
UNIT 2 LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

Structures

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Local government in India falls mainly under two categories: rural self government and urban self government. Local government in rural areas is enabled by the Panchayat system of governance involving Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). There are about 3 million elected representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), about one third of them women, and there are more than 640,000 village panchayats, about 6000 intermediate bodies and 500 district level bodies. Panchayats cover about 99.6% of India's rural population. The powers and functions of PRIs vary from state to state. The Panchayat system exists in all states except Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Panchayat system is provided for all states having a population more than 2 million. Function of the panchayat include, planning and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice relating to the 29 subjects in the indicative list.

Decentralization has been major instrument for the extension of the democratic process at the grass root level and to involve the local communities in decision making in matters concerning their basic civic and other needs. Right from the beginning in 19th century, the local-self government institutions (panchayats and municipalities) in rural and urban areas have remained the main instruments of democratic decentralization in India. The *panchayat* in rural India and municipalities in urban India are defined in the constitution as institutions of local-self government. The popular saying of '*panch-pardhan*' from the ancient times connotes that the panchayat had deep roots in the Indian culture. After the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, Panchayate Raj system has come to occupy a pivotal place in the Indian democratic system. With this landmark amendment, the local governments have become the third-tier in federal system after the union and the states. However even after more than a decade of passing of the historic constitutional amendment, of 1992, the local governments have not been made effective in many states. This function varies from state to state

and in many states, devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to the local government has not taken place as envisaged in Part-IX and IXA of the Constitution. On the other hand, considerable progress has been made in the member states of European Union in effective decentralization of powers and functions to the communities at the local level. In fact, unlike in India there are no separate local level institutions are regional and area based, covering both-urban and rural communities.

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the historical background of local self government in India
- Describe the evolution of Panchayati Raj in India
- Explain the three tier Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies
- Describe the essence of landmark 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Panchayats in Ancient Times

The *panchayats* in India have a long history, before earning a covered place in the Indian Constitution. The significance of the system had been chronicled during different periods of Indian history. It is not a flight of fancy, but the truth is that, ancient Indian history has provided evidence of the existence of village panchayats comprising five informally elected elderly members to settle dispute in the village. A reference to an organized system of rural local self-government (*panchayat*) has been found in ancient Vedic literature. Rig Veda has mentioned about 'Gramini', the village head employed by the king for civil and military purposes; while Atharva Veda envisaged the institution of 'sabha', 'samiti', 'bahupati' and 'sabhasad' primarily performing judicial functions. A mention of village institutions had been made in the great epics, the *Ramayana* and the Mahabharat, where the gramini was responsible for collecting statue dues, keeping village records, settling disputes and controlling crime. Kautaliya's *Artha* Shastra gives a comprehensive account of the system of village administration prevailing in ancient India. Besides, evidence of the village panchayats is also discerned in the Maurya and Chola dynasties and during the golden era of the Gupta period.

2.2.2 Panchayati Raj System during Medieval Period

With the coming of the Muslim rule in India, local institutions received a setback, as they did not enjoy the same autonomy and prestige, as under the Hindu kings. Mughal government was highly centralized, and the crown was the decision maker for the entire administrative machinery. Where ever the government is absolute, the supreme authority concentrated in one man's hand, the means of communications between the districts becomes slow and difficult, transfer of local officers becomes frequent, and no political life or local initiative is left to the people. The muslim rulers recognised local chiefs and *zamindars* as the repositories of local authority, to the exclusion of the people. "The villages and towns of the Mughal Empire enjoyed parochial self-government rather than local autonoiny. The office of *Kotwal* was developed as the keystone of the municipal.

While the Mughals did not initiate any positive measures of encouragement to local institutions, wherever such institutions existed, they worked in co-operation with the official machinery of the rulers and in certain respects became a part of it. Between the breakdown of the Mughal Empire and the coming of the British,

there was complete anarchy and military despotism in most parts of the country. During this intervening period the ties of social framework were loosened, and in many places, local institutions had been perverted or sapped, before the British officials had an opportunity to assess their value. The medieval period was comparatively an uneventful period in the history of panchayat system in India. The system was largely ineffective during Mughal rule, except during Akbar's reign, it appears that no other Mughal ruler assigned importance to the panchayats.

2.2.3 Panchayati Raj System during British Period

In the same vein, during the initial years of British rule, the autonomy of the panchayats gradually got diluted with the establishment of local civil courts, criminal courts, revenue and police administration. However the British rulers were well cognizant of the role played by self governing communities at the village level. Sir Charles Metcalfe, a British Governor in India during 1852 called panchayat as 'the little republic', but with some reservation because a caste ridden feudal system with power concentrated in the hands of a few landlords would be inconsistent with the sole mission of decentralization. This is amply reflected in the East Indian Company Resolution of 1865 which said: "The people of this country are perfectly capable of administering their local affairs. The municipal feeling is deeply mooted in them. The village communities are the most abiding of Indian institutions. They maintained the framework of society while successive swarms of invaders swept over the country".

The initiative taken by the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, in 1870 although it was a resolution for decentralization of power was aimed at improving administrative efficiency. In 1882 Lord Ripon resolved in favour of imparting political education to the people in general and rural people in particular. The Royal Commission on Decentralization in 1907 recognized the importance of the panchayats at the village level, and recommended association of the people with the task of local administration. A few subsequent initiatives focused on decentralization during British Raj are Montague Chelmsford Act, 1919; the Simon Commission report 1925 and Government of India Act, 1935. With these initiatives, by 1925 eight provinces had passed panchayat Acts and by 1926 six Indian princely states also passed panchayat laws. By 1948, 20 other native states had village panchayat Acts.

