

MANIDHANAHEYAM FREE IAS ACADEMY – TNPSC GROUP II & IIA
UNIT - II
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Committees for Local Bodies

1. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

In January 1957, the Government of India (Planning Commission) convened a committee to investigate the Community Development Programme (1952) and the National Extension Service (1953) and to recommend improvements. This was chaired by Balwant Rai G Mehta. This Committee became the first to use the term “democratic decentralisation”.

Historical Background

The village panchayat emerged as a system of governance in the British era as a response to aspirations for local autonomy. Citizens now have access to the lowest levels of government governance. The GoI Act of 1935 also grants the provinces the authority to make legislation.

Recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

1. Establishment of a three-tier Panchayati raj system: village-level grama panchayats, block-level panchayat samitis, and district-level Zila Parishads. Through a system of indirect elections, these tiers should be organically linked.
2. The village panchayat should be made up of directly elected members, while the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad should be made up of members who were indirectly elected.
3. These bodies shall be in charge of all planning and development efforts.
4. The executive body should be the panchayat Samiti, while the advisory, coordinating, and supervisory body should be the Zila Parishad.
5. The chairman of the Zila Parishad shall be the district collector.
6. These democratic entities should receive a meaningful transfer of power and duty.

Significance

1. The National Development Council adopted the committee's recommendations in January 1958.

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2. The council did not insist on a single fixed design, instead allowed states to choose their own patterns that were appropriate for their own circumstances.
3. However, the core concepts and broad basics should be the same across the country.
4. Rajasthan became the first state to implement Panchayati Raj on 2nd October 1959.
5. This became the stepping stone for the development of the Panchayati Raj and the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in India.

The establishment of Panchayat Raj is a watershed moment in the evolution of grass-roots administrative institutions. Panchayats have played a significant part in the development of India's rural areas. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee played an important role in giving a framework for the states to develop their own Panchayat System which resulted in many states having a working Panchayat system even before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

2. Ashok Mehta Committee

The Janata Government created a committee on Panchayati raj institutions, chaired by Ashok Mehta, in December 1977. In August 1978, it submitted a report with 132 recommendations for reviving and strengthening the country's ailing Panchayati raj system. Its primary recommendations included a two-tier panchayat structure, regular social audits, and political party representation at all levels of panchayat elections.

Historical Background

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2. Citizens now have access to the lowest levels of government governance.
3. The GoI Act of 1935 also grants the provinces the authority to make legislation.
4. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957 gave a framework for democratic decentralisation, which was incorporated by many states.

Recommendations of Ashok Mehta Committee

1. The three-tier Panchayati raj system should be replaced with a two-tier structure, with a district-level Zila Parishad and a Mandal panchayat

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consisting of a collection of villages with a combined population of 15,000 to 20,000 people.

2. Below the state level, a district should be the first point of decentralisation under popular supervision.
3. The Zila Parishad shall be the executive body and be in charge of district planning.
4. Political parties should be allowed to participate in panchayat elections at all levels.
5. To mobilise their own financial resources, Panchayati raj organisations should have compulsory taxing powers.
6. Social Audits must be conducted at regular intervals.
7. If the Panchayati institutions are superseded then elections must be held within 6 months.
8. The Minister of Panchayati Raj must be appointed at the state level.
9. Seats must be reserved for candidates from SC and STs.
10. Panchayati institutions must be given constitutional status.

The Ashok Mehta Committee's recommendations could not be implemented at the national level due to the Janata Government's fall before the end of its term.

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3. G V K Rao Committee

The Planning Commission created the Committee to Review the Existing Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programs in 1985, which was chaired by G.V.K. Rao. The Committee concluded that the development process had become increasingly bureaucratized and decoupled from the Panchayati Raj.

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Historical Background

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3. The GoI Act of 1935 also grants the provinces the authority to make legislation.
4. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957 gave a framework for democratic decentralization, which was incorporated by many states.
5. Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) had proposed a 2 tier Panchayati raj system with a district-level executive body. However, with the fall of the Janata Government, it was not considered.

Recommendations of G V K Rao Committee

1. In the scheme of democratic decentralization, the district-level body, namely the Zila Parishad, should play a crucial role. "The district is the proper unit for planning and development," the report noted, "and the Zila Parishad should become the key body for the management of all development programs that can be handled at that level."
2. In terms of planning, execution, and monitoring of rural development programs, the Panchayati Raj institutions at the district and lower levels should be given a significant role.
3. For efficient decentralized district planning, some state-level planning functions should be moved to district-level planning entities.
4. A District Development Commissioner position should be formed. He should be in charge of all development departments at the district level and serve as Zila Parishad's chief executive officer.
5. Panchayati Raj elections should be held on a regular basis. Elections were found to be delayed in 11 states for one or more tiers.

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Significance

1. This committee was different from the previous committee and kept the District level panchayat in the forefront and gave less emphasis to the village and Mandal panchayat.
2. It highlighted the real hurdles faced by village panchayats due to the bureaucracy.
3. It gave emphasis to the volunteer organization to participate in the decentralization process.
4. It recommended administrative elements for poverty alleviation and rural development.

The establishment of Panchayat Raj is a watershed moment in the evolution of grass-roots administrative institutions. Panchayats have played a significant part in the development of India's rural areas. In a nutshell, the G V K Rao committee wanted the district to be the epicenter of democratic centralization. The phenomenon of development administration bureaucratization in opposition to democratization damaged Panchayati Raj institutions, resulting in what is properly described as "grass without roots".

4. L M Singhvi Committee

Under the chairmanship of L.M.Singhvi, the Rajiv Gandhi government created a committee to develop a concept paper on "Revitalization of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Democracy and Development" in 1986. After decades of decentralization initiatives in India, the "Gram Sabhas" were identified as the "incarnation of direct democracy," by the L M Singhvi committee.

