
Chapter – 09 Civics

Public Facilities

- **Water and the People of Chennai:**

- (i) Mr Ramgopal lives in Anna Nagar, Chennai. This area looks lush and green with lawns maintained by a generous spraying of water.
- (ii) Likewise, in an apartment where Mr Subramaniam lives water supply is inadequate. They have to spend Rs 500-600 per month to buy water.
- (iii) Water as a public utility is available in different quantities to different people.

- **Water as Part of the Fundamental Rights to Life:**

- (i) Water is essential for life and for good health.
- (ii) India has one of the largest number of causes of water related diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera.
- (iii) The Constitution of India recognizes the right to water as being a part of the Right to Life under Article 21.
- (iv) The High Courts and Supreme Court have held that the right to safe drinking water is a Fundamental Right.

- **Public Facilities:**

- (i) Things like electricity, public transport, schools and colleges, etc. are known as public facilities.
- (ii) Public facilities are provided so that their benefits can be shared by many people.

- **The Government's Role:**

- (i) One of the most important functions of the government is to ensure that these public facilities are made available to everyone.
 - (ii) Private companies operate for profit in the market. Public facilities relate to people's basic needs.
 - (iii) The main source of revenue for the government is the taxes collected from the people and the government is empowered to collect these taxes and use them for such programmes.
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(iv) For instance, to supply water, the government has to incur costs in pumping water, carrying it over long distances, laying down pipes for its distribution, treating the water for impurities and finally collecting and treating waste water.

(v) It meets these expenses partly from the various taxes that it collects and partly by charging a price for water. This price for water. This price is set so that most people can afford a certain minimum amount of water for daily use.

- **Water supply to Chennai: is it Available to All:**

(i) Water supply in Chennai is marked by shortage. Municipal supply meets only about half the needs of the people of the city, on an average.

(ii) The burden of shortfalls in water supply falls mostly on the poor.

(iii) In search of Alternatives.

(iv) The Scenario of shortage and acute crisis during the summer months is common to other cities of India.

(v) A shortage of municipal water is often taken as a sign of failure of the government.

(vi) Throughout the world, water supply is the responsibility of the government. There are very few instances of private water supply.

(vii) There are areas in the world where public water supply.

- **Conclusion:**

(i) Public facilities relate to our basic needs and the Indian Constitution has recognized the right to water, health, education, etc. as being a part of the Right to Life.

(ii) The major role of the government is to ensure adequate public facilities for everyone.
