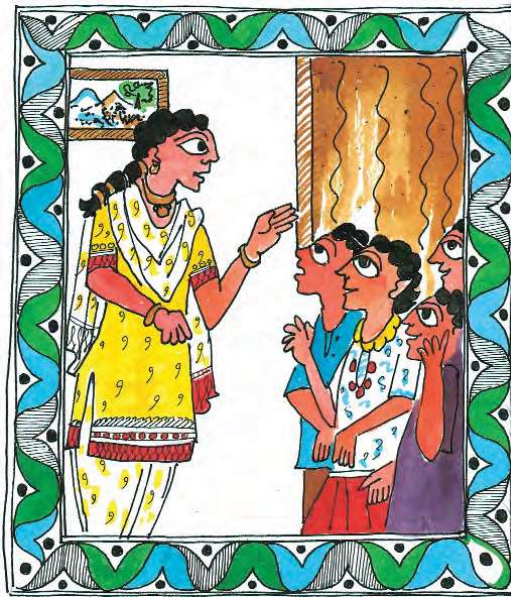


## **URBAN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Municipal Committees and Municipal Corporations perform the same functions, in towns and cities, which Panchayati Raj institutions perform in rural areas. But city life is very different from village life; so urban problems are quite different from those of rural areas.

Towns cover large areas and are thickly populated. Millions of people live in big cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru. They pay taxes, and in turn: they demand good transport and communication systems, drinking water, sanitation, regular supply of electricity, big hospitals and so on. Municipal Committees and Municipal Corporations provide these essential services.



### **MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

The Municipal Corporation is the local government in cities. It is a body that looks after the administration of cities and provides basic civic amenities to its residents. The name of a local government varies from city to city depending on the size of the city, like a Nagar Panchayat in small towns, a Municipal Council in small city and a Municipal Corporation in large cities.

The members of a Corporation are elected by the residents of the city. Any person who has reached the age of 18 years and is a registered voter can vote in the corporation election. Any person who wants to contest election, to become a councillor, should not be less than 25 years of age.

The number of members of a Corporation Council is fixed by the government. The Corporation area is divided into several wards. Each ward elects one member. Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Only members of these categories can contest for these seats. The members directly elected by the voters of the city are called Councillors. In some cities elect some more members who are known for their experience and integrity. These members are known as Aldermen.



### **COMPOSITION**

The members of the Corporation Council elect a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor. The Mayor presides over the meetings of the Corporation Council and looks after the work of corporation with the help of Municipal Commissioner, Chief Engineer, Chief Medical Officer, etc. In the absence of the Mayor, his/her duties are performed by the Deputy Mayor.



**Recycling is not a new thing. People like the man in the photo above have been recycling paper, metal, glass and plastic for a long time. The kabadi wallah plays a major role in recycling household plastic and paper, including your note books.**

The above office bearers are assisted by permanent staff on the payroll of the Corporation. This staff includes the Chief Executive Officer, Secretary, Health Officer, Sanitary Inspectors, Municipal Engineer, Overseers, Octroi Superintendent, Octroi Inspectors, etc.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation is called the Municipal Commissioner. He supervises and coordinates the work of all departments of the Corporation. The Health Department is under the Chief Medical Officer. The Health Officer and his team of Sanitary Inspectors are responsible for the cleanliness and prevention of diseases in the corporation area.

The responsibility for the construction, maintenance and repair of roads, buildings, parks, bridges, etc., falls on the Chief Engineer and his team of Overseers. The Superintendent of Water Works looks after the supply of drinking water to the residents of the city.

The office bearers of the Corporation advise the members on the day-to-day problems of the Corporation. The officers of the Corporation do not belong to any political party. They are expected to be impartial in the performance of their duties.

### **MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE**

Smaller cities and district towns with a population of more than 20,000 have Municipal Committees or Councils. They are elected-by , residents. The number of members is fixed by the government. A City is divided into different wards and ward councillors are elected. Generally, 15 to 60 members are elected in the same way as are the members of a Corporation. Apart from the elected members, there are official advisers. Though they are allowed to take part in discussions and deliberations, they do not have the right to vote. The Committee members elect a President and a VicePresident Their election has to be confirmed by the government. The President calls the meetings of the Committee and also presides over its meetings.

The Committee has a permanent staff to see to the day-to-day administration. The important officials of the Committee include the Octroi Superintendent and his Octroi Inspectors are responsible for collecting octroi duty levied on goods brought into the city.

Councillors are elected members of a Municipal Corporation; the Commissioner and the administrative staff are the office bearers.

## URBAN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Commissioner (Chief Executive Officer) , Secretary and Assistant Secretary. Other officers, such as the Chief Engineer, Health Officer, Chief Sanitary Inspector, etc., are in charge of their own departments. The Superintendent of Water Works looks after the supply of water, while the Octroi Superintendent and Octroi Inspectors are responsible for the collection of Octroi tax levied on goods brought into the city.

