



Working Paper Series

Functions of the Deputy Mayor, Corporation of Cochin

Vishnu Sreedharan

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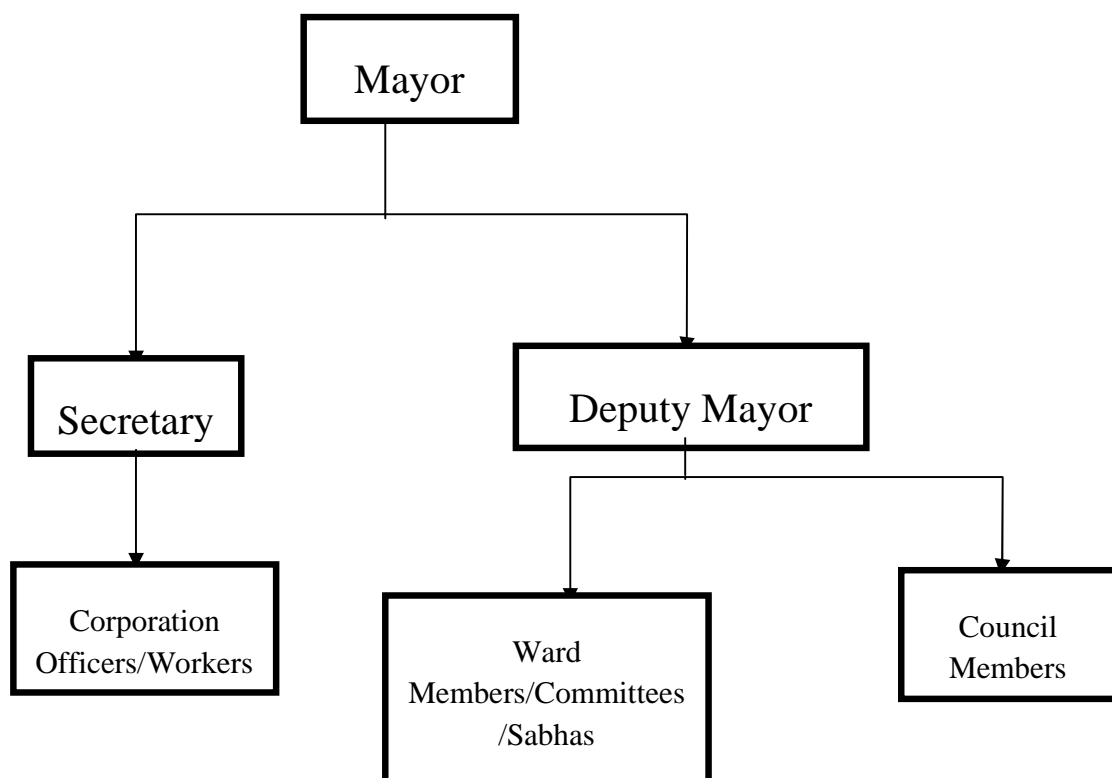
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For more information, please contact Centre for Public Policy Research, Door No 28/3656, Sonoro Church Road, Elamkulam, Kochi, Kerala, 682 020 India. Telephone: +91 484 6469177, Fax +91 0484 2323895, E-mail: project@cprr.in. Or visit the CPRR website at <http://www.cprr.in/>

1. Introduction

The Deputy Mayor is an official post indirectly elected from among the councillors for a term of five years. As the name suggests, the Deputy Mayor is the second in command to the Mayor and his/her main functions include substituting for the Mayor whenever he/she is absent from jurisdiction for more than 15 days, or if the office of the Mayor is vacant. The Deputy Mayor, due to his/her official position, is an ex-officio member and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Finance and a member of the Steering Committee.



2. Functions of the Deputy Mayor as a Substitute for the Mayor

- The primary functions of the Deputy Mayor include acting as a substitute in place of the Mayor, whenever his/her office is vacant (i.e. if the position of the Mayor is empty), if he/she is absent from office for more than 15 days, or is incapacitated due to reasons that may include diseases or other personal reasons. In such situations, the responsibilities that are given to the Deputy Mayor include functions of the Mayor like convening the meeting of the council once every month, exercising powers and discharging duties specifically conferred on the Mayor by the Municipality Act, and supervising the working of the Corporation, the Secretary and the Standing Committees.
- The Mayor, under the Municipal Corporation Act, has the power to delegate some of his/her functions to the Deputy Mayor, unless it is one of the functions prohibited from being delegated by the Council.

3. Functions of the Deputy Mayor as Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Finance

- The Deputy Mayor is an ex-officio member and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Finance and thus should fulfill his/her role. He/she, shall, as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, preside over the meetings of the Financial Committee, control the meeting and decide on the points of order and procedure arising at or in connection with the meeting, have all the powers and complete all the functions of the Committee, as assigned by the Corporation or as mentioned in the Municipal Act.
- As the Chairperson of the Committee, the Deputy Mayor has to oversee the following functions:
 - Supervision of the utilisation of budget grants and timely assessment and collection of taxes, fees, rents and other sums due to the Municipal Corporation
 - Frequent inspection of the accounts of the Municipal Corporation
 - Careful watch of the releases of grants from the Government and its proper utilisation
 - Conduct of monthly audit of the accounts and monthly checking of demand, collection and balance and abstracts of receipts and expenditures of the preceding month, as furnished by the Secretary

- Writing off of sums due to the Council, which the Committee thinks of as irrecoverable, under the rules prescribed
- Thorough examining of the annual accounts, demands, collection and balance
- Preparation and presentation of the budget estimate before the Council under Section 286 of the Act. The Standing Committee concerned of a particular function, process or act, while keeping in view the estimates and proposals put forward by the Secretary and the Officials dealing with the respective subjects concerned, submit their proposals to the Standing Committee of Finance and after considering those proposals and all the requirements given in the Municipal Act, the Standing Committee for Finance prepares the budget estimate of the receipts and expenditure of the Corporation for the next year.

