CHAPTER - II
DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS IN INDIA
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The institutions of Local Government have flourished in India since time immemorial. The Panchayats or Village Governments, as they were called, were ancient institutions and were themselves small republics. They exercised power in various spheres such as industrial, commercial, administrative, and social including civic education and religious functions.\(^1\) This chapter is an attempt to examine different phases of Local Self-Government from the furthest known history up to the current situation in India.

I. Local Self-Government in the Pre-British Period

The roots of Local Self-Government can be traced as far back as 3000 B.C. i.e., the period of Indus Valley Civilization.\(^2\) During this period, basic civic services like maintenance of streets, providing of streetlights, water supply, drainage etc., were taken care of in a fashion of modern Local Self-Government. Reference to such a highly organised system of Local Government can also be found in the \textit{Vedas}, in the Epics of ‘\textit{Ramayana}’ and ‘\textit{Mahabharata}’, in the ‘\textit{Upanishads}’ and in Kautilya’s ‘\textit{Arthasastra}.’ Village was the basic unit of Local Government and the ‘\textit{Gramini}’ was the Village Headman and its Leader. However, State, being small, there was hardly any distinction between the Central and Local Government.\(^3\)

Under different Empires in Ancient India, the basic unit of administration starts at the Village. But, the Village Panchayat was rarely representative of the Village as a whole. They were generally drawn from the member of the founding families, or from the ‘\textit{Brahmins}’ and superior cultivators. Under the Mughal Empire, the Villages were allowed to manage their own internal affairs in the ancient manner. Rural Local Self-Government continued to function without Governmental

\(^3\) \textit{Ibid.},
interference. Mughals incorporated the Village into the administration as a unit for revenue and policing purposes only. The State dealt grassroots administration through the Headman or ‘Mugaddam’ who was held responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the restitution of theft within the area of his authority. Another prominent writing about the life in the ideal Village includes the description by Sir Charles Metcalfe who referred to them as the ‘Little Republics.’

II. Urban Local Self-Government during the British Period

The origin of Municipal Administration in India dates back to 1687 when a Municipal Corporation was set up in Madras, under a Charter Act passed by James II, the then British Monarch. It was modelled after similar institutions then in vogue in Britain and clothed with authority to levy specific taxes. The corporation consisted of 1(one) Mayor, 12(twelve) Eldermen and 60(sixty) Burgesses, who were appointed from the Europeans living in India. It was constituted to pass on a part of the financial burden of administration to the people.

Following the setting up of the Corporation, there was resistance among people to pay taxes. Ultimately in 1726, the Corporation was replaced by a ‘Mayor’s Court’ which had some judicial rather than administrative powers. A statutory status was not provided to the Local Self-Governments in India until 1793, when a Charter Act was passed and subsequently ‘Justices of Peace’ were appointed to look after Municipal Administration in the Presidency Towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Later, in 1814, ‘Ward Committees’ were set up in some other big cities. In 1842, the Bengal Act was also passed to set up ‘Town Committees’ for sanitary purposes. But, it was difficult for the people to accept this Act as it involved direct taxation. With the passage of time, in 1850 to be precise, an Act was passed with the provisions of indirect taxation for the whole country. Following this Act, the Local Self-Government system received a boost in Bombay, and the United Provinces (UP) State

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4 Ibid.,
5 Ibid.,
6 Ibid., p-58.
7 Ibid., p-59
only while in other provinces, Voluntary Committees continued looking after the sanitation etc.\(^8\)

As a result of the proposals of Financial Decentralisation and the creation of Provincial Legislatures, Lt. Governor of Punjab, Sir Robert Montgomery, issued a Resolution in 1862 for the creation of Municipal Committees to be composed of citizens chosen by Trade Panchayats or selected for their public spirit. In 1864, of the 49 Municipal Committees in Punjab, Trade or Caste Panchayats elected 28.\(^9\)