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4. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957 gave a framework for democratic decentralization, which was incorporated by many states.
5. The Ashok Mehta Committee was set up in 1977 to make recommendations on the status of the Panchayat Raj system.
6. GVK Rao Committee 1985 was formed to review the existing administrative arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty alleviation.

Recommendations of L M Singhvi Committee

1. Local self-government should be acknowledged by the Constitution.
2. Panchayat elections should be held on a regular basis and without delay.
3. Every state should establish a Panchayati Raj judicial tribunal to deal with issues relating to the administration of Panchayati Raj.
4. Adequate financial resources are required to guarantee that panchayats function effectively.
5. Individuals affiliated with political parties should be discouraged from participating.
6. The Nyaya Panchayat should be tasked with mediating and resolving disputes.
7. The Gram Sabha represents direct democracy, and rural Panchayats should be better organized. Gram Sabha should be prioritized.

Significance

1. It recommended constitutional status for the Panchayat System.
2. Establishment of the Nyaya Panchayats to mediate and resolve disputes.
3. Gave more emphasis to Gram Sabhas.
4. It provided for a plan to gain financial autonomy for the local bodies.

The establishment of Panchayat Raj is a watershed moment in the evolution of grass-roots administrative institutions. Panchayats have played a significant part in the development of India's rural areas. The LM Singhvi Committee was of the view that the Panchayati Raj Institutions declined in the country because of the absence of a clear concept; the absence of political will and the lack of research, evaluation and monitoring.

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5. Thungon Committee

In 1988, a sub-committee of the constitutive committee of the Parliament under the chairmanship of P.K. Thungon was constituted to examine the political and administrative structure in the district and district planning. This committee suggested strengthening the Panchayati Raj system and giving it constitutional status.

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6. GVK Rao Committee 1985 was formed to review the existing administrative arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty alleviation.
7. L M Singhvi Committee 1986 published a concept paper on “Revitalisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Democracy and Development”.

Recommendations of Thungon Committee

1. Constitutional recognition must be granted for Panchayati Raj.
2. Suggested a 3-tier system with village, block and district levels.
3. Zila Parishad plays an important role and acts as a planning and development agency in the district.
4. Panchayati Raj must have a fixed tenure of 5 years.
5. The maximum time for supersession of a body must not be greater than 6 months.
6. A Planning and coordination committee at the state level with the Presidents of Zila Panchayat as members and minister of planning as the Chairman must be set up.

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7. The subjects for the Panchayats to administer must be incorporated in the constitution on schedule 7 lines.
8. Reservations for women, SC and STs.
9. A Finance commission in each state to lay criteria and guidelines for financial devolution.
10. The District Collector should be the CEO of the Zila Parishad.

Significance

1. Thungon committee once again stressed on few important aspects such as his predecessors like
 - i) Constitutional Status
 - ii) Reservation for SC and ST.
 - iii) Giving the Panchayats financial autonomy.
2. It gave a detailed recommendation regarding the CEO of Zila Parishat and State Finance Commission which went on to be included in the constitutional Amendment.

The establishment of Panchayat Raj is a watershed moment in the evolution of grass-roots administrative institutions. Panchayats have played a significant part in the development of India's rural areas. The Thungon committee emphasized on the constitutional status and gave detailed recommendations for the administrative machinery.

6. Gadgil Committee

In 1988, the Congress government set up a committee on policy and Programmes under the chairmanship of V.N.Gadgil. This committee's recommendation became the base work for the constitutional amendment. The committee was mandated to consider the question “How best Panchayati Raj institutions could be made effective.”

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3. The GoI Act of 1935 also grants the provinces the authority to make legislation.
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5. Ashok Mehta Committee was set up in 1977 to make recommendations on the status of the Panchayat Raj system.
6. GVK Rao Committee 1985 was formed to review the existing administrative arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty alleviation.
7. L M Singhvi Committee 1986 published a concept paper on “Revitalisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Democracy and Development”.
8. Thungon Committee 1988 was a sub-committee of the committee of the Parliament which examined political and administrative structure planning at the district level.

Recommendations of Gadgil Committee

1. The Panchayati Raj institutions should be given constitutional status.
2. Panchayati Raj is a three-tiered structure with panchayats at the village, block, and district levels.
3. Panchayati Raj institutions should be given a five-year term.
4. At all three levels, members of the Panchayats should be directly elected.
5. Women, SCs, and STs should have a reservation.
6. The preparation and implementation of socio-economic development plans should be the duty of Panchayati Raj authorities. A list of subjects should be established in the constitution for this purpose.
7. Taxation and duties should be levied, collected, and appropriated by Panchayat Raj entities.
8. The creation of a State Finance Commission to oversee the distribution of funds to the Panchayats.
9. Establishment of a State Election Commission to oversee the conduct of panchayat elections.

Significance

1. This committee's report became the basis of drafting the amendment bill.

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2. It provided measures for making the Panchayat Institutions more effective.
3. It reiterated the importance of giving constitutional status to the Panchayat System.

The establishment of Panchayat Raj is a watershed moment in the evolution of grass-roots administrative institutions. Panchayats have played a significant part in the development of India's rural areas. The Gadgil Committee gave a comprehensive report which was used in drafting the amendment bill.

2. Constitutionalisation of Panchayati Raj

Rajiv Gandhi Government

The Rajiv Gandhi Government introduced the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha in July 1989 to constitutionalize panchayati raj institutions and make them more powerful and broad based. Although, the Lok Sabha passed the bill in August 1989, it was not approved by the Rajya Sabha. The bill was vehemently opposed by the Opposition on the ground that it sought to strengthen centralization in the federal system.

