

## Foundation Course

### Senester 1

## 11: Local Self Government-Rural and Urban Area

The concept of local self-government is known to Indian since ancient times. During the vedic age, there existed village assemblies known as 'Sabha' and 'Samiti'. Gradually cities and Towns came into prominence. They also enjoyed greater level of autonomy in administration as witnessed during the Mauryan and Gupta period. The system of local self government in its modern sense was revived during the British period. In a democratic country power is decentralized and shared at different levels. Apart from the Central and State Government, the administration at the local level is handled by the local government in urban as well as rural areas. The local Self-Government ensures effective people's participation and ensures overall development. These small units of government enable people to feel a sense of responsibility and understand values of democracy. In India the Local Self Government is broadly classified into two categories that is Rural and Urban. The Urban local bodies include Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayat. The rural local bodies in corporate Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat.

We shall first study the Urban Local Self Government in detail

### **THE URBAN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT**

In urban areas a variety of local self-government institutions are found. They are as follows;

#### **The Municipal Corporation:**

This system was introduced by the Britishers first in Madras and then in Bombay and Calcutta. The current structure of Municipal administration is largely based on Lord Ripon's reforms on local self-government introduced in 1882. The 1992 Act brought uniformity in municipal bodies. The Municipal Corporations were set up for highly urbanized areas, Municipal Councils for smaller urban areas and Nagar Panchayat for areas in transition phase from rural to urban. The State legislature is empowered to make laws related to functioning and powers of the local government. The Municipal Corporation consists of the Council, where representatives from every ward are elected by the people known as Councillors for the term of five years. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by the Councillors for a period of two and half years. They enjoy great honour in the city. Mayor is regarded as the first citizen of the city. The MPs, MLAs are the ex-officio members of the corporation. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed through the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) known as the Municipal Commissioner. The entire administrative staff is also appointed by the State. The corporation also nominates some selected citizens as its members.

#### **Functions of the Municipal Corporation:**

It includes wide variety of duties to be performed by the corporations to ensure overall development of the city i.e. economic, social, health and sanitation, infrastructure etc. The functions of Municipal Corporations are classified as obligatory and voluntary. Some of

them are listed as follows;

### **Obligatory Functions:**

Sanitation of hospitals, roads, maintenance of drainage of city, Water supply for public and private purposes, Establishing hospitals, child and maternity welfare centres, Providing street lights, cleaning of garbages from the city roads, Registration of birth and death, Maintenance of bridges and public buildings, Providing primary education by setting up schools, Naming of streets and numbering of streets and houses,

### **Voluntary Functions:**

Constructing and maintaining public parks, gardens, libraries, museums, swimming pools, recreation centers etc., Providing shelter to old, street children, destitute, orphans etc., Survey of buildings, lands etc.

### **Municipal Council:**

1. The smaller cities are looked after by Municipal Councils. When the cities grow in size of population it is transformed under the administration of Municipal Corporations. The Council consists of;

2. The Council members are elected by the people for the term of five years.

3. President and Vice-President are elected by the members of the Council for the term of two and half years. The President is honoured as the first citizen of the town.

4. Each Council has among its appointed Staff, one Executive Officer and its subordinate staff and nominated selected citizens of the town.

### **Functions of the Municipal Council:**

The functions of the Municipal Council are similar to that of Municipal Corporations which includes some obligatory functions and some voluntary functions. To perform these functions various committees are created, namely, Public Works Committee, Education Committee, Sanitation Committee, Water Supply Committee, Planning and Development Committee, Women and Child Welfare Committee.

### **Nagar Panchayat:**

The composition and functions of the Nagar Panchayat are similar to Municipal Councils. Nagar Panchayats are established in those rural areas to be soon transformed into urban. Nagar Panchayat is formed according to the 74th constitutional amendment.

## **THE RURAL LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT**

The rural local self-government in India is also described as 'Panchayat Raj'. It was a major step taken for the upliftment of rural areas and to ensure rural development. On the basis of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Rajasthan was the first state to establish Panchayat Raj in India.. There after entire rural India came under this system. The main aims of the Panchayat Raj system was to promote social and economic development of rural areas, to make villages self-reliant and to provide with political education and training to rural people. Under the committee's recommendation a three tier system of local government was established which is as follows:

### **Zilla Parishad:**

It is a local government body at the district level. It looks after the administration of rural areas in a district. The members to the Parishad are elected by the people for the term of five years. Some seats are reserved for SC, ST, OBC and women. The President and Vice-President are elected for the term of two and half years. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the State government through Indian Administrative Services. The main functions of the Zilla Parishad include providing of facilities and initiating development programmes for the rural people. It houses various committees like Finance, Education, Health, Agriculture, Child Welfare, Animal Husbandry, Public works, Water supply and irrigation etc.

### **Panchayat Samiti:**

The Panchayat Samiti is formed at the taluka level. Every Panchayat Samiti is headed by the Chairperson. In the absence of Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson performs his functions. The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the executive head of the Panchayat Samiti. He is appointed by the State government.

### **Gram Panchayat:**

It works at the village level. It is formed in a village which has minimum population or else two or more villages are clubbed together. Sarpanch is the head of the Gram Panchayat. He supervises and implements the resolutions passed by the Gram Panchayat. In his absence Deputy Sarpanch looks after the affairs of the village.

The functions of the Gram Panchayat includes looking after the basic amenities of the village. Gramsevak is appointed by Zilla Parishad to carry out the routine work of the Gram Panchayat.