When India was colonised, there occurred a sharp break from the tradition. The state system, after the advent of the British emerged as a highly centralised set up. Local institutions during the British period were more a creation of the government from whom they derived their autonomy rather than a process of spontaneous growth. No attempts were made to build up the system on indigenous foundations, although a good deal of indigenous taxation was retained in local finance. "The *chungi* of the muslim rulers, the Sikh *dharat*, and the *muhtarafa* of Maratha towns have a descendant in today's systems. But from the structure and procedure of earlier local institutions, almost nothing has been incorporated into modern local government" The form adopted during the British rule was an admixture of the British and continental patterns. The history of local self-government in India under the British rule can be conveniently divided into four phases. "Local finance being a counterpart of local administration and its mainstay, has of course, been an expression of the purpose implicit in different phases of local government." The first phase may be assumed to have ended in 1882, when Lord Ripon issued his well-known resolution on local self government.

The second phase covers developments from 1882 to 1919, when more powers were transferred from the centre to the provinces, and the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission of 1907, besides discussing other matters, suggested some changes in local self-government. The third phase extended up to 1935, during which the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee (1925) considered the problems of local taxation, along with central and provincial finances. The Simon Commission of 1930 reversed the process of decentralisation, by recommending strict control of the state over local bodies. The fourth phase covers developments up to 1947. During this phase, the struggle for independence was intensified and with the introduction of provincial autonomy in 1937, and coming into power of congress ministries in many provinces, local bodies, particularly village panchayats, received a great stimulus and there was democratisation of local bodies. But "local self-government became a mere **annexe** to the national political stadium, where the struggle for independence was moving towards its climax.". A rapid survey of local **self-government** and finances in India under the British rule reveals certain "well marked **characteristics**". Independence opened a new chapter in socio-economic reforms, as embodied in the Directive Principles of State Policy, enunciated in the Constitution which established a federal system of public administration, provided universal adult **franchise** and the objective of welfare state. Article 40 of the Constitution lays down that the state would take steps to establish autonomous **bodies** in the form of village panchayats.

After reading this section, you will have gained an idea about the background of local self government in India. Now you should be able to answer the questions given in Check Your Progress I.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Describe the existence of panchayat during ancient period.

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2) Discuss the contribution of British rule to the panchayati system.

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2.3 PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM AFTER INDEPENDENCE

After independence, the process of empowering panchayats gathered momentum. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, while emphasizing on 'Gram Swaraj' (village autonomy) strongly advocated that: 'Independence must begin at the

bottom. Thus every village was expected to be a republic of panchayat having full power.' The spirit and importance of *panchayati raj* system found place in Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of India, which says: "The state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government".

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, considered panchayats as an important socio-economic and political institution at the village level. While inaugurating the panchayati raj in Rajasthan in 1959, he underlined the importance of people taking responsibilities: "To uplift millions of villages is not an ordinary task; the reason for the slow progress is our dependence on official machinery. An officer is probably necessary because he is an expert. But this can be done only if the people take up the responsibility in their own hands. The people are not merely to be consulted, but effective power has to be entrusted to them".

The then Rural Development Minister Shri S K Dey, had stated, that "In Panchayati Raj System, the people of India would govern themselves through their representative institutions, from the Parliament and thus democracy would travel from Gram Sabha (village parliament) to Lok Sabha (Lower House of the National Parliament)". Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, while emphasizing on the significance of panchayats had remarked. "We must put an end to planning from above. We must put an end to priorities being conceived and decided at ethereal heights, far from ground realities". While delineating a few functions of the local self-government, Jawaharlal Nehru, advocated that "The panchayati raj bodies should assume the responsibilities of looking after the needs of everyone in the village and thus become an insurance against illness, unemployment, illiteracy and other disabilities".

The First Five Year Plan also recognized the need for disaggregated planning through a process of democratic decentralization incorporating the idea of a village plan and a district development council. The Government of India constituted several committees at different points of time to strengthen the local self-government institutions. The first one was the Balwantray Mehta Committee constituted in 1957, which recommended the urgency of democratic and elected institution at the lowest level and suggested a three-tier system. After this, Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) recommended a two-tier set-up at district and village level. The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations appointed in 1983 recommended in its report that the objective of decentralized planning cannot be achieved unless panchayats play a major role of development and administration at village level. Instead of playing their role, ironically, these institutions have been allowed to stagnate. Elections to these bodies had not been held regularly and often they remain superseded for a long period. The Sarkaria Commission recommended that it was necessary to hold elections regularly and adequate funds devolved to these institutions. The G.V.K. Rao committee, in 1985, emphasized the need for regular elections to panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). A committee headed by P.K. Thungon, in 1986 recommended that panchayati raj bodies should be constitutionally recognized, and should have provision for timely and regular elections and their term should be for a period of five years. While the L. M. Singhvi Committee of 1987 recommended that the PRIs should get constitutional safeguards and financial resources should be devolved to them.

Since the beginning of the VI five year plan, a number of special programmes for poverty alleviation, employment generation and area development were launched in the country. At this stage, block level was considered important to implement rural development programmes through fuller utilization of local resources. In November 1977, a Working Group under the Chairmanship of **M. L. Dantwala** was appointed by the Government of India, to draw up guidelines for block level planning. At the same time, in December, 1977, a Committee on **Panchayati Raj**, headed by Ashok Mehta was also appointed. The Committee considered inadequacy of resources, mainly responsible for failure of PRIs and, therefore, recommended, *inter alia*, measures for strengthening the financial resources of PRIs. In the light of recommendations of the Committee, gradually PRIs were set up in almost all the states and were contemplated to be developed as instruments of development. Whereas in Maharashtra and Gujarat, power was vested in district panchayats, in Madhya Pradesh and some other states, the responsibility for development was entrusted to the blocks. Another committee headed by Prof. C.H. **Hanumantha Rao** (1984) went into the question of evolving methodology for district level planning and recommended that planning process at the district level should be sufficiently decentralised, having a good deal of autonomy, administrative and technical capability and financial adequacy.

