

Panchayati Raj & Local Government

Class 6 Social Science

Complete Study Notes

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, students will understand the meaning and importance of local self-government, learn about the Panchayati Raj system in rural India, study the structure and functions of urban local bodies, and understand how local governance encourages democratic participation and community development.

Introduction to Local Self-Government

Local self-government is a system in which people participate directly in managing the affairs of their own villages, towns, and cities. It enables citizens to solve local problems efficiently and ensures that development reaches every community.

In India, local self-government is divided into rural local bodies (Panchayati Raj Institutions) and urban local bodies (Municipal Institutions). These institutions strengthen democracy by allowing people to elect their local representatives.

Panchayati Raj System

The Panchayati Raj system is the system of local self-government in rural areas. It was introduced to promote village development and increase people's participation in decision-making. The Panchayati Raj system was first launched in Nagaur, Rajasthan, on 2 October 1959.

It consists of three levels. The Gram Panchayat functions at the village level, the Panchayat Samiti works at the block level, and the Zila Parishad functions at the district level. Together, these three institutions coordinate rural development and public welfare.

Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha

The Gram Panchayat is the basic unit of rural administration. It consists of elected representatives, including the Mukhiya and Ward Members, who work for the development of the village. They supervise public works, improve roads, drinking water facilities, sanitation, education, and implement government welfare schemes.

The Gram Sabha includes all adult voters of the village. It discusses development plans, monitors the use of public funds, and ensures transparency and accountability in local administration. The Panchayat Secretary maintains official records and assists in conducting meetings.

Urban Local Bodies

Urban areas are managed by Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Nagar Panchayats depending on their population and level of development.

These local bodies provide essential civic services such as clean drinking water, sanitation, waste management, street lighting, roads, public transport, public health services, fire protection, and the registration of births and deaths. They also collect taxes to finance local development projects.

Importance of Local Self-Government

Local self-government allows people to actively participate in decision-making and development activities. It makes administration more responsive, improves public services, and helps solve local problems quickly.

Grassroots Democracy: Local self-government is often called grassroots democracy because it gives ordinary citizens the opportunity to participate directly in governing their communities. Through regular elections, people choose representatives who work for local development and public welfare. This democratic participation helps ensure that government policies reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

Practice Questions

1. What is local self-government?
2. Name the three levels of the Panchayati Raj system.
3. What is the role of the Gram Sabha?
4. Name the three types of urban local bodies.
5. Why is local self-government important?

Answer Key

- **ANSWER 1:** Local self-government is a system in which local people elect representatives to manage the administration and development of villages, towns, and cities.
- **ANSWER 2:** The three levels of the Panchayati Raj system are Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad.
- **ANSWER 3:** The Gram Sabha consists of all adult voters in a village. It approves development plans, monitors public funds, and ensures accountability in village administration.
- **ANSWER 4:** The three types of urban local bodies are Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council (Nagar Parishad), and Nagar Panchayat.
- **ANSWER 5:** Local self-government promotes democratic participation, improves public services, solves local problems efficiently, and encourages community development.