V P Singh Government

The National Front Government, soon after assuming office in November 1989 under the Prime Ministership of V P Singh, announced that it would take steps to strengthen the panchayati raj institutions. In June 1990, a two-day conference of the state chief ministers under the chairmanship of V P Singh was held to discuss the issues relating to the strengthening of the panchayati raj bodies. The conference approved the proposals for the introduction of a fresh constitutional amendment bill. Consequently, a constitutional amendment bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in September 1990. However, the fall of the government resulted in the lapse of the bill.

Narasimha Rao Government

The Congress Government under the prime minister P V Narasimha Rao once again considered the matter of the constitutionalisation of panchayati raj bodies. It drastically modified the proposals in this regard to delete the controversial aspects and introduced a constitutional amendment bill in the Lok Sabha in September,

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1991. This bill finally emerged as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 and came into force on 24 April, 1993.

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

1. Panchayats and Municipalities will be 'institutions of self-government'.
2. Grama Sabhas (Villages) and Ward Committees (Municipalities) comprising.
3. Three-tier system of panchayats at village, taluk and district levels.
4. Seats at all levels filled by direct elections.
5. Seats reserved for chairpersons of the Panchayats at all levels also shall be reserved in proportion to their population.
6. One-third of the total number of seats reserved for women.
7. Uniform five year term.

4. History of Panchayat Raj Institutions

Tamil Nadu has a long history of local self-governance as is evident from the Uthiramerur stone inscriptions in Kancheepuram 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. “Kudavolai 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 rulers introduced local self-governance primarily as an administrative convenience for the imperial Government.

During the British period also, in the late 19th Century, Lord Ripon, the then Viceroy of India gave importance for Local Self Governments.

In the post-independence era, the first enactment in democratic decentralization in the State was the Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950.

In the Constitution of India, one of the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 40 in Part-IV) enshrines that 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.

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The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee on Panchayat administration was constituted in 1957 by the Union Government and this Committee in its report recommended for the democratic decentralization of powers to the Panchayat Raj Institutions and paved way for creation of Panchayats from the year 1960.

In continuation, the Madras Panchayats Act, 1958 and Madras District Development Council Act, 1958 were enacted which led to the creation of a two-tier system of Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions and entrusting the Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats with a large number of developmental and welfare functions.

The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) slowly and steadily developed throughout the country. But the representation of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women, was less and also there was inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources.

In order to institutionalize powers and functions of these Local Body Institutions, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was passed and it came into effect from April, 1993. Part IX was inserted in the Constitution as a sequence to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Panchayats were granted Constitutional Status.

5. Salient Features of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat 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. (f) One third reservation of seats for women and (g) Constitution of District Planning Committees.

6. 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 to contest in the election one must have attained the age of 21 years) 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

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- 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.

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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

Powers and Functions of three tier Panchayat Raj Institutions

Village Panchayats

There are 12,525 Village Panchayats consisting of 79,395 habitations in the State spread across 37 rural Districts. The Village Panchayat President is the Executive Authority of the Village Panchayat. Every Village Panchayat, unless dissolved, shall continue for 5 years from the date of its first meeting after each ordinary election.

In co-ordination with the Director of Census Operations, the Village Panchayat wise rural population data as per Census 2011, for all the Village Panchayats were published in August 2014. The data contains total population of Village Panchayat, SC/ST and Women. The same has also been uploaded in <https://drdpr.tn.gov.in/>

Grama Sabha

Historical evidences in Tamil Nadu has depicted the persistence of ‘Oor and Sabha’ during the Chola period. These Sabhas ensured the administration and the decisions were taken by the people by following democratic process. After Independence, Article 243 was inserted in the Constitution to give importance to the Panchayats. Article 243 of the Constitution ensures the formation of Grama Sabha.

All the registered voters of a Village Panchayat constitute Grama Sabha, which is provided with specific powers and functions. Grama Sabha shall statutorily be conducted in such a way that the intervening period between two Grama Sabhas shall not exceed a period of 6 months.

Section 3 of Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, stipulates that;

(a) The Grama Sabha shall –

- (i) Approve the Village Plan;
- (ii) Approve the Village Budget for the year;
- (iii) Approve the Audit Report of the Village Panchayat accounts of the previous year;
- (iv) Review the progress of the implementation of all schemes entrusted to the Village Panchayat.

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(b) The Government may, by notification, entrust to the Grama Sabha such other functions as may be specified.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has made it mandatory to convene Grama Sabha a minimum number of 4 times i.e. on 26th January, 1st May, 15th August and 2nd October of every calendar year. Grama Sabha can be convened as and when the necessity arises.

Village Panchayat Development Plan (VPDP)

As per Section-240 of Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 every Village Panchayat will prepare a development plan for the Village Panchayat every year.

For the preparation of Village Panchayat Development Plan (VPDP) for the ensuing financial year, People's Plan campaign is organized from 2 nd October to 31st December every year through a participatory approach in convergence with other departments as per guidelines issued by Government.

As part of this campaign, needs assessment is carried out by engaging Community Resource Persons (CRP) for arriving at the social and economic requirements of all the Village Panchayats in the State and updated on the Mission Antyodaya Mobile App of Union Government. Special Grama Sabhas meetings are to be held in the Village Panchayats for the finalization of the Village Panchayat Development Plan.

Village Panchayat Committees:

Every Village Panchayat shall constitute the following Committees, namely-

- Appointment Committee
- Development Committee
- Agricultural and Watershed Committee
- Works Committee
- Education Committee

Appointment Committee

The Appointment Committee may select candidates for appointment to any of the posts sanctioned in the Village Panchayats.

Development Committee

This committee will look after welfare subjects like Health, Drinking water and sanitation etc.