The above discussion shows that there has been no dearth of ideas and expert opinion but what lacked was consistency in thinking and political will to implement the concept of decentralised planning and development in a multi-level framework, and create PRIs in that framework which are democratic, autonomous, financially strong, capable of formulating and implementing plans for their respective areas and provide decentralised administration to the people. Elections were not held regularly in a large number of states. Even after three decades since the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee had recommended 3-tier *panchayati raj* system as a form of rural self-government and as a mechanism for democratic decentralisation, in most of the states, the position regarding PRIs remained unsatisfactory, and no tangible action was taken to strengthen the local self-government system. Financially these bodies were weak and dependent largely on state governments which did not follow any consistent policies, with the result that most of the PRIs remained defunct or superseded.

The Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, marked a water-shed in the history of local self-government in the country since it gave a constitutional mandate to the state governments to restructure and revamp rural local bodies in accordance with constitutional obligations. The Act provided for (i) the creation of three tier system of PRIs - *gram panchayat* at the village level, *Janapud Panchayat* at the block level and *Zila Panchayat* at the district level, with sufficient powers and functions contained in schedule XI of the Act; (ii) the creation of State Election Commission to ensure free, fair and timely elections after the expiry of every 5 years, and (iii) the creation of State Finance Commission after every 5 years to recommend devolution of financial resources from the state government to local bodies and also suggest measures for strengthening their financial position.

After reading this section, you will have gained an idea about the term, rural development. Now you should be able to answer the questions given in **Check Your Progress 2**.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Describe the first five commission constituted by Government of India for strengthening of Panchayati *Raj* Institutions.

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24 PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM AFTER 73RD AMENDMENT

The **73rd** amendment of the Constitution is an epoch making event in the history of democratic decentralization in India. While introducing the constitutional amendment bill in Parliament on December 1, 1992, the then Cabinet Minister of Rural Development had thus observed "This casts a duty on the centre **as well as** the states to establish and nourish the village panchayats so as to make them effective self-governing institutions and by introducing this Act, the government was fulfilling Mahatma **Gandhi's dream** of Gram **Swaraj**." As a **result, 2, 32,278** panchayats at village level; 6,022 panchayats at intermediate level and 535 panchayats at district level were constituted in the country. These panchayats are being manned by about 29.2 lakh elected representatives of panchayats at all levels. This is the broadest representative base that exists in any country of the world developed or underdeveloped. The main features of the Act are (i) a 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all States having population of over 20 lakh; (ii) panchayat elections regularly every 5 years; (iii) reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women (not less than one-third of seats); (iv) appointment of State Finance Commission to make recommendations as regards the financial powers of the panchayats and (v) constitution of District Planning Committees to prepare development plans for the district **as** a whole. As per the Constitution (**73rd** Amendment) Act, the Panchayati **Raj** Institutions have been endowed with such powers and authority as may be necessary to function as institutions of self government and contains provisions of devolution of powers and responsibilities upon panchayats at the appropriate level with reference to: (a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice; and (b) the implementation of such schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them.

India today has the world's largest functioning democracy at the **grassroots**, with 496 panchayats at the district level, known as district panchayats (**DP**)/ **zilla parishad** (ZP); 5905 at the intermediate level, know as block **samitis/intermediate panchayat** (IP); and 230762, at the village level know **as** gram panchayat (GP). These elected democratic institutions are manned by 3.4 million Scheduled **Castes** and 0.26 million Scheduled Tribe (**Kurukshetra**, 2002). In **conformity** with the Constitutional amendment, all the states have amended their state Acts by repealing the then existing ones. Today, the **PRIs** constitute the potential

instruments for effective implementation of India's rural development and poverty alleviation programmes, It is **true** that, if effectively empowered, the PRIs have the potential to build a progressive India (which veritably lives in its villages) in **harmony with** the felt **needs** and aspirations of the people.

The **structure** of the **PRIs** of a few Indian states is given in Table 1. It is **interesting** to note that in Kerala on an average one panchayat caters to the needs of 23,785 **rural** populations, where as in **Punjab** one panchayat deals with 1289 rural **population**. Each **panchayat** in Kerala and in Karnataka consists of wards, which **are** looked **after** by ward members of the panchayat. The division of panchayat **into wards** thrust responsibilities on the ward members to look after the needs of their **ward** population. This results in effective **functioning** of panchayat in Kerala and **Karnataka**.

Table 1: Structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions in a Few Indian States

States	Average rural Population per gram panchayat*	Average number of village per gram panchayat*	Average number of gram panchayat per panchayat samities**	Average number of panchayat samitis per zilla parishad**
Gujarat	2294	1.3	73.1	
Karnataka	6152	5.2	4.7	9.0
Kerala	23,785	1.4	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	2010	2.5	41.0	10.2
Maharashtra	1952	1.5	82.8	10.3
Punjab	1289	1.0	92.8	9.8

Source: *As per census 2001.

** Panchayati Raj Institutions in India, Ministry of Rural Development, 1991

25 KEY FEATURES OF 73RD CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The main feature of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment are: (i) Establishment of a **three-tier** structure: village panchayat (gram panchayat); intermediate **panchayat** (panchayat samiti) and **district panchayat (zilla parishad)**; (ii) Regular elections every five years; (iii) Reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population; (iv) **Not less** than **one-third** reservation of seats for women at the three different levels of **PRIs**; (v) Establishment of State Finance Commissions to recommend measures to improve the finances of panchayats; (vi) Establishment of State Election Commissions to conduct election to the PRIs; (vii) Establishment of District Planning **Committees** to prepare development plans for the districts; (viii) Preparation of plans of economic development and social justice and implement 29 subject listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution; (ix) Establishment of grama **sabhas** (village assemblies) and their empowerment as a decision making body at the village level; and (x) Rotation in accordance with the reservation of seats for women and the Scheduled Castes in the PRIs. The key features as envisaged in the 73rd constitutional amendment are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Key Features of 73rd Constitutional Amendment

