

Unit 25

Local Self Government and the Emergence of Voluntary Organisation

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Learning Objectives

A study of this unit will enable you to:

- define the institution of local government
- distinguish between local government and local self-government
- discuss the evolution of urban local government in India
- describe the Nagarpalika Bill, 1989
- explain the different functions of the municipalities
- describe the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC)
- discuss the suggestions the improvement in functioning of Local Administration; and
- describe the emergence of the voluntary Organisations in India.

25.1 Introduction

The present unit focusses on the concept of local self government particularly the urban local self government. It also throws light on the emergence and function of the voluntary organisation in the context of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. The importance of the urban local governments in India has considerably increased in post independent era

with the inauguration of the Constitution embodying the principle of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the governments in urban areas to promote social and economic development. In this unit a brief sketch of the emergence of the urban local bodies (ULBs) is being traced, taking into account the pre-independence period and the post independence developments in this field. There is also a brief explanation of the Nagarpalika bill and the new approaches to the local self governments in India in the period of rapid urbanisation. The types of urban local bodies have been discussed in details and their significance and mode of functioning has been discussed in this unit. At the end of the discussion some important suggestions have been put forth for the improvement of the local bodies in the changed circumstances.

The voluntary organisations take part in the new initiatives in the field of the development and progress in the field of civil society. They play an important role in this regard. Their role does not end with the creation of awareness among the people and capacity building in them but is redefined in order to pass on institutional learning both inter group and intra-group, thus becoming a core of learning for newer groups. Thus this unit concludes with the fact that the local government and the role of voluntary organisations are closely linked with each other.

25.2 Local Government: Few Definitions

Local governments have been defined in numerous ways. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica “an authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside and smaller than the whole state. The variant local-self government is important for its emphasis on the freedom to decide the act.” According to P. Stones “local government is that part of the government of a country which deals with the people in a particular locality.” According to L. Golding “local government is the management of their own affairs by the people of a locality”. A more appropriate definition of local government has been given by K. Venkatarangaiya. To him, “local government is the administration of a locality—a village, a city or any other area smaller than the state—by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services

which are regarded as local and therefore distinct from state and central services. Professor W.A Robson opines that the local government may be said to involve the conception of a territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal rights and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. Thus the essential characteristics of a local government are:

i) Local area

It is a well defined area which is fixed by the respective state government.this area can be termed as a city, town, or a village.

ii) Local authority

The administration of a particular locality is run by an authority or body of persons who are elected directly by the people in that particular area.

iii) Civic amenities for local inhabitants

The primary objective of the local government is to provide certain civic amenities to the people at their door step. These services are specifically meant for those inhabitants who are living in that restricted area for which the local government unit has been created.

iv) Local finance

Normally the local governments raise their finances locally and through several grants given by central and the respective state governments. The local government raises the finance by tax which is being paid by the residents of that particular area.

v) Local autonomy

Local autonomy means the freedom of the local bodies in discharge of their duties. It implies the legal rights of the inhabitants of a local area to choose their representatives to govern the particular area,according to legal laws framed by the local council, and to adopt the budget subject to law. But it should be clear that the authorities which have been given the responsibility to run the local government are neither sovereign nor self created entities and they will have to depend upon the higher level of government for their creation, rank, powers and functions.

vi) Local participation

The local government should encourage the local people to participate in the local developmental programmes. The local participation is a must for the success of any development programme or policies.

vii) Local leadership

A strong leadership is a prerequisite for a local government success. This leadership is provided to the people from the local area in the shape of elected representatives and elected office bearers of the elected councils in regard to the policies and programmes of the government.

viii) Local accountability.

Local government units are directly accountable to the local people. The citizen of the local area keeps a close watch on the local authorities to ensure effective performance in their functions.

ix) Local development.

Local government is concerned with the overall development of the people living in a particular area or the area itself. Every activity of local government unit is an approach to development.

25.3 Distinction Between Local Government and Local- Self Government

Local government and local self government are interchangeably used. The term local self government is used in those countries which were under the colonial rule. After India got independence, it used only the local government instead of local self government because the entire country is ruled by the people not only local government. That is why the term local government instead of local self government is used in Entry 5 of list II of the seventh schedule of our Constitution. Despite this distinction, both the terms continue to be in vogue in our country. The term signifies a government, representative of local inhabitants, more or less autonomous in character, instituted under state legislation, in a village, a district, a city or in urban areas to administer services as distinguished from state and central services.