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Agricultural and Watershed Committee:

This committee will organize farmers' forum in Village Panchayat to promote application of latest technologies, improved irrigation system.

Works Committee

The Works Committee shall assist the Village Panchayat in preparation of Village Panchayat development plan.

Education Committee

The Education Committee shall monitor the functioning of all schools in its area, plan and facilitate the public participation to develop school infrastructure.

Panchayat Unions

At the intermediate level, there are 388 Panchayat Unions (Block Panchayats) in the State. The Panchayat Union, otherwise called as Block Panchayat is divided into territorial wards for a minimum of every 5,000 population. The Panchayat Union Ward Members are directly elected from the territorial wards and the Panchayat Union Chairperson is elected indirectly from among the Ward Members.

Finance

1. The Panchayat Union Council cannot levy taxes.
2. It can avail non-tax revenues, assigned/shared revenues such as a portion of the pooled assigned revenue, fees and charges, rentals, fines and penalties
3. The Grants of State Finance Commission which consists of Population Grant and Minimum Lumpsum Grant is released to Panchayat Unions. As per fifth State Finance Commission's recommendation, Minimum Lumpsum Grant is increased to Rs.40 lakh per annum per Panchayat Union.
4. Based on the recommendations of the Fifteenth Union Finance Commission, 15% of the total grant earmarked for the RLB are allocated to the Panchayat Unions.

Infrastructure of Panchayat Unions

All the 388 Panchayat Unions have permanent office buildings. The aged and dilapidated buildings are reconstructed under Scheme Component of Pooled Assigned Revenue (SCPAR) and so far 224 Panchayat Union Office buildings have been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.453.70 crore.

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District Panchayats

There are 36 District Panchayats. District Panchayat has been constituted in each District as per Section 24 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994. The Ward Members are elected directly by the voters, whereas the Chairperson is indirectly elected from among the Ward Members.

In continuation of the creation of 5 new revenue Districts, five new District Panchayats namely Chengalpattu, Kallakurichi, Tirupathur, Ranipet and Tenkasi have been constituted by reorganizing the Blocks from the erstwhile Districts. These District Panchayats came in to functioning after successful completion of Local Body Elections in the year 2021. In addition to these 36 rural Districts, Mayiladuthurai also has been formed as a District and was carved out from Nagapattinam District. However, District Panchayat will be formed for Mayiladuthurai during the next election.

In each District, an officer in the cadre of Assistant Director from the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department is appointed as Secretary to District Panchayat.

Finance

The District Panchayat has no taxation powers. The State Finance Commission Grant is the main source of revenue. In certain District Panchayats, income from their own properties like lands and buildings, constitute the major source of income. 8% of the share from the SFC Devolution Grant for Rural Local Bodies is given to the District Panchayats, which is released on a monthly basis.

Based on the recommendations of the Fifteenth Union Finance Commission, 5% of the total grant has been earmarked to District Panchayats.

7. 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

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- Establishment of Public fairs
- Establishment of Veterinary hospitals
- 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.

8. 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 and he is appointed by the government.

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.

9. 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.

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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.

10. 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 grassroots levels of democracy.

Based on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Government of Tamil Nadu enacted Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994), which came into force on 22.04.1994. This Act introduced the following features in the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Raj structure:

- Three tier system came into existence in Tamil Nadu
- “Panchayat” became a generic term for all the three tiers

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- Members of three tiers of Rural Local Bodies and Village Panchayat Presidents are directly elected whereas the Chairpersons of Panchayat Union Councils and District Panchayats are indirectly elected from among the elected Ward Members.
- All the three tiers of Panchayats are independent of each other and the Village Panchayat Presidents are not members in the Panchayat Union Council.
- Reservation of seats and offices for SCs/STs in proportion to their population and reservation of one third of the total number of seats and offices for women have been mandated. Later, 50% of the Seats and Offices of Rural Local Bodies has been reserved for women in 2016.
- The rotation of offices in all three tiers will be done once in 10 years.
- Tamil Nadu State Election Commission was constituted.
- State Finance Commission is being constituted quinquennially to recommend the ratio of devolution of resources from the State Government to the Rural and Urban Local Bodies.
- District Planning Committee was constituted to prepare District Development Plan by consolidating the Development Plans of Rural and Urban Local Bodies in the Districts.

Article 243-G read with the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution stipulates that States may, by law, endow the Panchayats with 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. The Tamil Nadu Government through various Government Orders have adequately provided devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats on those 29 subjects such as Education, Health, Water supply, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Cooperation, Public Distribution System etc.,

11. Resources and Grants to Rural Local Bodies

In Tamil Nadu, among the three tiers of Rural Local Bodies, Village Panchayat is the only body empowered to levy and collect taxes.

1. Tax Revenue

Village Panchayats are entitled to get tax revenue such as;

- i) House / Property Tax
- ii) Professional Tax
- iii) Advertisement Tax

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2. Non-Tax Revenue

The Village Panchayats are entitled to get revenue from the following sources as non-tax revenue:

- i) Licensing fee for building plan and layout approval
- ii) Fees and charges on Dangerous and Offensive trades
- iii) Market fee
- iv) Water charges
- v) Fee on cart stand
- vi) Social Forestry auctions
- vii) Fishery rentals
- viii) 2-C patta fee
- ix) Income from markets and fairs
- x) Fee from ferries
- xi) Fines and penalties
- xii) Mines and Minerals seigniorage fee and lease amount

3. Grants to Rural Local Bodies

State Finance Commission Grant

Tamil Nadu is one of the States that regularly constitutes the State Finance Commission once in 5 years as mandated by 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India and Section 198 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994. Major functions of the State Finance Commission are:

1. Distribution of the net proceeds of taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the Government between the State and the Panchayats
2. Determination of taxes, duties, tolls and fees which may be assigned to the Panchayats
3. Grants to the Panchayats from the consolidated fund of the State
4. Measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats

So far, five State Finance Commissions have been constituted since 1994 for devolution of funds to the Local Bodies.