S.No	Key Features	Provision in the Act
1.	Three Tier Structure at the District Level	Article 243-B envisages, Gram Panchayat at village level, Intermediate Panchayat at the Block Level and <i>Zilla Parishad</i> at the district level.
2.	Elections at every five years	Article 243-E tells, Every Panchayat shall continue for five years from the date of its appointment.
3.	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes	Article 243-D envisages, reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population for membership of panchayat.
4.	Reservation of seats for women	Article 243-D (3), provides that not less than one third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe) of the total number of seats to be filled up by direct election in every panchayat shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat.
5.	Establishment of State Finance Commissions	Article 243-I provides for constitution of States Finance Commission to review financial position of the PRIs and to make recommendations to the Governor and distribution between the state and the PRIs of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees liveable by state.
6.	establishment of State Election Commission	Article 243-K provides for the establishment of State Election Commission. The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for and the conduct of all elections to the <i>panchayats</i> shall be vested in the State Election Commission.
7.	Establishment of District Planning Committee (DPCs)	Article 243 ZD provides for the constitution of DPCs to consolidate the development plans prepared by the gram panchayat.
8.	29 duties and responsibilities	Article 243(G) made addition of Eleventh Schedule and assigning duties and responsibilities on 29 subjects.
9.	Establishment of <i>Gram Sabha</i>	Article 243 provides for Gram Sabha to exercise such power and perform such function at the village level as the legislature of a State may by law provides.

With the enactment of 73rd constitutional amendment and formulation of *Panchayati Raj* Acts by different state governments, the State Election Commissions have been established, helping the state governments in holding periodic elections to PRIs. Almost all states have constituted State Finance Commission; despite the fact that their recommendations are being poorly implemented by many state governments. A large number of women, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe **have** been elected to these bodies and a tradition of justice and gender equality in political representation has been widely established (Table 3). Recently, **Bihar Government** has declared 50 per cent of seats reserved for **women** in PRIs.

Table 3: Representation of Women, SCs, and STs in PRI and on 1.4.2004

PRIs	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Women
Gram <i>Panchayat</i>	346002	233765	838227
Intermediate Panchayat	22333	8210	47455
District Panchayat	2201	1322	4923
Total	370536	243297	890605

Source: website of Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India

Thus, village-level democracy became a real prospect for India in 1992 with the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, which mandated that resources, responsibility and decision-making be devolved from central government to the lowest unit of the governance, the Gram Sabha or the village assembly. A three-tier structure of local self-government was envisaged under this amendment. The nationwide euphoria that greeted this about-turn in bureaucracy was seen again with the extension of the 73rd amendment to the Scheduled Areas, through Provisions of Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996 (hereinafter PESA or Central PESA or the Tribal Self Rule Law as it is variously called). Scheduled Areas are those, which are under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India where the tribal populations are predominant. It is also imperative to understand here that the founding fathers of the Constitution of India had envisaged a special scheme of administration in the scheduled areas where general laws would not be applicable unless the Governor deemed it fit to enforce such laws. It was thought that these areas are inhabited with people who have resided on the basis of their own customary practices and traditional beliefs and culture and thus general laws of the land would be inappropriate with their customary laws and ethos.

2.6 PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS: TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

Panchayati Raj Institutions comprise of three institutions namely gram panchayats, panchayat *samitis* and zillaparishads, the constitution and functions of these three organizations are given below:

2.6.1 Gram Panchayat

A gram panchayat consists of a **sarpanch** and five to 13 elected panches depending upon the population, and are elected for a period of 5 years, and is elected by the Gram Sabha. The members of village panchayats are elected by the same electoral college, which elects members of the Legislative Assembly of the state and the Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament). The State Election Commission prepares the election roll for PRIs elections. The Sarpanch or Chairperson is the head of the Gram Panchayat, and the Sarpanch and Deputy Sarpanch are usually elected from and by the elected members of the panchayat. Sometimes, they are elected directly by the people. The annual budget and development schemes for the village are placed before the Gram Sabha for consideration and approval. Gram Panchayats can be established in villages with a minimum population of 300, if individual villages have small populations, they can be grouped together to form a group-gram panchayat.

Functions of the Panchayat: Important functions of the gram panchayat include preparation of annual development plans, its budget; construction, repair and maintenance of community assets; **khadi** and village industries; rural housing; rural electrification; non-conventional sources of energy; poverty alleviation; education; public health and family welfare; adult and non-formal education; cultural activities, fairs and festivals; promoting agriculture, including animal husbandry; dairying and poultry; fisheries; social and farm forestry; women and child development; social welfare and public distribution system. The main **source** of income for panchayats is property tax, other sources include profession **tax**, taxes on pilgrimage (if applicable), animal trade etc. Besides this, the panchayats receive grants from the state government as well as Zilla Parishads.

2.6.2 Panchayat Samiti

The panchayat at the intermediate level is known as Panchayat Samiti. It works at the Tehsil or Taluka level, also known as Development Block. The Panchayat Samiti acts as the link between the gram panchayat and the district administration. The Panchayat Samiti is also known as Mandal Parishad, Taluka Panchayat, Mandal Panchayat. The main source of income of the Samiti is grants and loans from the state government. There is a panchayat samiti in each development block, a compact development area. Its membership comprises: 15 to 25 directly elected members from territorial constituencies. The Panchayat Samiti is composed of four types of members, the **Ex-officio** members: all sarpanchas of the Development Block, the **MPs** and **MLAs** of the area and Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Co-opted members: representatives of **SC/STs** and women, associate members: one farmer, one representative of cooperative societies and one representative of marketing services, and elected members. The samiti is elected for a period of 5 years, there is a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman, and there is an officer in charge for every department of the Samiti including administration, finance, public works, agriculture etc.

Functions of the Panchayat Samiti: The important functions are agricultural improvement, land improvement, establishment of primary health centres and primary schools, supply of drinking water, sanitation, and **construction/repair** of roads, establishment of cooperative societies, and establishment of youth organizations, irrigation and water management and promotion of animal husbandry and dairying and poultry, fisheries, social services, social welfare, technical training, poverty alleviation and rural electrification, and development of cottage and small scale industries.

