

Local Self-Government in Cities

Introduction

All of us need some basic things such as drinking water, electricity, roads, transport, schools, colleges and hospitals. These are called **civic amenities or public utility services**. In our country, the government provides these civic amenities to the people.

The government works at three levels:

- Centre
- State
- Local



The government provides many civic amenities.

Local Government

The local self-government or the government elected by the people at the local level provides civic amenities to the people. In a village, the **gram panchayat** provides these amenities to the people. In towns and cities, these are provided by **municipal committees or municipal corporations**.



The local government which looks after a small city is called a **municipal committee**. These are also known as **nagar palika** or **nagar nigam**. Cities with a population of more than 10 lakh, have **municipal corporations**. Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Ahmadabad and Pune have municipal corporations. It is also known as **mahanagar palika** or **mahanagar nigam**.

Members

The members of a municipal committee or corporation are elected by the people who live in that city. For the purposes of election, the city is divided into many small units called wards. People who are 18 years of age and above cast their votes and elect the members. One member is elected from each ward. Elections are held every five years.

Tips:

The Chennai Municipal Corporation was set up in 1688. It is the oldest municipal corporation in India. It is also the second oldest in the world, after London.

Composition

- The elected members are called municipal councillors.
- The head of a municipal committee is called the chairperson or president.
- The head of a municipal corporation is called a mayor. He is assisted by a deputy mayor.



Keep the city clean



Build and repair roads



Install and repair street lights

WHAT LOCAL SELF-GOVERNING BODIES DO



Set up and maintain public toilets



Open and run dispensaries, healthcare centres and hospitals



Provide free education to children from poor families

Taxes

All local bodies need money to function. They collect money through taxes – property tax, road tax, water tax, and so on. The state governments also give them money. We must cooperate with the local bodies in our area. We must help them in whatever way we can.

Tips:

- In cities, municipal committees or municipal corporations provide civic amenities to the people.
- Any person who is 18 years of age and above can vote in a municipal election. The elected members are called municipal councillors.
- Local bodies collect money through taxes. They also get money from the state government.