# CHAPTER - 8
# LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

**Q1. Constitution of India visualised village panchayats as units of self-government. Think over the situation described in the following statements and explain how do these situations strengthen or weaken the panchayats in becoming units of self-government.**
**a. Government of a State has allowed a big company to establish a huge steel plant. Many villages would be adversely affected by the steel plant. Gram Sabha of one of the affected villages passed a resolution that before establishing any big industries in the region, village people must be consulted and their grievances should be redressed.**
**b. The government has decided that 20% of all its expenditure would be done through the panchayats.**
**c. A village panchayat kept on demanding funds for a building for village school, the government officials turned down their proposal saying that funds are allocated for certain other schemes and cannot be spent otherwise.**
**d. The government divided a village Dungarpur into two and made a part of village Jamuna and Sohana.Now village Dungarpur has ceased to exist in government's books.**
**e. A village panchayat observed that water sources of their region are depleting fast. They decided to mobilise village youth to do some voluntary work and revive the old village ponds and wells.**

**Answer 1:**

- This refers that Gram Panchayat was not consulted before the establishment of steel plant, by the state government. This action can weaken the institution of panchayats. The resolution passed by Gram Sabha strengthened the panchayats by giving them right to move to courts against the unilateral move of the state government.
- This decision of state government help the panchayats financially on the ground not to interfere in the decisions and priorities of the panchayats as well as the panchayats need independent sources of
revenue to operate effectively at the local level.
- This will weaken the panchayati Raj because these institutions prioritize their developments agenda themselves and denial for the same weaken them to become a self government
- If this division has taken place on the recommendations of Panchayati Raj institutions, it strengthens their power but if it has been done on its own by the state, it would weaken these institutions.
- This will strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions respect and power.

**Q2. Suppose you are entrusted to evolve a local government plan of a State, what powers would you endow to the village panchayats to function as units of self-government? Mention any five powers and the justification in two lines for each of them for giving those powers.**

**Answer 2:**

(i) Development works at village level, i.e. irrigation facilities, drinking water, construction of

roads,etc.
(ii) Agriculture developments to be supervised and implemented by the panchayats only related to agriculture practices in a modern method.
(iii) Social welfare related activities to keep the records of birth and death in the village, family welfare and family planning.
(iv) Gram panchayats should be given the powers to ensure better health and life of citizens to provide basic civil amenities.

**Q3. What are the provisions for the reservations for the socially disadvantaged groups as per the 73rd amendment? Explain how these provisions have changed the profile of the leadership at the village level.**

**Answer 3:**

**Two constitutional amendments acts were passed in 1993 to recognize local self-government at the grassroot level. 73rd amendment made the following provisions:**
**I. The reservation of seats has been made for SCs, STs and OBCs and women.**
**II. Reservation for women at panchayats has ensured the participation of women in local bodies.**
**III. Due to this reservation, a number of women have occupied even the position of Sarpanch and Adhyaksha.**
**IV. Hence, more than 80,000 women sarpanchs have been elected so far.**

**Q4. What were the main differences between the local governments before 73rd amendment and after that amendment?**

**Answer 4:**
**Before 73rd Amendment:**
(i) Local government was a state subject only
(ii) States were free to make their own kind of laws in local government.

**After 73rd Amendment:**

(i) Local governments have received the recognition as a separate entity in the constitution.
(ii) Elections at every regular interval of five years have been made mandatory.
(iii) The seats have been reserved in favour of SCs, STs, OBCs and women.
(iv) State Election Commission has been appointed and made responsible to conduct free and fair elections here.
(v) After every five years, State Finance Commission has been set up to review the finances of the panchayats and to make recommendations for grants to panchayats.
(vi) The Panchayats have been empowered to collect, levy the appropriate taxes, fees, tools as assigned by the state government.

**Q5. Read the following conversation. Write in two hundred words your opinion about the issues raised in this conversation. Alok: Our Constitution guarantees equality between men and women. Reservations in local bodies for women ensure their equal share in power. Neha: But it is not enough that women should be in positions of power. It**

**is necessary that the budget of local bodies should have separate provision for women. Jayesh: I don't like this reservations business. A local body must take care of all people in the village and that would automatically take care of women and their interests.**

**Answer 5: This conversation is based on the issue of empowerment of women on equal basis:**

(i) I agree with alok's view that the constitution of India guarantees the equality of men and women. Reservations in local bodies for women ensure their equal share in power.
Women have gained more power and confidence by asserting control over resources. Their presence in these institutions has given many women a greater understanding of the working of politics. In many cases, they have brought a new perspective and a greater sensitivity to discussions at local bodies.
(ii) I do not agree with neha's view that the budget of local bodies should have separate provision for women. Local institutions are created for the overall development of the area. Developmental needs of women and men are same Article 39 (1) and (d) ensure an adequate livelihood and equal pay for equal work for both men and women respectively.
(iii) Jayesh view that I don't like this reservations business is a wrong view. In our parliament and state assembly and council, there is no provision for the reservation of women. That is why women do not have adequate representation in these bodies. If reservation was not provided in local government institutions, women might have inadequate representation in these bodies too.A large number of women elected representatives have come to occupy these positions. There are at least 200 women Adhyakshas in Zilla Panchayats, another 2000 women who are Presidents of the block or taluka panchayats and more than 80,000 women Sarpanchas in Gram Panchayats. We also have more than 30 women Mayors in Corporations, over 500 women Adhyakshas of Town Municipalities and nearly 650 Nagar Panchayats headed by women.

