

Revision Notes
Class-6 Social Science - Civics
Chapter 05 – Panchayat Raj

We all know that in the cities, the government positions several specific people from the locales that are called the representatives of the city. They are the ones who are responsible for listening to the demands and concerns rose by the people of the city and take the necessary actions. Similar to that, the rural areas of India also have a regulatory body called the Gram Panchayat where representatives of the village are elected and perform activities to serve the people of the village. CBSE Class 6 Social Science (Political Science) Chapter 5 introduces us to the present administrative system of rural India- the Panchayat Raj.

Gram Sabha:

- The Gram Sabha meeting in the Hardas village is being attended by everyone in the village.
- The Gram Sabha at Hardas village is holding its first meeting after the election of the new Gram Panchayat.
- The Gram Sabha meeting of the village begins with the panchayat president addressing the problems that are being faced by the people of Hardas village in regards to its roads.
- The Panchayat President is also known in the village as the Sarpanch of Hardas village.
- The Sarpanch is being joined in the meeting by the other members of the Hardas village panchayat who are known as the Panch.
- The Gram Sabha meeting begins with discussions about the plan on repairing the village road that connects Hardas village to the main highway.
- After that discussion, the meeting takes on the subject of the water and water shortages that are being faced by the village.
- The Gram Sabha is a meeting where all adults who live in the area covered by a Panchayat.
- Every village Panchayat is divided into wards that are similar to areas.

- Each of these wards or areas elects a representative who is known as the Ward member or Panch.
- The Sarpanch of the Gram Sabha is elected by all the members of the Gram Sabha and is the Panchayat President.
- The Gram Panchayat is, therefore, formed by the Ward Panch and the Sarpanch of the village.
- The duration of the Gram Panchayat for enjoying its governance over the villagers is for five years.
- The Gram Panchayat also contains a secretary of the organization.
- This secretary also acts as the secretary of the Gram Sabha.
- The secretary, however, is not elected by the people or the Panchs of the village, and that person is appointed by the Government of India instead.
- The primary job of the secretary is to call the meeting of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat, along with keeping a record of the village meetings and proceedings.
- The Gram Sabha is a key factor in making the Gram Panchayat play its role and be responsible.
- The Gram Sabha is the place in a village where all plans for the work of the Gram Panchayat concerning the village are placed before the villagers.
- The Gram Sabha prevents the Panchayat from doing wrong things like misusing money or favoring certain people in the village over others.
- Therefore, the Gram Sabha plays an important role in keeping an eye on the representatives of the village wards and in making them responsible to the villagers who elected them.

The Gram Panchayat:

- The Gram Panchayat meets regularly and one of its main tasks is to implement development programs for all villages that come under it.
- The work of the Gram Panchayat has to be approved by the Gram Sabha.
- In some states, Gram Sabhas form committees like construction and development.
- These committees serve as organization bodies that work together with the Gram Sabha members and are approved by the Gram Panchayat.
- Gram Panchayat works to construct and maintain water sources, roads, drainage, school buildings, and common property resources.

- It is also responsible for levying and collecting local taxes from the villagers.
- Other responsibilities of the Gram Panchayat also include executing government schemes that are related to the generation of employment among the people of the village.
- In the case of the Hardas Gram Panchayat, the meeting was held primarily for the water crisis that was faced by the people of that village.
- The Gram Panchayat members first discussed the suggestion to deepen the two hand pumps that are being used by the villagers every day to pump water for their houses.
- The other suggestion was to clean one of the hand pumps well so that the village would not go without drinkable water.
- In response to these two suggestions, the Sarpanch of Hardas village suggested that since the Panchayat had received some money for the maintenance of handpumps, that could be utilized to resolve the problem regarding water.
- This suggestion was agreed on by the members and the decision was recorded by the Secretary.
- The members of the Gram Panchayat then went on to discuss the options that were available to them which would provide a long-term solution to this crisis in Hardas village.
- The Gram Sabha members were expected to ask them questions at the next meeting.
- The watershed program was questioned by some Panchs of the Gram Panchayat and asked whether it would result in a substantial difference to the water level in the village.
- Following this, a lot of discussions arose about the members of the Gram Panchayat.
- The Gram Panchayat finally decided to approach the Block Development Officer to get more information on the scheme.