The urban local government is that part of the local government which deals exclusively with the urban affairs. The urban scenario in India is very complex and complicated one. And this complexity poses enormous challenges to the administrative system involved in managing regulatory as well as developmental affairs in urban areas. The scope of urban local governments extends to the study of the phenomenon of urbanisation and its problems, urban planning, structure of urban governments and their classifications, municipal legislation, personnel management, financial administration, special purpose agencies and organisation and functions of union ministry of urban development and its sub-ordinate and attached offices etc. The significance of urban local government lies in the numerous benefits that it bestows upon the inhabitants of the area it operates in. It functions as a school for democracy wherein citizens are imparted political and popular education regarding issues of local and national importance. It develops qualities of initiative, tolerance and compromise- so essential for the working of a democracy. The importance of the urban local governments in India has considerably increased in post independent era with the framing of the Constitution embodying the principle of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the governments in urban areas to promote social and economic development.

Reflection and Action 25.1

Visit the local administrative office in your city/ town/ village. Interview at best two officers of this administration about the structure and functioning of this office. What roles it performs and how far are they able to serve the people in general.

Write a note on “The Administration Process in my City (Ward or municipal office etc.)/ town/ village” in about two pages. Share your note with other learners at your study center.

25.4 Evolution of Urban Local Government in India

British phase

The first sign of urban local government can be traced to 1687, with the establishment of Madras Municipal Corporation. Later the Royal charter of 1720 established a

Mayor's court in each of the three presidencies Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. In 1850, an act was passed for the whole of British India permitting the formation of local committees to make better provisions for public health. Lord Mayo's resolution of 1870 made arrangements for strengthening the municipal institutions and increasing the associations of Indians in these bodies. But it was the resolution of Lord Ripon of 18th May 1882 that was hailed as the Magna Carta of local government and he suggested reforms for instilling life into the local bodies. He can be termed as the father of the urban local self government in India. But one thing was clear that the development of the local self government was done to primarily serve the British interests rather than to promote self-governing bodies in the country; that local government institutions were dominated by the British and most of the Indian population remained deprived of the participation in their functioning; that the dominant motive behind the institution of local government in India was to give relief to the imperial finances.

A significant development since Ripon's resolution came up in 1907 when the rising discontent among the Indian masses led to the appointment of the Royal commission on decentralisation, to enquire into the financial and administrative relations of the government of India and the provincial governments and the authorities subordinate to them. In order to increase the devolution of power and gradual democratisation of the local bodies the commission had recommended that the chairman should be elective non-official and the majority of the members should be elected non-officials. The other recommendations were that the municipalities should be given more powers of taxation and control over their budgets. Apart from these the large municipalities should be endowed with greater power and required to appoint qualified health officials along with the executive officials.

The act provided for the reduction of official control over municipal bodies; the provincial governments could introduce the election system in any municipalities and permit the election of non-official chairman. The government of India act 1919 introduced the system of diarchy and the local self government became a transferred

subject under the charge of a popular minister of the provincial legislature. The act increased the taxation powers of the local bodies, lowered the franchise, reduced the nominated elements and extended the communal electorate to a large number of municipalities. Lastly, the government of India act 1935, which emphasized provincial autonomy, again declared local government as a provincial subject. The act earmarked no taxes for local bodies. The municipal institutions were to be revitalized with the introduction of popular ministries. However due to the outbreak of World War II, little progress could be made in this direction. The act of 1935 abolished the system of diarchy and introduced popular governments in the provinces. The British left in 1947 without firmly establishing a self-reliant, vibrant, healthy and efficient system of municipal government.

The post independent period

After independence, on 26 January the constitution of India came into force. In reference to urban self government Entry 5 of the list II of the seventh schedule, viz. the state list says, local government, that is to say, the Constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, District boards, mining settlements authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration. Entry 20 of the concurrent list reads “economic and social planning.”

The most important landmark in the evolution of urban local government in the post-independent India is the setting up of Ministry of Urban Development in 1985. Earlier the urban local government was the responsibility of the ministry of health as local government had its beginning in its urge to improve sanitary conditions as recommended by the Royal Army Sanitation Commission (1863). The ministry of health looked after both rural and urban government until 1958 when the former was separated from it and put under the charge of Ministry of Community Development. In 1966, a part of local government namely urban development was made the responsibility of the Ministry of Works and Housing which was renamed the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development. In 1967, the subject of Urban Development was transferred to the Ministry of Health, which was designated as

Ministry of Health, Family Planning, Works, Housing and Urban Development. In 1985 on realizing the magnitude of urban problems resulting from urbanization taking place at alarming pace in the country that the Government of India decided to set up a separate ministry of Urban Development and entrusted it the responsibility of broad policy formulation and monitoring programmes in the areas of housing, urban development, urban poverty alleviation, urban water supply, and urban transport in addition to construction and maintenance of central government buildings and management of central government land and property.