Important towns like Ferozepur, Bhatinda, Saharanpur, Rohtak, Kamal, Aligarh, Ajmer, Alwar, etc., have Municipal Committees.



## FUNCTIONS OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AND MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE

We will now discuss the main functions of urban local bodies:

### ◆ COMPULSORY FUNCTIONS

Only healthy citizens can take active part in the affairs of state. It is the essential duty of a local government body to take all necessary steps to preserve the good health of its residents.

To discharge this duty, it performs the following functions:

1. Ensuring proper sanitation in the city.
2. Keep the streets clean by removing garbage.
3. Providing proper drainage.
4. Removing carcasses of dead animals and disposing of fallen trees.
5. Providing hospitals, dispensaries, child and maternity welfare centres.
6. Preventing the outbreak of epidemics.
7. Making arrangement for public vaccination.
8. Preventing the sale of adulterated food.
9. Ensuring the supply of clean drinking water.
10. Taking measure for keeping check on stray dog population.

### ◆ PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES

1. Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, latrines and drains.
2. Planting trees along roadsides.
3. Installing, maintaining and repairing street lights.
4. Providing efficient and adequate fire fighting services.

## URBAN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

5. Maintaining public gardens, parks, recreation centres, etc.
6. Assigning suitable places for burying or cremating the dead.
7. Controlling the number of beggars, by rehabilitating the able-bodied ones.
8. Registering all human births and deaths.
9. Maintaining libraries and reading rooms.
10. Ensuring regular supply of electricity and water.
11. Ensuring free or subsidised ambulance services for traffic casualties .

A tax is a sum of money that people have to pay to the government. It is a form of compensation for the public services provided to them.

**Other Functions:** Local bodies open primary schools and high schools. Adult education centres with well-equipped reading rooms, libraries as well as museums are opened to spread literacy in the local area. Municipal Corporations and Committees often conduct public vaccination schemes, including drives to administer free anti-polio drops to infants. They demolish old and unsafe buildings. They also check food adulteration and sale of spurious medicines.

## VOLUNTARY FUNCTIONS

We have studied the compulsory functions of the urban local bodies. They can also perform some voluntary functions, provided they have enough financial resources. Some of them are:

1. Construction of parks and gardens.
2. Establishing zoos, aquariums, aviaries and museums .
3. Maintaining old age homes, orphanages, rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, night shelters for the destitute, arranging for traffic control volunteers, blood banks, etc.
4. Cheap and efficient local transport facilities such as mini buses.
5. Constructing public toilets and bathrooms such as Sulabh Shauchalayas.

## SOURCES OF INCOME

Municipal Corporations and Committees need large sums of money to discharge their many functions. Their sources of income are:

1. Terminal tax or octroi duty levied on goods entering municipal limits.
2. Taxes on property and houses.
3. Taxes on roads, flyovers, bridges and ferries.
4. Taxes on vehicles.
5. Auction of parking lots at designated places.
6. Taxes on water, lighting, drainage and sewerage.
7. Rent from municipal properties, land, markets and rest houses.
8. Raise loans from the public with the consent of State government.
9. Grants-in-Aid from the state government.
10. Fines and penalties levied on violators of traffic and city rules.

**Other forms of local Government in Towns:** Small towns with populations between ten thousand and twenty thousand people have Local Government bodies called Town Area Committees. They have some elected members, just as the municipalities do. The Government also nominates some of its members. These committees are responsible for maintaining roads, public health, sanitation, etc.



## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AND A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

The main differences between the two are:

1. Municipal Corporations are set up in big cities with large population.  
On the other hand, Municipal Committees are established in smaller cities and towns.
2. Municipal Corporations enjoy more powers and have a higher status than those of Municipal Committees.
3. Municipal Corporations are more independent of the government control in respect of administration .
4. Municipal Corporations have better income and have more financial powers than the Municipal Committees/Councils.
5. Municipal Corporations generally deal with the State government directly. Municipal Committees, on the other hand , have to deal with the government through the District Administration. In our country, only big cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Nagpur; Kanpur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Patna, etc., have Municipal Corporations

## STATE GOVERNMENTS CONTROL OVER LOCAL BODIES

1. The state government keeps control over the local bodies in a state . The minister of local self government supervises the work of the local bodies. The state government gives them financial aid. So it keeps a strict watch on how the funds are being used. The Audit Department of the government checks the accounts of all the local bodies. Local bodies cannot levy any new tax or raise any loan without the permission of the state government.
2. The state government has the power to dissolve any Corporation or Municipality if it does not perform its duties properly and/or misuses its funds. The life of a local body depends on the goodwill of the state government.
3. Though the state government keeps a close watch over the local bodies, it is sometime an obstacle in their progress. Both the state government and the local bodies aim to promote the welfare of the people. The state government will intervene in the functioning of a local body if it feels that it is not implementing government orders properly or is not working efficiently.

Local bodies are the training grounds for democracy. They help to inculcate civic virtues among the people. They encourage citizens to cooperate with one another in solving their neighbourhood problems.

