

Unit 3

Gram Panchayat (Village council) is a basic village governing institute in Indian villages. It is a democratic structure at the grass-roots level in India. It is a political institute, acting as cabinet of the village. The gram-Sabha work as the general body of Gram Panchayat. The members of the Gram panchayat are elected by the Gram Sabha.

A Gram panchayat's term of office is five years. Every five years elections take place in the village. All people over the age of 18 who are residents of the territory of the that village's Gram panchayat can vote.

For women's empowerment and to encourage participation of women in the democratic process, the government of India has set some restrictions on Gram panchayat elections, reserving one-third of the seats for women, as well as reserving seats for scheduled castes and tribes.

Key functions of Gram Sabha

Following are the important and specific functions of Gram Sabha:

To help implementation of the development programmes and schemes of the Panchayat.

To identify beneficiaries for different programmes and schemes. However, if the Gram Sabha fails to identify such beneficiaries within a reasonable time, the Gram Panchayat shall identify the beneficiaries.

To solicit support — in cash or kind or both and voluntary labour — from the public for community welfare programmes.

To support the programmes of mass education and family welfare.

To promote unity and harmony among all sections of the society in the village.

To seek clarification from the Mukhiya, Up-Mukhiya and other members of the Gram Panchayat about any particular activity, scheme, income and expenditure.

To discuss and recommend appropriate action with regard to reports of the Vigilance Committee.

Other related matters brought to the notice of the Gram Sabha.

To consider levy of taxes, rates, rents & fees & enhancement of rates thereof.

To consider all such matters as may be referred by the Gram Panchayat for its decision.

Role of Panchayat Secretary in Gram Sabha

The role of Panchayat Secretary is vital at Gram Sabha. The duties of Panchayat Secretary can broadly be categorized into three stages:

Pre-Gram Sabha

During Gram Sabha, and

Post Gram Sabha

Pre-Gram Sabha duties

The pre Gram Sabha duties of Panchayat Secretary include:

Finalisation of agenda for Gram Sabha in consultation with the Sarpanch.

Issuing notice of Gram Sabha meeting.

Publicising widely the Gram Sabha meeting details, such as the date, time and venue.

Preparing the Action Taken Report on the resolutions of the previous Gram Sabha meeting.

Preparation of notes on the agenda items to be placed before the current Gram Sabha meeting.

Providing proper seating, drinking water facilities and sanitation facilities for people attending the Gram Sabha meeting.

Duties during Gram Sabha

The duties of Panchayat Secretary during the conduct of Gram Sabha include:

Recording the details of members attending the meeting of Gram Sabha.

Presenting the Action Taken Report on resolutions of previous Gram Sabha meeting.

Ensuring the smooth conduct of the meeting of Gram Sabha as per its Agenda.

Assisting the Sarpanch in recording the minutes of Gram Sabha.

Recording of votes casted in favour/against of any resolution placed before Gram Sabha

Post Gram Sabha duties

These include

To coordinate with the Sarpanch and ward members for considering the resolutions of Gram Sabha in Gram Panchayat meetings.

To send report on the Gram Sabha meeting to the higher officials concerned.

The Zila Panchayat or District Council or Mandal Parishad or District Panchayat is the third tier of the Panchayati Raj system. Zila Parishad is an elected body. Block Pramukh of Block Panchayat are also represented in Zila Parishad. The members of the State Legislature and the members of the Parliament of India are members of the Zila Parishad. The Zila parishad is the top most tier of the panchayat raj system and acts as the link between the state government and the gram panchayat.

Zila parishad are Panchayats at Apex or District Level in Panchayat Raj Institutions

The 73rd Amendment is about Governments' (which are also known as Panchayati Raj Institutions

Panchayat at District (or apex) Level

Panchayat at Intermediate Level

Panchayat at Base Level

The chief executive officer (CEO), who is an IAS or IDES or a state civil service officer, heads the administrative machinery of the Zila Parishad. He may also be district magistrate in some states. The CEO supervises the divisions of the parishad and executes its development schemes.

Function

The Zila Parishad is an official body that coordinates the activities of the Panchayats in all its developmental activities, such as minor irrigation works, vocational and industrial schools, village industries, sanitation and public health among others.

It advises the State Government on all matters relating to the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis under its supervision and the needs of the rural population living therein.

It also supervises the work of the Panchayats. It also does the scrutiny of the budget estimates of Panchayat Samitis in some states like Assam, Bihar and Punjab.

It functions mostly through various Standing Committees, which oversee and coordinate the common programmes of the villages under its jurisdiction.

A municipality is usually a single administrative division having corporate status and powers of self-government or jurisdiction as granted by national and regional laws to which it is subordinate.

The term municipality may also mean the governing or ruling body of a given municipality. A municipality is a general-purpose administrative subdivision, as opposed to a special-purpose district.

The term is derived from French *municipalité* and Latin *municipalis*.^[2] The English word municipality derives from the Latin social contract *municipium* (derived from a word meaning “duty holders”), referring to the Latin communities that supplied Rome with troops in exchange for their own incorporation into the Roman state (granting Roman citizenship to the inhabitants) while permitting the communities to retain their own local governments (a limited autonomy).

Powers of municipalities range from virtual autonomy to complete subordination to the state. Municipalities may have the right to tax individuals and corporations with income tax, property tax, and corporate income tax, but may also receive substantial funding from the state. In some European countries, such as Germany, municipalities have the constitutional right to supply public services through municipally-owned public utility companies.

1. Provide essential services and facilities to the rural population and the planning and execution of the development programmes for the district.
2. Supply improved seeds to farmers. Inform them of new techniques of training. Undertake construction of small-scale irrigation projects and percolation tanks. Maintain pastures and grazing lands.
3. Set up and run schools in villages. Execute programmes for adult literacy. Run libraries.
4. Start Primary Health Centres and hospitals in villages. Start vaccination drives against epidemics and family welfare campaigns.
5. Construct bridges and roads wherever needed
6. Execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashramshalas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for scheduled caste students.

7. Encourage entrepreneurs to start small-scale industries like cottage industries, handicraft, agriculture produce processing mills, dairy farms, etc. Implement rural employment schemes.

The municipal council is the highest governing body of a municipality. Members of the council make all the major decisions affecting the municipality. This includes decisions on education, the construction of new buildings or tax levels.

Municipal corporations are organized under the applicable state constitution and laws, with powers of government expressly or implicitly conferred by that constitution and laws, and also by charter. Within the municipality, these powers are exercised by a governing body elected by the people. A municipality is basically the response of the state government to the need for certain public services (i.e., waste disposal, police and fire protection, water supply, health services) in addition to what is available from the county or other local governments in the area.

Town Area Committee –

- Town area committee is set up for administering a small town.

It is a semi-municipal authority.

- It is entrusted with a limited number of civic functions like drainage, roads, street lighting etc.

They are created by a separate act of a state legislature.

- The act governs its composition, functions and other matters.

They may be wholly or partly elected or wholly or partly nominated by the state government.

Township –

They are established by large public enterprises to provide civic amenities to its staff and workers.

- The staff is generally living in the housing colonies built near the plant.

The enterprise appoints a town administrator who

Looks after the administration of the township.

- The town administrator is assisted by some engineers and other technical and non-technical staff.

It doesn't have elected members.

- It can be thought of as an extension of the bureaucratic structure of the enterprises.