

## 1. Critically evaluate the implementation of 74th amendment act across states in India. What can Andhra Pradesh learn from other states?

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, sought to empower urban local bodies (ULBs) by ensuring democratic decentralization and providing a legal framework for urban governance. The Act's primary objective was to enable ULBs to take charge of urban affairs, improve service delivery, and ensure participatory democracy at the grassroots level.

### I. Achievements of the 74th Amendment Act:

#### 1. Empowerment of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs):

- **Constitutional Recognition:** The Act gave ULBs constitutional status, allowing them to function as autonomous bodies, providing them with legal backing for governance and administration.
- **Example:** In Kerala, ULBs have significant autonomy, and urban governance is effectively decentralized. Local bodies are actively involved in planning and development at the grassroots level.

#### 2. Direct Elections to Urban Local Bodies:

- **Democratic Decentralization:** The provision for direct elections to ULBs has encouraged democratic participation and increased political engagement at the local level.
- **Example:** In Maharashtra, regular elections have contributed to strong local leadership in cities like Mumbai and Pune, enhancing accountability in urban governance.

#### 3. Reservation of Seats for Marginalized Groups:

- **Inclusive Governance:** The Act mandates 33% reservation for women and ensures representation for SC/STs in ULBs, promoting social justice and participation of marginalized groups in local governance.
- **Example:** Kerala has seen a high level of women's participation in local governance due to this reservation, leading to more inclusive decision-making.

#### 4. Financial Devolution:

- **State Finance Commissions (SFCs):** The establishment of SFCs has helped ensure the devolution of finances to ULBs, providing a framework for distributing funds and resources from the state government.
- **Example:** Gujarat has implemented a well-functioning SFC, ensuring that local bodies in Ahmedabad and other cities receive adequate financial resources for urban development.

#### 5. Improvement in Local Service Delivery:

- ULBs have been able to manage services such as waste management, water supply, and public health more efficiently, as they are now directly accountable for these functions.
- **Example:** In Bengaluru, local bodies have improved waste segregation and sanitation services by being directly responsible for the delivery of these services

### II. Shortcomings in the Implementation of the 74th Amendment Act:

#### 1. Limited Devolution of Powers:

- While the Act mandates the transfer of several powers to ULBs, many states have been reluctant to fully transfer authority in key areas like urban planning, land-use regulation, and policing.
- **Example:** In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, many urban local bodies still lack control over essential urban functions like building regulations and land use. State governments retain significant power in these areas, undermining the autonomy of ULBs.

## 2. Inadequate Financial Resources:

- Many ULBs are still financially dependent on state governments, and their revenue-raising powers (such as property taxes) are weak or inefficiently implemented.
- Example: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh struggle with poor tax collection and lack of financial independence for ULBs, making it difficult for them to finance urban projects.

## 3. Weak Administrative Capacity:

- Many ULBs, especially in smaller cities, face challenges related to the administrative capacity to handle devolved functions. This includes lack of trained staff, inadequate infrastructure, and outdated technologies.
- Example: In West Bengal, ULBs face administrative bottlenecks in service delivery due to a lack of skilled personnel and poor implementation of technology-driven solutions.

## 4. Political Interference in ULBs:

- Political interference in urban local bodies has reduced their autonomy and efficiency. In many states, appointed bureaucrats have more control over ULBs than elected representatives.
- Example: In West Bengal, political interference in the functioning of Kolkata Municipal Corporation has hindered its performance, as elected representatives have limited authority in making key decisions.

## 5. Irregular Elections and Non-Functioning ULBs:

- Many states have not held regular elections to urban local bodies, resulting in dysfunctional ULBs and a lack of political accountability.
- Example: In Uttar Pradesh, elections to municipal bodies have been delayed, leading to administrative paralysis in many cities. In some cases, ULBs are administered by bureaucrats rather than elected representatives.

## 6. Fragmented Urban Planning:

- Urban planning often remains fragmented due to lack of coordination between state governments and ULBs, resulting in unplanned urban growth and inadequate infrastructure development.
- Example: In Delhi, urban planning has been a challenge due to poor coordination between the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the municipal corporations, leading to congestion and inadequate infrastructure in urban areas.

## III. What can Andhra Pradesh Learn from Other States?

### 1. Empowerment of Local Bodies:

- Andhra Pradesh can work towards devolving more powers to ULBs, especially in key urban governance functions like urban planning, land-use regulation, and policing, as seen in Kerala and Maharashtra.
- Learning: Ensuring greater political autonomy and empowering ULBs to make decisions will enhance their effectiveness.

### 2. Financial Empowerment:

- Andhra Pradesh can strengthen the role of the State Finance Commission to ensure timely and adequate financial devolution to ULBs, as practiced in Gujarat.
- Learning: Encouraging property tax collection and introducing innovative revenue sources will help ULBs become more financially self-sufficient.

### 3. Training and Capacity Building:

- The state can invest in capacity building and skill development for municipal staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle urban governance challenges, as seen in Gujarat and Kerala.
- Learning: Providing training programs and technology tools can help improve service delivery and urban management.

