

## Chapter – 6: Urban Administration

- City – much larger than village – more spread out
- City – crowded markets, many vehicles, water and electricity facilities, traffic control, hospitals
- Who controls these larger cities? Let's discuss
- One lazy Sunday afternoon – Mala, Shankar, Jehangir, Rehana – playing cricket
- Shankar – bowled a good over – managed to get Rehana out – she was still batting – bowled a short ball – hoping she will give it for an easy catch – instead she hit harder – street light broke
- Rehana screamed worryingly – what has she done
- Shankar said – they forgot to make a rule – if you hit street light, you are out
- Other worried – what happened – told Shankar – stop worrying about the wicket
- Last week – they broke Nirmala Mausi's window – used pocket money for repairing
- Now they wondered – would they have to contribute again? Who will they pay? Whom does the street light belonged to?
- Rehana's house closest – ran there and told her mother everything
- Mother said – she has no idea about these things – BUT – what she knows is that Municipal Corporation takes care of street lights
- Mother advised to contact Yasmin Khala – recently retired from Municipal Corporation
- Children ran to her house – lived in the same lane – started telling altogether
- When asked about street light – Yasmin Khala said – there is no one person whom you can pay
- A big organization – Municipal Corporation – takes care of street light, garbage collection, water supply, etc.
- Mala said – she has heard about Municipal Corporation – put up signs – inform people about malaria
- Yasmin Khala said – Mala was right – Municipal Corporation – responsible – ensure – diseases do not spread in city – also runs schools, hospitals, dispensaries, make gardens and maintain them
- Then she said – their city Pune – big city – there is Municipal Corporation – smaller towns – Municipal Council

### The Ward Councilor and Administrative Staff

- Rehana asked – she was curious – where a park should go? – who decides this? Did Yasmin Khala take any such decisions?
- Yasmin Khala explained – she worked in the accounts department – cities – quite large – Municipal Corporation – makes a lot of decisions
- Decisions like – where to set up park or hospital – made by Ward Councilor
- City – divided into wards – ward councilors are elected
- Complicated decisions – affect entire city – taken by group of councilors – form committees – decide and debate issues
  - Example – bus stand needs to be improved, garbage needs to be cleared more regularly, 'nala' or drain need to be cleaned
- These committees – water, garbage collection, street lighting, etc – decide what to be done
- Problems – within a ward – people contact their councilor
  - Example – dangerous wire hanging – local councilor helps in informing concerning authority

- Councilor and committees make decision – Commissioner and administrative staff implement these decisions
- Rehana asked – how are those decisions made? – still on the same train of thought
- Yasmin Khala – enjoying questions by children – replied with joy – all the ward councilor meets – decide a budget – money spent accordingly
- Ward councilors – try to ensure – demands of their ward – placed before council – administrative staff – implements these decisions
- Shankar asked – since the city is so big, it might take lots of workers to look after
- Yasmin Khala explained – work in city – divided into multiple departments – water, garbage collection, look after gardens, roads, etc. – she worked in the accounts section of sanitation department
- Jehangir asked – where does the garbage collected by Municipal Corporation goes to?
- Yasmin Khala replied – it has an interesting answer – usually garbage lying around the street
- Earlier – neighborhood – garbage lying all around – smelled really bad – attracted all kinds of animals and pests – children stopped playing – parents afraid – children will get sick

## **A Community Protest**

- Yasmin Khala continued – women were unhappy – some even contacted her – she told them – she will ask some officer about this but cannot guarantee
- Gangabai suggested – they should contact Ward Councilor and protest – she gathered small group of women – started shouting slogans in front of his house
- He came out – asked their problem – assured them – he will talk to Commissioner along with them
- He asked Gangabai – prepare a petition (complaint) stating garbage was not collected – get it signed by all the adults
- He also suggested – taking local sanitation engineer – speak with Commissioner – tell him how bad the situation was
- That evening – children ran from house to house – making sure maximum people sign petition
- Next morning – lots of women – along with Ward Councilor and sanitation engineer – went to Municipal Corporation office
- Commissioner – met with them – gave excuses – saying Corporation does not have enough trucks
- Gangabai replied smartly – you seem to have enough trucks to collect garbage from rich localities
- Jehangir made a remark – he would have been lost for words
- Yasmin Khala continued – yes, he assured to solve it as soon as possible – Gangabai threatened – he has 2 days to clear up the garbage – if not done – larger group of women will protest
- Rehana asked curiously – did the streets get cleaned
- Yasmin Khala replied – not within 2 days – BUT – after a larger protest – sanitation service improved
- Mala replied – this sounds like a Bollywood film – she started imagining herself in the lead role of Gangabai
- Children enjoyed hearing the stories – thanked Yasmin Khala – now they knew the reason behind the love and respect Gangabai received in the locality
- Rehana asked before leaving – was the idea of 2 dustbins at home was also from Gangabai
- Khala laughed and replied – no, not really – it was Corporation's idea – helps keep the street clean – reduces their work

- Children – thanked Khala – walked back to their homes – street was much darker – they looked up – then looked at each other – smiled – and ran back to Khala’s house

### **How does Municipal Corporation get its money?**

- Providing so many services – require – lots of money
- Municipal Corporation – collects in different ways
- Tax – people pay to government for services
- People who own homes – property tax – also – tax for water and other services
- Property tax – 25-30 % of Municipal Corporation’s income
- Also – tax for education and other amenities
- Those who own shop or some business – pay tax for it as well
- Even movie tickets have some tax included
- Rich people – pay property tax – much wider population – pays general taxes