(a) **Lord Mayo’s Resolution of 1870**

In 1870, Lord Mayo declared the policy of Financial Decentralisation, which stressed the need of associating Indians in administration, decentralisation of certain responsibilities to the Provinces and strengthening of Municipal Government for this purpose. The motive that figured largest in Mayo’s Resolution was, however, again that of Finance. The proposed remedy was to endow the Provinces with a share of the revenues, and to make them responsible for education, roads, and medical services. In turn, Local Authorities were to be liberalised and to accept enlarged responsibilities.\(^10\)

(b) **Lord Ripon**

Lord Ripon, the erstwhile Governor General, and the Viceroy of India (1880-1884), pioneered modern Local Self-Government in India. He sought to revolutionise the basic approach to Local Self-Government. The visionary Viceroy deprecated the earlier approach and, instead, advocated the extension of the Local Self-Government, primarily as an institution of political and popular education. He thought of the application of local knowledge and interest to local administration.\(^11\) On May 18\(^{th}\) 1882, Lord Ripon’s Government issued the historic Resolution on Local Self-Government. This Resolution is regarded today as a landmark in the development of

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Local Self-Government in India and its founder, therefore, as the Father of Local Self-Government. The main recommendations of Ripon’s Resolution are as follows:  

(i) That a network of Local Boards be spread throughout the country and the area of jurisdiction of every Local Board should be so small that both local knowledge and local interest on the part of the members of the Board could be secured.

(ii) The number of non-officials was to be very large. The official element was not to exceed one-third of the whole.

(iii) As far as practicable, the Local Governments were to introduce elections for the members of the Local Boards.

(iv) That Boards should be entrusted not merely with expenditure of fixed allotment of funds but also with the management of local sources of revenue.

(v) Non-Official Chairman, whose election should be subject to the approval of the Provincial Government, should be introduced.

(vi) The District Engineer should help the local bodies in their work of supervision and maintenance of buildings. He should work as their servant and not as their master.

(vii) The affixation of courtesy titles to the names of non-officials should be fixed with a view to giving them pride in local service and attracting more men with deep sense of responsibility.

(viii) That the control should be exercised from within rather than from without. The Government should “revise and check the acts of the Local Bodies that dictate them.” The control over Local Bodies was to be exercised in two ways -

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(a) Sanction of the Government was made necessary to legalise certain actions of the Local Boards, e.g., raising loans, levying taxes, etc.

(b) Resolutions or proceedings of the Local Bodies could be set aside by the Government in certain particular or more appropriately, critical circumstances.

(ix) The power of absolute suppression was to be exercised only with the consent of the Government of India. A general principle of guidance was put in these words: “It should be the general function of the Executive Officers of Government to watch, especially at the outset, the proceedings of the Local Boards, to point out to them matters calling for their consideration, to draw their attention to any neglect of duty on their part and to check, by official remonstrance, any attempt to exceed proper functions or to act illegally or in any arbitrary or unreasonable manner.”

(x) The implementation of the recommendations should be according to local conditions.\textsuperscript{13}

Lord Ripon’s Resolution was the first sincere effort to indianise the Local Self-Government by the imperialist. K.M. Pannikar remarks that, “Lord Ripon’s reform of Local Self-Government laid the basis of Local and Municipal Self-Government which soon took firm roots in India and became the ground work of democratic institutions in higher spheres. The resolution put forward the cases for the expansion of Local Self-Government in a very convincing manner.”\textsuperscript{14}

A significant development since Ripon’s resolution came up in the year 1907, when pressure by the rising discontent among the Indian masses led the Britishers to appoint the Royal Commission on Decentralisation. The Commission presided over

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p-59.  
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p-60.
by C.E.H. Hobhouse, submitted its Report in 1909. The Commission rectified a significant omission by Ripon regarding the strengthening of Village Panchayats.\footnote{Ibid., p-62.}

