

## 9th Social Science Lesson 15 Notes in English

### 15. Local Self Government

#### Meaning of Local Self Government

- Local Self-Governments are institutions that **look after the administration of an area or a small community** such as a **village, a town or a city**.
- Local Self Government operates at the lowest level of society. It works at the grass root level, close to the people, touching their everyday life.
- Local Self-Government is the management of local affairs by such local bodies which have been elected by the local people.
- These local bodies provide services to the local community as well as act as an instrument of democratic self-government.

#### Historical Background

- The idea of local self government is a very old concept in India. **It was at its peak under the later Cholas or the Imperial Cholas of Tanjore.**
- There are historical records of references to local self government under Mauryan administration.
- Local self government existed throughout the country with its own diverse characteristics of ancient India.
- During the medieval period, local self governments had somewhat declined due to the onslaught of feudalism.
- It was revived during the British period in the last quarter of the 19th century, with Western orientation of training in democracy with **Lord Ripon's Resolution in 1882.**
- Lord Ripon was known as the 'Father of Local Government for laying the foundations of local self governments in modern times.
- Under the **Government of India Act, 1935** provincial autonomy was introduced. This Act came into force in 1937.
- In the provinces where the Congress formed its Government, rural development received special attention.
- It was an essential part of Gandhi's programme that Panchayat Raj institutions would be built from villages to the highest level.
- After Independence, the Gandhian ideal of Grama Swaraj (Village Republic) greatly influenced the constitution makers.
- India being the land of villages, the creation of village panchayats became a social movement.
- Restoration of panchayats has become an article of faith during our freedom struggle. Hence with the dawn of independence and framing of the constitution of India, **Article 40** was

incorporated in the constitution which reads as: **“the State should take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as the units of self Governments.”**

### Local Self Governments since Independence

- The conceptualisation of the system of local self-government in India took place through the formation and effort of four important committees from the year 1957 to 1986.
- **The Community Development Programme (1952) and National Extension Service (1953) became a basis for 'The Great Charter on Panchayat Raj' in 1957.**

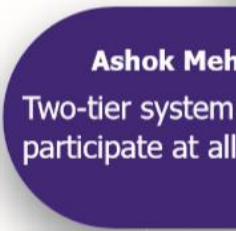
### Salient Features of the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts (1992)

Panchayats and Municipalities will be **'institutions of self-government'**.



#### Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957)

Three-tier Panchayati Raj system – gram panchayat at village level (direct election), panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zila Parishad at the district level (indirect election).



#### Ashok Mehta Committee (1977-1978)

Two-tier system and political parties should participate at all levels in the elections.



#### G V K Rao Committee (1985)

Appointed by the Planning Commission, the committee concluded that the developmental procedures were gradually being taken away from the local self-government institutions, resulting in a system comparable to 'grass without roots'.



#### L M Singhvi Committee (1986)

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992.



## Committees and Recommendations

### Committees and Recommendations

- Basic Units of Democratic System – Grama Sabhas (Villages) and Ward Committees (Municipalities) comprising all the adult members registered as voters
- Three-tier system of panchayats at village, intermediate **block/taluk/mandal and district levels**. Two-tier for smaller states with population **below 2 million**.
- Seats at all levels filled by direct elections.
- Seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and chairpersons of the Panchayats at all levels also shall be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population
- One-third of the total number of seats reserved for women. One-third of the seats reserved for SCs and STs also reserved for women. One-third offices of chairpersons at all levels reserved for women.
- Uniform five year term and elections to constitute new bodies to be completed before the expiry of the term. In the event of dissolution, elections must be held compulsorily within six months.

### Salient Features of the Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act, 1994

The New Panchayati Raj System came into being in Tamil Nadu after the enactment of a new law for local body institutions in the year 1994. The salient features of the new Act are as follows:

- (a) A three-tier system
- (b) Gram Sabha
- (c) Establishment of Election Commission
- (d) Constitution of Finance Commission
- (e) Reservation of seats for SC/ST's proportionate to their population One third reservation of seats for women and
- (g) Constitution of District Planning Committees.

### Village Panchayat

- Local governments which are function in villages are called Village Panchayats.
- The President and ward members are directly elected by the people. **(Those who have attained the age above 18)** and their term of office is five years.
- District Collector act as the Inspector of Village Panchayat.
- Village Panchayats are constituted in each and every village wherever the population is above 500.

