

Lesson 4

Dokchory learns about the Panchayat

Do you know who builds our roads, bridges and office buildings?

From where does the money to build all this come?

In groups, discuss how government money is spent for public welfare.

What will you do to help people who are old, unwell or homeless?

In this lesson you will read about how Panchayats spend money for the people.



Dokchory is a student of Class VIII of Disangmukh Janajati High School. Her Ba-bu (father) Konke Mili takes her to school on his bicycle. She loves the bicycle ride for she gets to know new things every day. 'Dokchory' means a necklace of beads the Misings usually wear in festival time.

- Dokchory : Isn't that your Panchayat office, Ba-bu?
- Konke Mili : Yes my child. It has got a new sign board.
- Dokchory : But what is a 'Panchayat', Ba-bu?
- Konke Mili : Long ago Dokchory, Panchayat meant a system of governance by five elderly men called Panch Gramin Pramukh. Their word was the rule. There was no quarrel among the villagers, because they respected their Gram Pramukhs.
- Dokchory : You are not old and yet you are in the Panchayat?
- Konke Mili : You see, nowadays, anyone who is above 21 can contest Panchayat elections. A Panchayat is the body that is responsible for the development of villages. The Panchayat is a very important institution for social change, you know. The Constitution of India grants power to the Panchayat to raise taxes, plan development schemes and work for local development.
- Dokchory : What kind of work do you do, father?
- Konke Mili : We build and repair rural roads, bridges, houses for the poor and so on.
- Dokchory : Where do you get all the money from?
- Konke Mili : A good question! The Panchayat raises a little money from taxes on vehicles, river *ghats*, bazaars and *beels*, etc.
- Dokchory : Is that money enough to do so much work?
- Konke Mili : We get an annual grant from the Panchayat and Rural Development Department of the government. The local MLA or Ministers can also contribute substantially, if they wish.
- Dokchory : Why don't you build a house for poor Dhaniram, Ba-bu?
- Konke Mili : O, Dhaniram – the man with no legs? We did build a house for him last year but he left it after his mother died. Differently-abled people like him need help with their daily chores, you know.

Dokchory : Ba-bu, please do something for the poor man. He spends the bitter cold December nights on the open verandah of our school building.

Konke Mili : Don't worry – we are building a home for people with special needs like him, so that they can live with dignity. Young people like you should do volunteer work there, when you can. You will see how they learn to do their own chores, and also paint, read, play games and enjoy other hobbies. You will see how such people can lead normal, happy lives and learn to be independent.

Dokchory : Thank you, Ba-bu. I will help you in the Panchayat's work.

ACTIVITIES

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1. Here are some words from the text and their meanings. Test your understanding by matching the words on the left with their meanings on the right.

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| institution | – | manner of governing or ruling |
| elections | – | angry dispute, unfriendly relations with someone |
| sincerity | – | organisation or society |
| differently abled | – | the exercise through which we vote for new leaders |
| schemes | – | the money citizens of a country have to pay the government to help it do different kinds of work |
| substantial | – | plans |
| rural | – | large in size or amount |
| tax | – | relating to a village or the countryside |
| quarrel | – | having a physical or mental condition that makes it difficult for a person to do all the work that other people do |
| governance | – | devotion to a purpose |

2. Complete the following sentences with information from the text:

- (a) Dokchory studies in Class _____.
- (b) The name of her school is _____.
- (c) Her father's name is _____.
- (d) He works in the _____.
- (e) Dokchory goes to school by _____.
- (f) She loves the ride because she _____.
- (g) To contest the Panchayat elections, one has to be _____ years old.

3. Answer the following questions to understand the text better:

- (a) What was the meaning of Panchayat long ago?
- (b) What is the meaning of Panchayat now?
- (c) What kind of work is done by the Panchayat?
- (d) From where does the Panchayat get money to perform all its work?
- (e) How did the Panchayat help Dhaniram?
- (f) How did Dhaniram spend the cold December nights?

4. You have just read about the Panchayat. Using information from the lesson, fill in the table below:

The Panchayat	
Meaning:	
Minimum age to contest:	
Powers of a Panchayat:	
Kinds of work a Panchayat does:	
Sources of money:	

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5. The morning assembly of Disangmukh Janajati High School begins at 8.45 every day. Each student of the school has to deliver a speech according to a roster prepared by the school authorities.

When Dokchory's turn came, she gave the following speech:

Good morning!

Respected Principal, teachers, parents and my dear friends. I am Dokchory. Today I am going to talk about the Father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who is also known as Bapu. His full name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhiji was born on 2 October, 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat in India. He was a great freedom fighter who led India in its fight against the British rule. Gandhiji died on 30 January, 1948. His life story is a source of inspiration for all of us.

Imagine that your turn to deliver a speech for the morning assembly is tomorrow. Prepare your own speech using Dokchory's example, and present it in the class.

– Your teacher will ask each student to deliver the speech one by one.

6. Discuss in small groups:

- If you want to help the needy, would it be fine to do it immediately? Why or why not?
- How would you like to help a person with special needs? Share your ideas in your group.
- Did Konke Mili plan the right thing to help Dhaniram? Give more suggestions.

7. Dokchory will work for the Panchayat when she finishes school. Write a paragraph on what you will do for your village or town when you grow up.

8. In class VII you learnt about Reported Speech and Reporting Verbs. In this lesson, we see more of such sentences.

Look at this sentence from the lesson:

She said to her father, "What is a Panchayat?"