In August 1988, the Government set up the National Commission on Urbanization (NCU), it subsequently recommended the following measures:

- i) The ministry of Urban development to be restructured to make it the nodal ministry to deal with urbanisation.
- ii) A national urbanisation council (NUC) is set up to formulate urbanisation policies and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policies.
- iii) An Indian Council for Citizens Action (ICCA) be created to encourage citizens through organised voluntary efforts.
- iv) Every town, with a population of more than 50,000, be provided with an urban community department, through which development programmes be implemented.

25.5 Nagarpalika Bill, 1989

The government has introduced the nagarpalika bill in august, 1989 with a view to give power to the people and to strengthen, revamp and rejuvenate urban local governments. Its main provision were the constitution of Nagar Panchayats for areas in transition from rural to urban areas, ward committees in nagarpalikas and zonal committees in maha nagarpalikas, reservations for scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and women, finance commission to recommend the principles to ensure soundness of local bodies finances, conduct of elections by central election commission, audit of accounts by the comptroller and auditor general of India and above all, the grant of constitutional status to local bodies. In this bill, mainly three types of nagarpalikas

were envisaged; (i) nagar panchayat for a population of 10,000-20,000, (ii) municipal council for urban areas with a population between 20,000-3,00,000 and (iii) municipal corporation for urban areas with a population exceeding 3,00,000. The bill was passed by Lok Sabha but it was defeated in the Rajya Sabha by a narrow margin of three votes.

Again in 1991, when congress ministry came into power, it introduced the bill with slight modifications. It was passed by both the houses of Parliament in December, 1992. Later on it came into existence as the constitution 74th amendment act, 1992. The act introduces a new part, namely, part IX A, in the Constitution. This part deals with issues relating to municipalities such as their structure and composition, reservation of seats, elections, powers and functions, finances, and some miscellaneous provisions. The 74th Amendment thus gives a constitutional status to the municipalities.

To conclude It may be observed that the evolution of urban local government in the post independent India has been characterised by the inertia on the part of the central governments and the state governments as is evidenced by the sporadic and piecemeal efforts made by them in realising and recognising the significance of the city governments and taking half hearted measures in improving their organisation and functioning. It was only during 1980s that the central government took decision of setting-up of the Ministry of Urban Development, appointment of national commission of urbanisation and introducing nagarpalika bill in 1989 and 1991 to rejuvenate the urban self government institutions in the country.

The following types of urban bodies are constituted for the urban administration in India.

- i) Municipal Corporation
- ii) Municipal Council/Committee/Municipality.
- iii) Notified area Committee.
- iv) Town Area Committee.
- v) Township.
- vi) Cantonment Board and Special Purpose Agency/Authority.

Municipal corporations are set-up in big and large cities. The council of the corporation is headed by a Mayor and its standing committees constitute the deliberative wing which takes decisions. The Municipal Commissioner the executive authority, responsible for enforcing these decisions. Collectively, headed by the Mayor, the standing committees and the Municipal Commissioner make up the corporation. The council of the corporation consists of councillors who function for a period of five years. The Municipal Commissioner of corporation is at the apex of the municipal hierarchy and is the key officer controlling the administrative machinery of the corporation. He is appointed by the state government. Generally officers belonging to the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) are appointed to this post. The traditional civic functions are performed by the municipal bodies.

The municipal council is a statutory body created by an act of the state legislature and the criteria of setting it up varies from state to state. A municipal council consists of elected, coopted and associate members. The council elects from amongst its members, a president for a period of five years. He/She can be removed by the council as well as the state government. The council also elects one or two vice-presidents. The president is the administrative head and he normally presides over the meeting of the council, guides the deliberations and gets the decisions implemented. The state government also appoints the executive officer in the municipal council for the conduct of the general administrative works. He exercises general control and supervision over the municipal office, can transfer clerical employees, prepare the municipal budgets, keeps an eye on the expenditure, is responsible for the collection of the taxes and fees and takes measures for recovering the arrears and dues. He can be removed by the council or by the state government. Normally the functions of the council are similar to those of the municipal corporations.