**Q6. Read the provisions of the 73rd Amendment.Which of the following concerns does this amendment address?**
**a. Fear of replacement makes representatives accountable to the people.**
**b. The dominant castes and feudal landlords dominate the local bodies.**
**c. Rural illiteracy is very high. Illiterate people cannot take decisions about the development of the village.**
**d. To be effective the village panchayats need resources and powers to make plans for the village development.**

**Answer 6:**
**After 73rd Amendment Act 1983:**

(a) It is mandatory to hold elections after every five
years.If the state government dissolves the panchayats before the completion of terms, fresh elections must take place within six months.(b) (i) Reservation for SCs, STs and women have been provided. The women have reservation of 1/3 rd seats in local bodies. SCs and STs have been given proportion accordingly to their population of that particular area.Hence, dominance of feudal lords and dominant classes has come to an end.
(c), (i) In the eleventh schedule of the constitution, 29 subjects have been given to local bodies

in 1992. Primary and secondary education is the part of this list to make the people literate in village.The state government would shoulder the responsibility.
(d) The panchayats have been given powers to levy, collect taxes, duties and fees according to state government's provision. The provisions for the establishment of a state finance commission have also been made to review the finances of panchayats and to make recommendations also.

**Q7. The following are different justifications given in favour of local government. Give them ranking and explain why you attach greater significance to a particular rationale than the others. According to you, on which of these rationales the decision of the Gram panchayat of Vengaivasal village was based? How?**
**a. Government can complete the projects with lesser cost with the involvement of the local community.**
**b. The development plans made by the local people will have greater acceptability than those made by the government officers.**
**c. People know their area, needs problems and priorities. By collective participation they should discuss and take decisions about their life.**
**d. It is difficult for the common people to contact their representatives of the State or the national legislature.**

**Answer 7:**

1. c. People know their area, needs problems and priorities. By collective participation they should discuss and take decisions about their life.
2. a. Government can complete the projects with lesser cost with the involvement of the local community.
3. b. The development plans made by the local people will have greater acceptability than those made by the government officers.
4. d. It is difficult for the common people to contact their representatives of the State or the national legislature.

**Q8. Which of the following according to you involve decentralisation? Why are other options not sufficient for decentralisation?**
**a. To hold election of the Gram Panchayat.**
**b. Decision by the villagers themselves about what policies and programmes are useful for the village.**
**c. Power to call meeting of Gram Sabha.**
**d. A Gram Panchayat receiving the report from the Block Development Officer about the progress of a project started by the State government.**

**Answer 8:**

(a) It may be the main point of involvement of decentralization.
(b) The representatives are elected by the villagers only from among themselves.
(c) It may also be subsidiary.
(d) It is the manifestation of the working of decentralization.

**Q9. A student of Delhi University, Raghavendra Parpanna, wanted to study the role of decentralisation in decision making about primary education. He asked some questions to the villagers. These questions are given below. If you were among those villagers, what answer would you give to each of these questions?A meeting of the Gram Sabha is to be called to discuss what steps should be taken to ensure that every child of the village goes to the school.**
**a. How would you decide the suitable day for the meeting? Think who would be able to attend / not attend the meeting because of your choice.**
**(i) A day specified by the BDO or the collector**
**(ii) Day of the village haat**
**(iii) Sunday**
**(iv) Naag panchami / Sankranti**
**b. What is a suitable venue for the meeting? Why?**
**(i) Venue suggested by the circular of the district collector.**
**(ii) Religious place in the village.**
**(iii) Dalit Mohalla.**
**(iv) Upper caste Tola**
**(v) Village school**
**c. In the Gram Sabha meeting firstly a circular sent by the district collector was read. It suggested what steps should be taken to organise an education rally and what should be its route. The meeting did not discuss about the children who never come to school or about girls' education, or the condition of the school building and the timing of the school. No women teacher attended the meeting as it was held on Sunday. What do you think about these proceedings as an instance of people's participation?**
**d. Imagine your class as the Gram Sabha. Discuss the agenda of the meeting and suggest some steps to realise the goal.**

**Answer 9:**

(a) The day of village haat would be the most appropriate due to the availability of a number of people to sell and purchase the commodities.
(b) The most suitable venue for the meeting would be the village school where every person feel free to move and come to join the meeting because rest of the venues are community based and people will not be comfortable to join the meeting.
(c) (i) It was held on Sunday, hence the women teachers did not attend it.
(ii) A Gram Sabha meeting should be held to discuss the problems of village in place of organizing an education rally.This meeting had to discuss the problems like education, condition of school, girl's education as well as regularity of children in school.

**(d) The agenda would be:**

1. Regularity of students in school, if not, how to make it regular.
2. To focus on poverty alleviation programmes
3. To focus on landlessness of farmers
4. The construction work in village required.
5. Socio cultural programmes
6. To arrange the funds for the programmes decided