2.6.3 Zilla Parishad

Every district has a zilla parishad, having jurisdiction over the entire district excluding the areas included in a municipality or a cantonment board. Sources of income of Zilla **Parishad** are from the taxes on water, pilgrimage, markets etc, money from the state government for works and schemes assigned to the Parishad, and fixed grant from the state government in proportion to the land revenue. The Additional Deputy Commissioner (Development) of the district is the **ex-officio** Chief Executive **Officer** of the zilla parishad. The other members of the zilla parishad are:

- Directly elected from demarcated constituencies;
- All chairpersons of panchayat **samities**;
- Members of **Parliament/Member** of Legislative Assemblies whose constituencies fall in the jurisdiction and geographical area of the zilla parishad;

- The members of the Zilla **Parishad** are Chairmen of the Panchayat **Samitis** falling under the area, they serve for a period of 5 years;
- Zilla Parishads have min 50 and maximum 75 members;
- Seats are reserved for **SC/STs**, backward classes and women.

Functions of the Zilla Parishad: The functions include planning and execution of development projects for the district, provide essential services and facilities to the rural population, agriculture projects such as supply of seeds, irrigation, new techniques of farming etc, ground water resources and watershed development; horticulture; **statistics**; **rural** electrification; distribution of essential commodities; soil conservation; animal husbandry and dairying; fisheries; **small-scale** industries including food processing industries; **rural** roads; health and hygiene; rural housing; education projects such as setting up and running of schools, adult literacy, running libraries, establish primary health centres, **hospitals**, mobile health centres, carry out vaccination drives and family welfare campaigns, **construct/repair** bridges and roads, development plans for **SC/STs**, **hostels** for SC students, **ashramshalas** for **adivasis**, encourage entrepreneurship in small scale industries such as handicrafts, dairy farms etc.

2.6.4 Twenty Nine (29) Functions of the PRIs as per Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution

The 29 functions and responsibilities given to the **PRIs**, under the 11th Schedule of the Constitution of India are listed below:

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| 1 | Agriculture, including Agricultural Extension Agriculture, |
| 2 | Land Improvement, Implementation of Land Reforms, Land Consolidation and Soil Conservation |
| 3 | Minor Irrigation, Water Management and Watershed Development |
| 4 | Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Poultry |
| 5 | Fisheries |
| 6 | Social Forestry and Farm Forestry |
| 7 | Minor Forest Produce |
| 8 | Small Scale Industries, including Food Processing Industries |
| 9 | Khadi, Village and Cottage Industries |
| 10 | Rural Housing |
| 11 | Drinking Water Water Supply and Sanitation |
| 12 | Fuel and Fodder |
| 13 | Roads, Culverts Bridges, Ferries, Waterways and Other Means of Communication |
| 14 | Rural Electrification, including Distribution of Electricity |
| 15 | Non-conventional Energy Sources |
| 16 | Poverty Alleviation Programme |
| 17 | Education, including Primary and Secondary Schools |
| 18 | Technical Training and Vocational Education |
| 19 | Adult and Non-formal Education |
| 20 | Libraries |

- | |
|---|
| 21 Cultural Activities |
| 22 Markets and Fairs |
| 23 Health and Sanitation |
| 24 Family Welfare |
| 25 Women and Child Development |
| 26 Social Welfare, including Welfare of the Handicapped and Mentally Retarded |
| 27 Welfare of the Weaker Sections, Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes |
| 28 Public Distribution System |
| 29 Maintenance of Community Assets |

In order to ensure that Panchayati **Raj** Institutions function as instruments of local government, it is important that their functional and financial autonomy is guaranteed and transparency in their functioning is ensured, and this has to be accomplished in most of the states. The role of the Gram Sabha is, perhaps, the most important in ensuring the success of Panchayati **Raj** Institutions at the village level. The role of local people in conducting social audit and fixing responsibility on panchayat functionaries will be effectively ensured with Gram Sabha becoming active. It is essential that the village community perceives meetings of the Gram Sabha as useful. The most important factor for that is the empowerment of the Gram Sabha. Another important factor for the success of the Panchayati **Raj** system is the need for transparency in the functioning of these bodies. Panchayats being closer to the people, their right to information and accessibility to the panchayats must be ensured.

2.7 THE 74TH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT AND ULBS

The 1992 Act provided for the Twelfth Schedule which listed the functions of urban local bodies, along with their planning, regulation and development powers. It made provision for ward committees in areas exceeding 300,000 and the specification of the powers and responsibilities of municipal units and the ward committees. There is a requirement made therein for the holding of timely periodical elections and for the reconstitution of a municipal government within six months. Sources of municipal finance and their periodic review by a statutorily constituted State Finance Commission were also provided by the Act, which also made it obligatory for the Central Finance Commission to recommend steps to support state resources for the assistance of municipal governments. The Act also provided for reservation of one-third of the seats for women and scheduled castes in municipal bodies. State Governments were to adopt the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act with reference to their respective municipal bodies to affect its purpose within their jurisdictions.

2.7.1 Role of PRIs and ULBs in 73rd and 74th Amendment Act

In order to impart certainty, continuity and strength to the Panchayat **Raj** Institutions (**PRIs**) and Urban Local Bodies (**ULBs**), the 73rd and 74th Amendments have come into force in 1993. These amendments of the Constitution of India, provided for empowerment of Panchayats and

Nagarपालikas by way of reserving 33% seats for women; and for the citizens belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population. Articles 243G & 243W and 11th & 12th Schedules of the Constitution indicate the subjects to be devolved to the Panchayats and *Nagarपालikas* respectively. While the Eleventh Schedule of Constitution deals with evolution of functions to different tiers of Panchayats in respect to twenty nine subjects including education—primary and secondary schools, Article 243W of the Constitution of India, specifies the powers, authority and responsibilities with respect to Municipalities. The 18 major functions to be performed by Municipalities are mentioned in Article 243 W of the Constitution of India.