The budget estimation should include the payment of installments of loans that the Municipal Corporation has taken from the Government, banks and other sources and still allow for a cash balance of up to 5 per cent of the total revenue of the Corporation. If the Standing Committee of Finance fails to submit a budget estimate before the Council within the stipulated time, the Mayor shall cause the proposals put prepared by the Secretary to be laid before the Council and the Council shall pass it as the budget estimate proposed by the Secretary, with or without modification before the beginning of the ensuing year.

- Verification of the amount proposed to be spend for an act by the Municipal Corporation; to check if it is within the budget provisions approved by the Council and whether there are sufficient funds for the same
- Inquiries into allegations made against employees of the Municipal Corporation, if the Council directs so, and bringing out the result of the inquiry to the notice of the Council

4. Functions of the Deputy Mayor as Member of the Steering Committee

- The Deputy Mayor acts as a member of the Steering Committee, the main function of which are to coordinate and monitor the functioning of the Standing Committees and also to discharge the powers and functions entrusted to it by the Council. The Steering Committee comprises of the Mayor (as the Chairperson), the Deputy Mayor, and Chairpersons of various Standing Committees.

5. Functions of the Deputy Mayor as a Councillor

- The Deputy Mayor also has duties and functions of a Councillor. As a Councillor of the Corporation, it is his/her right,
 - To call for the attention of the Chairperson or the Secretary of the Corporation to any neglect in the execution of work on part of the Corporation, to any waste of Corporation Property, to the needs of the people of any locality in the Corporation area, to inspect the works or schemes conducted by the Corporation, and suggest improvements that he/she thinks is necessary
 - To move a resolution and to question the Chairperson on matters concerned with the administration of a Corporation subject, according to the regulations set down by the Council
 - To have access to the records of the Corporation during office hours on due notice to the Secretary, unless the Commissioner, with permission from the Mayor, shall restrict such access, under written reasons to the Mayor

6. The Ward Sabha/Committee

- The Councilor who represents a Ward Sabha shall be the Convener of that Ward Sabha. A Ward Sabha is formed in a ward with population below 1,00,000
- The Convener of the Ward Sabha shall convene a meeting within 15 days of the request made in writing by the electors of the Ward and with not less than 10 per cent of the total electors present to discuss the issue raised in the request

- The Convener shall place before the Ward Sabha a report on development programmes relating to the ward of the previous year and that are proposed to be undertaken during the current year; the expenditure involved, and a statement of the annual accounts and the administration report of the previous year
- The procedure for convening and conducting a meeting of the Ward Sabha is as follows:
 - The Ward Sabha may constitute sub committees consisting of not less than 10 members to assist the implementation of any scheme, policy or decision of the Ward Sabha, generally or specially and in according with the rights and responsibilities of the Ward Sabha
 - Resolutions may be passed on the basis of a majority in the meetings of the Ward Sabha for issues within its jurisdiction. However, as far as possible, efforts should be taken to ensure that decisions are taken on the basis of consensus
- A Ward Committee is formed where the population of the Ward is above 1,00,000 or by combining more than one Sabha. The Councillor of that ward is the Chairperson of the Ward Committee. The Councillor shall convene a meeting of the Ward Committee once every three months and preside over it.

7. Councillor's Functions as the Convener or Chairperson of the Ward Sabha/Committee

- Assist in the collection and consolidation of details necessary for the formulation of developmental schemes for the municipality
- Formulation of proposals on developmental schemes to be implemented in the municipal area, determining the priority of the scheme and making available the information regarding the functioning of schemes for the next three months
- Preparation of the final list of beneficiaries in order of priority by finding eligible applicants from the applications from the Ward area, based on criterion prescribed in respect of the beneficiary-oriented schemes and to submit the same to the municipality
- Rendering of necessary assistance for the effective implementation of developmental schemes by providing necessary local facilities
- Seeking out and obtaining detailed information regarding developmental programmes being implemented in the Ward and observing if the same was taking place in accordance with the set directions
- Providing and mobilisation of voluntary services and assistances in cash or kind for social welfare programmes

- Preparation of an order of priority as to the location of street lights, water taps, etc., and of Public Sanitation Units in the street or other public places, irrigation facilities and other public utility schemes
- Promotion of harmony and unity among people belonging to different sections in the Ward, and the organisation of arts and sports festivals to promote goodwill among the people of that area
- Observation and assistance of beneficiary committees that conduct developmental programmes in the Ward
- Verification of the eligibility of a person getting various kinds of welfare assistance from the government (such as pension and subsidiary)
- Spreading awareness among the people for the prompt payment of taxes, fees, rents, and other sums due to the municipality;
- Cooperation with the employees of the Ward in providing sanitation arrangements and rendering voluntary service in the removal of garbage
- Encouragement of residents of the Ward to have kitchen gardens and engage in horticultural activities
- Identification of deficiencies in water supplies, street lightning, etc. and suggestion of remedial measures
- Identification of the lacunae and lapses in following building rules and in implementing spatial planning
- Assistance in activities of parent-teacher associations in the schools
- Assistance in the functions of public health centres
- Performing of other functions, as may be prescribed by the Ward Committee or by the Municipal Act

8. Conclusion

The Deputy Mayor's post does not confer any particular power, other than making them the ex-officio member of the Standing Committee of Finance. The only function the official position offers is as a substitute of the Mayor in his/her absence and to assist him/her in duties.

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