LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE

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# ABSTRACT

Small units of a country such as villages, towns or cities are governed by Local Self- Government. This administrating body works at grass root level, connecting common people, in their day to day life. Local self-government is a body of local people elected by local people to look after the local issues. These bodies are made to serve the local communities as well as they act as an instrument of local self-government.

This form of government has no share in sovereignty and is thus completely subordinate to the central authority or, in a federal system, to state or regional authority. People recognize this form of government as it serves people in the closest way possible and is also involved in their decision making process.

# INTRODUCTION

Local Self-government emerges from man's wish of liability and freedom. It is the distribution of administrative power to the lowest cider of people forming a ruling authority. It is basically the decentralization of democratic power to ensure participation of people at ground level. Here governing body is formed by local people to look after their issues.

Jurisdiction of Local Self-Government is bounded to a particular area, say, a village, a town or a city and its functions relate to civic amenities of the population living within that particular area. It has power to raise revenue to provide various local services like sanitation, health, water supply etc.

Local Government is based upon some basic characteristics. Some important characteristics are:

* *Local* Area- Local Government unit has a well-defined area which is set by the concerned State government. This area can be called as a village, a town or a city.
* *Local* Authority- A group of people or an authority is responsible to run administration of a local area. These people are elected directly, by the people residing in that particular area. Local affairs of an area is managed and supervised by a local authority having representatives elected by the people.
* *Amenities* for Local Residents- The primary goal of a local government is to provide since basic civic amenities to residents of that area to their doorstep. Its provision is to ensure a healthy life of residents.
* *Local* Autonomy- Local Autonomy is the freedom of Government to decide and act in response to series of situations according to the given guidelines.
* *Local* Accountability- Local Government units that are made for providing civic amenities to residents are answerable or accountable to residents of that area. Residents of that area keep an eye on activates of local unit to ensure proper functioning of their duties.
* *Local* Finance- For effective functioning of every local government, adequate finance is very important. Services to local residents are provided greatly by the funds raised locally. State and Central Government also provide funds to carry out the assigned tasks in firm of grants.
* *Local* Participation- Success or failure of a plan is entirely dependent upon the participation of local public in government activates for whom those activities are being conducted. Without the active participation of local people, development seems to be an impossible task. Hence, participation of local public plays a vital role in deciding success or failure of a local government.
* *Local* Leadership- People falling under the boundaries of local government, especially rural people are mostly unaware about the functioning of government. Also, illiteracy rate is high in rural areas due to which finding a suitable leader for public becomes a delicate task. One must have leadership skills in order to lead people and form local authorizing body of the Government.
* *Local* Development- Local Government aims to developed people in every aspect of life, residing in their area. Primary objective of a local government is the overall development of people living in that area.

*The* concept of local self-government works upon some principles that are, 'Delegation', 'Devolution', 'DE concentration' and 'Decentralization'.

**Delegation**

Delegation is the idea of transferring authority, power and responsibility to someone. It is transferal of power to sub-national levels to be performed as an agency basis. It refers to transfer of power from one government to another. From formulating the law, constitution or legislative assembly to executive body or from an administrator to a subordinate.

**Devolution**

Devolution is transfer to power from upper governing body to lower, regional governing bodies. From central government to regional sub ordinates. From upper level to lower level. Devolution involves the relocation of powers, duties and functions to sub-national levels of government from the central level of government. Whereas, sub national levels of government overtakes every responsibility and accountability for Decentralization functions of Indian government.

**De-concentration**

De-concentrating takes place when the Central Government disperses it's powers and officials to lower levels or say sub national levels to carry out their functions effectively for better results under the supervision of central government. The actual power still remains in hands of the central government whine its duties or responsibilities are carried forward to sub-national levels or officers of regional level. It can also create strong administration field for better development results under the supervision of central government.

**Decentralization**

Decentralization is generally known as expansion of responsibilities and powers away from the national bodies. Decentralization means delegation and devolution of authorities, functions and resources from central body to local bodies and authorizes or regional legal councils. Decentralization refers to dispersing and dividing of powers to independent governing bodies under the central government. It is the process of sharing a part of central powers of central body to different ruling groups, each group ruling in defined specified areas of the state. Decentralization works upon the principle of sub-dividing the area of central state to smaller territories and forming independent governing and administrative institutions in those territories.

