

Public Facilities | Easy and detailed Notes for class 8th | Civics

Description

Introduction:-

People need basic facilities to have a livable life. When everyone gets access to essential services, they become *public facilities*. But do you know who provides these 'public facilities', such as water, electricity, roads, etc.? In this chapter, we will learn about the authorities who take care of public facilities and how far they have reached in achieving the goal of providing these facilities to the public properly.

Public Facilities:

Public facilities are essential services that the government **provides** to improve people's lives.

- These include **supplying** clean water, **building** roads, **maintaining** electricity, **running** schools, and **operating** hospitals.
- They ensure everyone gets basic necessities, either for free or at a low cost.

Government's Role in Public Facilities:-

- The Government works through various departments to provide facilities.
 - **For Example:-** *Electricity board* provides electricity.
 - *Public Works Department (PWD)* maintains main roads and government buildings.
 - *Education Department* runs government schools.
 - *Health Department* operates government hospitals and clinics.
- The government uses the money it collects through taxes and provides facilities to people.

However, the sad thing is that not all people get adequate and affordable facilities equally.

Water and the People of Chennai:-

Water is a basic need, but **not everyone gets it equally**. Some people have plenty, while others struggle daily. Let's see examples of how different people in Chennai get water.

- In **Anna Nagar:-** **Mr. Ramagopal** lives in a bungalow with *regular tap water*.
 - Whenever there is a supply cut, he calls an official and easily arranges a water tanker.
- **Mylapore:-** **Subramanian** gets *municipal water once in two days*.
 - He uses a private borewell, but the water is salty.

- So, for drinking, he buys water from tankers, spending ₹500-600 per month.
- **Madipakkam:- Siva** faces *severe shortage*, gets *water once in four days*.
 - He buys bottled water but cannot bring his family to Chennai due to the water crisis.
- **Saidapet Slum:- Padma** lives in a hut without a tap.
 - 30 families share one tap, which gives water for just *20 minutes twice a day*.
 - In summer, some families don't get water at all.

Water Supply to Chennai: Is it Available to All?

- Municipal water supply meets only half of the city's needs. Some areas get more water than others.
- Areas near storage points receive more water, while distant colonies get less.
 - The poor suffer the most as they cannot afford alternatives.
 - However, the middle class and wealthy use borewells, tankers, and bottled water to manage shortages.

Why is Water Unequally Available ?

1. **Financial Status:-** The wealthy can afford water, while the poor face difficulties.
2. **Privilege and Influence:-** Some people can access water easily through official contacts.
 - *For example:-* Mr. Ramagopal's case
3. **Water Supply Issues:-** Municipal water is limited and irregular.
4. **Scarcity and Unequal Distribution:-** There may be enough water overall, but it is not distributed fairly.
 - *For Example:-* Some areas (like Anna Nagar) get more, while others (like the slums) get very little.

Thus, this basic facility is not equally available to everyone due to differences in income, location, and connections.

Farmers and Water Dealers:-

- Farmers in Chennai sell water to private dealers. This reduces local water availability.
- Also, villages near the city face water shortages as groundwater levels drop.
- This affects both farming and drinking water supplies.
- However, the government can step in to regulate water use and protect local needs.

Water as a Part of the Fundamental Right to Life:-

- Clean water is necessary for drinking, cooking, and preventing diseases.
- Many diseases like diarrhoea and cholera spread due to unsafe water.
 - Over 1,600 Indians, mostly children, die daily from water-related diseases.
- The **Indian Constitution** includes water as part of the **Right to Life (Article 21)**.
 - Everyone should get enough water at an affordable price.
- Courts have confirmed that safe drinking water is a **Fundamental Right**

- *For Example:-* In 2007, the **Andhra Pradesh High Court** ordered clean water supply when a village's water was contaminated by a textile company.

Did you know that individuals owning businesses also provide the above-mentioned facilities? Let's understand the differences.

Public Facilities Vs Private Facilities:-

Public Facilities

1. Government provides facilities for everyone.
2. Everyone can access them at low or no cost.
3. Government ensures basic needs like water, electricity, and sanitation.
4. Their service can be slow due to lack of funds or management issues.
5. Public services aim to reach all, including rural areas, despite limited resources.

Private Facilities

1. Private companies run services for profit.
2. Only those who can pay get the services.
3. Companies aim to earn money by selling services.
4. They are more efficient but profit driven.
5. Private hospitals and schools thrive in cities due to affordability, demand, and better infrastructure.

In search of Alternatives:-

Scenario of shortages and acute crisis:-

- Many Indian cities face severe water shortages, especially in summer.
- Municipal supply fails to meet demand, forcing reliance on private water sources.
- Water use is highly unequal—
 - slum dwellers get less than 20 litres per day,
 - while luxury hotels consume up to 1,600 litres per person.
- Private companies often raise prices, making water unaffordable for many.

Alternatives for such issues:-

- Alternatives include improving government water management, rainwater harvesting, and better revenue collection.
 - **For Example:-** Cities like Mumbai and Hyderabad have increased coverage and improved financial efficiency.
 - Additionally, Chennai regulates private tankers to keep prices in check.
- Thus, strengthening public water systems is the best long-term solution.

The chapter is now complete! I hope each concept was easy for you to understand and you feel confident about the material. Feel free to share your feedback and comments on the notes posted. Your thoughts are always welcome!

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