2.7.2 Salient Features of the Constitutional (74th Amendment) Act, 1992

Salient Features of the Constitutional (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 with regard to ULBs are summarised as:

- i) **Continuity:** CAA has ensured continuity of the municipalities with five years duration for an elected municipality and re-election of municipalities before the expiry of the five-year term or within six months of their dissolution.
- ii) **Three-tier system:** A uniform structure of three tiers i.e., municipal corporations for large urban areas, municipal councils for small urban areas and nagar panchayats for transitional areas has been provided. The constitution and composition of the municipalities has been left to the wisdom of the state, subject to all seats being filled by elected persons from the respective municipal constituencies.
- iii) **Reservation of seats:** In every municipality, reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) has been provided in the CAA on the basis of proportional representation. Such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a municipality and not less than one-third of the seats so reserved are further reserved for woman belonging to the SCs/STs. And also, not less than one-third of the total number of seats in a municipality are reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation by different constituencies in a municipality.
- iv) **Power, authority and functions:** The CAA has provided for states to endow municipal powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of self-governance. The municipal functions envisaged under Article 243W are of development nature. The performance of functions and implementation of schemes including those in relation to matters delegated through the Twelfth Schedule may be entrusted to the ULBs.
- v) **Constitution of Ward Committees:** The CAA makes it mandatory to constitute ward committees in municipalities with a population of over 3 lakh with representation of women, SCs/STs and citizens' groups. The major objective of constituting the ward committees is to bring governance closer to the people and enhance their participation in local affairs including those listed in the Twelfth Schedule.
- vi) **Constitution of District Planning Committees:** The CAA provides for the constitution of the DPCs with representation of elected local representatives to effect spatial and economic development by integrating rural and urban plans at the district level.

vii) State Finance Commission: The CAA mandates the constitution of a State Finance Commission (SFC) every five years to strengthen the financial domain of the ULBs. The Commission reviews the financial position of the urban bodies, their revenue and capital account requirements, recommends devolution of taxes, charges, fees, toll, duties, shared revenues, inter-government transfer and grants from the state to the municipalities and suggests measures for the mobilization of municipal resources.

viii) State Election Commission: The CAA provides for the constitution of a state election commission (SEC) every five-year to regulate municipal elections. It is a progressive step towards ensuring democratic process at the local level. The SEC has a mandate to oversee, direct and control the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct elections of municipalities. The SEC will also ensure that elections to municipalities dissolved by the state government, are held within six months.

28 URBAN LOCAL BODIES

The urban population of India has increased in recent years at rapid rates. In 1961 about 79 million persons lived in urban areas of the country; by 1991, their number had increased to over 217 million, registering an increase of over 250 per cent in the last three decades. Almost all population projections indicate that India will enter the 21st century with an urban population of about 300 million, which will further increase to over 400 million in the year 2011 and 553 million in the year 2021. The trends of urbanization in India are presented in Table 4. The municipal governance in India was first introduced in Madras in 1688. The Madras Municipal Corporation was the first municipal body in the Commonwealth outside the UK. The Bombay and Calcutta Corporations were established in 1726.

Table 4. Trends of Urbanization in India, 1951-2021

Census Year	Total population (in million)	Urban Population (million)	Percentage of Urban Population to total population	Decadal Urban Growth Rate(%)	Annual Compound Growth Rate	
					Total	Urban
1951	361.08	62.44	17.29	-	-	-
1961	439.23	78.93	17.97	26.41	1.98	2.37
1971	548.15	109.11	19.91	38.24	2.24	3.29
1981	683.32	159.46	23.34	46.15	2.23	3.87
1991	846.30	217.61	25.71	36.47	2.16	3.16
2001	1048.15	296.97	28.33	36.47	2.16	3.16
2011*	1298.15	405.26	31.22	36.47	2.16	3.16
2021*	1607.77	553.04	34.40	36.47	2.16	3.16

* Projected figures.

Source: NIUA Urban Statistics – Handbook 2000, National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, January

The urban local bodies look after the affairs of the development of urban areas. According to Census of India, 1991, there were 3255 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the country; classified into four major categories of municipal corporations, municipalities (municipal council, municipal board, municipal committee), town area committee and notified area committees (Table 5). The municipal corporations and municipalities were fully representative bodies, while the notified area committees and town area committees were either fully or partially nominated bodies.

Table 5. Urban Local Bodies in India, 1991

State/UTs	Municipal Corporation	Municipal Council	Municipal Committee / City Committee	Municipal Board	Municipality	Town Committee/ Township/ Town Area Committee	Town/ Nagar Panchayat	Notified Area Committee	Total
Andhra Pradesh	3	-	-	-	109	-	141	2	255
Assam	1	-	-	24	-	49	-	-	74
Bihar	6	-	-	-	70	-	-	92	168
Goa	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Gujarat	6	-	-	-	62	-	100	10	178
Haryana	-	-	81	-	-	-	-	-	81
Himachal Pradesh	1	-	19	-	-	-	-	30	50
Karnataka	6	-	20	-	-	136	-	14	176
Kerala	3	-	-	-	61	2	-	-	66
Madhya Pradesh	-	-	17	-	357	-	-	7	381
Maharashtra	11	-	-	-	227	-	-	-	238
Orissa	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	72	102
Punjab	3	-	95	-	-	-	-	11	109
Rajasthan	-	19	-	-	168	-	-	5	192
Tamil Nadu	3	-	-	-	98	8	212	-	321
Uttar Pradesh	8	-	-	228	-	418	-	33	687
West Bengal	3	-	-	-	95	-	-	10	108
Delhi	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Andaman & Nicobar	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4
Manipur	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	21	28
Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	7
Tripura	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	11	12
Total	55	32	233	253	1290	620	453	319	3255

- Excluding Cantonment Boards (57) under the Ministry of Defence, Established by a separate Act of Parliament.

Source: NIUA, Strategy for Capacity Building of Urban Government Institution in India, National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, Research Study Series No.62, 1998.

