# Chapter 11: Grassroots Democracy Part 2: Local Government in Rural Areas

## Questions — Questions, Activities and Projects

**Q1** Name the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system. What are the key functions of each tier?

SOLUTION

The Panchayati Raj system has three tiers:

1. Gram Panchayat (village level): The base tier, closest to the people. Its members are elected by the Gram Sabha — the group of adult voters of the village. It addresses local needs like roads, water, schools and sanitation, and is headed by a Sarpanch (or Pradhan). It is assisted by a Panchayat Secretary and, in many areas, a Patwari who maintains land records.

2. Panchayat Samiti / Block Panchayat (block level): The middle tier. It collects development plans from all the Gram Panchayats in the block and presents them at higher levels to secure funds for development projects and government schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

3. Zila Parishad / District Panchayat (district level): The top tier. It oversees all panchayat activities across the district, covering agriculture, housing, roads, water resources, education, health care, social welfare and cultural activities.

Answer: The three tiers are: Gram Panchayat (village), Panchayat Samiti (block), and Zila Parishad (district). Together they manage local issues — from roads and water to education and health — at three different levels, from the village up to the district.

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**Q2** Write a letter to the Sarpanch regarding the issue of plastic bags lying on the roadside in the village.

SOLUTION

A letter to the Sarpanch should include the following:

To,
The Sarpanch,
Gram Panchayat, [Village Name]

Subject: Problem of plastic bags on the roadside

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am a student of Class 6 living in our village. I am writing to bring to your attention the problem of plastic bags lying scattered on the roadside. They block drains, harm animals and make the village look unclean.

I request the Gram Panchayat to arrange dustbins at key spots, organise a clean-up drive, and put up notices asking people not to throw plastic bags on the road. Banning single-use plastic bags in the village market would also help.

I hope the Gram Panchayat will take up this issue at the next Gram Sabha meeting.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Village Name]

Answer: The letter should be addressed to the Sarpanch, describe the problem (plastic bags on the roadside causing dirt and health hazards), and request the Gram Panchayat to arrange dustbins, organise clean-up drives, and discourage the use of plastic bags — ideally by raising it at the Gram Sabha.

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Q3 In your view, what type of person should be a Gram Panchayat member?

SOLUTION

The chapter describes the Panchayat as a form of self-government meant to bring governance closer to the people and ensure the benefits of government schemes reach the grassroots level.
It also shows examples of Sarpanchs who worked for rainwater harvesting, children's rights, education and sanitation — placing the village's needs above personal gain.
Based on this, a good Gram Panchayat member should be honest and committed to serving the village, willing to listen to everyone including women, children and disadvantaged groups, aware of the village's real problems (water, roads, schools, sanitation), and able to work with others to find practical solutions.

Answer: A Gram Panchayat member should be honest, hardworking, and genuinely committed to the village's welfare. They should listen to all villagers — including women and children — and work together to solve local problems like water, roads and education.

Q4 Suppose you study in a village school located next to a highway. Students find it difficult to cross the road when coming to school or leaving at the end of the day. What are the options to solve this issue? Which institutions in the Panchayati Raj can help? What can the students do?

SOLUTION

Options to solve the problem include: building a footpath or a pedestrian crossing (zebra crossing) near the school, putting up traffic signs or speed-breaker humps, or requesting a traffic constable to be posted during school hours.

Panchayati Raj institutions that can help:
The Gram Panchayat is the first point of contact — students and parents can raise this issue at the Gram Sabha, where all adult voters discuss and decide on local problems. The Gram Panchayat can then take up road-safety measures or pass a resolution.
If the highway is a larger road, the Panchayat Samiti at the block level or the Zila Parishad at the district level may need to be involved, as they oversee road maintenance and larger development works.

What students can do: Students can write a letter or petition to the Sarpanch or Gram Panchayat. They can ask their teachers to raise the issue at the next Gram Sabha meeting. They can also form a small group to speak at the Bal Sabha, where children's voices are heard in child-friendly panchayats.

Answer: Students can raise the road-safety issue at the Gram Sabha through the Gram Panchayat, which can arrange a pedestrian crossing, speed-breakers or traffic signs. If the road is bigger, the Panchayat Samiti or Zila Parishad can help. Students can write to the Sarpanch or speak at a Bal Sabha meeting.