Three Levels of Panchayats:

- The Panchayati Raj System is a process through which people participate in their own government.
- In the rural areas of India, the Gram Panchayat is the first tier of the level of a democratic government.

- A democratic government is the form of government in which the people of a country or a nation have the right to elect their country's representatives through general voting.
- The Panch and the Gram Panchayat are answerable to the Gram Sabha because it is the members of the Gram Sabha who elected them.
- This idea of people's participation in the Panchayati Raj system extends to two other levels.
- One of these two other levels are- the Block level. This is called the Janpad Panchayat or the Panchayat Samiti.
- This type of level contains numerous Gram Panchayats under it.
- Above this level of Panchayat Samiti, the District Panchayat exists which is often called the Zila Parishad in local languages.
- The work of the Zila Parishad is to make actual development plans at the district or the Zila level of the village(s) it falls under.
- The Zila Parishad can regulate the money distribution among all the Gram panchayats in the district with the help of the Panchayat Samitis.
- Within the many guidelines that are present in the Indian Constitution, each of the states in the country is entitled to have its own laws with regards to the Gram Panchayats. The main objective of this provision is to provide more and more space for the people of the villages in the villages and to let them participate in the system to empower them to raise their own voices.

Important Questions and Answers:

1. What do you mean by a Gram Sabha?

Ans: A Gram Sabha can be defined as the meeting that is held at every village or rural area in the states of India, where all the adults of the village participate to discuss any concerning issue of the village or to offer any new implementation in the village. The adults who can participate in the Gram Sabha must live in the area that is covered by the Panchayat of any one village or a few villages. The Gram Sabha also allows all individuals of a village to be a member of the Gram Sabha as long as they can vote.

2. In the case of Hardas Village, what were the problems that were discussed?

Ans: In case of the first Gram Sabha meeting that was held by the new Gram Panchayat of the Hardas Village, the problem that was first dealt with was the planning of the repairing of the road that connects the Hardas village to the main highway. Apart from that, the other problem that was discussed in the Gram Sabha meeting was the subject of water and water shortages in the village that was affecting the people of Hardas village. Since the availability of safe drinking water was starting to diminish in the village and the village was facing water shortages, this problem was discussed in the meeting.

3. Describe the classification of a village Panchayat.

Ans: The village Panchayat is classified into different wards for every village in the districts of India. Each of the wards comprises smaller areas and segments within the village. Each of these wards elects their respective representatives who are known as the Panch or the Ward Members. All the members of the Gram Sabha elect a Sarpanch who is the President of the Panchayat. Therefore, the village Panchayat is formed by these Ward Panchs and the Gram Sarpanch. This regulatory body is elected for a standard term of five years. Apart from this, the Gram Panchayat also consists of the Secretary of the Gram Sabha.

4. What was the conclusion that was reached in the Gram Sabha in case of Hardas village?

Ans: From the discussions that were followed in the first meeting of the Gram Panchayat in the Hardas village, the Gram Sabha addressed the problem of the village that was regarding the water crisis that was faced by the villagers. Due to a shortage of drinkable water in the village, the Gram Panchayat decided to resolve this problem and it was suggested that the two hand pumps of the village be deepened along with cleaning one hand pump well. This decision was agreed upon and recorded. Then the Gram Panchayat decided to approach the Block Development Officer of the village to figure out any long-term solution to this problem.

5. What are the tasks of a Gram Panchayat?

Ans: The tasks of the Gram Panchayat include the construction and the maintenance of the water resources, roads, drainage systems, school buildings in villages and other common property resources. Therefore, the construction and maintenance of public properties are important tasks for a Gram Panchayat. Similarly, the levying and collection of the local taxes from the people of the village is also a task of the Gram Panchayat. Apart from these, the Gram Panchayat is also responsible for the execution of government schemes which are related to the generation of employment among the villagers. Therefore, the Gram Panchayat is responsible for taxation and government schemes in villages as well.