Fifth State Finance Commission (2017-18 to 2021-22)

Based on the recommendations of the 5th SFC, funds are devolved to the Rural and Urban Local Bodies. The following are the major recommendations of the fifth SFC (2017 to 2022) for which orders have been issued by the Government.

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- a) 10% of State's Own Tax Revenue will be devolved to Rural and Urban Local Bodies.
- b) Devolution grant will be shared in the ratio of 56:44 between Rural and Urban Local Bodies.
- c) The vertical sharing ratio among three tiers of Rural Local Bodies shall be 8:37:55 for District Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats respectively.
- d) Minimum Lumpsum Grant to the Village Panchayats increased from Rs.5 lakh to Rs.7 lakh per year from the year 2017-18.
- e) Minimum Lumpsum Grant to Panchayat Unions increased to Rs.40 lakh per annum per Panchayat Union.
- f) Horizontal distribution of SFC devolution to Rural Local Bodies will be done on the basis of the following formula:

a)	Population as per 2011 census	60%
b)	Area	15%
c)	SC / ST population	15%
d)	Per capita consumption expenditure distance	10%

- g) Capital Grant Fund has been established to replace the Infrastructure Gap Filling Fund, which aggregates to 20% of the devolution intended for Rural Local Bodies.
- h) Pooled Fund for Deficit Rural Local Bodies has been created which aggregates to 10% of overall devolution intended for Rural Local Bodies.

The Government has released an amount of Rs.6149.23 crore as grant to Rural Local Bodies for the year 2021-22.

Sixth State Finance Commission

The sixth SFC constituted in 2020 by the Government has submitted its recommendations and it is under consideration.

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Capital Grant Fund (CGF)

Capital Grant Fund was created on the recommendation of 5th State Finance Commission and 20% of the overall devolution of SFC grant to Rural Local Bodies is earmarked for this grant.

Of this 20%, CGF 20% shall be set apart for taking up projects which are deemed to be of importance at the State level.

The Government has released an amount of Rs.1229.84 crore as Capital Grant Fund (CGF) within the overall SFC grant meant for Rural Local Bodies for the year 2021-22.

Pooled Fund for Deficit Rural Local Bodies

Out of the overall SFC grant for the local bodies, 10% of fund is earmarked for Pooled Fund for deficit RLBs. Of this 10% fund, 40% will be disbursed by the Director of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, to those Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats recommended by the SFC which have been in deficit for at least 3 of the last 5 years.

Director of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj retains 20% of the fund and 20% is distributed among the District Collectors based on the horizontal District Panchayat wise share. These funds will be utilized by the Director of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj to provide grant to those Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions which have financial problems which cannot be met out by the other Schemes due to paucity of funds.

20% of the Pooled fund for deficit Rural Local Bodies will be provided to Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board to meet the deficit on Combined Water Supply Schemes (CWSS).

The Government has released an amount of Rs.614.92 crore as Pooled Fund for Deficit Rural Local Bodies within the SFC grant to Rural Local Bodies for the year 2021-22.

Pooled Assigned Revenue (PAR)

The assigned revenues due to Rural Local Bodies from the proceeds of surcharge on stamp duty collected by the Registration Department is being pooled at State level for apportioning the same to the Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions.

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Accordingly, the Government have sanctioned and released from the proceeds of surcharge on stamp duty to the tune of Rs.850.37 crore as Pooled Assigned Revenue for the year 2021-22, as detailed below:

1. One third (1/3) of total allocation of Rs.283.45 crore has been apportioned to the Village Panchayats and the Panchayat Unions and the same has been earmarked for settlement of long pending dues of current consumption charges of Village Panchayats
2. The balance two-third (2/3) amount of Rs.566.92 crore has been earmarked for 'Fund for the Priority Schemes in rural areas' for implementing proposed specific development schemes in the rural areas.

Scheme Component of Pooled Assigned Revenue (SCPAR)

Scheme Component of Pooled Assigned Revenue is a portion of Pooled Assigned Revenue allotted by the Government to exclusively take special works based on need. Since 2007-08, the State Government had been ordering pooling of assigned revenue due to the Rural Local Bodies from the proceeds of surcharge on Entertainment Tax and Stamp Duty at the State level and apportioning the same to the Rural Local Bodies and providing fund for priority schemes and works. Once GST was introduced, surcharge on Entertainment Tax was abolished.

Union Finance Commission (CFC)

Grant the Union Government accepted the Fifteenth Union Finance Commission report in 2020. The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) submitted its report in two stages one for the year 2020-21 and another for the rest of the award period (i.e., 2021-22 to 2025-26).

- The total allocation for the year 2020-21 to the RLBs of Tamil Nadu is Rs.3,607 crore of which Tied and Untied Grant will be in 50:50 ratio.
- Total allocation for the year 2021-22 is Rs.2666 Crores. Out of this Tied and Untied Grant will be in the ratio of 60:40.
- Untied Grant may be utilised for the Local specific needs as permitted by the Government other than salary and Establishment expenditure.
- The 50% portion of the Tied Grant should be utilised for water Supply, water conservation, Rain Water harvesting and recycling of water and the remaining 50% will be utilised for sanitation and open defecation free related activities.

