

3. Rural Local Government Bodies

3.1 The Gram Panchayat

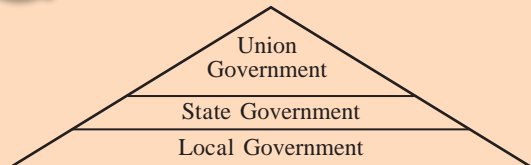
3.2 The Panchayat Samiti

3.3 The Zilla Parishad

Local government bodies play an important role in the regulation of social life. In our country, along with local bodies, the Union Government and the State Government also participate in the work of regulation. The local government bodies are broadly classified as rural and urban local bodies. In this chapter, we will learn about the rural local government bodies. The Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad are the rural local government bodies that are collectively known as the 'Panchayati Raj Institutions'.

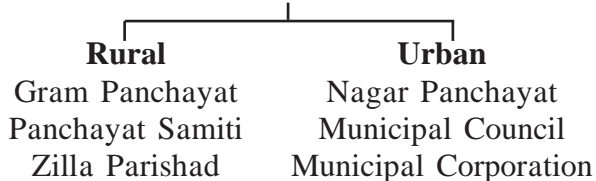


Do you know ?



The administration in our country is carried on at three levels. The administration for the entire country is carried out by the Union Government. Subjects such as defence, foreign affairs, currency, etc. are the jurisdiction of the Union Government. At the second level is the State Government. The State Government of Maharashtra makes laws related to law and order, health, education, etc. The local government bodies work at the third level.

Local Government Bodies



3.1 Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat looks after the administration of the village. If the population of a village is less than 500, two or more such villages come under one Gram Panchayat. It is then called a 'Group Gram Panchayat'. The Gram Panchayat carries out the functions relating to water supply, electricity, registration of births, deaths and marriages.

The office bearers and officers of the Gram Panchayat

Sarpanch : The elections to a Gram Panchayat are held every five years. The elected members elect a Sarpanch and Deputy Sarpanch from among themselves. The meetings of the Gram Panchayat are held under the chairmanship of the Sarpanch. It is his responsibility to implement the development schemes of the village. The members of the Gram Panchayat can bring a motion of no confidence against a Sarpanch who is not carrying out his responsibilities properly. In the absence of the Sarpanch, the Deputy Sarpanch looks after the work of a Gram Panchayat.

Gram Sevak : He is the secretary of the Gram Panchayat. He is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad. His main function is to look after the day to day functioning of the Gram Panchayat, to explain its development schemes to the residents of the village, etc.

Gram Sabha : The assembly of all the voters of the village or rural area is the Gram Sabha. It is the most important organization of the people at the local level.

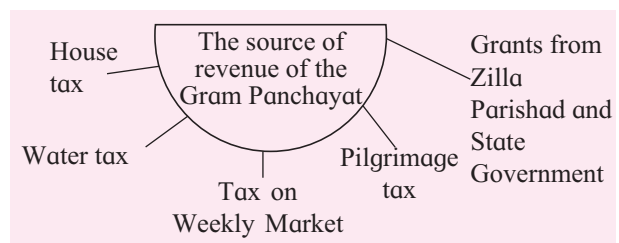
It is binding to hold at least six meetings of the Gram Sabha in each financial year. The responsibility of calling

the meetings of the Gram Sabha is with the Sarpanch. In the first meeting of each financial year, the Gram Sabha discusses the annual report and accounts submitted by the Gram Panchayat. The suggestions of the Gram Sabha are conveyed to the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Sabha gives sanction to the development schemes proposed by the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Sabha has the authority to decide upon which individuals deserve the benefits of Government schemes.

Women’s participation in the Gram Sabha : A meeting of the women of a village is held before the meeting of the Gram Sabha. Here, women feel free to discuss a variety of issues. During the

Gram Sabha, they speak with greater concern about issues such as drinking water, prohibition, employment, fuel, health, etc. They also suggest measures for bringing about necessary changes.

The source of revenue of the Gram Panchayat : The Gram Panchayat carries out many schemes and programmes for the welfare of the village. For this purpose, it requires money. The Gram Panchayat raises these funds through different taxes.

