

Question:1

Why did the children go to Yasmin Khala's house?

Solution:

The children went to Yasmin Khala's house to find out whom they had to pay for the streetlight they had broken while playing cricket. Rehana's mother told them that the Municipal Corporation took care of replacing street lights, and that the best person they could ask would be Yasmin Khala as she had recently retired from the Municipal Corporation.

Question:2

List four ways in which the work of the Municipal Corporation affects the life of a city-dweller.

Solution:

The work done by the Municipal Corporation, which affects the life of a city-dweller.

- (i) Installing, maintaining and repairing street lights
- (ii) Ensuring proper collection and disposal of garbage
- (iii) Keeping the streets and the markets clean
- (iv) Ensuring that diseases do not break out in the city
- (v) Running schools, hospitals and dispensaries
- (vi) Laying, maintaining and repairing roads

Question:3

Who is a Municipal Councillor?

Solution:

A city is divided into different wards, and the people of each ward elect a Ward Councillor, who is also known as the Municipal Councillor of that ward. When the people of a ward have certain grievances, they go to their local Councillor for help. The Councillors are responsible for their wards, and have to ensure that the demands of their wards are placed before the entire council. When decisions regarding the city as a whole are to be taken, the Councillors of different wards come together to form committees. These committees debate and decide upon issues concerning the city; for example, issues regarding sanitation and health. The Municipal Councillors also come together to make periodic budgets, and money is spent according to these budgets.

Question:4

What did Gangabai do and why?

Solution:

According to Yasmin Khala, at one point, their neighbourhood used to have garbage lying all over. The situation had become so bad that children stopped playing cricket as their parents were afraid that they would get sick from staying on the streets too long. The women in the neighbourhood were understandably very unhappy about the situation. Gangabai suggested that they should go to their Ward Councillor and protest, as they were the ones who had elected him and he was answerable to them. A small group of women went to the Councillor's house and

shouted slogans. When he enquired the reason for their protest, Gangabai described the unhygienic situation of their locality. Hearing their grievance, the Councillor promised to go with them to the Municipal Commissioner, who was responsible for implementing the decisions of the Municipal Corporation. He also asked them to get a petition signed by all the adults in the locality saying that garbage was not being collected. The next morning they went to the Municipal Corporation's office, where the Municipal Commissioner began giving excuses at first. But he was soon silenced by Gangabai and others, and he had to give in to their demands. He promised to take care of the situation. In spite of this promise, Gangabai threatened that if the problem was not solved within two days, then she would get a larger group of women to protest before the Corporation office. In the end, after another larger and noisier demonstration, the sanitation service in their locality became more regular.

By doing what she did, Gangabai proved herself to be an active and alert citizen. The democratic structure of the Indian social order requires the people to not only take part in electing their representatives from time to time, but also be aware of the work being done or not done by their representatives. The elected representatives are accountable to the people who elect them, and the people have the right to hold them countable for any negligence on their part. Gangabai was right in suggesting that they should protest before their Ward Councillor as he was their elected representative, and he was entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of the problems faced by his ward.

Question:5

How does the Municipal Corporation earn the money to do its work?

Solution:

For its work, the Municipal Corporation gets its money from the different kinds of taxes paid by the people living in the city. People who own homes pay property tax as well as taxes for water and other services. There are also taxes for education and other amenities such as watching movies, eating at a hotel etc.

Question:6



Discuss.

In the two photographs you see different ways of collecting and disposing garbage.

- (i) Which way do you think provides safety to the person disposing garbage?
- (ii) What are the dangers of collecting garbage in the manner shown in the first photograph?
- (iii) Why do you think that proper ways of disposing garbage are not available to those who work in municipalities?

Solution:

(i) The way of collecting and disposing garbage shown in the second photograph provides safety to the persons disposing garbage.

(ii) The way of collecting and disposing garbage shown in the first photograph provides no safety to the persons disposing garbage. As a result, they become vulnerable to several diseases, which can be life threatening as well. Also, in such cases, diseases can spread from animals to humans.

(iii) Proper ways of disposing garbage are not available to those who work in municipalities. This could perhaps be because of the careless and negligent attitude of the municipal corporations towards the people responsible for collecting and disposing garbage.

Question:7

Several poor people in the city work as domestic servants as well as work for the Corporation, keeping the city clean. Yet the slums in which they live are quite filthy. This is because these slums seldom have any water and sanitation facilities. The reason often given by the Municipal Corporation is that the land in which the poor have set up their homes does not belong to them and that slum-dwellers do not pay taxes. However people living in middle class neighbourhoods pay very little in taxes compared to the amount of money the Corporation spends on them in setting up parks, street lighting facilities, regular garbage collection etc. Also as you read in this chapter, the property taxes collected by the Municipality make up only 25-30 per cent of its money. Why do you think it is important that the Corporation should spend more money on slum localities? Why is it important that the Municipal Corporation provide the poor in the city with the same facilities that the rich get?

Solution:

The people living on the streets live in extremely unhygienic and filthy conditions. The Municipal Corporation is responsible for the welfare of all the people living in the city—whether they live in posh localities or in slums. Slums are the breeding grounds of several diseases, and it is the municipal corporation's job to keep the city clean and healthy. The presence of unequal living conditions is a factor that can add to the list of crimes taking place in the city. The Constitution of India talks about providing "equality of status and opportunity" to everyone. It also talks about providing "social, economic and political justice" to each individual. Therefore, the problem of unequal living conditions has to be addressed. The Municipal Corporation should provide the poor in the city with the same facilities that the rich get. They should ensure that the poor do not experience any discrimination. The Municipal Corporation should spend more money on slum localities so as to provide the poor with the basic needs of proper food, clothing and shelter. It can collect this money by various methods; for example, by increasing the amount of property taxes and by making use of its unused lands and building for the proper settlement of the people living in the slums.