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The Fifteenth Union Finance Commission has also recommended that its Grant, Basic and Tied, should be distributed to all the tiers of the Panchayats in the State on the basis of the accepted recommendations of the latest State Finance Commission (SFC) and also in conformity of the following bands recommended by the 15th CFC. The vertical sharing ratio among three tiers of Rural Local Bodies is as follows:

District Panchayats	5%
Panchayat Unions	15%
Village Panchayats	80%

12. Election to Rural Local Bodies

State Election Commission

The Tamil Nadu State Election Commission was established in 1994 as an independent and autonomous constitutional authority to conduct elections to both urban and rural local bodies in the State. The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls are also vested with the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission.

Constitution of State Delimitation Commission

Section 28 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 necessitates the delimitation of territorial wards of Rural Local Bodies after every census. In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 12 of the Tamil Nadu Delimitation Commission Act, 2017 (Tamil Nadu Act 23 of 2017), the Delimitation Commission has been constituted.

Rural Local Body Elections

Based on the delimited wards of RLB's of 27 Districts, the notification for the same was done and ordinary elections to the Rural Local Bodies in 27 districts were completed during 2019-20. After the assumption of this new Government, the delimitation for the wards of Rural Local Bodies of newly reorganized 9 districts have been completed. Accordingly, the ordinary elections to the above Rural Local Bodies have been conducted by the State Election Commission on 06.10.2021 and 09.10.2021.

13. Women in Panchayat Administration

The Government has taken earnest efforts to increase the representation of women in Panchayat Administration. Though the Government reserved 50% of the offices and seats to women in the Rural Local Body elections held during 2019 and 2021, it

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has exceeded and 56% of the total seats and offices are occupied by women. Of the total 12525 Village Panchayats, 7012 (56%) Presidents are women, out of 388 Panchayat Unions, 242 Panchayat Union chairpersons are women (62%). Likewise, out of total 36 District Panchayat chairpersons, 20 (55%) are women. Further out of total 1,18,978 Rural Local Body representatives, 67756 are women and thus constitute 56%. The Government is fully committed to empower women representatives through capacity building and leadership programmes.

14. Eleventh Schedule (Article 243 G)

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
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
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. Market and fairs

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23. Health and sanitation including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries
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 and in particular of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.
28. Public distribution system
29. Maintenance of community assets.

15. Twelfth Schedule of the constitution: Powers and Responsibilities of Municipalities

1. Urban Planning including town planning
2. Regulation of land use and construction of buildings
3. Planning for economic and social development
4. Roads and Bridges
5. Water supply for domestic purposes,
6. Public Health, sanitation conservancy, and solid waste management
7. Fire services
8. Urban forestry, protection of the environment, and promotion of ecological aspects
9. Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded
10. Slum improvement and up gradation
11. Urban poverty alleviation
12. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens and play grounds
13. Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects
14. Burials and burial grounds, cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematoriums
15. Cattle ponds, prevention of cruelty to animals
16. Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths
17. Public amenities including street lighting , parking, bus stops and public conveniences

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18. Regulation of slaughter houses and tanneries

16. Types of Urban Governments

1. Municipal Corporation

- It is established in states by acts of state legislatures and in UT's but acts of Parliament.
- Each corporation has three organs namely; council, standing committees and commissioner.
- Council, a legislative body, is headed by the mayor who is assisted by the deputy mayor.
- Council consists of counsellors who are directly elected by the people.
- Standing committee assists the working of the council. It deals with public work, education, taxation, health, finance and so on.
- Municipal Commissioner is the chief executive authority of the corporation and is responsible for implementation of decisions of council and standing committees.

2. Municipality

- The municipalities are established by the acts of the concerned state legislature for the administration of towns and smaller cities.
- They are also known by municipal council, municipal committee, municipal board, borough municipality, city municipality and others.
- Municipality also has the same three organs like municipal corporation namely Council, standing committee and the Chief Executive officer.
- In composition they are quite similar to municipal corporations except that the council is headed by President /chairman and is assisted by Vice-president/vice-chairman and in place of commissioner they have a chief executive officer/chief municipal officer.
- The Chief Executive authority, appointed by the state government, is responsible for day-to-day administration.

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3. Notified Area Committee

- A notified area committee is established for the administration of an area which is either a fast developing town due to industrialisation or a town not yet developed to fulfil all the conditions necessary for the constitution of a municipality.
- It is established by a notification in the gazette.
- Only the provision mentioned in the government gazette notification is applicable to the function of Notified Area Committee.
- The powers of a notified area committee are the same as of municipality.
- The Notified Area committee is an entirely nominated body. All the members are nominated by the State government including the chairman to a notified area committee.
- Therefore, it is neither an elected body nor a statutory body.

4. Town Area Committee

- A Town Area Committee is established for the administration of a small town.
- It is a semi-municipal authority and has a limited number of civic functions such as drainage, roads, street lighting and conservancy.
- It is created by a state legislature act.
- The act mentions the composition, functions and other matters relating to the Town Area Committee.
- It can be a body fully appointed by the government of a state or a body that is fully elected or partially appointed and partially elected.

5. Cantonment Board

- Cantonment Boards are established for municipal administration for the civilian population in the cantonment areas.
- It is established and administered by the union government.
- It is set up under the provisions of the Cantonments Act of 2006, a central government act.
- A cantonment board works under the administrative control of the union defence ministry.

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- Presently, there are 62 cantonment boards in the country.
- Cantonment Boards are divided into four categories, i.e. Category I - population above 50,000; Category II- Civil population between 10,000-50,000; Category III- Civil population between 2500-10,000 and Category IV- Population below 2500.
- Its members are partly elected and partly nominated.
- The executive officer of the cantonment board is appointed by the President of India.

6. Township

- Township is established by large public enterprises to provide civic amenities to its staff and workers, who live in the housing colonies built near the plant.
- It is not an elected body and Enterprise appoints all the members, including the town administrator to look after the administration of the township.

