

Local Self-Government in Urban Areas



Look at the illustration of a city given below. What do you think are the differences between villages and cities? What kinds of public amenities are needed and available in cities? What are the different sources of livelihood of people in urban areas? What kind of amenities do such works require? Discuss these points in the class.



Fig. 14.1: A view of a city

Towns and cities are places where large number of people live. Roads in many parts of the cities are wider and busier. There are more shops, vehicles, and industries in cities. They require a lot more planning and amenities than in rural areas. Moreover,

every year more and more people are shifting to towns in search of employment and livelihood. So, the size of the cities is growing day by day and new colonies are coming up constantly. Many of these colonies are in the form of slums in which

a large number of poor people live and work. They should be assured of water and electricity supply, transport, schools and hospitals. A major problem in cities is the disposal of waste materials or garbage and drainage.

Thus, providing public amenities in towns and cities is a very complex job and needs a large organisation. This organisation is called Municipality. There are three kinds of municipal bodies depending upon the size of the population:

Nagar Panchayat: 20,000 to 40,000 people; Municipal Council: 40,000 to 3,00,000 people; Municipal Corporation: More than 3,00,000 people.

Formation of Municipalities

Like the village panchayats, the municipalities too are formed through elections. Urban areas are also divided into wards and divisions. People are elected as representatives. These representatives are called Councillors in municipal towns and corporators in Corporation cities. Apart from the ward Councillors, there are also Mayors, or Chairpersons, who head the institution like the Sarpanches in the Panchayats do. As per Election Procedure followed to elect Gram Sarpanch the chairman and mayor are elected directly by the enrolled voters of municipality and corporation.

- ♦ The rules of elections with regard to the municipalities are similar to that of panchayat. Compare the information given about Panchayat and correct the wrong statements given below:

- i. Elections to the municipalities are held every five years.

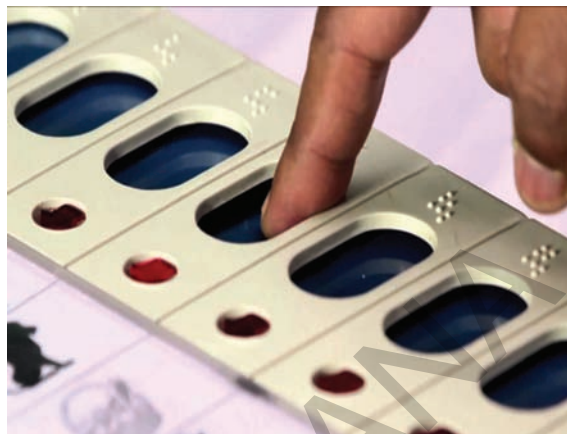


Fig. 14.2: EVM (Electronic Voting Machine)

- ii. Voter should be 18 years or older.
 - iii. There is only one representative for each ward.
 - iv. His or her name is listed in the voter list of a particular ward of the village.
 - v. All ward representatives are men.
 - vi. Anyone above the age of 21 can contest the elections.
- ♦ With the help of your teacher, identify Municipal Councils or Municipal Corporations in your district.

How does the Municipality work?

The municipality has a lot of tasks to perform like water supply, street lighting, maintaining and building roads, drainage and garbage disposal, running schools, ration shops, hospitals among others besides taking up new developmental works. Now, all this cannot be done by a few people or by the Corporators or Councillors alone. Hence the municipalities employ a large number of workers, officers, clerks and accountants. Each

municipality has a number of departments, headed by an officer who is responsible for the proper working of that department.

For example, there will be a water supply department, electricity department, education department and garbage disposal department in every municipality.

You may be wondering as to what is the work of the Councillors. Actually, the Councillors stay in touch with the people of the ward to understand their needs, and problems and discuss them in the municipality meetings. In order to ensure that all these different kinds of work are properly thought about, the municipality has a number of committees and the Councillors are assigned to these committees. The work of these committees is to review the functioning of the municipality department, and plan new works to be undertaken. They prepare proposals, which are discussed in the municipality meetings and passed. These decisions are implemented by the officers and employees of the municipality.