### 4. Citizen Participation and Transparency:

- Andhra Pradesh can strengthen mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance, such as ward committees, to ensure that the needs of urban residents are met effectively, as practiced in Kerala.

- **Learning:** Community-driven planning will foster greater public trust in local bodies and improve the responsiveness of urban governance.

## 5. Timely Elections and Political Autonomy:

- Ensuring regular elections to ULBs and reducing political interference will help create more accountable and effective local governance in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Learning:** As seen in Maharashtra, frequent elections to ULBs lead to stronger political accountability and better service delivery.

## 6. Integrated Urban Planning:

- Andhra Pradesh should focus on integrated urban planning to address challenges like traffic congestion, waste management, and public transport. This requires better coordination between state agencies and local bodies, as seen in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- **Learning:** Unified urban plans will ensure cohesive development and mitigate urban chaos.

The 74th Amendment Act has empowered urban local bodies (ULBs) and contributed to more decentralized urban governance. However, the implementation has been uneven across states, with some states making significant progress while others face challenges such as limited devolution of powers, financial constraints, and weak administrative capacity. Andhra Pradesh can learn from the successes of states like Kerala, Maharashtra, and Gujarat by empowering ULBs, ensuring financial devolution, investing in capacity.

## 2. How does urban local governance contribute to the implementation of Smart City projects in Andhra Pradesh?

Urban local governance is crucial for the implementation of Smart City projects as it ensures proper planning, coordination, and execution at the local level. Smart City projects aim to modernize urban infrastructure, enhance quality of life, and make cities more sustainable through technology and innovation.

### Role of Urban Local Governance in Smart City Projects

#### 1. Leadership and Coordination:

- ULBs provide leadership and ensure proper coordination among various stakeholders, including state government, private sector, and citizens.
- **Example (Visakhapatnam):** The Visakhapatnam Smart City Corporation Limited (VSCCL) is responsible for the coordination of various initiatives such as smart parking systems and intelligent traffic management. This corporation ensures alignment between different departments and stakeholders for successful project implementation.

#### 2. Urban Planning and Policy Making:

- ULBs are responsible for formulating urban planning policies and strategies that align with the Smart City Mission goals. They regulate land use, zoning, and infrastructure development.
- **Example (Amaravati):** The Amaravati Development Corporation (ADC) has developed comprehensive plans for sustainable urban development, including green buildings, eco-friendly transport systems, and public amenities, all guided by the local governance structures to ensure holistic planning.

#### 3. Infrastructure Development:

- ULBs play a key role in developing critical urban infrastructure like smart roads, green spaces, public transport systems, and renewable energy systems.
- **Example (Vijayawada):** The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation has initiated the smart road project on NTR Circle, which includes the installation of smart street lighting, solar power panels, and electric vehicle charging stations, making the city more sustainable and energy-efficient.

#### 4. Citizen Engagement and Participation:

- Smart City projects require active citizen participation. ULBs engage citizens through feedback mechanisms, public consultations, and digital platforms to ensure the projects meet their needs.

- Example (Kakinada): In Kakinada, the municipal body uses a citizen feedback app to collect suggestions on improving urban services such as waste management, water supply, and street cleanliness. Citizens can also use the app to report issues in real-time, ensuring better responsiveness.

## 5. Resource Mobilization and Financial Management:

- ULBs are responsible for managing finances for Smart City projects by leveraging state and central government funds, private investments, and public-private partnerships (PPP).
- Example (Tirupati): The Tirupati Municipal Corporation has successfully mobilized funds through PPP initiatives for the construction of smart sewage treatment plants and solar-powered water pumping stations, ensuring both financial sustainability and environmental benefits.

## 6. Technological Integration:

- ULBs are responsible for incorporating ICT-based solutions like smart grids, e-governance systems, and intelligent traffic management into urban infrastructure.
- Example (Visakhapatnam): The smart city project in Visakhapatnam has integrated IoT (Internet of Things) technologies for water distribution management. The system helps in monitoring water consumption, detecting leaks, and improving water supply efficiency across the city.

## 7. Sustainability and Environmental Management:

- ULBs are key in integrating sustainable practices like renewable energy, green infrastructure, and eco-friendly waste management into urban projects.
- Example (Amaravati): Amaravati has adopted solar-powered streetlights, rainwater harvesting systems, and waste-to-energy projects to ensure that the city remains environmentally sustainable while meeting the needs of a growing urban population.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- ULBs monitor the progress and impact of Smart City projects, ensuring that projects meet timelines, quality standards, and citizen expectations.
- Example (Visakhapatnam): The smart surveillance system in Visakhapatnam is continuously monitored to ensure public safety. The local authorities use real-time data analytics to track incidents, assess the effectiveness of the system, and improve security across the city.

Urban local governance plays an indispensable role in the implementation of Smart City projects in Andhra Pradesh. By focusing on coordination, citizen engagement, resource mobilization, and technology integration, ULBs can significantly improve urban life. The state's urban governance can draw inspiration from cities like Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada, which have effectively implemented Smart City projects through public-private partnerships and innovative solutions and are working towards Smart Cities Mission.