

3. PANCHAYATI RAJ

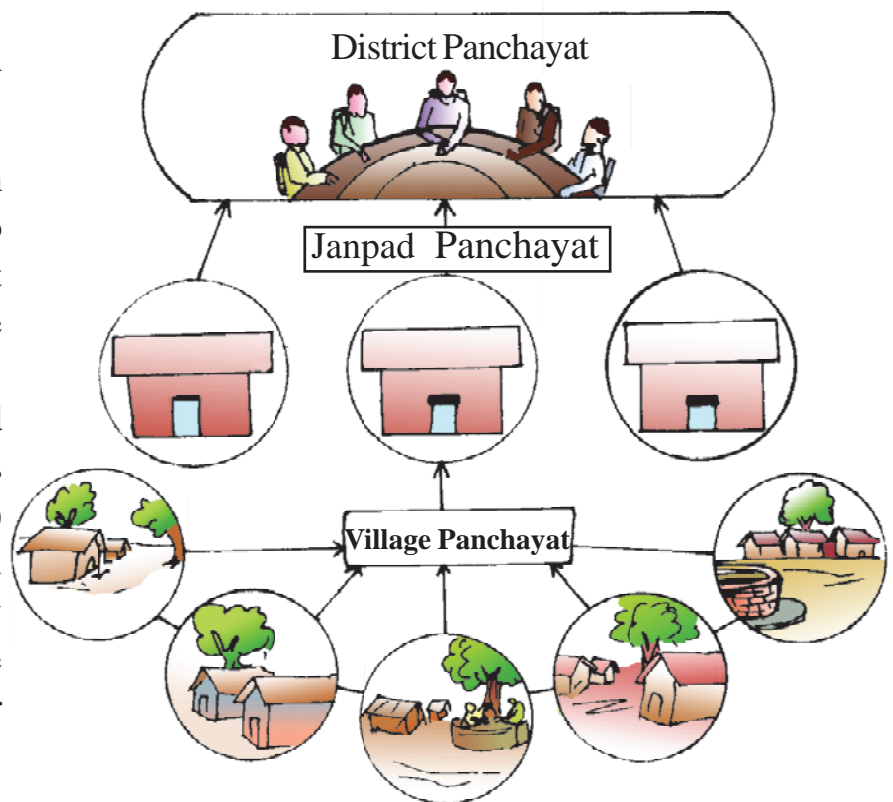
1. How are the roads, water, school, hospital etc. managed in your village or city?
Do you have any problems related to them?
2. What has been done by the village panchayat or municipality to solve these problems?

Today, we shall read about village panchayats, their formation and functions in this lesson.

VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

The social science teacher of class VI of the Kamalpura village asked the students to find out about the panchayat. She gave them a week's time to find out about the panch, sarpanch, upsarpanch, secretary and gram sabha of their village.

The work was distributed in this manner - Neha had to give information about panch. Sandhya would be telling about sarpanch. Jagmohan and Subhash had to find out about the duties and rights of gram (village) sabha. The teacher asked Abhay to find out how gram panchayats are formed and what are their functions.



Three tier Panchayati Raj System

Neha's work was easy, as her sister-in-law was the panch of Madanpur, After dinner, Neha went to her sister-in-law Uma to know about Panch.



WARD AND ELECTION OF A PANCH

- Neha - Bhabhi, we know that you are a panch. But how did you become a panch? Are there more Panchs like you in the panchayat?
- Uma - In any panchayat there are 10 to 20 panchs. All the adults of each wards elect a panch.
- Neha - Bhabhi, what is this ward?
- Uma - The whole area of the gram panchayat is divided into several parts on the basis of its population. These parts are known as wards. The adults of each ward elect one person as their representative or panch. This way every panchayat has about 10 to 20 wards, Now I am the panch of Matapura ward.
- Neha - Uma bhabhi, but tell me how did you become the panch of this ward?
- Uma - Anyone whose age is 21 years or above can contest the election. Those who contest elections are known as the candidates. I had contested from the Matapura ward. When there are more than one contestant then there are elections to choose one of them. The people of the ward cast their votes and whoever gets the maximum votes, become the panch.

