

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FIELD ADMINISTRATION

| L.No | Title of Lesson | SKILLS | Activity |
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| 18 | Local Governments and Field Administration | Self Awareness, Problem Solving, Empathy | To Understand the System of Local Governance and Administration |

Meaning

Local Government is a government of the local people. Being located nearest to the local people, local government institutions are under constant observation of the society. It is said that Local Government provides services to the individual from “cradle to the grave.”

The Government of India has empowered the institutions by 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts 1992, so that they may work for the welfare of the local people in a more effective manner.

Rural and Urban Local Government

The system of rural Local Government is known as ‘Panchayati Raj System’ and includes Village Panchayat (Gram Panchayat), Panchayat or Block Samiti and Zila Parishad. The urban local government also has three kinds of institutional arrangement in different cities and towns known as Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats.

Panchayati Raj System

The founding fathers of the Constitution made provisions for Panchayati Raj system under the Directive Principles of State policy. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended the establishment of a three-tier Panchyati Raj system: Gram Panchayats at village level, Panchayat Samiti at block level and Zila Parishad at the District level. However, it was the 73rd Constitutional Amendment 1992 that provided the present shape to the Panchyati Raj System.

Gram Panchayat

The Organization, Functions and Sources of Funds of Gram Panchayats

- a. **Organisation :** Village panchayat also called gram panchayat is the grass root institution of the Panchayati Raj System. At the village level there is a Gram Panchayat having a chairperson known as Gram Pradhan or Sarpanch (Mukhia), a Vice-Chairman and some panches. The village panchayat or gram panchayat is the Executive of Gram Sabha. All members of each Gram Sabha are voters who elect the members of the Gram Panchayat by a secret ballot. In most of the States, a Village Panchyat has 5 to 9 members, 1/3 seats are reserved for women. Provision of reservation for SCs and STs is also there.

- b. Functions of Gram Panchyats :** With a view to public needs and requirements of villages every Gram Panchayat has to work for provision of safe drinking water, paving of streets, ensuring cleanliness of the village, upkeep of street light, developing and maintaining good drainage system, plantation of trees, setting up and running the library or reading room and insemination centers for cattle and dispensary etc.
- c. Sources of Income of Gram Panchayats:** Taxes on property, land, goods and cattle, rent collected on property of Panchayat, various types of fines imposed by Gram Panchayats and grant-in-aid received from State and Union Government etc.

Panchyat Samiti

The Organisation and Functions of Panchyat Samiti

- a. Composition :** Panchyat or Block Samiti is the middle tier of Panchayati Raj System and is constituted by-
- All the Surpanches (Mukhias) of Gram Panchayats lying in that block area; MPs, MLAs and MLCs of that Block; directly elected members, elected members of Zila Parishad of that Block and some officers of that Block (Ex-officio members)
- b. Functions of Panchyat Samiti :** Some important functions are agriculture, land improvement, watershed development, social and farm forestry, primary, technical and vocational education. Besides these functions it implements certain schemes and programmes for which specific fund or grant-in-aid is allocated by the State Government or Central Government.
- c. Sources of Income :** Grants given by government, taxes, and also receives a fixed percentage of land revenue.

Zila Parishad

The Organisation and Functions of Zila Parishad

- a. Composition :** Zila Parishad is the apex body being the third tier of Panchayati Raj System. It is situated at the District level. It also has a term of 5 years. Some of its members are directly elected and chairpersons of Panchayat Samities are ex-officio members of Zila Parishad. Chairperson of Zila Parishad is elected from the directly elected members. Not less than 1/3rd of the seats are reserved for women members. Seats are also reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.
- b. Functions of the Zila Parishad :** Providing of essential services and facilities to the rural population, planning and executing the developmental programmes for the district. Supplying improved seeds to the farmers, undertaking construction of small-scale irrigation projects, maintaining pastures and executing programmes for literacy, running libraries, conducting vaccination drives against epidemics and welfare campaigns, encourage entrepreneurs to setup small scale industries like cottage industries, handicrafts, agriculture products processing, mills, dairy farms etc. and implementing rural employment schemes.
- c. Sources of Income of Zila Parishad :** Income from taxes levied by Zila Parishad, license fees and market fees; share from the collected land revenue; income from various properties of Zila Parishad; Grants from State and Central Governments; and Funds allocated by the State for Developmental activities.

