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LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SOME REVIEW



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# ABSTRACT

The objective is to ensure that suitable levels of infrastructure and services are available to the citizens. In many parts of India, the quality of life in rural and urban areas is miserable and the citizens lead a difficult life. The main purpose of this working paper is to describe the major issues of governance at the local level.

KEYWORDS: Local Government, Panchayati Raj.

### Introduction:

India has the distinction of being a unique federal country. Ordinarily, federalism involves a two tier system – central/union government at the first level and the state/provincial government at the second level. But the Indian constitution provides for a three tier federal structure as below: -Union Government at the top

State Government in the Middle

Local Government i.e. Panchayats and Municipalities at Grass Root

As such, in India, Local Government is the third stratum of the Government, the first two being the central and state Governments. India is known to be the world's largest democracy. In constitutional sense, democracy is the system of Government, in the administration of which, every adult citizen of the country enjoys some direct or indirect share. Keeping in view the real spirit and high ideas of democracy, Local Government forms an indispensable part of governance and administration

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in India. Town and villages are two distinct entities in India. They have different needs and problems. The main requirements of towns are the provisions of housing, transport, communications, water supply, sanitary conditions, community centers, slum clearance and town planning while main emphasis in the village has to be on improvement of agriculture, irrigation facilities, animal husbandry, village industries and the like. The personnel of Urban Local Government and Panchayati Raj institutions would thus require specialised training to cater the specific needs of urban and rural areas respectively.

#### **Local Government:**

Local Government may be described as government by popularly elected bodies charged with administrative and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitants of a particular district or place and vested with powers to make bye-laws for their guidance. Local Government has been defined from various angles. It has been defined as "an authority to determine and execute measures with in restricted area inside and smaller than the whole state." The term "Local Government" literally means management of the local affairs by the people of the locality. It is based on the principle that the local problems and needs can be looked by the people of the locality better than by central or state governments. The administration of local affair is entrusted to the representatives elected by the people of the locality on regular intervals. Though local government institutions enjoy autonomy of operations, it does not mean that there are no legal restrictions upon them. The central and state governments are free to prescribe the limits within which a local government has to operate and also reserve the right to issue directions from time to time. The term "Local Government" or "Local-self government' means the government by freely elected local bodies which are endowed with power, discretion and responsibility to be exercised and discharged by them, without control over their decisions by any other higher authority. Their actions are, however, subjected to the supremacy of the national government. Defining local self-government, it has been observed that: Local inhabitants representing local body possessing autonomy within its limited spheres, raising revenue through local taxation and spending its income on local services constitute the local-self-government.6 For a better understanding of the concept of Local Government and its meaning, scope and nature, it shall be desirable to study a few important definitions and interpretations from various sources.

Local Government both in urban and rural areas has thus to shoulder manifold and complex responsibilities. The central and state governments are conscious of the short- coming from which local government suffered in the past. They have therefore been trying to understand them by instituting several enquires and studies. The Central Government, for instance, set up the Local Finance Enquiry Committee (1951) and the Taxation Enquiry Commission (1954) to examine the problems of finances of urban local bodies. A central council of Local Self-Government was established in 1954 to consider and recommend broad lines of policy and draw up a common programme of action to promote local self-government through out India. The council set up a committee on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local bodies in 1965.

#### Local government within the state:

In 1989 the government of India took steps to enhance the role of rural local governments (panchayats) through direct funding. The aim was to create units responsible for economic development at the local level, and to create jobs directly. Attempts were made by the

government to make it mandatory for all states to adopt a three-tiered system of panchayats, for

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example through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. Local government is divided between the rural authorities (panchayats) and urban authorities (municipalities). Mayors are elected directly or indirectly depending on the state. Councillors are elected for a five-year term of office, mayors for either one or five years. The position of mayor/chairperson is also assigned to scheduled tribes and castes, women and minorities on a rotating basis. In the urban sector, all municipalities with a population over 300,000 are required to establish ward committees chaired by the local ward councilor. Election processes are defined in state municipal law. These structures are consultative and also play a role in monitoring the delivery of services. Municipal corporations, as stipulated in the state municipal Acts, work within a committee system in which councilors report to council with recommendations.

#### **Conclusion:**

Local government means the administration of the affairs of locality in urban and rural areas by the people through their elected representatives. It may be described as government by popularly elected bodies charged with the administration and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitants of the particular district or place and vested with powers to make bye laws for their guidance. The urban local government operates in towns and cities through Municipal Corporations, Municipal Committees, Cantonment Boards, Town and Notified Area Committees

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J.H. Warren, "The Local Government Service" (1952), p. 5. 2 J.S. Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government", (1865), p. 213.

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