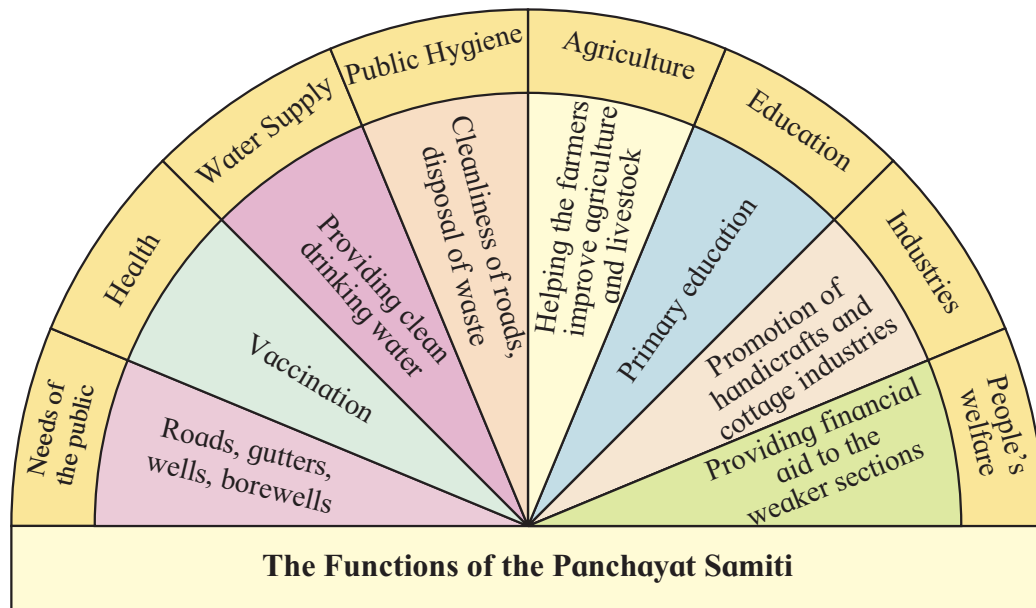


3.2 Panchayat Samiti

All the villages within a taluka form a development block. The body that looks after the functioning of the development block is the Panchayat Samiti. It also acts as a link between the Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat.

The office bearers of the Panchayat Samiti

Samiti : Elections to the Panchayat Samiti are held every five years. The elected members elect from among themselves, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti. The Chairman has the responsibility of calling



the meetings and conducting the business of the meetings. In the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman presides over the meetings.

The Functions of the Panchayat Samiti: The Panchayat Samiti prepares a plan of the schemes to be implemented in the development block. It is binding on the Panchayat Samiti to hold at least one meeting every month.

The Panchayat Samiti receives a certain amount of money from the district funds. It also receives grants from the State Government to carry out the development schemes of the development block.

3.3 Zilla Parishad

Every District has a Zilla Parishad. At present, the State of Maharashtra has 36 districts but only 34 Zilla Parishads. The reason is that Mumbai City District and Mumbai Suburban District do not have a rural population. Therefore, they do not have Zilla Parishads.

The office-bearers of the Zilla Parishad : Elections to the Zilla Parishad are held every five years. The elected representatives choose a President and a Vice-President from among themselves.

The President of the Zilla Parishad presides over the meetings of the Zilla Parishad. He exercises control over business conducted during the meetings. He also controls the financial transactions of the Zilla Parishad.

He has the authority to undertake appropriate expenditure from the Zilla Parishad's funds. The Vice-President carries out these duties in the absence of the President.



Do you know ?

How does the Zilla Parishad function?

The work of the Zilla Parishad is carried out through different committees - the Finance Committee, Agriculture Committee, Education Committee, Health Committee, Water Management and Sanitation Committee, etc. The Women and Child Welfare Committee takes up issues related to problems faced by women and children.

Chief Executive Officer : The decisions taken by the Zilla Parishad are implemented by the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad. He is appointed by the State Government.