(c) The Government of India Acts 1919 and 1935

With the passing of the Government of India Act 1919, Local Self-Government was transferred to Indian Ministers who were anxious to make the pattern of Local Self-Government more effective. To them fell the task of implementing the Resolution, as they deemed proper. A number of Acts were passed by the Provincial Legislative Councils between 1921 and 1926. The overall growth of Local Self-Government up to 1935 was not much encouraging for the Urban Areas as opposed to the rural areas, on account of taxation problems in Urban Areas.\footnote{Ibid., p-63.}

Next phase of the growth of Local Self-Government in India is marked by the Government of India Act, 1935. This Act pushed the process of democratisation of the Government and Administration further. It replaced the diarchy system in the Provincial Government by Provincial Autonomy. Whatever hurdles stood in the way of development of Local Self-Government institutions were thus removed, and different Provincial Governments enacted fresh legislations to this effect. The component of nomination in legislation was completely done away with and the financial position of Local Bodies was strengthened. However, the latest Act created confusion in the sphere of taxation between the Local Bodies and the Provincial Government and created new problems concerning the devising of an adequate system of Local Taxation and Local Finance. Thus, the last opportunity offered by the Government of India Act, 1935 was too short-lived since the subsequent years were wholly devoted to a keen struggle for freedom by those Indians looking forward to a better self-governance. Whatever efforts being made towards the growth of Local Self-Government institutions came to a halt with the outbreak of the Second World War and the resignation of popular ministries in all the Congress dominated Provinces. The Governors assumed entire responsibility for the administration of their provinces and continued to do so until 1946.\footnote{Ibid., p-64.}
III. Post-Independence Period

The independence of the country in 1947 ushered in a new period in the history of Local Self-Government in India. With the termination of alien rule, there was Self-Government at all the levels – Central, Provincial, and Local. In 1948, the Ministers of Local Self-Government in the Provinces met under the Chairmanship of the Central Minister for Health Smt. Amrit Kaur. This was the first meeting of its kind. Smt. Amrit Kaur, the Minister for Health, and Chairman of the Conference, observed: “I believe this is the first time that the Government of India has called a conference… Apparently, no conference of those responsible for Local Self-Government has been called so far… I felt it would be definitely beneficial if a forum could be provided where those responsible for this important arm of the administration all over India could meet together periodically, exchange ideas, and discuss problems of common interest.” 18 Jawaharlal Nehru, in his inaugural address, elucidated the significance of Local Self-Government in free India in the following words: “Local Self-Government is and must be the basis of any true system of democracy. We have rather into the habit of thinking of democracy at the top and not so much below. Democracy at the top may not be a success unless you build on this foundation from below.” 19 Subsequently, political leaders and legislators lost no time to process democracy from the grassroot level. The dream become true after the Constitution of India was enforced in 1950 and Village Panchayat clause was enshrined in Article 40.

The onward journey of Local Self-Government is mark by the appointment of a number of Commissions, Committees, or Conferences. In 1949, the Local Finance Enquiry Committee was appointed to look into the financial position of the Local Bodies and to give suggestions for improvement of the same. Having a broader perspective, the Committee recommended that the overall transfer of functions from Local Bodies to the State Government was a retrograde step and should be avoided.20 On the other hand, the Taxation Enquiry Commission, appointed by the Government of India, published its report in 1954, made some important observations regarding

20 Ibid.,
the set-up and finances of Rural Local Bodies. Other important Committees appointed from time to time to enquire into the working of Local Self-Government and to make recommendations for their improvement. These include (i) Committee on Training of Municipal Employees, 1963; (ii) Committee of Ministers on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies, 1963; (iii) Rural-Urban Relationship Committee, 1966; (iv) Committee on the Service Conditions of the Municipal Employees, 1968, and so on. Apart from these, various State Governments also appointed a good number of Committees on similar lines. 21

