



CLASS: VI

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SCIENCE

CHAPTER: 11 GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY — PART 2: LOCAL
GOVERNMENT IN RURAL AREAS

BOOK: EXPLORING SOCIETY: INDIA AND BEYOND

The Big Questions?

What are
Panchayati Raj
institutions?

What are their
functions?

Why are they
important in
governance and
democracy?

Governance Challenge

Diversity of India: India is a vast and diverse country with around 600,000 villages, 8,000 towns, and more than 4,000 cities.

Large Population: India's population has exceeded 1.4 billion, with nearly two-thirds living in rural areas.

Governance Challenge: The governance of such a large and diverse population in rural areas is complex and requires effective local government systems.

Village Settings



Lakshmanpur is a small village in the foothills of the Himalayas with 200 houses and a population of about 700. Most of the villagers are farmers.



The villagers are involved in farming and rearing cows or goats. Some have relatives in the armed forces, and a few younger people migrate to the city for work.



The village faces issues like water for fields, road repairs after heavy rains, and maintaining the primary school.

What are the needs of this village?

The villagers need to figure out how to make decisions on these matters affecting their daily lives.

There are questions about where the village will get the resources to meet its needs.

In case of land disputes or theft, the villagers need to decide how to address these issues.

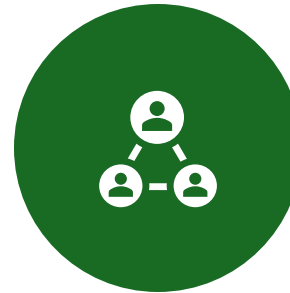
The village cannot always rely on the State or national government to resolve every issue, so local governance becomes crucial.

Can people run to the State or the national capital for every such issue?

Panchayati Raj System



Panchayat System: Lakshmanpur, like every village in India, has a local government system called the **Panchayat**, which is a village council.



Closer Governance: The Panchayat system brings governance closer to the people, allowing them to actively participate in decision-making.