7. Port Trust

- The port trusts are established in the port areas of the country like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, etc.
- The purposes for establishment of port trust are to manage and protect the ports and to provide civil amenities.
- It is created by an Act of Parliament.
- Port trust consists of both elected and nominated members. Its Chairman is an official.
- Its functions are more or less similar to those of a Municipality.

8. Special Purpose Agency

- Apart from the above seven types of urban bodies, the states can create certain agencies to look after specific functions that 'legitimately' belong to any of the above local urban governments.
- Special purpose agencies are function-based and not area-based like the other urban bodies.

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- Examples of such bodies are: Town improvement trusts; Water supply and sewerage boards; Pollution control boards; Electricity supply boards; Urban development authorities; City transport boards; Housing boards.
- These are established as statutory bodies by an act of state legislature or as departments by an executive resolution.
- They function as autonomous bodies which perform the functions assigned to them independently of the local urban governments.
- They are not subordinated to any organ of the local urban bodies.

17. Central Council of Local Government

The Central Council of Local Government was set up in 1954. It was constituted under Article 263 of the Constitution of India by an order of the President of India. Originally, it was known as the Central Council of Local Self-Government. However, the term 'self-government' was found to be superfluous and hence was replaced by the term 'government' in the 1980s. Till 1958, it dealt with both urban as well as rural local governments, but after 1958 it has been dealing with matters of urban local government only.

The Council is an advisory body. It consists of the Minister for Urban Development in the Government of India and the ministers for local self government in states. The Union minister acts as the Chairman of the Council.

The Council performs the following functions with regard to local government:

- (i) Considering and recommending the policy matters
- (ii) Making proposals for legislation
- (iii) Examining the possibility of cooperation between the Centre and the states
- (iv) Drawing up a common programme of action
- (v) Recommending Central financial assistance
- (vi) Reviewing the work done by the local bodies with the Central financial assistance.

64th Constitutional Amendment Act

Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Constitution (Sixty-fifth Amendment) Bill, 1990 which was enacted as THE CONSTITUTION (Sixty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1990.

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So, the 64th constitutional amendment bill was introduced in the parliament in the year 1989 and the Act came into effect on 16 April, 1990.

The 64th amendment to the constitution was amended mainly to allow the president's rule up to 3 years and 6 months in the state of Punjab.

Article 356 of the constitution of India gives power to the president to impose president's rule on any state if constitutional machinery of that particular state fails.

Clause (4) of article 356 of the Constitution of India says, no Proclamation which is issued under that article as well as approved by both the Houses of Parliament shall remain in force for a period of more than three years. But, under clause (5) of the article 356, a resolution which approves a Proclamation's continuance is issued under clause (1) of that article more than a period of one year can't be passed by any of the two House of Parliament unless the two conditions relating to a Proclamation of Emergency being in operation in the whole or any part of the State and the certificate by the Election Commission that the continuation of the Proclamation issued under clause (1) is necessary on account of difficulties in holding general elections to the Legislative Assembly of the State as specified in that clause are met. The three year period in the matter of Proclamation which is issued on 11th May, 1987 with regard to the State of Punjab would be over on 10th May, 1990 and the said two conditions are also not fulfilled. The prevailing circumstances in the State do not hold out good prospects for free and peaceful elections to the State Legislative Assembly. Various political party representatives who attended the All-Party Meeting conducted by the Governor of Punjab at Chandigarh recently were also of the view that before holding the elections to the State Legislative Assembly the congenial condition should be created. Clauses (4) and (5) of article 356 of the Constitution are, therefore, proposed to be amended so as to facilitate the extension of the said Proclamation up to a total period of three years and six months in relation to the State of Punjab.

18. STATE PLANNING COMMISSION

The State Planning Commission (SPC) functions as an advisory body and makes its recommendations to the Government on various aspects pertaining to the development of the State with Social Justice.

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Headed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister as ExOfficio Chairman, the present State Planning Commission has been reconstituted in June 2021 with 10 Members consisting of a Vice Chairman, two Full Time Members and seven Part Time Members.

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Planning and Development Department and the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Finance Department are Ex-Officio official Members of the State Planning Commission, besides a Member Secretary who is in charge of the administration of the State Planning Commission.

The State Planning Commission gives its inputs in an advisory capacity to the Government to strengthen its policies and to formulate special programmes for the development of the State.

Main Functions of State Planning Commission

- (i) Monitor macro economic growth parameters like economic growth, employment, poverty etc. and give advice to Government on restructuring existing schemes / programmes or formulate new projects / schemes / programmes.
- (ii) Monitor the Tamil Nadu economy and send reports to the Government for improvement as and when necessary.
- (iii) Assist the State Government in formulating long term, medium term and short term goals to guide overall development and also achieve the targets set by the State under the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030.
- (iv) Evolve sector wise strategic plans and documents, in consonance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to be achieved by the year 2030, and in correlation to the milestones of the Finance Commission.
- (v) Systematically address —policy coherence issues‡ and offer a platform for resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues in order to appropriately devise policies, programmes and schemes and accelerate their implementation.
- (vi) Encourage partnerships between Government stakeholders and national and international policy advisory bodies, as well as educational and policy research institutions.