But from the Matapura ward, I was the only candidate so there were no elections and I was unanimously elected.

**What are the advantages of dividing the panchayat into wards ?
Discuss with the teacher in the class.**

VOTER

- Neha - Bhabhi, can we also cast our votes?
- Uma - No, you and Sandhya are only 12 years old.

The minimum age of the voter is 18 years. Every village has a voters list. The village head (Patwari) and the teachers of that place go and visit each house and update the list before the elections. Neha gave all this information to the class.

1. Find out how many wards and panches are there in your gram panchayat?

2. Find the name of the panch of your ward?

3. Why was Uma elected unanimously? Tick the correct answer,

- (i) because she was a woman.
- (ii) because majority of the people liked her.
- (iii) because there was no other candidate from her ward.

**Who can be the voters of the Matapura ward?**

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Age	Sex	Name of the ward
1.	Sonal	Ram singh	16	F	Mathpara
2.	Sapana	Ram singh	19	F	Matapura
3.	Shankar	Kamal Bhan	18	M	Matapura
4.	Kallu	Komal Singh	25	M	Matapura
5.	Samina	Afjal	15	F	Matapura

ELECTIONS AFTER FIVE YEARS

Neha asked her bhabhi. Since you have won the election. Will you be a panch for ever?

Uma - No, Panchayat election is held in every 5 years. Every panch is elected for 5 years only. Last panchayat elections were held 2 years ago. I shall be panch for next 3 years only. After that again there will be elections.

**Pic. 3.1 Panchayat Election**

- 1. Discuss in class why Panchs are elected for only for 5 years?**
- 2. Discuss in the class why is a panch not elected forever?**

SARPANCH AND UPSARPANCH / DEPUTY SARPANCH

Sandhya had to find out about sarpanch. She went to the Panchayat Bhawan and talked directly to Kalawati, the Sarpanch.

Sandhya - How did you become the Sarpanch?

Kalawati - Sarpanch is elected just as a panch. The only difference is that while a panch is elected by the voters of a ward, sarpanch is elected by the voters of the whole gram panchayat.

Sandhya - O.K. But as a sarpanch what do you have to do?



Kalawati - Sarpanch is the leader of the panchayat. Every month I call a meeting of all the panchs. I preside over the meeting that is - I conduct the meeting. I have to conduct a meeting of the gram sabha too, where the voters of the gram panchayats are present and decide on the development work, which has to be done. I meet the government officers and arrange for the finances. I have to supervise all the work which is done and monitor the financial accounts too.

Sandhya - You have to do a lot of work. But what happens if you are ill or you have to go out for any personal work? Is the panchayat closed for that period?

Kalawati - No, no, when I am not there, the upsarpanch does the work. He even presides over the meetings in my absence.

Sandhya - Is the upsarpanch also elected by all the people of the village?

Kalawati - No, All the panchs select any one among themselves as the upsarpanch.

What Sandhya had to tell about the Sarpanch to the class, she had written in her copy.

Fill in some of the words which were left out.

1. Voters of a _____ elect a panch, but sarpanch is elected by the voters of the whole _____.
2. All the panchs elect any one among them as the _____.
3. The _____ presides over the meetings in the absence of the sarpanch.
4. The work of the _____ is to preside over the meetings of the panchayat.

MEETING OF A GRAM (VILLAGE) PANCHAYAT

Abhay had the responsibility of finding out the functions of the gram panchayat. He decided to go and see what happens in the panchayat meetings. The meeting had not started when Abhay reached the Panchayat Bhawan. Out of 12 only 5 panches had arrived. Everyone was waiting for the arrival of at least 2 more panches, as the meeting can be



Pic. 3.2 Meeting of Gram Panchayat



started only when there are more than half of the total number of panch present. In Kamalpura panchayat there are 12 panches, so to start the meeting, presence of at least the 7 panches is required.

1. Why is the presence of more than half of total number of panch, necessary to start a meeting?

2. Rooppur panchayat has a total of 18 panches. Presence of how many panch is required to start a meeting there?

After sometime 2-3 more panches came and the meeting started. This meeting was presided by Kalawati - the sarpanch.