With the setting up of the Planning Commission in 1950, the era of planning socio-economic development started in India. The First Five Years Plan document stated that, “The Panchayat as an institution has not yet become the instrument of Village reconstruction and development which it was intended to be… it is believed that it would be able to perform its civic functions satisfactorily only if the Panchayats are associated with an active process of development, in which the Village Panchayat itself is given an effective part.” 22 The point was emphasized in the Second Five Year Plan, which called specifically for a “well organised democratic structure of administration within the District” in order to evoke popular initiative and participation. 23

The Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched on 2nd October 1952, to synchronous with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, for integrated Rural Development. 24 On the other hand, the National Extension Service (NES) was also introduced in October 1953 with a view to extending the coverage of assistance to a greater number of rural communities. Towards the end of the First Plan period, it was found that CDP and NES had not succeeded in getting the participation of the people, which was one of the most essential requirements. 25 So, the Government appointed a Committee headed by Balwantrai Mehta in January 1957 to

21 Ibid., p-66.
22 Ibid.,
23 Ibid.,
24 Avasthi & Avasthi, Indian Administration (1997-98), Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Hospital Road, Agra-3, p-548.
25 Ibid., p-549.
review the working of the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service, popularly known as the Balwantrai Mehta Committee.\textsuperscript{26}

This Committee was also responsible to examine the question of reorganisation of the District administration by providing for the association of popular organisations at the Village and the State level. The Committee submitted its report in the same year.\textsuperscript{27} The recommendations of this Committee were accepted by the National Development Council (NDC) in January 1959, which includes a scheme of ‘Democratic decentralisation’ with a three tier structure of Local Bodies, namely, the directly elected Panchayat at the Village Level, the Panchayat Samiti at the Block Level and the Zila Parishad at the District Level.\textsuperscript{28}

Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first States to adopt the Panchayat form of Rural Local Self-Government in 1959. These were joined by other States in due course.\textsuperscript{29} In December 1977, the Janata Government at the Centre appointed a Committee, under the Chairmanship of Ashok Mehta, to review the working of the Panchayati Raj set-up and recommend remedial measures.\textsuperscript{30} Along with many other Reforms, the Committee recommended two-tier system of Panchayati Raj, in the place of existing three-tier with Zila Parishad as Executive Body at District Level and below it Mandal Panchayat constituted by grouping of a number of Villages and having a population of 15,000 to 20,000 etc.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1984, the Planning Commission set up a 12(twelve) member Committee under the Chairmanship of G.V.K. Rao for reviewing the administrative arrangements for rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. The Government of India appointed another Committee during 1986 – 87 under the Chairmanship of eminent Jurist, L.M. Singhvi, to review the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Similarly, Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations (1988) too observed that most of the Local Self-Governing bodies were not functioning efficiently and

\textsuperscript{26} Avasthi & Maheshwari, \textit{Public Administration} (1997), Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Hospital Road, Agra-3, p-168.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Op.cit.}, Avasthi & Avasthi, p-549.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}, p-550.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ibid.}, p-552.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.},
effectively. A Sub-Committee of Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions was also set up under the Chairmanship of P.K. Thungon (1988) to give exhaustive recommendations on this account.\textsuperscript{32} Though many efforts were given by the Government for participative model of the Rural Administration, it took an Act of Parliament (the 64\textsuperscript{th} Constitution Amendment Bill on Local Self-Government on May 15, 1989) to guarantee concrete measures were taken through Constitutional sanction on Panchayati Raj. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha, but sadly, it failed to go through the Rajya Sabha.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1990, the issues relating to strengthening of the Panchayati Raj Institutions were considered afresh by the Cabinet Committee set up for this purpose. It was brought up before a Conference of Chief Ministers held in June 1990, presided over by the then Prime Minister Shri V.P. Singh.\textsuperscript{34} The Chief Ministers’ Conference endorsed the proposals for the introduction of a new Constitutional Amendment Bill. The Cabinet approved the Amendment Bill and Model Guidelines in July 1990. The Constitution Amendment Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 7\textsuperscript{th} September 1990, but could not be taken up as political changes took place leading to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Finally, the Central Government headed by Narasimha Rao was successful in enacting ‘The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 on Panchayats and The Constitution 74th Amendment Act, 1992 on Municipalities.’\textsuperscript{35} This 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) exhibited the beginning of Local Self-Government under adequate legal sanction in India.\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{IV. 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA), 1992}