Based on the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, there are now only three types of ULBs: (i) Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam) (ii) Municipality (Nagar Palika) (iii) City Council (Nagar Panchayat). According to the Act, there needs to be a City Council for areas in transition from rural to urban, a Municipality for

small urban areas and a Municipal Corporation for large urban areas. The functions and powers of **ULBs** vary **from** state to state. Now, there are three kinds of Urban Local Bodies in India (i) Municipal Corporation (ii) Municipal Councils and (iii) Nagar Panchayats, demarcated on the basis of population, revenue generation, area and economic importance as follows:

- i) **Municipal Corporation:** for a larger urban area with a population exceeding 50,000 and generating annual revenue exceeding Rs. 2 crores for the local administration and which has been declared to be a municipal area.
- ii) **Municipal Council:** for a smaller urban area (urban) with population exceeding 5000 and generating annual revenue exceeding Rs. 20 **lakh** for local administration.
- iii) **Nagar Panchayat:** for a Transitional Area with a population exceeding 2,000 and generating the revenue of Rs. 5, 00,000 for local administration.

Most states have amended their municipal laws in conformity with the Constitution Amendment Act (CAA). However, variations are found in the definition of small and large urban areas, as well as in transitional areas. States like Tamil Nadu has used the income criteria, some using only population, and others sing additional criteria such as density and percentage of non-agricultural employment. The amended Municipal Act of Andhra Pradesh provide for all three types of municipal bodies, viz; Nagar Panchayats; Municipalities and Municipal Corporations. In addition to population criteria, the Andhra Act also follows density of population, percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities, etc.

2.9 URBAN LOCAL BODIES – TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

The first municipal mechanism created during British rule was the Municipal Corporation introduced in Madras (Chennai today) in 1688, which was followed by municipal corporations in Bombay (Mumbai today) and Calcutta (Kolkata today) by 1762. Subsequently, Lord **Mayo's** Resolution of 1870 called for the introduction of an elected President in the municipalities. The current form and structure of municipal bodies is based on Lord **Ripon's** Resolution on local self-government adopted in 1882. Since then the structure of municipal bodies has essentially remained the same, even though the urban areas multiplied along with their **increasingly** complex problems.

Statutory provision for creating a municipal unit was available in two forms. First, by statute that provides for the establishment of a municipal authority, as for instance in the form taken in the case of the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act in 1888, the City of **Nagpur** Corporation Act of **1948** and the **Delhi** Municipal Corporation Act of 1957. The other route was through statutory provision empowering State Government creation. The Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act of 1949 and the Gujarat Municipalities Act of 1964 are both examples of the latter. Generally, these statutes confer significant control and supervisory powers on the state government. In this context, it can be said they were creation of state government.

Municipal election provisions in different states were not uniform. In some, arrangements for election are made by the state government; while in others Municipal Commissioners (executive **officers**) make the arrangements. Prior to the passage of the 1992 Act, urban local government was **defined** generally by the Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Town Area Committees and Notified Area Committees. In this context, the ~~structure and~~ composition of municipalities varied **considerably**, with wide differences in definition and structure between **states**. Hence, the 1992 Act attempted to instil some uniformity ~~in the constitution~~ of the municipal bodies by classifying them as Municipal Corporations for large urban areas, Municipal Councils for smaller urban areas and what are **termed** Nagar Panchayats, **suburban** government bodies.

Municipal governments in India have been in existence for many years. The first municipal corporation was created by a Royal Charter in Madras in 1688. In the present form and structure, the municipal bodies ~~owe~~ their existence to what is known as the Lord **Ripon's** Resolution adopted on May 18, 1882. According to Census of India, 1991, there are 3255 urban local bodies (**ULBs**) in the country, classified into four major categories of municipal corporations, municipalities (municipal council, municipal board, municipal committee), town **area** committee and notified area committees. The municipal corporations and **municipalities** are fully representative bodies, while the notified area committees **and** town area committees are either **fully** or partially nominated bodies. As per the Constitution (74th) Amendment Act of 1992 (CAA), the latter two categories of towns are to be designated as municipalities or Nagar *Panchayats* with elected **bodies**. Until the amendments in state municipal legislations, which were mostly **made** in 1994, municipal authorities were organized on the basis of the 'ultra virus' principle and the state governments were free to extend or control the functional sphere through executive decisions without an amendment to the legislative provisions.

2.9.1 The Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam)

This model is also known as the Commissioners system, taking its name from the role of the city administrator who is generally a state-appointed officer. In such a system the Mayor in the Municipal Corporation is usually chosen through indirect election by the councillors from among themselves for a term of one year, which is renewable. The Mayor generally lacks executive authority. This is due to the British roots of the system that remain from the time when the administrator was the representative of the colonial power, not to the fact that it operates under a council-manager system (the subject of another article by this author on this **website**) whereby the executive would be accountable to the elected representatives. In this context, the indirect election of the Mayor combined with his short one-year tenure renders the role little more than that of a figurehead. Councillors act by committee, the most **powerful** being the Standing Committee with its role of the steering committee exercising executive, supervisory, financial and **personnel** powers. It is composed of elected members varying in number between seven and sixteen through a system of proportional representation of councillors.

The executive arm of the corporation is the Municipal Commissioner, who is the chief Executive Officer and head of the executive arm of the Municipal Corporation. All executive powers are vested in the Municipal **Commissioner**.

Although the Municipal Corporation is the legislative body that lays down policies for the governance of the city, it is the Commissioner who is responsible for the execution of the policies. The Commissioner is appointed for a fixed term as defined by state statute. The Commissioner's term in **office** can be extended or reduced. The powers of the Commissioner are those provided by statute **and** those delegated **by the Corporation** or the **Standing** Committee. **This is the closest** that India has come to the council-manager **system**, with the critical difference of accountability of the manager to the elected **arm of government**; and **the fact** that the power of the unelected executive arm of government **is thus weighted in** its favour.