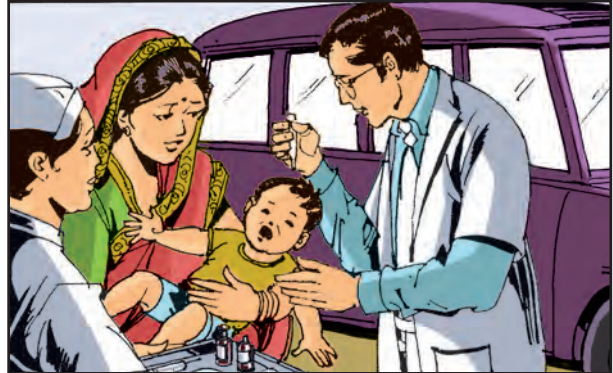
What would you do?

Imagine that you are the Chief Executive Officer of a Zilla Parishad. To which development plans would you give priority in your district?

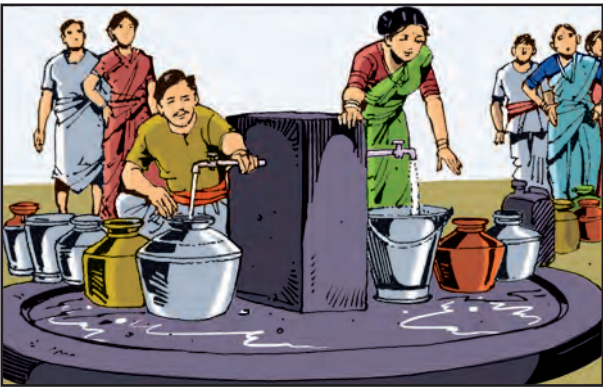
Functions of the Zilla Parishad



Education Facilities



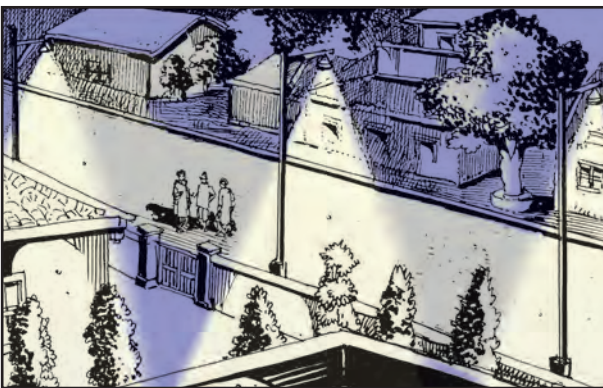
Health Facilities



Water Supply



Provision of Seeds



Electricity



Tree Plantation in the Village



What would you do?

Where would you tell Dinesh and Naina to go for the following things ?

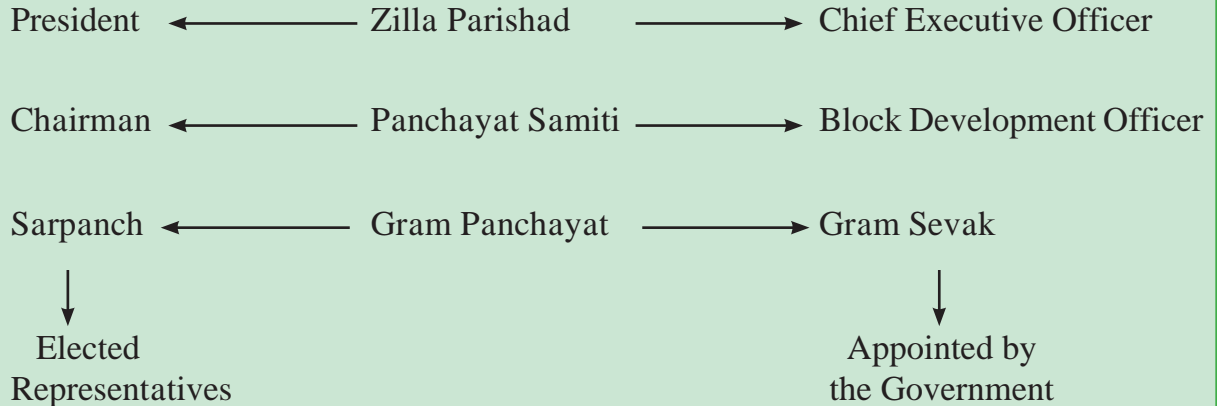
- To get their younger sibling vaccinated
- To accompany their father to get the 7/12 extract
- To learn about the use of a new manure
- To complain against contaminated water supply
- To get a birth certificate
- To get the income / caste certificate



Do you know ?