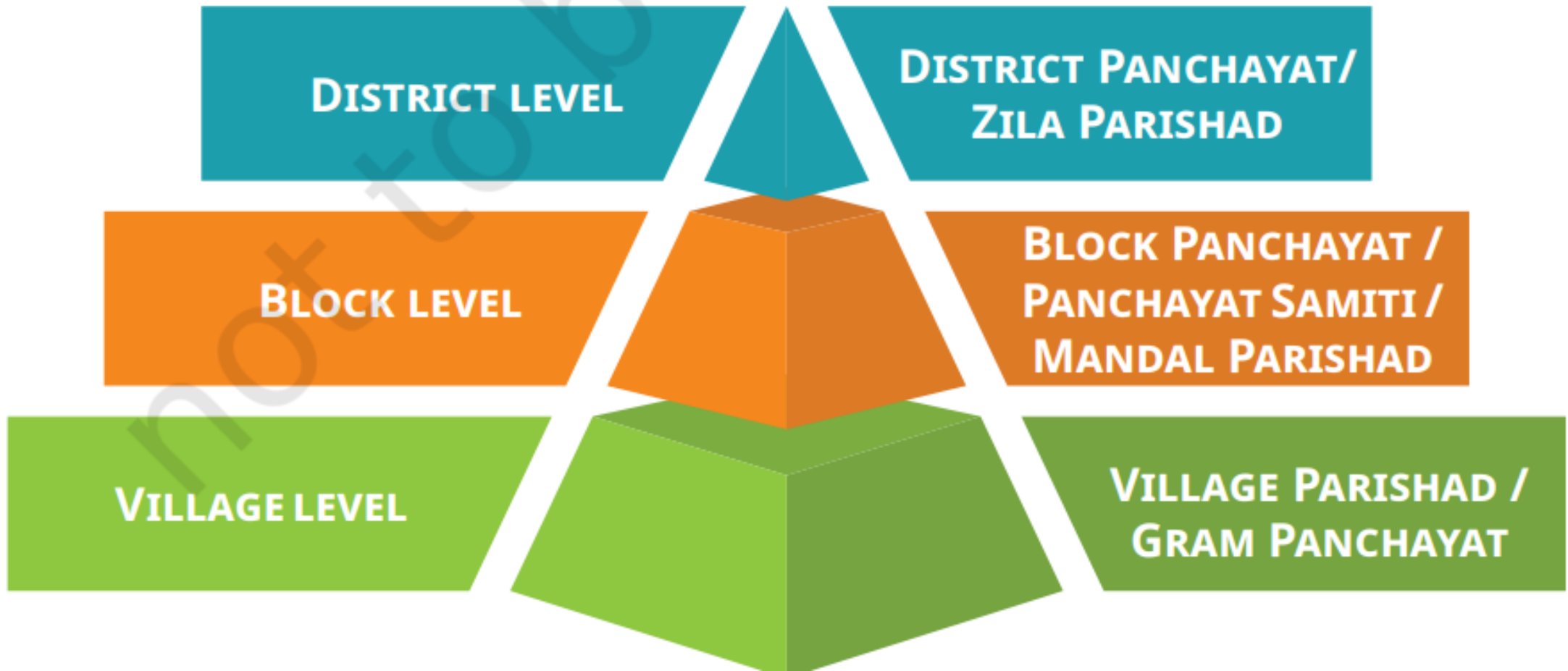


Panchayati Raj: The Panchayat system is also known as **Panchayati Raj**, which is a form of **self-government** for villages.