The ward Councillors ensure that the needs of their wards are placed before the council when decisions are taken. They also stay in touch with the people of the ward who may take their problems to them. Let us look at an example of how people of a ward can solve their problems by approaching their ward Councillor.

- ♦ Can you distinguish between the functions of municipalities and panchayats?
- ♦ How do the departments help in the work of the municipalities?
- ♦ What committees do you setup for the running of your school?



Fig. 14.3: submission of a letter to authorities for sanitation

A community representation

Yasmin Khala said, “Earlier even our colony used to have garbage lying all over, and if it remained uncollected, it would attract dogs, rats and flies. People also got ill because of the smell. The women were very unhappy about the situation. Then it was Gangabai who said that we should meet the Ward Councillor and protest since we elected him. She gathered a small group of women and went to his house. He came out and asked them what was wrong. Gangabai described the situation of the locality to him. He promised to go with them the next day to meet the Commissioner. He asked Gangabai to get a petition signed by all the adults in the locality saying that garbage was not being collected. That evening children ran from house to house making sure that as many families as possible signed the petition.

The next morning a large group of women along with the Ward Councillor

went to the Municipal Corporation office. The Commissioner met with this large group and said that he did not have enough trucks. Gangabai replied, “But you seem to have enough trucks to collect garbage from the other localities.”

He promised that he would take care of it immediately. “If it was not done in two days, protest would continue” said Yasmin Khala.

“So did the streets get cleaned?” asked Rehana, who never let things remain unfinished. Yes, from that day onward, sanitation service in this locality became regular.

- ♦ What should ward Councillors do to ensure that all amenities are working properly in their wards?
- ♦ If you find garbage piled up in front of your house, what would you do?

Sub-contracting of Work

Several municipalities across the country are hiring contractors to collect and process garbage. This is called Sub-Contracting. This means that the work that was earlier being done by municipality workers is now being done by a private company. Collecting garbage is quite a dangerous job and the authorities have to see that contract workers have access to safety measures like gloves and masks while working.

- ♦ If you live in a town, find out how many people work in the municipality and how many are employed through contractors. What kind of problems do they face?
- ♦ Why do municipalities prefer to give out work on sub-contract?

Funds for the Municipalities

Municipalities levy a number of taxes – like tax on houses, water and street light taxes, taxes on shops and film tickets. However, the income from these taxes is not enough for the work of the municipalities. So, they depend upon grants from the government. The government allots funds for different projects (like construction of roads) and for the regular work of the municipalities.

Municipal Workers



Fig. 14.4: Sanitation work

Let us read about a day in the life of a Municipal worker:

It was Monday morning, 5 a.m. Chinna did not want to get up and go for work. Yesterday she had no work, because it was Sunday. But that means there will be more sweeping and more bins to clean. All those living in Starlight colony too had their holidays and have

thrown more waste in the bins. The street will have more wrappers and plastic bags that were thrown away after their shopping. The more the waste those people throw, the harder it becomes for Chinna to sort them out. Her own colony had no dustbins, only garbage heap. Her hutment, which is next to the drainage pipe coming from other parts of the city, was leaking. Dirty water stagnates near the hand pump.

Chinna barely managed to collect water for the house, and clean herself up. And there is Nazma already at her door. “Hurry up! If we do not reach Starlight colony in another 10 minutes and start cleaning, we will miss the truck that comes at 6:45.” Chinna, drank some hot water, shook her daughter’s shoulders and told, “I am leaving for work, do not be late to school.”

