



WORKING OF ANANTHAPURAMU MUNICIPAL CORPORATION: A BRIEF STUDY

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ABSTRACT Local bodies are segregated into wards for the sake of electing, councilors to represent them in the municipal bodies according to the Municipal Act. Formed by the Government, every urban local body with a population of 40,000 or less will have a membership of 21 in the municipal council, all of whom are elected by the people of their respective wards. The provision has been made for increasing the membership of the municipal council with every increase in population. As per the changes brought about in the Municipal Act of A.P., the strength of a municipal council is marginally changed based upon strength of the councils, excluding the ex-officio and co-opted members MLAs / MPs representing the constituencies of which municipality or a portion thereof form part shall be ex-officio members of municipalities with voting rights. 31 Rajya Sabha members registered as electors within the municipality shall be ex-officio members with voting rights.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Ananthapuramu came first under the India Act XXVI of 1850, the first of the mufassal municipal enactments which permitted towns voluntarily to tax themselves for their own improvement. The Government contributed a sum equal to that raised by the inhabitants for this purpose and the amount raised in the town reached a modest sum of only Rs. 40 per mensem. The Act was introduced in the town in 1864 and continued to be in force for four years until 1869 when it was replaced by the Towns Improvement Act X of 1865. Later it came under the Towns Improvement Act III of 1871 which repealed the previous enactment. Its area was 9 square miles and its population was 4,907. During the period 1865-71, its income was derived from tolls, taxes on vehicles and animals, house tax, fees for plying dangerous and offensive trades, magisterial fines, endowments and contributions from Government. It looked after the maintenance of sanitation and ran an elementary school in the town. In 1872, it took over the management of the local hospital. Though the Act of 1884 provided for an elected Chairman, the Ananthapuramu Municipality came to have its first elected Chairman only in 1888, but its Councillors were all nominated by Government. Between 1894 and 1903 the Municipality had again a nominated Chairman as the privilege of electing a Chairman was withdrawn owing to the failure of the Council to elect one at three consecutive meetings. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, the Council levied under the Act of 1884 a tax on buildings based on the rental value of lands, a tax on arts and a tax on carts. The income of the Municipality in 1899-1900 was Rs. 18,820 and its expenditure Rs. 16,271. A substantial portion of this expenditure was on Education and Public Health.

Till 1920, the sanctioned strength of the Municipality remained at 12, of which 4 were elected. In 1907, the first step towards providing protected water supply to the town was taken up, but it was only in 1924 that the scheme was completed. In 1908, the municipality set apart a site for extending the town and provided it with roads and wells. In 1916, it placed the high school building, constructed by it in 1915, at the disposal of the newly opened Ceded Districts College, and provided a scavengers' settlement with the help of a grant of Rs. 8,900 received from Government. In 1918 the majority of the Councillors, 8 out of 12, came to be elected, the rest being nominated. Towards the beginning of 1920-21 the Council maintained a market, a high school, and 7 elementary schools and made provision for lighting, sanitation and public and private conservancy.

The introduction of the Act of 1920 accentuated factions in the Council. Government consequently retained in office the Chairman elected under the old Act for some time and this led to the neglect of civic affairs. A Vice-Chairman was elected in 1922 for the first time. In the same year the Councillors failed to take the oath of allegiance to the Crown and the municipality was superseded for about three months. At

'the commencement of the nineteen-thirties the official element among the Councillors was withdrawn. In 1935, a Commissioner was appointed to the Municipality. In 1938, it started its own electrical undertaking to supply power to the town. In 1939, for the first time in the annals of the municipality a no-confidence motion was passed against the Chairman and he was removed. In 1944, the Council was superseded for a period of one year. At the commencement of 1950, the Council maintained 9 elementary schools, 2 secondary schools, 3 markets, 5 cart stands and a slaughter house.

In 1950, the municipality was classed as second grade and a post of an Engineer was also sanctioned.

The privilege of electing a chairman was withdrawn again in 1922 and it was only in 1927 that it was restored.

The undertaking was handed-over to Government in 1949.

Elections were conducted in 1952 with the help of electoral rolls prepared on the basis of adult franchise.

At the close of March, 1965, the area of Ananthapuramu Municipality was 7.25 square miles and it covered the revenue villages of Ananthapuramu and portions of Kakkalipalli and Papampalli revenue villages. The elected Council of the municipality functioned till October, 1964.

