It elects the Prime Minister for the village
- C. It oversees the work of elected representatives and approves development plans
- D. It enforces local taxes

Answer: C. It oversees the work of elected representatives and approves development plans

Q 5:In the context of the Gram Sabha, why did Saroj suggest Om Prakash's name for inclusion in the BPL list?

- A. Saroj believed Om Prakash was wealthy
- B. Saroj wanted to challenge Amirchand's power
- C. Saroj thought Om Prakash was politically influential
- D. Saroj was biased against Natwar and Birju

Answer: B. Saroj wanted to challenge Amirchand's power

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. It is the **village-level Panchayat** where residents elect representatives like the Sarpanch and Ward Members
2. The **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** list exemplifies the Gram Sabha's role in ensuring accountability.
3. The **Zila Parishad** ensures coordination and resource allocation among Panchayat Samitis
4. **Managing and conserving water resources** is the primary objective of watershed development in rural areas.
5. The Panchayati Raj System comprises three levels **of Panchayats: Gram Panchayat (village level), Panchayat Samiti or Janpad Panchayat (block level), and Zila Parishad or District Panchayat**

summary

The chapter explores the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system, focusing on the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in a village named Hardas. The Gram Sabha, a meeting of all adults in a Panchayat area, plays a crucial role in decision-making and oversight.

The Gram Sabha meeting in Hardas addresses the issues of repairing roads and resolving water shortages. The villagers discuss various solutions, including deepening handpumps, cleaning wells, and exploring watershed development. The importance of the Gram Sabha in approving plans and preventing misuse of funds by the Gram Panchayat is highlighted.

The Gram Panchayat, comprising elected representatives and a secretary appointed by the government, implements development programs for the villages. The chapter discusses the decision-making process within the Gram Panchayat, involving discussions on short-term and long-term solutions to water problems. The importance of the Gram Sabha's approval for Gram Panchayat decisions is emphasized.

The narrative also touches upon the issues related to the below-poverty-line (BPL) list, showcasing the Gram Sabha's role in scrutinizing and rectifying discrepancies. The chapter introduces the three levels of Panchayats—Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti (Block level), and Zila Parishad (District level). These levels create a hierarchical structure for local self-governance.

The concluding section emphasizes the idea of people's participation in the Panchayati Raj system and the significance of extending this participation to Block and District levels. The role of Gram Panchayats in implementing developmental plans is discussed, along with the importance of state-specific laws for Panchayats.

The exercise at the end includes questions that prompt reflection on the problems faced by the villagers, the role of Gram Sabha, the connection between Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, examples of tasks undertaken by Panchayats, the difference between Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, and an analysis of a news item related to discrimination in water distribution