Chinna and Nazma, walked all the way to Starlight colony. They collected the brooms and the cart from their regular place. The old cart was making all sorts of noise. Both of them moved along the road side and began to sweep. There were all sorts of waste. The dustbins were overflowing just in one day. People had thrown their waste outside the dustbins. In many places, people had left the waste in the open

Sweeping the street is one part of the work. After piling up the waste, they have to load it into the truck. They often handpick the plastic bags, bottles, milk pouches, etc. from kitchen waste, vegetable peels, bones and other bio-

degradable material. Some years ago, with much fanfare, there were green waste bins and blue waste bins in the street corners. It was thought that people would separate their waste. For about three four weeks at least some people threw their waste after segregation. But now Chinna and Nazma have to do this. They were also given some carts to carry around the waste. Chinna knows that many people consider their profession unclean. Although the municipal workers clean the entire city to make it inhabitable to the people living there, they are still not treated properly.

Apart from sweepers, there are also truck drivers and other helpers who are employed by the Contractor. All the waste from different parts of the city is dumped at the allotted places.

- ♦ Where does Chinna work? Who employs her? What are the different activities they have to do, for cleaning the colony?
- ♦ Is the work of Chinna and Nazma respected by all the people in society?
- ♦ What do you feel about this wide difference between the two colonies?
- ♦ Draw an imaginary illustration of the two colonies.

Vemulawada Nagara

Panchayat: A case study

Vemulawada is a Nagara Panchayat in Rajanna Disitric. It has 20 wards and it was

a major gram panchayat until 2011. The Raja Rajeshwara Swami temple is a well known pilgrim centre. The temple attracts a large number of pilgrims and special care is taken by the temple authorities to ensure its premises are kept clean.

Something unique about the town is its drinking water supply system. It is called Akasha Ganga. It began in the year 2003. These are overhead pipes. Under the Swajaladhara scheme, these pipelines connect 10-15 households. Five thousand households have been connected in this manner. Water is supplied to the houses on every alternate day.

The city also makes sure that garbage is collected every day. Workers are provided with wheel-carts, gloves, masks and uniforms. They also use hydraulic dumper bins, trolley auto rickshaws, tractors etc. to collect the garbage and dump it in the yard. This yard is five kilometres away from the town. It is their proposal to separate plastic from other waste and the waste is to be used for power generation.

Most households have been provided with personal latrines. These were constructed through collaboration between non governmental organisations and government funds.



Fig. 14.5: Drinking water supply in a municipality

Another facility created by the city is marking out a special place in the rivulet for celebrations of *Bathukamma*. The city ensures the safety of the people and lighting is arranged in the area during the festive season.



Fig. 14.6: Pipe lines for drinking water(Akasha Ganga)



Fig. 14.7: Bathukamma Teppa

Keywords

Self-Government

Municipal council

Municipal corporation

Sub contracting

Bio-degradable material

Improve your learning



1. How is garbage collected in your locality? What happens to it?
2. What are the public amenities provided by a municipality but not by a Panchayat?
3. If you live in a town, prepare a list of work done by the municipality in your ward during the last two years.
4. Pochamma says that her street tap gives water only for half an hour and several people queue up to fill their buckets. What would you advise her to do to solve this problem?
5. Xavier repairs street lights. He is employed by an electricity contractor who is engaged by the municipality. Xavier was injured due to electric shock. He could not work for two months. He did not get any wages for this period and was dismissed by his contractor. What would you advise him to do?
6. What are the services of municipality in helping the poor?
7. How do you differentiate the village from the city?
8. What do you like the most in cities and villages?
9. Locate the different Municipalities in your district map.
10. Frame a few questions to ask the local Corporator/ Councillor to know the details of work done by the Municipality.
11. Read the last para of page 124 ('Apart from sweepers allotted places') read and comment on it.
12. Some people expecting that the Municipality has to provide all the public amenities at lower cost. While other think that the Municipalities should also provide dignified working conditions for those who work for it. Write your arguments.

Project:

1. Visit any amenity provided by the nearby municipality like bus stand, hospital, school, market, public toilets, etc. and prepare a report on their condition. Prepare a poster on them.
2. Interview two municipal workers and prepare a poster on their daily schedule and the problems they face.
3. Collect news clippings from newspapers on the working of municipalities for a week and prepare a summary of the reports.