Pending the reconstitution of the Council in accordance with Andhra Pradesh District Municipalities Act, 1964, the Council elected earlier was dissolved in October, 1964 and the municipality was placed under the management of the Secretary who is now the Executive Officer. Till then it maintained roads of the length of 31 miles, 5 furlongs and 51 yards of which about 16 miles are metalled, 6 miles unmetalled, 3 miles cement concreted and 5 miles bitumen surfaced; a second class traveler's bungalow, a choultry, 27 elementary schools and four secondary schools (of the latter one higher secondary school for boys, one boys' high school, two girls' high schools); two free public reading rooms and two maternity and child welfare centres. 15 market stalls, 3 rooms and a canteen which are leased out, a bus-stand, a daily and a weekly market, 4 cart-stands and 2 slaughter houses constitute the important remunerative enterprises of the municipality. It levies property tax at 12 per cent per half year on the annual rental value of buildings; a tax of 0.60 P. per Rs. 100 of capital value of vacant sites per half year; a land tax of 814 per cent; library cess at 0.04 paise per every completed rupee of property tax excluding the education tax, surcharge on house tax; profession tax; animal and vehicle tax; and licence fees for plying dangerous and offensive trades. The receipts of the municipality in 1964-65 were Rs. 18,11,444 and the expenditure Rs. 15,30,255.

1986 ANDHRA PRADESH MUNICIPALITIES LAW (AMENDMENT BILL)

The then prevailing municipal laws were amended. According to the amendment, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Municipal chairman were to be directly elected in contrary to early practice when they were elected indirectly by the councillors and corporators. The government imposed restrictions on the Mayor and Municipal Chairman. If they transgressed or misused their powers, they could be terminated from their office. It could also dissolve the corporations or the standing committee if it found fault with them with regard to their functions, use of powers etc.

The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 years. In municipal bodies, nearly 50% of seats were reserved. Reservations were provided for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Back ward classes and women candidates.

Further Photo identity system was introduced in the election for the first time in India.

ANDHRA PRADESH MUNICIPAL LAWS AMENDMENT 1994

The Municipal laws were once again amendment in 1994 in the wake of the 74th constitutional amendment which brought far reaching changes in the urban local government. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) passed by the parliament envisaged that in conformity with it, legislation in the states should be enacted before 31st May, 1994 to give effect to the constitutional amendment from 1st June, 1994.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh constituted a task force consisting of a senior officer dealing with subject relating to local self - government, urban planning etc, for studying the various Provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act. The task force submitted its report in a very short time. As it did not cover all aspects of the 74th amendment, the government constituted two working groups in October 1993 to make specific recommendations on the amendments to be brought about. These two working groups were expected to submit reports within 20 days. As there was pressure from the Central Government to pass the conformity legislation before 31st May, 1994, the Government of A.P. introduced the bill on the 27th Dec 1993 to amend the Municipalities and Corporations Act. The bill was referred to a select committee. It submitted its reports to the legislators in the last week of March 1994. Based on the report of the select committee, the A.P. Municipalities and corporations Act was amended. The amended act received the assent of the government on 30th April 1994. The Andhra Pradesh Municipal laws (Amendment) Act, 1994 (Act No. 7th of 1994) came into effect from 1-6-1994.

Table 1
Caste Wise and Gender Wise Corporators Elected to Ananthapuramu Municipal Corporation in 2014 Ordinary Elections

S. No	Social Category	No. of Seats
1	BC	9
2	BC (Women)	8
3	SC	1
4	SC (Women)	1
5	ST	1
6	UR	13
7	UR (Women)	17
	Total	50

Source: State Election Commission, Andhra Pradesh, 4th Ordinary Elections to Municipal Bodies, 2014, Detailed Election Results of Municipal Bodies in Andhra Pradesh State.

It is evident from table 1 that the women outnumbering the men in 2014 ordinary elections held to Ananthapuramu Municipal Corporation. Around 52 per cent of Corporators elected in 2014 elections were women. Among the 2 Scheduled Caste reserved seats 1 each is reserved to men and women. Only 1 seat reserved to Scheduled Tribe. As such there is no reserved seat for women. In unreserved category 17 out of 30 constituting 56.66 per cent of seats were reserved for women. But with regard to Backward Class category the men outnumbering the women.

Table 2 Party Wise Corporators Elected to Ananthapuramu Municipal Corporation in 2014 Ordinary Elections

S. No	Party	Seats Won
1	CPI	2
2	CPM	1
3	IND	4
4	TDP	32
5	YSRCP	11
		50

Source: State Election Commission, Andhra Pradesh, 4th Ordinary Elections to Municipal Bodies, 2014, Detailed Election Results of Municipal Bodies in Andhra Pradesh State.

Table 2 reveals that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) bagged as many as 64 per cent of total seats in the Ananthapuramu Municipal Corporation. The other main contending party namely Yuvajana Sramika Rhythu Congress Party (YSRCP) managed to win only 22 per cent of seats. Independent candidates emerged victorious in 4 seats. The Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of Marxist (CPM) managed to win in 2 seats No 1 seat respectively.

CONCLUSION

The newly elected chairpersons of Municipalities and Corporations represented their grievances, related to the deprivation of powers which they enjoyed earlier and urged the government to restore the powers in the light of their direct election. Their contention is that the chairpersons under the direct election represent a constituency larger than that of an MLA. In this regard the withdrawal of the power of chairpersons is considered a retrograde step

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