Municipal Corporations are established in cities with population greater than 1 million. The Municipal Corporations function under the provisions of the **Corporation Act 1835**, the Corporations are elected directly by the people. Elected members serve a term of 5 years. Municipal Corporations provide **necessary** community services such as health care, educational centres etc. It also interact directly with the state governments, the head of the Corporation is the Mayor. The principal executive officer is the Municipal **Commissioner** (an IAS officer). The **sources of income** of Municipal Corporation are from (i) taxes on property, water, markets, entertainment, (ii) taxes on vehicles, and (iii) grants from the state government.

Functions of the Municipal Corporations: The important functions of the municipal corporations are **urban** planning and management, providing health services, establishment of primary health centres and primary schools, supply of drinking water, sanitation, and **construction/repair** of roads, street lighting, establishment of cooperative societies, and establishment of youth organizations, water management and waste disposal, social services, social welfare, technical training, poverty alleviation and electrification, providing fire records of birth and death.

2.9.2 Municipality (Nagar Palika)

Some of the important features of Municipality are as follows:

- A municipality administers an **urban** area of **population** 200,000 or less
- Municipalities interact with the state government through the Directorate of Municipalities or the District Collector
- Members of Municipalities are elected for a period of five **years**
- The head of the Municipality is the President, elected by and from the members
- The state government also appoints a Chief Officer and other **officers** such as Health Inspector, Sanitation Inspector, etc to assist the President
- Their sources of income and functions are similar to that of Municipal Corporations

2.9.3 City Council (Nagar Panchayat)

Some of the features of City Council are as follows:

- City Council administer urban areas having population greater than 30,000 and less than 100,000

- However, **as an exception, all** previous Town Area Committees (**more than 5000 less than 20,000**) **have been reclassified as City Councils**
- City Councils **have** a **Chairman and** ward members
- **Ward members** included **elected** members (min 10) and **nominated members** (min 3)

29.4 Functions of Urban Local Bodies

18 **functions** and responsibilities ensured to the ULBs under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution are **as** follows:

- **Urban** Planning including town planning **Urban** Development Authority
- Regulation of land use and construction of **Buildings**.
- Planning for economic and social development
- Roads and Bridges
- Water supply for domestic, industrial and **commercial** purposes
- Public health, sanitation conservancy and solid **waste management**.
- Fire Services
- **Urban** forestry, protection of the environment and **promotion** of ecological aspects.
- Safeguarding the interests of weaker **sections** of society, **including** the handicapped and mentally retarded
- Slum improvement and up gradation
- Urban poverty alleviation
- Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, **gardens** and playgrounds
- Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.
- Burials and burial grounds, cremations, cremation **grounds** and **electric** crematoriums.
- Cattle ponds and preventions of cruelty to **animals**
- Vital statistics including registration of births **and** deaths
- Public amenities including street lighting, parking lots, **bus-stops and public** convenience
- **Regulation** of slaughterhouses and tanneries.

After reading this section, you will have gained an idea about **the background** of urban Local Bodies in India. Now you should **be** able to **answer** the **questions** given in *Check Your Progress 3*.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of **the unit**.

- 1) Describe the types of urban local bodies in India after 74th **Constitutional** Amendment.

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2.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Describe the existence of panchayat during ancient period.

Answer: Ancient Indian history has provided evidence of the existence of village *panchayats* comprising five informally elected elderly members to settle dispute in the village. A reference to an organized system of rural local self-government (*panchayat*) has been found in ancient Vedic literature. Rig Veda has mentioned about 'Gramini', the village head employed by the king for civil and military purposes; while Atharva Veda envisaged the institution of 'sabha', 'samiti', 'sabhapati' and 'sabhasad' primarily performing judicial functions. A mention of village institutions had been made in the great epics, the Ramyana and the Mahabharat, where the *gramini* was responsible for collecting statue dues, keeping village records, settling disputes and controlling crime. Kautaliya's *Artha Shastra* gives a comprehensive account of the system of village administration prevailing in ancient India.

- 2) Discuss the contribution of British rule to the panchayati system.

Answer: The history of local self-government in India under the British rule can be conveniently divided into four phases. "Local finance being a counterpart of local administration and its mainstay, has of course, been an expression of the purpose implicit in different phases of local government." The first phase may be assumed to have ended in 1882, when Lord Ripon issued his well-known resolution on local self government. The second phase covers developments from 1882 to 1919, when more powers were transferred from the centre to the provinces, and the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission of 1907, besides discussing other matters, suggested some changes in local self-government. The third phase extended up to 1935, during which the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee (1925)

considered the problems of local taxation, along with central and provincial finances. The fourth phase covers developments up to 1947. During this phase, the struggle for independence was intensified and with the introduction of provincial autonomy in 1937, and coming into power of congress ministries in many provinces, local bodies, particularly village panchayats, received a great stimulus and there was democratisation of local bodies.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Describe the first five commission constituted by Government of India for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions?

Answer: The first five commission constituted by Government of India for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions are i) Balwantray Mehta Committee constituted in 1957 ii) Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) iii) The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations appointed in (1983) iv) GVK Rao committee (1985) v) P.K. Thungon (1986) and vi) L. M. Singhvi Committee (1987).

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Describe the types of urban local bodies in India after 74th Constitutional Amendment.

Answer: Based on the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, there are now only three types of ULBs: (i) Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam) (ii) Municipality (Nagar Palika) (iii) City Council (Nagar Panchayat). According to the Act, there needs to be a City Council for areas in transition from rural to urban, a Municipality for small urban areas and a Municipal Corporation for large urban areas. The functions and powers of ULBs vary from state to state. Now, there are three kinds of Urban Local Bodies in India (i) Municipal Corporation (ii) Municipal Councils and (iii) Nagar Panchayats, demarcated on the basis of population, revenue generation, area and economic importance

- 2) Discuss the functions of Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam)

Answer: The important functions of the municipal corporations are urban planning and management, providing health services, establishment of primary health centres and primary schools, supply of drinking water, sanitation, and construction/repair of roads, street lighting, establishment of cooperative societies, and establishment of youth organizations, water management and waste disposal, social services, social welfare, technical training, poverty alleviation and electrification, providing fire records of birth and death.