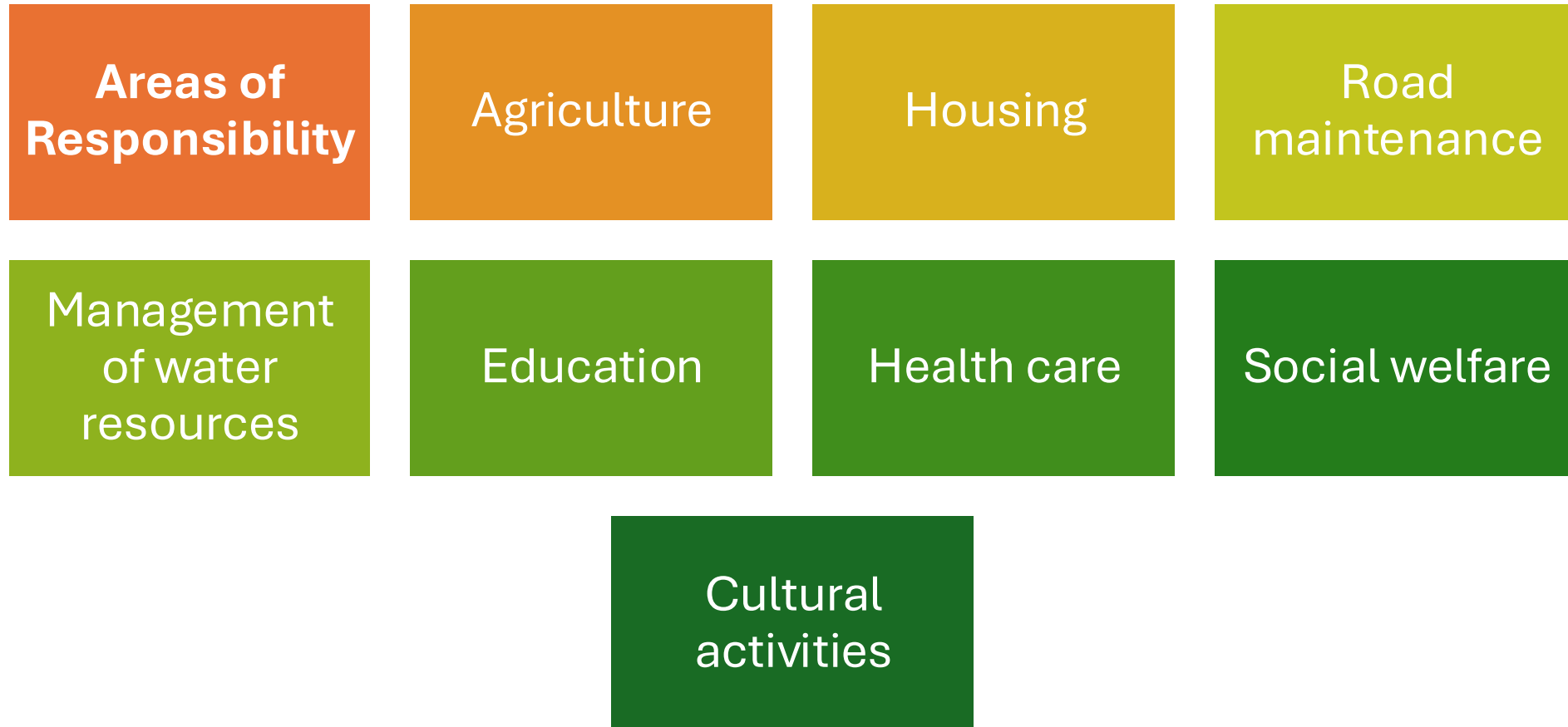


Role of Panchayats: Panchayats play a vital role in addressing local issues, promoting development, and ensuring that government schemes benefit people at the grassroots level.

The Panchayati Raj system works at three levels from bottom up — the village, the block and the district. This is called a ‘three-tier system’.



Local government institutions, like Panchayats, are responsible for almost all aspects of life in the district.



Gram Panchayat

01

Gram Panchayat: The **Gram Panchayat** is the local governing body closest to the people in rural areas.

02

Electoral Process: Members of the Gram Panchayat are elected directly by the **Gram Sabha**, which is a group of adult villagers (or groups of neighboring villages) who are enrolled as voters.

03

Role of Gram Sabha: In the **Gram Sabha**, both men and women discuss matters related to the village and make decisions.



Sarpanch

- **Sarpanch/Pradhan:** Each Gram Panchayat elects a head or president called the **Sarpanch** (or **Pradhan**).
- **Increased Female Participation:** In recent years, more women have become **Sarpanchs**.



Dnyaneshwar Kamble

- **Dnyaneshwar Kamble**, a transgender person, was elected as the **Sarpanch** of **Tarangfal village** in the **Solapur district** of Maharashtra in 2017.
- **Motto:** Kamble's motto is "**lok seva, gram seva**", which translates to "Service to the village is service to the public."
- **Election Victory:** Kamble defeated **six other candidates** to become the Sarpanch of the village.

Vandana Bahadur Maida

- **Vandana Bahadur Maida:** Vandana Bahadur Maida, a member of the **Bhil community** from **Khankhandvi village** in **Madhya Pradesh**, became the first **female Sarpanch** of her village.
- **Challenging Patriarchy:** She defied patriarchal norms to take on this leadership role.
- **Empowering Women:** Vandana encouraged women in the village to attend **Gram Sabha** meetings and actively participate in decision-making.
- **Focus on Key Issues:** She addressed important issues such as **education** and **sanitation**, gaining wide recognition.
- **Transformative Leadership:** Vandana's journey highlights the significant role women can play in **transforming rural India**.



Hiware Bazar

- **Hiware Bazar's Struggles:** Hiware Bazar, a village in Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra, faced frequent droughts and poor agricultural yields.
- **Popatrao Pawar's Leadership:** After Popatrao Baguji Pawar became the Sarpanch, he implemented Anna Hazare's model of rainwater harvesting, watershed conservation, and large-scale tree planting.
- **Improvement in the Village:** These efforts helped recharge the village's groundwater, leading to a significant transformation, making Hiware Bazar green and prosperous in a few years.
- **Recognition:** Due to his work, Popatrao Pawar was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020.
- 4o mini





Panchayat Secretary and Patwari

- **Panchayat Secretary:** The **Panchayat Secretary** assists the **Gram Panchayat** by handling administrative tasks, such as calling meetings and maintaining records.
- **Role of Patwari:** Many Gram Panchayats are also assisted by a **Patwari**, an officer who is responsible for maintaining land records of the villagers.
- **Historical Records:** In some cases, the **Patwari** even keeps **maps** that are **generations old**.

Child-Friendly Panchayat Initiative

Inclusive Governance: Panchayats are meant to listen to the voices of all members of the community, including **children**.

Child-Friendly Panchayat Initiative: This initiative creates opportunities for children to express their ideas and opinions on issues related to their wellbeing.

Bal Sabhas and Bal Panchayats: Steps are being taken in several states to encourage children's participation in **Bal Sabhas** (children's assemblies) and **Bal Panchayats** (children's councils) on a regular basis.

Addressing Children's Concerns: Village elders work to find solutions to the concerns raised by children in these forums.