The notified area committee is set up in those areas which are not yet ready for declaring themselves as the municipalities. It is normally created in the areas which are rapidly growing with large and heavy industrialisation. The state government constitutes a committee called as Notified Area Committee. This committee

administers this area. Except three members who are elected, all the members are normally appointed by the state government. The chairman is also appointed by the state government.

Town area committee can be termed as the semi-municipal authority. They are constituted for the smaller towns. The town area committee is constituted by an act of state legislature and its composition and functions are specified in it. The committee may be partly nominated or partly elected or wholly elected or wholly nominated.

When, in an area, large public enterprises are set-up, several residential colonies also come into existence. For example, the steel plants of Rourkela, Bhilai, and Jamshedpur etc. consequently to administer such a township the municipal council or the corporations in which these areas falls appoint a Town Administrator, who is assisted by a few engineers and technicians. The townships are well planned and contains several facilities like water, electricity, roads, drainage etc. The expenditure on these services are shared by the industries concerned.

Cantonment Boards are the only bodies which are controlled by the Central government by the Defense Ministry. These are set-up when a military station is established in a new area. With the establishment of the cantonment area several civilian areas like shops and market and the inhabitants of these markets constitute a sizable population. The officer commanding the station is the president of the board. An elected member holds office for the period of three years, while the nominated members continue as long as they hold the office in that station.

Apart from the municipalities and corporations there are other single purpose agencies which are set-up as statutory bodies under separate acts of the respective state governments. The single purpose agencies are housing boards and improvement trusts. To deal with the problem of housing the housing boards are set-up in almost every state. At the central level, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) plays a crucial role. It has promoted numerous houses in the country. Most

of them are for the members of the lower income groups people. The housing boards receive the funds from central and the state government for the promotion of different housing schemes. These boards generally analyse the problem of housing and they usually give advice to the government regarding the improvement of the housing problems. They also create the planned neighbourhood with the construction of the houses at reasonable cost. However, the housing boards are not exclusively for poor income groups rather they also plan for the housing of the higher income group, yet their most important contribution has been in serving the middle income groups. Besides, a number of well integrated colonies have been developed by the housing boards.

To promote the development of a city the improvement trusts are constituted. They are the statutory bodies. Normally, it is the new areas of a city which falls under the improvement trusts. The power and functions of the improvement trusts are specified in the act by which they are created. Hence there are inter-state variation in the composition and functioning of the improvement trusts. Generally, an improvement trust is headed by a chairman, who is a nominee of the state government. An improvement trust is a multi-functional development agency, which performs an important coordinative role by bringing the representatives of a large number of government agencies engaged in the process of development under one roof. An example of the improvement trust is Delhi Development Agency (DDA), which was set up in 1957.

25.6 Functions of the Municipalities

The List of Functions that has been laid down in the twelfth schedule is as follows:

- i) urban planning, including town planning
- ii) Regulation of land use and construction of buildings.
- iii) Planning for economic and social development.
- iv) Roads and bridges.
- v) Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes.
- vi) Public health, sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management.
- vii) Fire services.

- viii) Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects.
- ix) Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.
- x) Slum improvement and up gradation.
- xi) Urban poverty alleviation.
- xii) Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens and playgrounds.
- xiii) Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.
- xiv) Burial and burial grounds and electric crematoriums.
- xv) Cattle ponds, prevention of cruelty to animals.
- xvi) Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths.
- xvii) Public amenities, including street lighting, parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences.
- xviii) Regulation of slaughter houses and tanneries.

25.7 Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC)

The Metropolitan Planning Committee came into existence with the introduction of the 74th constitutional amendment which provides that in every metropolitan area, a Metropolitan Planning Committee should be constituted for preparing a draft development plan for the metropolitan area as a whole. It also laid down that in this sort of committee not less than two third of its members shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members of the municipalities of that particular area. While preparing the draft development plan the following factors will be taken into account

- i) The plans will be prepared by the municipalities and the panchayats in the metropolitan area.
- ii) Matters of common interest between the two.
- iii) Sharing of water and other physical and natural resources.
- iv) Integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation.

- v) Overall objectives and priorities set-up by the government of India and the state government.
- vi) Other available resources, financial and otherwise.