The development of Urban Local Self-Government, as compared to that of Rural Local Self-Government, has been very slow after independence. The first two Plans did not carry much for the improvement of Urban Local Bodies. It was only at the end of the Second Plan that the planners focused their attention on the Urban Local Bodies. In the Third Plan, it was suggested strengthening the Municipal

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{34} www.pmindia.gov.in
Administration by the way of better Personnel and Finances and by enlarging their jurisdiction and functions. It was also suggested to cover all the Towns and Cities having a population of over one lakh under the scheme of planning in an organic way.37

Local Self-Government is a State subject with the Constitution recognising that Local Self-Government institutions are an essential part of the National Government (Article 12).38 When the Constitution of India was inaugurated on 26th January 1950, neither the details of Urban Administration nor Management of Urban Areas was incorporated. Entry 5 of List-ll of the State List simply enshrines that

“Local Government, that is to say, the constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, District boards, mining settlement authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of Local Self - Government or Village administration.” 39

Different States Assembly made legislations for their Urban Administration by adopting different systems with their own terms. However, the 74th CAA solved the long pending problems by elaborating uniform urban mechanism in India. This Amendment Act added a new Part - IXA (Article 243-P to 243-ZG) to the Constitution of India and its legitimate powers are enshrined in Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution.40 Salient features of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act are:

(i) Constitution of Municipalities- It provides for the constitution of 3 types of Municipalities depending upon the size and area namely (i) a Nagar Panchayat – (by whatever name called) for a transitional area, that is to say, an area in transition from a Rural area to an Urban area; (ii) a Municipal Council - for smaller Urban area; and (iii) a Municipal Corporation - for a larger Urban area.

(ii) Composition of Municipalities- All seats shall be filled by direct elections. The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the representation in a

37 Ibid., p-73.
38 Datta, Abhijit. - Municipal and Urban India (Selection from NAGARLOK)-1980, Pauls Press, Naraina Phase-I, New Delhi-110,028, p-76.
39 Ibid., p-1079.
40 Ibid., p-704.
Municipality, like, persons having special knowledge or experience in Municipal administration, the members of the House of the People and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State representing constituencies which comprise wholly or partly of the Municipal area; the Members of the Council of States and the Members of the Legislative Council of the State registered as electors within the municipal area. The manner of election of Chairperson of Municipalities has been left to be specified by the State Legislature. 41

(iii) Constitution of Wards Committees- The Act provides for the constitution of Ward Committees, consisting of one or more wards, within the territorial area of a Municipality, with a population of 3 lakhs or more. 42

(iv) Reservation of seats- In order to provide for adequate representation of Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) and of women in the Municipal Bodies, provisions have been made for reservation of seats in every Municipality. The proportion of seats to be reserved for SC/ST to the total number of seats shall be the same as the proportion of the population of SC/ST in the municipal area. The reservation would be made in respect of seats to be filled by direct elections only. Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved for SC/ST shall be reserved for women belonging to SC/ST. This is a mandatory provision. In respect of women, the seats shall be reserved to the extent of not less than one-third of the total number of seats. This includes seats reserved for women belonging to SC/ST. These reservations will apply for direct election only. This is also a mandatory provision. Under the optional provision, there will be no bar on State Legislatures from making provisions for reservation of seats in any Municipality or office of Chairperson in the Municipalities in favour of backward classes of the citizens. 43

(v) Duration of Municipalities- The Municipality has a fixed term of 5(five) years from the date appointed for its first meeting. Election to constitute new body of Municipality is to be completed before the expiration of the duration of the Municipality. If the Municipality is dissolve before the expiry of five years, the

41 Ibid., p-705.
42 Ibid., p-705.
43 Ibid., p-706.
election for constituting a new Municipality is required to be completed within a period of 6(six) months from the date of its dissolution.\(^{44}\)

**(vi) Powers and Functions of the Municipalities**- All Municipalities would be empowered with such powers and responsibilities as may be necessary to enable them to function as effective institutions of Self-Government. The State Legislature may, by law, specify the powers and responsibilities that would be given to the Municipalities in respect of preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and for the implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them. An illustrative list of functions that may be entrusted to the Municipalities has been incorporated at the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution.