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- (vii) Provide access to measuring the progress and performance through different indices such as Human Development Index, Gender Development Index and other Sectoral Indices of relevance to the State and to advise the Government for appropriate interventions.
- (viii) Conduct periodic studies on various sectors and provide inputs to Government based on the study findings and for the purpose co-ordinate with leading state, national and international institutions.
- (ix) Help create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
- (x) Study and advice on uniform policy adoption covering inter-sectoral, inter-departmental issues and allocations and other regulatory /mandatory frameworks in achieving goals.
- (xi) Similarly, advise the Government on plans for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and coverage on the concept of inclusive growth i.e Leave No One Behind (LNOB).
- (xii) Advise on the effectiveness of implementation of mandated systems under the Decentralized Planning concept for good local governance.
- (xiii) Apart from the above, the State Planning Commission implements the following programmes:
 - a. State Balanced Growth Fund (SBGF)
 - b. Tamil Nadu Innovations Initiative(TANII)
 - c. Programmes of Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board (TNSLURB)

State Balanced Growth Fund

With an objective to reduce regional disparities and correct geographical imbalances, the Government introduced —State Balanced Growth Fund. The programme was introduced in the year 2012-13. The programme covers blocks which are backward in income, employment, poverty, health, education and gender equity.

A comprehensive method was employed to assess the backwardness of blocks through which 105 blocks were identified as backward in the State. In order to cover urban areas, one fourth of wards with predominant slum population in

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Municipalities and Corporations are being considered. Town Panchayats in a backward block and those with higher population density are also being covered under this programme.

A State Level Empowered Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission to guide and monitor the programme implementation, approval of perspective plans and approval of projects. At the district level, the District Collectors implement the programme by involving the officials of line departments.

Approval of projects

- The State Level Empowered Committee constituted for this programme has approved 747 projects worth Rs.596.64 crore upto 2020-21 to correct the regional imbalances in the following parameters.
- Projects related to income - 147 projects worth Rs.102.65 crore
- Projects related to reduce poverty - 107 projects worth Rs.74.30 crore
- Projects related to provide additional employment - 118 projects worth Rs.57.93 crore
- Projects related to improve infrastructure in schools and education - 91 projects worth Rs.82.81 crore
- Projects related to improve health infrastructure - 218 projects worth Rs.227.97 crore
- Projects aimed at bridging the gender divide – 66 projects worth Rs.50.98 crore

During the current year, it has been decided to revisit the selection of 105 blocks done in 2012-13 as nearly a decade has passed. The State Planning Commission is to go into the parameters for selection and devise a methodology which may be district specific parameter of backwardness or common parameter of backwardness that cuts across districts and geographical imbalances. After detailed deliberations the blocks are to be identified and special programmes designed to suit the districts are to be funded under the State Balanced Growth Fund. Also focusing on select priority areas viz., education and health is under consideration rather than to spread the meagre resources thin and wide.

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19. Tamil Nadu State Election Commission

The Tamil Nadu State Election Commission is an autonomous, independent Constitutional and Statutory authority of Tamil Nadu. It was formed under the Constitution of India as per the provisions of the 73rd and 74th Amendments Acts of 1992 on 15 July 1994. All Local Body elections of Tamil Nadu are conducted by this Commission.

History

Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 was enacted according to the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments of India in May 1994 which paved way for the creation of Tamil Nadu State Election Commission. But, the first election to the Local Bodies of Tamil Nadu was conducted in October 1996. Consecutive elections were then conducted in October 2001, October 2006, October 2011 successfully and December 2019 election held as partially.

Structure

The Tamil Nadu State Election Commission is headed by a Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioner appointed by the Governor of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioner holds his term for two years which is eligible for reappointment for two terms. Usually, Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioners are appointed in the rank of Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu. Currently, Thiru. Dr.V.Palani Kumar I.A.S (Retired) is the Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioner. Commissioner is assisted by a Secretary in the cadre of a senior IAS Officer and Officers and sufficient staff.

Duties

The conduct of elections to Rural and Urban bodies of Tamil Nadu are held by both direct and indirect elections. The sole controlling authority vests with the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission. Elections to the various posts are held by this commission by direct and indirect election.

Electoral rolls as per the electoral rolls of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly constituency are prepared by this commission. Polling stations are then identified based on the rolls. Followed by which is the notification for elections. Similar norms followed for the assembly elections are adhered here.

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20. District Planning Committees

Article 243ZD of the 74th Amendment of the Constitution requires the formation of District Planning Committees (DPCs), which is a requirement for both Panchayats and Municipalities. The District Planning Committees will be in charge of integrated planning for the district's urban and rural areas. District Planning Committees must prepare a draft development plan that addresses critical issues of common interest such as water and natural resource sharing, among other things.

District Planning Committee Structure

The 74th Amendment to the Constitution of India led to the establishment of the District Planning Commission. Accordingly District Planning Committee has been set up in all 31 districts.

The District Planning Committee is chaired by the District Panchayat Chairman and the Deputy Chairman by the District Administration Chairman. Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and representatives of local bodies in proportion as determined are members of this committee.

District Planning Committee Works

1. Collection, compilation and up-to-date information of district level resource resources required for preparation of district decentralized plan.
2. Identifying and prioritizing needs.
3. Formulation and prioritization of policies, plans necessary for the development of the district.
4. Preparation of district development plan by integrating plans prepared by rural and urban local bodies in the district. The development plan prepared by the District Planning Committee is helpful to the State level plan prepared by the State Planning Committee.
5. Monitoring and reviewing various development projects in the district.
6. Encouraging participation of charities in development projects.
7. Advising the State Government regarding implementation of State Government schemes.
8. To perform such other duties as may be assigned by the State Government from time to time.

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It is the responsibility of the District Planning Commission to allocate 80% of the capital for state funded works as per the recommendation of the 5th State Finance Commission apart from the works described above.

80 per cent of the capital state fund will be distributed to the district panchayats on a district-wise basis based on the agreed distribution ratio between rural local bodies. Funds will be allocated by the District Planning Committee to projects selected on the basis of an ordinance issued by the Department of Rural Development and Local Government on the advice of the Department of Finance, Planning and Development.

Infrastructure facilities for District Panchayats At the state level, 31 District Panchayats have their own buildings. Computer, printer and internet facilities have been established in all 31 district panchayats.