### Functions of the Village Panchayat

- Supply of drinking water
- Maintenance of street lights
- Maintenance of roads
- Maintenance of village libraries
- Maintenance of small bridges
- Granting permission to the housing plots
- Maintenance of drainage
- Construction of group houses
- Cleaning of streets
- Maintenance of burial grounds
- Maintenance of common lavatory facilities

### **Voluntary Functions.**

According to the Tamil Nadu Local Government Act passed in 1994, the following functions to be performed as voluntary functions by the local governments

- Maintenance of street lights in the villages
- Maintenance of markets and fairs
- Implantation of trees
- Maintenance of play grounds
- Maintenance of parking vehicles, slaughter houses and cattle sheds
- Control over places of exhibition

### **Revenue**

Village Panchayat was the only local government which was empowered to levy taxes in the three-tier system of Village Panchayat.

### **Taxes**

- Property Tax
- Professional Tax
- House Tax
- Taxes for connection of drinking water
- Land Tax
- Taxes levied on shops

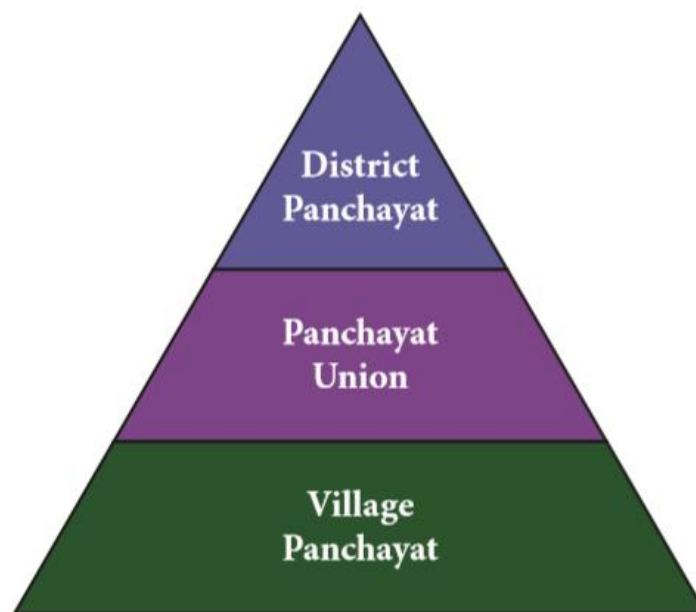
### **Meeting of Gram Sabha**

- In each and every village, the people living within its jurisdiction will be the members of Panchayat.
- The **President of the Panchayat** will preside over its meetings.

- In the meeting of the Grama Sabha, the income and expenditure and the beneficiary of the schemes in the village are discussed.

**Meetings of the Grama Sabha are conducted four times a year**

1. January 26 - Republic Day
2. May 1 - Labourer Day
3. August 15 - Independent Day
4. October 2 - Gandhi Jayanthi



**Panchayat Union**

- Panchayat Union is formed by grouping of villages.
- Members of the Panchayat Union are directly elected by the people.
- The Chairman of the Panchayat Union is chosen from among the members.

**Functions of the Panchayat Union**

- Supply of drinking water
- Maintenance of Village Health Centres
- Maintenance of roads
- Establishment of Maternity Homes
- Establishment of Public fairs
- Maintenance of Social forests
- Repairing of Primary School buildings

The district collector, Planning officer, concerned **Block Development Officer** are empowered to supervise the developmental functions of the Panchayat Union.

### District Panchayat

- A District Panchayat is constituted in each district.
- One district Panchayat is constituted for every **50,000 people** and the ward members are directly elected by the people.
- The Chairman is elected from one among its members and their **term is 5 years**.

### Functions of District Panchayat

- Advising the government about the developmental schemes of the Village Panchayat and Panchayat Union
- Supervising the functions of District Planning Commission.

### Town Panchayat

- The area where more than **10,000** people live is called a Town Panchayat.
- Members and President of the town Panchayat are directly elected by the people.
- There is an Executive Officer to look after the administration of the Town Panchayat and their term of office is **5 years**.

### Municipality

- The area where more than **1,00,000** people live is called a Municipality.
- The Members and the Chairman of the Municipalities are directly elected by the people and their term of office is **five years**.
- A Municipal Commissioner is appointed by the government to administer the Municipality.

### Corporation

- Municipal corporations are established in big cities where the city has many lakhs of population.
- The Municipal Commissioner is the Administrative Officer. The Mayor is the Chairman of the corporation.
- The term of office of the Mayor and other members is five years. The Municipal Commissioner will be a person from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). All the decisions of the Corporation Council will be implemented by him.
- He will be assisted by the office of the corporation.