The reported clause starts with a 'wh' question. Wh words are who, when, whom, whose, what, where, which, why and how. A wh-question is changed into the indirect form by using the question word at the beginning of the reported clause.

e.g. She asked her father *what a Panchayat was*. dailyassam.com

Let's practise changing other questions into the reported form:

- (a) She said to her father, "What kind of work do you do?"
- (b) She said to her father, "Where do you get all the money from?"
- (c) She said to her father, "Is that enough to do so much work?"
- (d) She asked him, "Why don't you build a house for poor Dhaniram?"
- (e) She said to him, "What is a Panchayat?"

Now read this sentence. It is another type of reported sentence:

- (a) She said to her father, "Do something for the old man."

Here the reported clause is an Imperative sentence. In an imperative sentence, the subject, which is usually the second person 'you', is generally left unwritten.

- (b) Do something for the old man. (= You do something for the old man.)

There are other types of imperatives such as negative and emphatic imperatives. For example, the imperative sentence

- (c) Come in please.

can be turned into:

Negative: Don't come in, please.

Emphatic: Do come in, please.

Find out how much you have understood. Change the following imperative sentences into their negative and emphatic forms:

- (a) Repair the roads.
- (b) Build a house for Dhaniram.
- (c) Work for local development.
- (d) Close the door, please.
- (e) Please wash your hands.

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9. Say the words in the box aloud:

Panchayat	child	Dockchory
much	change	Panch

Did you notice that they all have the sound ch?

Now, find other words from the lesson which have similar ch sound in them. Write them in your notebook. Add a few more and practise saying them aloud.

10. Here is a crossword puzzle for you to find out the adjectives (describing words) in the puzzle to fill up the blanks on the right. One is done for you.

B	U	N	G	I	R	Q	A	S
I	M	P	O	R	T	A	N	T
T	S	O	O	M	Y	V	N	W
T	H	O	D	C	E	P	U	J
E	O	R	W	R	U	R	A	L
R	R	S	O	C	I	A	L	B
F	T	I	N	Y	N	E	W	A
E	L	D	E	R	L	Y	P	D
V	E	R	Y	Z	O	P	E	N

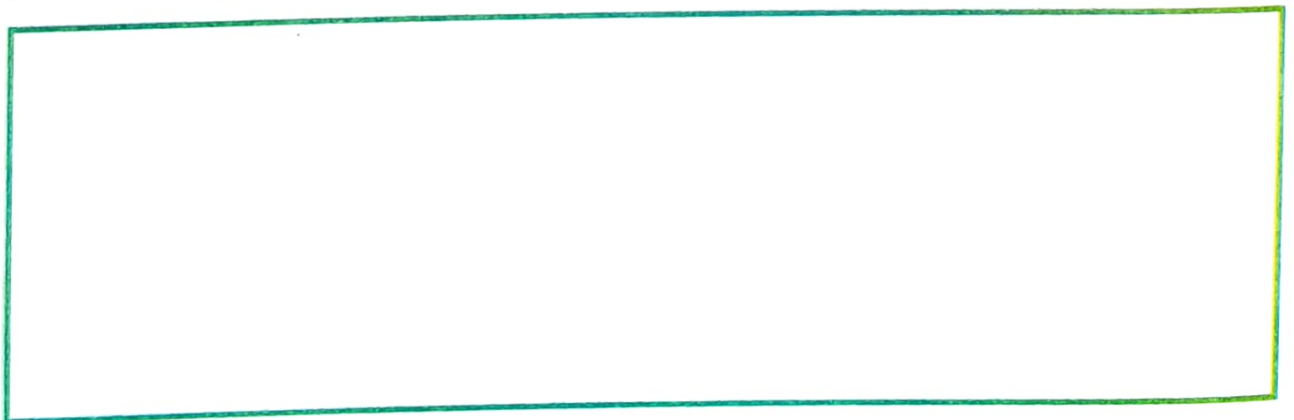
- (a) open verandah
- (b) _____ grant
- (c) _____ roads
- (d) _____ institution
- (e) _____ things
- (f) _____ change
- (g) _____ questions
- (h) _____ cold

11. Let's play a game. Look at the following pairs of words quickly. Each pair looks the same, but are different in meaning as well as in spelling. The different meanings are given against each pair. Fill in the blanks by putting in one or two letter(s) to show the difference in spelling. The one who completes it first will be the winner.

- (a) d — ry : a record of everyday's events or thoughts
d — ry : a place where milk is processed to make different milk products
- (b) w — ther : temperature of a place
w — ther : expressing a doubt
- (c) l — ke : a large area of water
l — ke : similar to
- (d) w — sh : to make something clean by using water
w — sh : to want something to happen
- (e) n — w : fresh, not old or used
n — w : the present time

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12. Rupalee Chetia is a contestant for President in the coming Panchayat election. In groups, design a poster seeking votes for her victory.



The teacher may help the learners in this activity by providing hints.

13. Recite the poem:

Love of Country

Who loves his country will not rest
Content with vow and pledge alone,
But flies her banner in his breast
And counts her destiny his own—
Not only when the bugle plays
Stands forth to give his life for her,
But on the field of common days
Is strong to live his life for her,
He is not satisfied to claim
As heritage, her power and fame,
But striving, gains the right to wear
The shining honour of her name.

Vow: a formal and serious promise

Fame: the state of being known and talked about by many people

Striving: trying very hard to achieve something

claim: to demand

— Nancy Byrd Tuner



bugle: a musical instrument like a small trumpet

14. Think and write:

Do you love your country? Discuss with your friend how you can show your love for your country. Write a paragraph on it.