However, despite a rapid growth of urban local bodies after the attainment of independence general impression is that the urban local bodies in India have failed to come up to the people's expectations. The importance of urban local bodies is very crucial in our democratic set-up. Local urban bodies form a substantial step towards centralization of power and promotion of democratic values. The local bodies are the instruments of cultural and social change in India. They are more effective instruments of social change because they inculcate the civic sense and the neighbourhood consciousness among the urbanites. Despite there has been an imbalance between the peoples aspirations and needs on the one hand and the actual conduct of the municipal administration on the other hand. The shortage of finances added to the gravity of the problem. Non utilization of available resources properly also made things worse. Rapid urbanization and the emergence of developmental tasks necessitated high degree of administrative and technical skills. There is a great need for larger financial devolution to urban authorities. The system of municipal finance suffers from serious flaws. The system of accounting, as prescribed by the state government is not followed strictly, leading to embezzlement, leakages and under assessment. In various municipalities, audit objections remain pending for many years and in some municipalities audit is not even conducted on a regular basis.

Due to excessive control over the urban local bodies, their performance suffers. To ensure proper performance of their functions, the state government exercise legislative, administrative, financial and judicial control. These controls, instead of providing guidance and support, the control turns out to be negative, restricting the functioning of these bodies. Apart from the control another reason for the failure of the urban local bodies is due to the postponement of the elections of the local bodies like municipalities etc. The state government feel it safer and easier to deal with bureaucracy placed at the helm of the civic administration than with the popularly

elected councilors and corporators. The shifting of the large rural masses to the urban areas for jobs led to several problems such as the unplanned growth of towns and cities. In the absence of the proper planning, judicious use of land is not being made, colonies are set-up without proper facilities such as schools, parks and hospitals, the growth of slums is not checked, there is shortage of houses, traffic congestion is rampant and hardly any effective steps are taken to check urban poverty and unemployment.

Due to the lack of awareness in public, public participation in urban bodies has been negligible. The population of the cities consists of heterogeneous groups and they are alienated from one another. Most of the city population was once rural and even now, it looks at the city merely as a place to earn a livelihood, and has little attachment with it. While one understands the reason behind the low participation of the rural population in the management of their politico-administrative institutions, it is difficult to appreciate a similar, if not identical, phenomenon in the urban areas. The urban leadership also fails to inspire any confidence among the people and once elected they hardly visit their wards to learn about the gravity of the problems of their constituency.

25.8 Suggestions for Improvement in the Functioning of Local Administration

In the decision making process the people participation is a must. Although the local bodies are democratic but most of the essential decisions are done by the bureaucrats and other government officials. The representation of people is a very essential ingredient for the developmental programme to be successful. Side by side the local administration should have the coordination between the municipal government and other public agencies for the successful implementation of the developmental plans and policies. The local administration should also have the political support to obtain funds and access to other resources required for the execution of urban development plans and programmes. The organizational performance must be efficient in the location of the programmes, the timing of activities, the impact of programmes on individual target groups on which projects are to be focussed and the use of resources

and requiring more effective programming in individual cases. The organizational structure should also provide for continuity in administration and have the capacity to overcome major political difficulties associated with the change in the government at the national level affecting inter-governmental relationships. It should be adaptable to shift in priorities and the unforeseeable events in the process of urban development. There is a need for making provisions in the system for monitoring and evaluation of progress and consistent improvements in performance.

The existing urban local government and the development legislation is not only inadequate in the faces of the enormity of task of urban development but far more narrow than the ranges of the legislations considered adequate for the implementation of our urban policy. The current urban legislation is grouped around the land use patterns, development control building codes and by laws, property taxation, environmental control and industrial location legislations. The existing institutional and juridical structures relating to the application of the legislation, requires improvement in administrative procedures, particularly in respect of delays in reviews, development permission, buildings codes and by - laws, land acquisition, land tenure, industrial location, permission for guiding urban development. Since the crux of the urban growth is the change in demographic, social and economic structures, the task of urban local bodies in the field of urban development is to cope with the emerging problems more efficiently with suitable development strategies and minimum of institutional organizational changes in the distribution of assets, including level of education, health and related services. These are prerequisites to bring about changes in the level of income and consumption, where urban poverty is compounded by shortage and scarcity and also by high cost of basic necessities including services. So we can say that the prospects for an effective representative local government are yet to be seen despite the fact that political process and urban development administration are closely related and generally for most of the time dominated by state/or national political system.

25.9 Emergence of the Voluntary Organisation

The problems of urban local government are varied in nature. Some of the urban problems like housing problems, infrastructural facilities, problem of safe drinking water, unemployment, poverty, rise in crime rate, social isolation, old age problems and the neglect of aged population in a city, beggary, individualism and low social cohesion and cooperation between the individuals are glaring. To solve these problems the need of voluntary organization arises. For some years, the voluntary organizations have emerged as an important option for the popular activities, in spite of their limited reach and impact of their programmes. The role of voluntary organization should represent a form of social and economic investment towards achieving equity, social justice and the full democratization of the society. In the context of the above problems in urban areas the role of Non Government Organisations is very crucial.