Urban Local Government

The 74th Constitutional Amendment 1992 brought about major changes in the system of urban local government. Now three types of urban local government are functioning : (a) Municipal Corporations for big cities, (b) Municipal Councils for small cities and (c) Nagar Panchayat for those areas that are in transition from rural areas to urban areas.

Municipal Corporations

- a. **Composition :** Municipal Corporations are established in big cities. The councillors or municipal corporators are elected for a fixed period of 5 years. The elected councillors elect one of them as Mayor annually. The Mayor is known as the first citizen of the city. Not less than 1/3rd of the total seats are reserved for women. There is also a provision of reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes.
- b. There is an official post of Municipal Commissioner, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Municipal Corporation and is appointed by State Government. In case of Union Territory like Delhi, he/she is appointed by the Central Government.
- b. **Functions of Municipal Corporations :** (i) Health & Sanitation (ii) Electricity and Water Supply (iii) Education (iv) Public works and (v) Miscellaneous functions such as maintaining record of Birth and Deaths etc.
- c. **Sources of Income of Municipal Corporations:** Income from taxes, license fees and water supply charges, electricity charges, sewer charges, toll-tax and octroi duty, (ii) Grants-in-aid from State and Union Government and (iii) Income from rent from its properties

Municipal Councils

- a. **Composition :** Small cities have Municipal Councils. Every Municipal Council has councillors who are elected by the voters of the concerned city for 5 years. Chairperson or President of the Municipal Council is elected by the councillors. Every Municipal Councils has one Executive officer appointed by the State Government. The Health Officer, Tax superintendent, Civil Engineer are some other important officers.
- b. **Functions of the Municipal Councils :** (i) Health and sanitation (ii) Electricity and water supply, (iii) Primary Education, (iv) Maintenance of Birth and Death Records, and (v) Public works.
- c. **Sources of Income :** The main sources of Income of Municipal Councils are:
Taxes on properties, vehicles, entertainment and advertisement, rents, fees, and charges – water supply charges, electricity charges, sewer charges, License Fees, Rents of property-shops, community halls etc. Grants from State Government, and fines collected from tax evaders, law breakers, on encroachment etc.

Nagar Panchayats

- a. **Composition :** Every urban centre with more than 30,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants has a Nagar Panchayat. It is composed of a chairperson and ward members. It may have a body of ten elected ward members and three nominated members.
- b. **Functions :** Nagar Panchayat is responsible for (a) Cleanliness and disposal of garbage; (b) Supply of drinking water. (c) Maintenance of public conveniences; (d) Setting up and maintaining Fire Services and (e) Registration of Births and Deaths.
- c. **Sources of Income :** House Tax, Water Tax, Toll Tax; License Fees and Fee for approving building plans, Rents collected from Community Centers, Barat-ghars and other properties like shops etc. and grant-in-aid from State government.

District Administration

- **District Collector or Deputy Commissioner or District Magistrate**

District Administration is headed by District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate. Other important officials of District Administration are Superintendent of Police, District Education Officer, Civil Surgeon or District Health Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Sub-Divisional Officer and Block Development Officer etc. The main function of District Magistrate is to maintain law and order and ensure peace.

- **Sub-Divisional Officer**

The Sub- Divisional Officer assists the District Magistrate in the field of administration and also works as his /her representative. He/She keeps and maintains land records and collects land revenue and has the power to issue certificates regarding Domicile, Schedule castes/Scheduled tribes and other Backward classes.

- **Block Development Officer**

The Block Development Officer is linked with middle tier of Panchayati Raj as he/she is the ex-officio Secretary or the Executive officer of Panchayat Samiti and keeps the record of its meeting, prepare budget and co-ordinates various development activities.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. What is the impact of 73rd; Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 on the Panchayati Raj System?
 - Q. What is the impact of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992?
 - Q. Discuss briefly the main functions of a Municipal Council.
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