

Local Self-Government – Urban

Urban Local Self-Government

While the administration of a village is looked after by the Panchayat, the administration of the city is looked after by the Municipal Council or Municipal Corporation.

The 74th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1992 to make urban local bodies more effective. The salient features of the Act were

- The Act gave legal and constitutional status to the urban local bodies.
- The Act fixed a tenure of five years for the members of the urban local self-government bodies.
- One-third of the seats have been reserved for women and for the members belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
 - Municipal Corporations look after the administration of cities with a population of more than 20 lakh.
 - Municipal Councils administer small urban areas.
 - A town which has a population of about 5,000–10,000 people is regarded as a small town or an area in transition. The Nagar Panchayat is set up for transitional areas which are in transition from the rural to the urban areas.

The Municipal Corporation

The Municipal Corporation has many departments such as water supply, sewage disposal and education. It administers the functions of the city with the help of committees.

Elections

The city is divided into different wards. The people of each ward elect the members of the Municipal Corporation known as ward councillors. The number of representatives depends on the population of the city.

Elections to the Municipal Corporation are held once in every five years.



The building of the Chennai Municipal Corporation. It is the oldest Municipal Corporation in India.

Composition

A Municipal Corporation consists of the following members:

General Council

- The Municipal Corporation consists of elected members known as Councillors. There are reserved seats for the people of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.
- The Council may appoint an alderman who is generally an eminent personality of the city and is nominated by the Governor.

Mayor

- The Councillors elect the Mayor from among themselves.
- A Mayor is usually elected for a period of one year, but he can be re-elected for another term.

Functions of the Mayor:

- He presides over the meetings of the Corporation.
- He represents the city on various occasions and receives foreign guests who visit the city.
- He decides and fixes the agenda for consideration at the meetings of the Corporation.
- He obtains a report from the Municipal Commissioner pertaining to various projects and programmes undertaken by the Corporation.
- He acts as a link between the Corporation and the state government.

Municipal Commissioner

- He is appointed by the Governor for a term of five years. His functions are
 - He is the Chief Executive of the Corporation. He prepares the final budget of the Corporation.
 - He maintains and safeguards all municipal properties and records.
 - He has to implement and execute projects and programmes which are laid down by the General Council.
 - He participates in the meetings of the Corporation and keeps records of the minutes and proceedings of the meeting.

Standing Committees

Councillors get elected to various committees called standing committees. These standing committees deal with subjects such as health, taxation, welfare schemes and finance.

Functions of the Municipal Corporation

Compulsory Functions

- To supply electricity and clean drinking water
- To establish public health care services such as public hospitals, dispensaries and family welfare centres
- To make arrangements for the vaccination of children and to control the spread of epidemic diseases
- To provide primary and secondary education to children and organise sports events in the city
- To construct and maintain roads and streets
- To maintain a record of births and deaths
- To take measures to ensure public safety and security such as the maintenance of the fire department as well as to undertake disaster management during floods and earthquakes
- To make provisions for the disposal of garbage and sewage of the city



One of the main functions of the Municipal Corporation is the construction and maintenance of roads.

Voluntary or Discretionary Functions

- To set up orphanages, old age homes, night shelters
- To provide affordable and efficient transport services
- To beautify cities by constructing and maintaining public parks, gardens, libraries and museums
- To organise fairs and exhibitions
- To provide affordable housing to the people

Municipal Committee

It looks after the administration of smaller towns with a population between 20,000 and 3 lakh people. Municipal Committees are also known as Municipal Boards or Municipalities. It consists of the General Body, Chairperson/President and Chief Executive Officer or Secretary.

General Body or Municipal Committee

- The members of the General Body are known as Councillors. They are elected by the people residing in municipal wards.
- They are elected for a period of five years.

Chairperson or President

- A Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are elected by the members of the Municipal Committee from among themselves.
- He/she performs the same functions as those performed by the Mayor of the Municipal Corporation.

Other Office Bearers

A Municipal Committee consists of various departments such as education, health and engineering. These departments are looked after by the members of the Municipal Committee and senior officers.

Sources of Income

Local Urban Self-Institutions collect money from the people through various taxes. Its main sources of income are

- It levies property tax, entertainment tax and water and electricity charges.
- It also earns money through levying octroi charges (goods coming into the city), service tax, toll tax and vehicle tax.
- It gets financial aid from the state government.



Earning through toll tax is a major source of income of the city's Municipal Corporation.

Differences between the Municipal Corporation and the Municipal Committee

Municipal Corporation	Municipal Committee
Municipal Corporations function in big cities which have a population of more than 20 lakh people.	Municipal Committees are formed in smaller cities which have a population between 20,000 and 3 lakh people.
The Mayor heads the Corporation.	The Chairperson or President heads the Municipal Committee.
It has wide-ranging powers and more sources of revenues.	It has comparatively less powers and fewer sources of revenues.
It directly deals with the state government.	It deals with the state government through the district administration.

Local Government

District Administration

- The local government works under a District Collector or Deputy Commissioner. He is the highest officer in a district and is responsible for the collection of revenues. He is thus called the District Collector.
- He is appointed by the state government after clearing the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) examination.
- He is trained in all aspects of administration and management of local affairs.

Other Officers

- Several government officers head various departments under the Deputy Commissioner.
- Some officers are tehsildar, naib tehsildar, lekhpal and patwari. They are concerned with the preparation of land records and revenue collection in villages and towns.
- Other important officers are Chief Medical Officer, Inspector of Education and District Judge.

Functions of the Deputy Commissioner

- He is responsible for the collection of revenues and for maintaining and updating land records.
- He is responsible for maintaining law and order in the district.
- He has to ensure the provision of civic amenities and to execute public works.
- He has to ensure the implementation of policies and programmes framed by Panchayati Raj institutions.