First of all the secretary read out the decisions taken in the last meeting and informed what work has been carried out. Then the panch of Paraswara said, the water level of the wells in our village is going down. This way in a couple of months there will be no drinking water in the wells. Villagers want to start water harvesting schemes so that they can store the rain water. Some planning must be done regarding this.

Besides panches, sarpanch and upsarpanch, there is a secretary of the panchayat, Secretary is not elected but is appointed by the government. Besides keeping a record of the minutes and decisions taken in the meetings, a secretary has to keep a record of the finances too. The secretary gets his salary from the government, whereas panch, sarpanch and upsarpanch do not get any salary.

Panch of Changora said - The proposal of constructing a bridge connecting Changora to the main road had been passed in the gram panchayat and sent to the Block Samiti for budget approval. What development has taken place in that case?

Sarpanch Kalawati replied - The approved amount has reached us. Soon you'll have to start the work.

The panch of the Gandhi ward said. There are 4 teachers in our primary school. Only one is teaching for the last one month. 1 teacher is on leave and other 2 are busy in some survey. This way how can there be proper teaching in the school?

Sarpanch promised that she would be taking up the matter with the Block Education officer.

Uma Bai, panch of the Matapura ward said - Malaria and jaundice are widely spread. The ponds and wells of the village have to be cleaned and medicine should be sprayed. I take the responsibility of my ward but I need some money for it.

Then Upsarpanch asked all the panches to take responsibility of their respective wards. After this a proposal regarding construction of a road connecting Mungeli



Pandaria road to Kamalpur was drafted. Everyone signed on it and then the meeting was over by 2 O'clock in the afternoon.

FUNCTIONS OF A GRAM PANCHAYAT

After the meeting Abhay went to the sarpanch Kalawati Bai and said - “I didn’t know that so many things happen in panchayat. I used to think that the only work of the panchayat was to build roads. Can you, please, tell me what are the other functions of the panchayat ?”



Pic. 3.3 Clean Village

Kalawati said - “The list of our functions is very long. But the main function is to keep the village clean, provide drinking water facility, organise the drainage system, construct and maintain the roads, bridges, school buildings and registration of the marriages, births and deaths. Proper functioning of the schools and health services are also monitored by the panchayat. In addition to this the panchayat has to make proposals for the development of the village and help in the execution of Government schemes.”

REVENUE OF THE GRAM PANCHAYAT

Abhay’s next question was - From where does the panchayat get the finances to do all those things?

Kalawati said - It is good, you asked this question.

The state and the central governments give money to the panchayat to perform the above functions. Whatever development works the state and the central governments wish to perform at the village level is done through the panchayat. They give the allotted amount and the panchayat gets that work done. The panchayat can collect money by levying small taxes too.



Pic. 3.4 Village with no proper facilities



Abhay was surprised - Panchayat can levy taxes !

Which taxes ?

Kalawati said - It can levy a tax for cleanliness, shops in the market, shops in the fairs etc. If there are any mines of stones, sand, murram etc. it can collect royalty on it. The panchayat works with this income.

In the following week, gram panchayat was discussed in the Social Science period. Different groups of students told the class what they had found out on the topics given.

Neha told about the elections of the panch. There was a discussion in the class as to why children were not given a right to vote.

Discuss with your teacher about central and state government.

RESERVATION IN PANCHAYAT

Sandhya gave information regarding sarpanch and upsarpanch. She was very proud that the sarpanch of her village was a woman. She explained that this was possible because there is reservation for the women, schedule castes, schedule tribes and other backward classes. That is, in every panchayat there are certain wards from where only women can contest elections, and certain other wards where people belonging to ST, SC and OBC only can contest elections.

Similarly in every development block from certain panchayats only women or people of other reserved group can contest for the post of sarpanch.

Sheikh Imran had a question - Then from other wards can only men or people from general category contest the elections.

Sandhya replied - No, for those unreserved seats anyone can contest - it can be even a woman or a person from SC, ST & OBC.