**(vii) Finances of Municipalities**- It have been left to the Legislature of a State to specify by law matters relating to imposition of taxes, such as:

1. Taxes, duties, fees, etc., shall be levied and collected by the Municipalities, and the procedures to be laid in the State Law;
2. Taxes, duties, fees, etc., which would be levied and collected by the State Government and a share passed on to the Municipalities;
3. Grant-in-aid that would be given to the Municipalities from the State;

**(viii) Finance Commission**- The Finance Commission constituted under Article 243-I to review the financial positions of Panchayati Raj Institutions shall also review the financial position of the Municipalities and will make recommendations to the Governor. The recommendations of the Finance Commission will cover the following:\(^{45}\)

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 
\(^{45}\) Ibid., p-708.
(i) Distribution between the State Government and Municipalities of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State;

(ii) Allocation of share of such proceeds between the Municipalities at all levels in the State;

(iii) Determination of taxes, duties, tolls and fees to be assigned or appropriated by the Municipalities;

(iv) Grants-in-aid to Municipalities from the Consolidated Fund of the State;

(v) Measures needed to improve the financial position of the Municipalities.

(vi) Any other matters referred to them by the Governor in the interests of sound finance of the Municipalities.46

(ix) **Election to Municipalities**- The superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats and Municipalities shall be vested in the State Election Commission.47

(x) **Audit and Accounts**- The maintenance of the Accounts of the Municipalities and other audit shall be done in accordance with the provisions of the State law. The State Legislatures will be free to make appropriate provisions in this regards, depending upon the local needs and institutional framework available for this purpose.48

(xi) **Committee for District Planning**- There shall be constituted in every State at the District level a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the District and to prepare a Draft Development Plan for the District as a whole.49 Provision has, therefore, been

made for the constitution of a Planning Committee at the District level with a view to consolidating the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities and preparing a Development Plan for the District as a whole. The District Planning Committee in preparing the Draft Development Plan shall have regard to:

(1) Matter of common interest between the Panchayats and the Municipalities including spatial planning;

(2) Sharing of water and other physical and natural resources;

(3) Integrated development of infrastructure and environment conservation;

(4) Extent and type of available resources, whether financial or otherwise;

(xii) Metropolitan Planning Committees - It is provided in Article 243-ZE of the Constitution that there shall be constituted in every Metropolitan area a Metropolitan Planning Committee to prepare a Draft Development Plan for the Metropolitan area as a whole. The Metropolitan Planning Committee shall take into account the followings for preparation of the Draft Development Plan:

(1) The plans prepared by the Municipalities and the Panchayats in the Metropolitan area;

(2) Matters of common interest between the Municipalities and the Panchayats including coordinated spatial plans of the area; Sharing of water and other physical and natural resources; the Integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation;

(5) The overall objectives and priorities set by the Government of India and the Government of the State;

50 Ibid., p-710.
51 Ibid.,
(6) The extent and nature of investments likely to be made in the metropolitan area by agencies of the Government;

(7) To consult such institutions and organisations as the Governor may, by order, specify.

(xiii) **Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters:** - The validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made shall not be called in question in any Court. Besides, no election to any Municipality shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority.\(^{52}\)

(xiv) **Part not to apply to certain areas:** - Under Article 243-ZC of the Constitution, nothing in this part shall apply to Scheduled Areas referred to in clause (1), and the Tribal Areas referred to in clause (2) of Article 244. However, Parliament may by law, extend the provisions of Part IXA to these areas, subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in that law.\(^{53}\)

The elected Municipal representatives shall have a decisive role in the planning, provision and delivery of civic infrastructure and services. The Act also stipulates that if the State Government dissolves a Municipality, election to the same should be held within a period of six months. Newly elected members would serve for the remaining period of five years, on the other hand, election may not be required if the remaining Municipal period is less than six months to the date of dissolution.

