

LESSON- 7

Urban Administration

Introduction

The government provides certain basic amenities that are essential for its smooth running to all villages, towns and cities. Water and electricity are basic requirements for homes, schools and offices to function. A good network of roads and transport system, adequate housing facilities, proper sewage tanks, schools and hospitals, recreational facilities and many more things are needed by an urban set-up. Municipal governance was set up to create effective and responsive bodies to administer the towns and cities.

Smaller towns and cities that have a population of less than 20,000 are governed by city councils, cities that have a population of more than 20,000 but less than 10 lakhs are governed by **municipal council** and cities with a population of more than 10 lakhs are governed by **municipal corporation**.

Municipal Corporation

The Municipal corporation or Nagar Nigam / Mahanagar Palika is the topmost form of local government in India. Cities governed by municipal corporations are divided into wards from which the members are elected. Each municipal corporation has a committee whose members are elected for a term of 5 years. The committee is comprised of a mayor, and a municipal commissioner along with councilors. The mayor is the head of the committee and he is elected for a period of 1 year. Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and women. This institution enjoys a greater measure of autonomy than the other forms of local government.

Functions of the municipal corporation

- Regular supply of drinking water as well as construction and maintenance of waterworks.
- Supply of electricity for all streets, public places and building of the area.
- Constructions of roads and streets.
- Maintaining public health and sanitation by ensuring that the streets and other public places are cleaned.
- Construction and maintenance of a proper drainage system.
- Maintaining public hospitals and keeping a record of births and deaths.
- Setting up schools issuing licenses.
- Safeguarding the public from disaster, accident or injury.
- Constructing fire brigades, market places, etc.

Other functions

The optional function include construction and maintenance of public parks, libraries, maintenance of public transport system, providing housing for the poor and promoting welfare schemes.

In order to understand the role of these bodies, let us take one example of the functions performed by them. Along with providing facilities, a municipal corporation also organizes relief and rescue work, in case of any disaster, like earthquake and floods. In case of tragedies like train accidents, fires etc they help the victims, and also approach the state and central government for further aid, if required.

Sources of Income

Funds are required by the municipal corporations to carry out their responsibilities. People living in the wards own shops, houses and other property. Various sources of income are:

- Water and electricity tax
- Entertainment tax
- Octroi and Toll Tax.
- Tax on property.
- Grants-in-aid from the state government.

Thus, with this body of fund, the municipal corporation is able to provide facilities to the people. These bodies also play a significant role in addressing the grievances of the people.

The Municipal Council

The Municipal Council or the nagar palika governs smaller cities with a population of more than 20,000. Like municipal corporations, municipal councils are also divided into wards. They are formed through elections and their tenure is five years, after which elections are held again. Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. One-third of the seats are reserved for women in the municipalities. It is headed by the municipal commissioner.

Functions of the Municipal Council

- Maintenance of public hygiene, including disposal of garbage and provision of proper drainage system.
- Maintenance of public health by organizing vaccination and health awareness camps, checking for food adulteration, ensuring regular supply of clean drinking water.
- Providing educational facilities, maintain schools, public libraries and museums.
- registering of births and deaths, and issue of certificates.
- Maintenance of public places like parks, roundabouts, roads and bridges, recreation centers, parking lots, shops, markets.
- Issuing licenses for parking lots, markets, restaurants, hospitals and housing complexes.
- Ensuring regular water and electricity supply, and proper street lighting.
- Collecting tax and surcharge on property, water, electricity, parking and other facilities.

Sources of Income

The sources of municipal council are similar to that of the municipal corporation. The municipal council also collects tax from water, electricity, entertainment, toll and property. It also gets grants from the state governments.

The municipal authorities some times hire workers on a contract basis, when there is more work to be done and less number of people to manage it. Sometimes in bigger cities the contractors sub contract the job further. The contractual workers are not paid at par with the regular employee of the municipal corporation or council.

Nagar Panchayats

With time, many rural areas change and develop into urban areas. The facilities in these areas grow, and people gradually take up activities other than farming. Such areas, which are in transition from the rural to urban, are administered by a body called the **nagar panchayat**. The name of this body explains its function well, Nagar because it is looking after a city, and panchayat because a panchayat looks after rural areas. They are formed in areas which have a population of more than 11000 and less than 25000. These civic bodies also perform similar functions and their sources of income is also the taxes they collect from people.