Champa asked the teacher - Sir, what is the need for reservation? When everyone is equal why can't anyone contest for any post ?

The teacher explained - Reservation is done for that section of the society which is generally poor and weak. Normally they will not be able to win elections and join the process of decision making. It is very essential that they join the decision making process.

If they are not given a chance, these sections of the society will remain neglected and there will never be equality in the society. This is why people belonging to ST, SC and OBC and women are given reservation. It is because of the reservations that



today in every panchayat at least one third of the panches are women, and people of SC, ST and OBC have also become panch and sarpanch.

If in a gram panchayat there are 12 panches then any 4 seats will be reserved for women. Reservation means that no male candidate can contest for that post. But it does not mean that a woman cannot contest for general seats. Similarly, some seats are reserved for the SC, ST and OBC, from where people belonging to the general category cannot contest, but SC, ST and OBC can contest for general seats too.

1. Discuss in the class if the aims of reservations have been achieved in your area or not.

2. Find out whether the post of sarpanch is reserved in your gram panchayat or not. If yes, then for which section?

GRAM SABHA

Now it was the turn of Subhash. He had found out about the gram sabha.

Subhash said & you all know that only last week there was a meeting of the gram sabha of our village. I attended that meeting and got the information.

Just then Ranjan enquired & Can children participate in the meeting of gram sabha? Subhash made it clear that anyone can attend the meeting, but only the adults have the right to vote.

Then he began to explain about the gram sabha. When I had reached the meeting had already started. The first issue was the approval of the list of those families which come below the poverty line. Actually there is a scheme in the state government that those families which are below the poverty line will be given a gas stove and a cylinder and also a monthly stipend. So such families were being selected. As Bholakaka was the panch, he started reading the names of those families which were below the poverty line. He read out about fifteen names. Out of these there were objections on five names by some people. Somebody said & Lakhan is not poor, he has a pucca house and a motorcycle. Bholakaka replied that he has taken these things on loan. Still people felt that by his salary he will be able to repay the loans. So his name was struck off. Similarly, the names of 4 more people struck off.

Then there was discussion on the work done by the village panchayat. 'Extra rooms for the school' was discussed. The extra room which was to be built is incomplete and no work is done. Bholakaka said that the contractor has fallen ill. Then the people said - if he is not well then another contractor should be given the charge. The work should be completed before the rainy season. Bholakaka assured the panchayat that the work will be done. The meeting continued for next two to three



Pic. 3.5. Meeting of a Gram Sabha

hours. Several issues were discussed. Money received and spent by the gram panchayat was also discussed.

Subhash further said that the work which the panchayat wanted to do, had to be proposed in the gram Sabha. There would be discussions on it and then the proposal is approved. Without the approval of the gram sabha, panchayat cannot do any work. It has to inform the members of the panchayat about its progress from time to time.

Kekti, a student of the class was very happy and said that through the gram sabha everyone from the village can take part in the development work and can keep a watch on it too.

Discuss with your teacher about Below poverty line

BLOCK SAMITI (JANAPAD PANCHAYAT)

Our panchayati raj is a three level system. Gram panchayat, Janapad panchayat (Block Samiti) and District panchayat are interlinked. These three institutions work together for the development of the villages.

FORMATION OF THE BLOCK SAMITI

Like the Gram Panchayat even Block Samitis are formed through elections. The members of the Block Samiti are elected by the voters of that area. Besides these



members who are elected, the local MLAs, MPs and members of the Rajya Sabha are the nominated members. Representatives of the Co-operative Bank are also the co-opted members of the Block Samiti.

To look after the affairs of the Block Samiti its members elect a Chairman called Pramukh and a Vice-Chairman called Up-Pramukh from among themselves. Like panchayat, here too there is a provision of reservation for women and persons belonging to SC, ST and OBC. Out of the two posts, one is represented by the reserved class.

1. Which Block Samiti is your panchayat a part of ?

2. From your area who is the member of the Block Samiti?

3. Ask your teacher the meaning of the following words:

Vote, nominated and co-opted.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BLOCK SAMITI

The most important function of the block samiti is to get grants from the State government for the gram panchayat. The Block Samiti supervises the work of the gram panchayats within the block.