Our Constitution was amended in 1992 by the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act. These amendments have granted a constitutional status to the rural and urban local government bodies. It has also given them more powers to develop their respective areas more efficiently. The number of subjects under their jurisdiction were also increased. In order to enable them to work effectively, their sources of revenue have also been increased.

Panchayati Raj System at a Glance

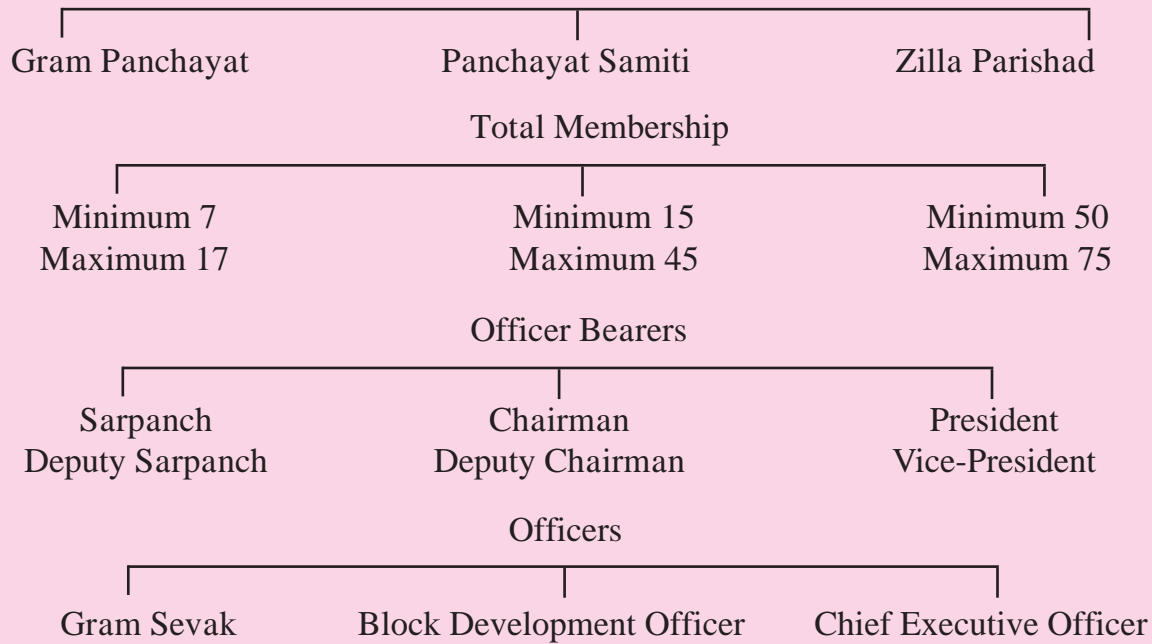


Do you know ?

Who can contest elections ?

In order to get elected to the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad, candidates must fulfil certain conditions of eligibility. For example, he/she should be a citizen of India. He/She should have completed 21 years of age. The person's name should be enrolled in the local voters list. These conditions also apply to the urban local government bodies.

Local Government Bodies – Rural



Exercise

1. Put a tick (✓) in the right box.

- (1) The looks after the local administration of the village.
 Gram Panchayat Panchayat Samiti Zilla Parishad
- (2) It is binding to hold at least meetings of the Gram Sabha in each financial year.
 Four Five Six
- (3) At present, there are districts in Maharashtra.
 34 35 36

2. Make a list of the functions of the Panchayat Samiti.

3. What is your opinion?

- (1) The Gram Panchayat levies various taxes.
- (2) The number of Zilla Parishads is less than the total number of districts in Maharashtra.

4. Complete the Table.

My Taluka, My Panchayat Samiti.

- (1) Name of the Taluka
- (2) The name of the Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti

- (3) The name of the Deputy Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti
- (4) The name of the Block Development Officer
- (5) The name of the Block Education Officer

5. Write a brief note on

- (1) The Sarpanch
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer

Project

- (1) Organize a mock Gram Sabha and enact the roles of the Sarpanch, members of the Gram Panchayat, voters, Gram Sevak.
- (2) Make a chart depicting the possible structure of a *Balsansad* and display it in the class.
- (3) Obtain information about the schemes run by the Zilla Parishad in your area or near your city.

