

CBSE Class-12 Sociology Test Paper-03
Story of Indian Democracy

General Instruction:

- Question 1-5 carries two marks each.
 - Question 6-8 carries four marks each.
 - Question 9-10 carries six marks each.
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1. Discuss about Gandhiji's opinion on the local self-government.
2. What is the 73rd Constitutional Amendment about?
3. Why should Panchayats be given powers and authority?
4. Mention the powers and responsibility that were delegated to the Panchayat.
5. What are the social welfare responsibilities of the Panchayats?
6. What are the main income sources of the Panchayats?
7. Describe about the innovative modes of communicating the strength of the Panchayati Raj system to illiterate women.
8. Illustrate the tradition of grassroot democratic functioning in many tribal areas.
9. Describe the structure of the three tier system of Panchayati Raj Institution.
10. Describe the importance of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments that ushered in the grassroots democracy or decentralised governance.

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1. The concept of local government was dear to Gandhiji. He envisaged each village as a self-sufficient unit conducting its own affairs and saw gram-swarajya to be an ideal model to be continued after independence.
2. The 73rd Amendment act provided constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It is compulsory now for local self-government bodies in rural and municipal areas to be elected every five years. More importantly, control of local resources is given to the elected local bodies.
3. According to the Constitution, Panchayats should be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. It thus, requires all state governments to revitalise local representative institution.
4. The following powers and responsibility were delegated to the Panchayats:
 - i. To prepare plans and schemes for economic development.
 - ii. To promote schemes that will enhance social justice.
 - iii. To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.
 - iv. To help in the devolution of governmental responsibilities, especially that of finances to local authorities
5. The Social welfare responsibilities of the Panchayats include the maintenance of burning and burial grounds, recording statistics of births and deaths, establishment of child welfare and maternity centres, control of cattle pounds, propagation of family planning and promotion of agricultural activities.
6. The main income of the Panchayats is from:
 - i. Tax levied on property, profession, animals, vehicles, cess on land revenue and rentals.
 - ii. The resources are further increased by the grants received through the Zilla Panchayat.
 - iii. It is also considered compulsory for Panchayat offices to put up boards outside their offices, listing the breakup of funds received, and utilisation of the financial aid received.
 - iv. This exercise was taken up to ensure that people at the grassroot level should have the 'right to information' – opening all functioning to the public eye. People had the

right to scrutinise allocation of money. And ask reasons for decisions that were taken for the welfare and development activities of the village.

7. Pictorial pictures on the 'phad', accompanied with folk music were useful tools to convey the message for able governance and participation and were used as innovative modes of communicating the strength of the Panchayati Raj system to illiterate women.

This innovative method of storytelling was very affective in bringing awareness to unlettered women. Most importantly the campaign conveyed the message that it was not enough to merely vote, or to stand for election, or to win. But important to know why one is voting for a particular person, what are the traits to look for, and what does he or she stand for. The value for integrity is also emphasised through the story and song media of the 'phad'.

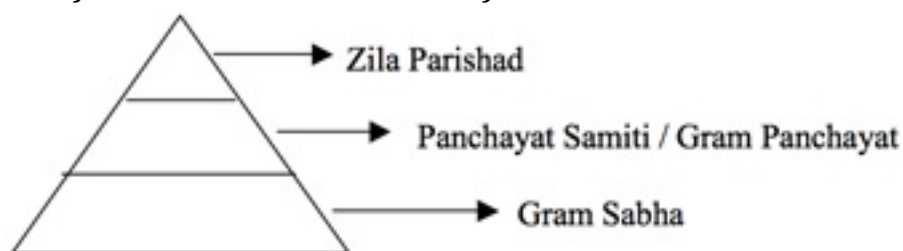
8. Many tribal areas have had a rich tradition of grassroot democratic functioning. This can be illustrated with the example from Meghalaya.

All the three major ethnic tribal groups, namely, the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos have their own traditional political institutions that have existed for hundreds of years.

These political institutions were fairly well-developed and functioned at various tiers, such as the village level, clan level and state level. For instance, in the traditional political system of the Khasis each clan had its own council known as the 'Durbar Kur' which was presided over by the clan headman.

Though there is a long tradition of grassroot political institutions in Meghalaya, a large chunk of tribal areas lie outside the provisions of the 73rd Amendment. This may be because the concerned policy makers did not wish to interfere with the traditional tribal institutions.

9. The structure of the three tier system of Panchyati Raj Institution is like a pyramid. At the base of the structure stands the unit of democracy or Gram Sabha followed by the Panchayat Samiti or Gram Panchayat and then the Zila Parishad.



This consists of the entire body of citizens in a village or grama. It is this general body that elects the local government and charges it with specific responsibilities. The Gram Sabhas ideally ought to provide an open forum for discussions and village-level

development activities and play a crucial role in ensuring inclusion of the weaker sections in the decision-making processes.

The 73rd Amendment provided a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all states having a population of over twenty lakhs. It became mandatory that election to these bodies be conducted every five years. It provided reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and thirty-three percent seats for women. It constituted District Planning Committee to prepare drafts and develop plans for the district as a whole.

10. In the year 1992, grassroots democracy or decentralised governance was ushered in by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This act provided constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It is compulsory now for local self-government bodies in rural and municipal areas to be elected every five years. More importantly, control of local resources is given to the elected local bodies.

The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution ensured the reservation of one third of the total seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies in both the rural and urban areas. Out of this, 17 per cent seats are reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes. This amendment is significant as for the first time it brought women into elected bodies which also bestowed on them, decision making powers.

One third of the seats in local bodies, gram Panchayats, village Panchayats, municipalities, city corporations and district boards are reserved for women. The 1993-94 elections, soon after the 73rd amendment brought in 800,000 women into the political processes in a single election and that was a big step indeed in enfranchising women.