The Block veterinary Samiti organizes the services of specialists like agriculturists, educationists, veterinary doctors etc. It conducts welfare programmes like family planning, vocational training, sports etc. for the women, youth, children, weak and disabled persons. Now a days it also appoints some Shiksha karmis, Panchayat karmis, and Swasthya karmis.

SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR THE BLOCK SAMITIS/JANPAD PANCHAYAT

The Block Samiti has several sources of revenue for the development of its area. It can levy taxes on the houses, land, shops in the market, fairs etc. in its block and collect revenue. Secondly, it gets financial help and grants from the State Government.

At the Block Samiti the highest post is that of the Chief Executive officer and his main work is to see that the decisions of the gram panchayats are implemented.



DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

District panchayat is the third and the highest link of the panchayati raj. It is formed at the district level and all the block samitis come under its jurisdiction.

FORMATION OF DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

Just as block samitis, the members of the District panchayat are also elected for a period of 5 years by the voters of that district. One person is directly elected by the adult franchise on the population of every 50,000 people. The minimum number of the members of the district panchayat is 10 and the maximum is 35. The MLA, MP and members of the Rajya Sabha are also the nominated members of the district panchayat. The president of the District Co-operative Bank is also its nominated member. Even in the district panchayat there is reservation for women, SC, ST and OBC.

Discuss with your teacher about District Co-operative bank

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE MEMBER OF THE DISTRICT PANCHAYAT FROM YOUR AREA?

The members of the district panchayat elect a president and a vice-president from among themselves. Here one post is represented by the reserved class. If the president or the vice-president does not perform their work properly, he/she can be removed from the post by passing a no-confidence motion.

FUNCTION OF DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

The main function is to supervise the work done by gram panchayats and block samitis. District Panchayat has to organize the finances for them. It has to co-ordinate activities between government departments for the implementation of the various schemes of the government. District panchayat can appoint people on some posts.

SOURCES OF REVENUE OF DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

Write the name of the chief executive officer of zila panchayat in your district

The main source of revenue are the grants given by the State government. Besides this it can collect taxes on houses, shops, organizing fares etc.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The state government appoints a chief executive officer who supervises the implementation of the decisions taken by the district panchayat.



EXERCISE

I. Fill in the blanks.

1. The minimum age of a candidate must be _____ years to contest elections of the panchayat.
2. Person less than _____ years of age cannot cast his vote.
3. The secretary of the panchayat keeps a _____ of the functions of the panchayat.
4. The members of the panchayat have to give details of the work done in the _____.
5. Members of the district panchayat are elected for _____ years.
6. The highest link of the panchayati raj is _____.
7. The functions of _____ is to implement the programmes of the government at the district level.
8. Chief Executive Officer of the District is appointed by _____.

II. Correct the following sentences.

1. The Sarpanch of every village must be a woman.
2. Any person living in the area of the panchayat can caste his vote to elect the sarpanch.
3. The secretary of the village panchayat is elected by the voters of one ward.
4. Upsarpanch conducts the meetings of the panchayat.
5. Sarpanch of the village panchayat is a government officer.
6. Public elects a panchayat worker by using their right to vote.
7. Every-citizen of a village is the member of the village panchayat.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. How is Gram Panchayat formed?
2. How is a Sarpanch elected?
3. How is an upsarpanch elected?



4. What are the advantages of reservation?
Do you think that there should be reservation for specific group?
5. If the panch of your ward wants to get a bridge constructed, what will he have to do?
6. Write the 4 important functions of the gram panchayat.
7. What are the sources of revenue of the panchayat?
8. Write 3 rights of the Gram Sabha.
9. Besides the elected members who are the members of the district panchayat?
10. Which is the most important function of the district panchayat?
12. How is the president of the District panchayat elected?

IV. Find out from your teacher or your family members:

If your elder sister is married and goes to a distant village can she cast her vote in the panchayat elections of your village ?