Decentralization involves shifting of powers i.e., responsibilities, role and authorities in the direction-

a) From center to state level

b) From state to district level

Flow of powers is descending, ultimately reaching to units of self- government, participation of people in self-management.

A horizontal power shift takes place from appointed executives to elected representatives of people. Decentralization enables involvement of people of grassroots level in decision making, planning and execution for better development of their respective areas and lives.

## Evolution of Local Self- Government (Panchayat Raj System) in India

As we all know, the government in India is decentralized and divided into Central and State levels. But there is another important system for local governance. Panchayat Raj was laid by the local self- government in India (1992).

History of Panchayat Raj starts from self-governing and self-sufficient village communities. Evidences shows that, In Rig-Veda era (1700 BC) self-governing village bodies were called 'sabras'. These sabras evolved and became 'panchayats' (committee of five people) with the passage of time.

Panchayats functions at the grass root level of governance in villages and or towns. They persist growth and downfall of different empires in the past, to the current finely structured governing system.

### History

The village panchayat administration, local self-governing body, got established in British days, when bridges were ruling India. They offered to satisfy the demands of local autonomy. They also opened up lowest levels of government to the local people.

### Panchayats and Municipality

* Panchayats and Municipalities are the specific terms used fir local self-governing bodies. Both of them exists as a three tier system - at the upper, intermediate and the lower level.
* Gram Sabha acts as the foundation of Panchayati Raj System, according to the 73rd Conditional Amendment act. It consists of all the registered voters of a panchayat firming a village assembly. Functions and duties of a Panchayat are determined by the state government.
* Three types of municipalities are provided by the 74th amendment act of the Constitution. They are:

1. Nagar Panchayat for an area between a rural and an urban area.

2. Municipal Council for a small urban area.

3. Municipal Corporation for a large urban area.

* Urban local self government are represented by Municipalities.
* Particular constituency of a village is called a ward.
* Meeting of a ward is termed as Gram Sabha.
* Chairperson of a Panchayat or a Municipality is elected from the candidates of the next lower level by indirect election.

### Types of Urban Local Government

Currently, India has eight types of urban local government, which are as follows:

1. Municipal Corporations.

2. Municipality.

3. Notified area committee.

4. Town area committee.

5. Cantonment board.

6. Township.

7. Port trust.

8. Special purpose agency.

### Process of elections held in the local government bodies

* Direct elections are conducted to chose the representatives of local bodies.
* State election commission governs and conduct the election of local governing bodies.
* The chairperson at intermediate and district levels shall be elected indirectly from among the directly elected representatives at the immediate lower level.
* The chairperson, at the lowest level, shall be elected in a mode defined by the state legislature.
* Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population.
* Further, not less than one- third seats are reserved for women, providing females a equal status and opportunities in the society.
* There must be a blanket reservation done for women of one-third seats in all the constituencies taken together. (Including already reserved seats for SC and ST).
* The acts inhibits the interference of courts in any issues related to the ejection of local bodies.

### Qualifications needed to be a member of Local Self-Government

Any person eligible to be a member of the state legislature is qualified to be a member of the Local Self-Government, i.e. Panchayat or Municipality.

But unlike the state legislature, a person having 21 years of age is eligible to participate in local bodies and be a part of them. Whereas, in the state legislature, the person should have attained 25 years of age.

### Duration of the Local Government

* Local governing bodies functions for a time period of five years after getting elected.
* New elections should be conducted before the expiration of existing local government.
* If a local body, say, a Panchayat or a Municipality is dissolved before expiration of five years term than reelections should be conducted within six months and the new elected body shall hold the office if the remaining term is more than six months.
* If the remaining time is less than six months than new body will function for next five years.

### Powers of Local Government Bodies

Powers of local authorizing bodies are not especially defined in the constitution. Their powers can be amended by the state government according to situation and atmosphere. Generally, State Government has the right to assign power to the local government to make plans for their social justice and economic development. They may also be assigned the power to impose or collect apt taxes.

# CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

To conclude, the idea of local self-government is really innovative. It is the most deliberate governance change prices our country has seen. Involvement of people at the grass root level is absolutely efficient and praiseworthy.

Howsoever, like any other system, it is also facing some challenges and have some minute defects. Maladministration and misappropriation of funds can be seen.

But this should not overlap the efficient governance, and if this malfunction can be sorted out, our local self Government can be accepted as the best governing body worldwide, at the local level. There will be no comparisons of our local self- government.