The voluntary organisations can sensitive the local populace about the existing problems in their respective cities and towns. They can form associations and other smaller groups. Normally the NGOs can act as the sources of various information through various processes to each components of the society. The process of making the people aware and sensitive of their rights and duties is essential for the suitability and transparency of any planning process. The voluntary organisations can impart training to the people of the locality for the solution of various problems which can be solved with the active participation of the people of the concerned locality. Training should provide groups the power to negotiate and formulate plans for their own localities, along with a common knowledge of its effects at a larger level. They can assists in playing an advocacy and pioneering role in the planning and information, education and service delivery or a complementary and supplementary role in policy and programmes.

As our society is getting more and more democratized and the administration is more and more decentralized, the role of voluntary organisations is increasing day by day. To achieve the role of development in this scenario, the voluntary organisations are

expanding their activities, strategic access and use of media and communication as more effective, along with negotiations. The voluntary organisations take a proactive role in implementation of various programmes of urban problem. They advocate with the state and other voluntary organisations to ensure that the commitments are transformed into reality. As an immediate follow-up the strategic plans should be translated into local language and documents disseminated widely to policy-makers, government and other NGOs, the media and the public. It is also essential that the voluntary organisations document the institutional learnings for the use of the interested groups.

The voluntary organizations take part in the new initiatives in the field of the development and other progresses in the field of civil society. They play an important role in this regard. Their role does not end with the creation of awareness among the people and capacity building in them but is redefined in order to pass on institutional learning both inter-group and intra-group, thus becoming a core of learning for newer groups. They advocate for the rights of the marginalized groups of society like poor sections of the lower castes and the handicapped section of the urban areas. They act as the consultant for these groups and they fight for the right cause of these marginalized groups of urban areas. They also complement the lack of technical know how of this section of the society by providing necessary support and explaining the different processes involved if any. They spread the documents on experiences and institutional learning nationally and even globally for easy replication elsewhere. These documents can be used to identify and overcome the problems and also as a base for dealing with governments.

Reflection and Action 25.2

Visit a local NGO in your neighbourhood. Find out about its activities and participation of people in them. Write a note of two pages on the “Native and Activities of an NGO” Compare your note with other students at your study center.

It is very important to develop mechanisms for consultation, negotiation, multilateral accords and coordination among various agents involved, within an institutional framework that respect integral policies, plans and programmes. If these practices are to be legitimized, the validity and representation of the spokespersons of popular organisations must be recognized and their dynamics should be respected. Institutions must be adapted and public servants educated so that they have an open mind to recognise the importance of processes present within the popular neighborhoods of our cities. Citizens and their groups are the stake holders in the urban areas.

Voluntary organisations have emerged as a force in the process of urban development. There is a need to build their own capacities as well as government capacity to perform the roles well and ultimately to learn in the process. The NGO also need to evolve and strengthen the emerging new partnership to make the enabling role of the government in the human settlement sectors a reality in the coming years. Thus the urban locality should be planned in such a way which cares for the marginalised and the vulnerable with compassion and respect for the rights for all. The voluntary organisations thus emerged to promote and encourage the political participation of all the people in the city and conducting its affairs in a transparent and accountable manner. They also emerged due to the social need of the people in an urbanised society.

25.8 Conclusion

The scope of the urban local government is very wide which includes the phenomena of urbanisation itself, urban planning, municipal legislation, personnel management, finances of the urban local bodies and other agencies. The urban local government operates in towns and cities. The chief characteristics of the urban local governments are: that its jurisdiction is limited to the specific area and its functions relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population living in that local areas, it has the power to raise finances by taxation in the areas under its jurisdiction and they act under the general supervision of the particular state and central governments. The urban local governments act as a school to teach democracy to the citizens of the

locality. In other words we can say that the local urban bodies act as the custodians of our democratic culture and ethos. It provides facilities for minimum basic needs of the people. The importance of the urban local government has increased considerably after the independence with the introduction of the notion of the welfare state in our Constitution. Similarly, the Non-government Organisations or NGOs have also emerged to fulfil the needs of the citizens. Through adversary and training the NGOs spread awareness of various kinds in society, in general and urban areas in specific.

25.9 Further Reading

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