After the implementation of the Constitution 74th Amendment Act in June 1993, many new Urban Local Self-Governments were inaugurated while ongoing institutions were renovated to synchronise with the new provisions embodied by the amendment of 1992. Citizens were looking for decentralisation of decision-making process, as a result of which the Local Self-Government came to the limelight. Somehow, the State Governments also took steps for decentralisation of more powers to the people through the Local Self-Government.


V. Trend of increase in the number of Urban Local Self-Governments after Independence

In 1947, there were only 3 (three) Municipal Corporations, which were established in the Metropolitan Cities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. By 1975, the number rose to 34 (thirty-four) and up to 1986, the number had risen to 68 (sixty-eight) Municipal Corporations.\(^{54}\) According to the 1981 Census, Urban India comprises 4,029 Towns and in 1991 India had 4,489 Towns.\(^{55}\) The number of Urban Local Self-Governments has been increasing as a result of increase in Urban and Suburban population. The following Table (2.1) shows the number and various forms of Urban Governance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Form of Urban Local Government</th>
<th>No. in 1968</th>
<th>No. in 1971</th>
<th>No. in 1987</th>
<th>No. in 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Municipal Corporations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Municipal Councils</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>1,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Notified Area Committees</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Town Area Committees</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Cantonment Boards</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Townships</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As portrayed by the above Table (2.1), there were 30 Municipal Corporations in India in 1968. Among other Local Bodies, 1,473 Municipal Councils, 115 Notified Area Committees, 385 Town Area Committees, and 59 Cantonment Boards were to be found in the same year, i.e., 1968. However, Urban Local Bodies had increased to a very high number in 1990. There were 73 Municipal Corporations, 1,770 Municipal


\(^{56}\) Ibid., p-200.
Councils, 717 Notified Area Committees, 229 Town Area Committees, and 62 Cantonment Boards respectively.\textsuperscript{57}

Table - 2.2

State-wise Data on Number of Urban Local Bodies in India

(As on Oct. 2004)\textsuperscript{58}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Municipal Corporation</th>
<th>Municipal Council</th>
<th>Nagar Panchayat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td><strong>1,220</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,850</strong></td>
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\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.,

There was a steady increase of Urban Local Self-Government in India. The State-wise numbers of different Urban Local Bodies were shown in Table (2.2). This Table unveiled the numbers of Municipal Corporations (MCs) in different States. There were 7(seven) MCs in Andhra Pradesh; 1(one) MCs each in Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh; 5(five) MCs each in Bihar and Kerala. Chhatisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal has 6(six) each, 14(fourteen) in Madhya Pradesh, 19(nineteen) in Maharastra, 2(two) in Orissa, 4(four) in Punjab, 3(three) in Rajasthan, 11(eleven) in Uttar Pradesh and 1(one) MCs in the National Capital of Delhi respectively.59

As revealed in the Table (2.2), there were 2,850 Urban Local Bodies of different kinds in India (excluding Union Territories). Out of these, 117 are Municipal Corporations, 1,513 Municipal Councils, and 1,220 Nagar Panchayats. Maharastra State has the highest number of both Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils. It may be pertinent to point out that Maharastra surprisingly does not have any Nagar Panchayat. Maharastra was followed by Madhya Pradesh with 14 Corporations, Uttar Pradesh with 12 Corporations and Chhatisgarh with 10 Corporations each. As far as Urban Local Self Government is concerned, Uttar Pradesh tops the total number of urban mechanism with 628 Urban Local Bodies, followed by Maharastra with 247 and Karnataka with 222 Local Bodies respectively.