

Chapter - 09 Public Facilities

Public facilities are the facilities provided to the people by the government. They are important to sustain and lead a comfortable life.

Water and the People of Chennai:

- Mr Ramgopal lives in Anna Nagar, Chennai. This area looks lush and green with lawns maintained by a generous spraying of water.
- Likewise, in an apartment where Mr Subramaniam lives water supply is inadequate. They have to spend Rs 500-600 per month to buy water.
- Siva lives in Madipakkam, Chennai. She gets water once in 4 days. For drinking, she buys bottled water.
- Water as a public utility is available in different quantity to different people.
- Safe drinking water comes under the fundamental right of an individual and it is the responsibility of government to avail it to its citizens.

Water as Part of the Fundamental Rights to Life:

- Water is essential for life and for good health.
- India has one of the largest number of causes of water related diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera. More than 1600 Indians, mostly children below the age of five die everyday because of water-related diseases.
- The Constitution of India recognizes the right to water as being a part of the Right to Life under Article 21. That means there should be "universal access" to water.
- The High Courts and Supreme Court have held that the right to safe drinking water is a Fundamental Right.
- Verdicts given by courts make it as the responsibility of government to ensure the supply of fresh drinking water.

Public Facilities:

- Things like electricity, public transport, schools and colleges, etc. which are necessary

for survival are known as public facilities.

- Public facilities are provided so that its benefits can be shared by many people.
- This is the responsibility of government to make public facilities available to every individual and no one should be discriminated just on the basis of social or economic division.

The Government's Role:

- One of the most important functions of the government is to ensure that these public facilities are made available to everyone:
 - Making provision for education & setting up of schools & colleges.
 - Improving health & sanitation facilities.
 - Ensuring equal distribution of food throughout the country.
 - Improving the means of transport
 - Maintenance of public utility works like post offices, railways and roads
- Private companies operate for profit in the market. Public facilities are related to people's basic needs.
- The main source of revenue for the government is the taxes collected from the people and the government is empowered to collect these taxes and use them for such programmes.
- For instance, to supply water, the government has to incur costs in pumping water, carrying it over long distances, laying down pipes for its distribution, treating the water for impurities and finally collecting and treating waste water.
- It meets these expenses partly from the various taxes that it collects and partly by charging a price for water. This price is set so that most people can afford a certain minimum amount of water for daily use.
- One of the most important task of government is to ensure the availability of resources to everyone.
- By making the administration strict and effectively implementing the schemes government can help underprivileged.
- The government by utilising the revenue collected in better social schemes and using the resources in better manner can ensure the well being to maximum of the population.

Water supply to Chennai: is it Available to All:

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- Water supply in Chennai is marked by shortage. Municipal supply meets only about half the needs of the people of the city, on an average.
 - The burden of shortfalls in water supply falls mostly on the poor.
 - In search of Alternatives, the scenario of shortage and acute crisis during the summer months is common to other cities of India.
 - A shortage of municipal water is often taken as a sign of failure of the government.
 - Throughout the world, water supply is the responsibility of the government. There are very few instances of private water supply.
 - In this era of industrialisation water pollution has become a major problem.
 - To avail the clean drinking water to a large population can be done through the technology advancement which needs investement by the government.

Conclusion:

- Public facilities are related to our basic needs and the Indian Constitution has recognised the right to water, health, education, etc. as being a part of the Right to Life.
- The major role of the government is to ensure adequate public facilities for everyone.
- Public facilities provided to everyone give rise to better living indices and help any country to get recognised at international level in terms of development.
- The success of any government is also acknowledged through the facilities and basic needs provided to all the individuals.
- These facilites finally become the building blocks of the development of a nation.