Bal Panchayat in Maharashtra

Impact in Maharashtra:
In Maharashtra, some **Bal Panchayats** have worked to address serious social issues like **child labour** and **child marriage**.



Promoting Education:
These Bal Panchayats have successfully brought many children back to school.



Role of Bal Panchayat Members: Members of the Bal Panchayat actively engage with parents and adults, convincing them to send their children back to school and refrain from arranging marriages for young girls who should be studying.



Award-Winning Initiatives

- **Award-Winning Initiatives:** Several **Gram Panchayats** have been recognized for their child-friendly initiatives.
- **Example from Sikkim:** The **Sangkhu Radhu Khandu Gram Panchayat** in **west Sikkim** has prioritized children's needs and rights, making significant efforts to improve their wellbeing.

Children's Parliament in Rajasthan

- **Children's Parliament in Rajasthan:** The **Children's Parliament** is an initiative inspired by **Bunker Roy's Barefoot College** and empowers underprivileged children in rural Rajasthan through education and democratic participation.
- **Engagement in Governance:** Children aged 8 to 14 participate in governance processes, learning about democracy and social responsibility through **night schools** and **parliament-like elections**.
- **Formal Procedures:** The Children's Parliament follows formal procedures, such as issuing **voter ID cards** and conducting **campaigns**. Elected representatives form a **Cabinet** responsible for school management and advocating for community needs.
- **Development of Skills:** The initiative fosters leadership skills, social awareness, and the ability to challenge societal norms, allowing children to advocate for change.
- **Addressing Key Issues:** Children in the Parliament actively address issues like **access to education**, **sanitation**, and **social equality**, contributing to community development.
- **Recognition:** The Children's Parliament initiative received several accolades, including the **World's Children's Honorary Award** in 2001.



Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad



Higher-Level Institutions: Similar institutions to the Gram Panchayat exist at the **block** and **district** levels.



Panchayat Samiti: At the block level, the **Panchayat Samiti** serves as the link between the **Gram Panchayat** (village level) and the **Zila Parishad** (district level).



Election of Members: The members of these higher-level institutions are elected by local people.



Additional Members: In addition to elected members, these institutions may include the **Sarpanchs** of the villages in the area and local **members of the State Legislative Assembly**.

Composition of Panchayat Samitis

01

Varying Composition: The composition of **Panchayat Samitis** may differ from state to state, but their primary role in promoting local participation remains the same.

02

Coordination Role: Panchayat Samitis coordinate activities across **Gram Panchayats**, such as collecting development plans from all villages and presenting them at the **District** or **State** levels.

03

Fund Allocation: By consolidating these plans, Panchayat Samitis help secure **funds** for development projects and government schemes, like the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** (which focuses on building all-weather roads in rural areas).



Special Rules

Special Rules for Disadvantaged Sections: At all three levels of local government (village, block, and district), special rules ensure that **disadvantaged sections** of the population can voice their needs and problems.

Reservation for Women: There is a provision to **reserve one-third of the seats** for **women**, promoting gender equality in local governance.

Different Structure but Common Objectives



Variation Across States: The structure and functions of **Panchayati Raj institutions** may vary slightly across different states because states have authority over these institutions.

Common Objectives: Despite these differences, the main objective remains the same: to enable **villagers** to take an active role in the **management** and **development** of their villages and local areas.

The *Arthaśhāstra* is an ancient text of governance written by Kauṭilya (later also known as Chāṇakya) some 2,300 years ago. Among other things, it describes how a state should be structured and run, how the economy can be made prosperous, what the duties of the ruler are and how to conduct war. Kauṭilya, an expert in statecraft, also explains how a whole administrative structure should be put in place from the village to the regional capital:

In today's language, what are the names we would give these four categories? Is it not amazing that a similar structure was thought of so long ago?

"The king shall establish a *sangrahaṇa* (a sub-district head quarters) for every 10 villages; a *kārvaṭika* (district headquarters) for every 100 villages; a *droṇamukha* for every 400 villages; and a *sthānīya* (provincial headquarters) for every 800 villages."

The top-left corner features a light blue square with a darker blue square inside it, partially cut off by the edge. The top-right corner features a light blue square with a darker blue square inside it, also partially cut off.

Thank

You

The bottom-right corner features a light blue square with a darker blue square inside it, partially cut off by the edge.