### Important functions of the Mayor

- He acts as a bridge between the members of the corporation and the government

- He presides over the meetings of the Corporation Council
- He receives the dignitaries from foreign countries

### Types of other Urban Panchayats

- Notified Area Committee
- Town Area Committee
- Cantonment Board
- Township
- Port Trust
- Special Purpose Agency

### Elections to the local government in Tamil Nadu

- The State Election Commission conducts the elections to the local government like general elections.
- The electoral roll is prepared ward wise. Seats are reserved for the SC & ST and also for the women in proportion to the population by rotation basis.

### Problems and Challenges facing the Local Self Governments

Local self governments are the crucial basis for our democracy. The Constitutional status of local self governments adds more significance to their functioning. There are, however, a few critical concerns in the working of local self governments in India. Major problems and challenges may be mentioned as below:

- Lack of clear demarcation of powers and functions of local bodies
- Allocation of funds and needs assessment are not matched
- Role of caste, class and religion in decision making at the local self governments
- Poor accountability of elected members and officials at the grass root levels of democracy.

### More to know:

#### 1. Odanthurai Panchayat

- With permanent concrete houses built over a period, the village now has been declared as hut less village which provides continuous water supply, quality road networks to the residents.
- The most notable among Odanthurai's Self-help ventures is its experiments with renewable energy sources.
- By awaiting loan from the banks and subsidy by The Government, the village panchayat had installed a small wind tarn at the **cost of Rs.2.3 Cr which generates around 7.5 lakh** units of electricity in a year.

- While the Panchayat's need is only **2.5 lakh units**, the remaining power is sold to TANGEDCO, fetching an annual income of around R.s **20 lakh**.
- Moreover the panchayat had installed a **9kw biomass gasifier** Power generation system to substitute the grid electricity for pumping drinking water.
- Solar based streetlight and biogas system connected to houses for cooking purpose are some of the highlights of the self-reliant in energy aspect by this model village panchayat, Odanthurai.

## 2. Piped water supply scheme in Erode Municipality:

- Periyar E.V.Ramasamy became the Chairman of **Erode Municipality in 1917**.
- During his tenure in Erode Municipality, Periyar worked effectively for Providing piped drinking water supply and health facilities to the people.
- Piped water supply scheme was implemented in **1919** by Periyar.
- This scheme was said to be first of kind in the history of Indian Municipal administration.

3. In Tamil Nadu, there are **15 Corporations**. They are in Chennai, Kovai, Madurai, Trichy, Tirunelveli, Salem, Erode, Vellore, Tuticorin, Tirupur, Tanjore, Dindigul, Nagercoil, Hosur, Aavadi.

## 4. Gandhi's Concept of Gram Swaraj

- Gandhi really wanted 'Swaraj', the self rule by the people of India who represent the rural mass. He observed 'India's soul lives in the village'.
- He dreamt of village republics in terms of Panchayat in free India. Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayat Raj, a decentralized form of government, where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system.
- In simpler words, Gandhi's ideal village should be basically self-reliant, making provision for all necessities of life-food clothing, clean water, sanitation, housing, education, and other requirements, including government and self-defense.

## 5. Urban Local Government

- Town Panchayat
- Municipality
- Corporation

## 6. Historical Origin and Development of Local Self Government in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu has a long history of local self-governance as is evident from the Uthiramerur stone inscriptions in **Kanchipuram District**.
- Tamil Nadu, in those days was a land of village republics, with community groups undertaking many activities for their area development.

- This tradition reached its peak during the **10th and 11th centuries** under the reign of Cholas when Village Councils used to levy taxes, improve community life and administer justice in their limited area.
- These Village Councils had effective links with the Chola rulers.
- **"Kuda Olai Murai"** was the name of the secret ballot method exercised to elect members to the Village Councils.
- With the downfall of Cholas, the state experienced a decline of the village autonomy and rise of the centralized feudal administrative system.
- This continued till British rules introduced local self-governance primarily as an administrative convenience for the colonial British Government.
- In the post independence era, the first enactment in democratic decentralization in the state was the **Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950**.
- Pursuant to the White Paper on the '**Reform of Local Administration**' in 1957, the **Madras Panchayats Act, 1958** and Madras District Development Council Act were enacted with the following salient features.

#### 7. Lord Ripon

- Lord Ripon was the one who gave Indians the first taste of freedom by introducing the **Local Self Government in 1882**.
- Ripon took some steps towards liberalizing the administration in India. He formulated the local self government and made it clear that he was advocating for the decentralization of administration.
- He tried to remove obstacles in the sphere of Local Self government by his resolution of 1882.
- He led a series of enactments in which larger powers of the local self-government were given to the rural and urban bodies and the elected people received wider rights.