Local Governance in Tamil Nadu – Panchayat Acts 1950/1958/1994, 73rd & 74th Amendments, Grama Sabha, 50% Women Quota & Urban Local Bodies | TNPSC Notes

TNPSC Notes · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/tnpsc-notes/tn-local-governance/en

Local governance in Tamil Nadu means the elected **rural local bodies** (Village Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats) and **urban local bodies** (Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and Town Panchayats) that run civic services and local development. The State has a long tradition of village self-rule – the Chola-period **Uthiramerur inscriptions** describe the **kudavolai** (pot-ticket) method of choosing village committees. The modern system was built by the **Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950** and the **Madras Panchayats Act, 1958**, and was reshaped after the **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** by the **Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994**. Tamil Nadu now holds **six Grama Sabha meetings a year**, reserves **50% of local body seats for women** (2016) and governs all urban bodies under the revived **Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998** (in force from 13 April 2023).

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants and are meant to be complete on their own. Local government is a core topic in **Indian Polity** (Panchayati Raj, 73rd and 74th Amendments, State Election Commission, State Finance Commission). The Tamil Nadu Acts, Grama Sabha, women's reservation and the latest numbers of local bodies come under **Indian Economy and Development Administration in Tamil Nadu**, and new corporations, local body elections and Special Officers keep appearing in **Current Events**. Every number below is given with its source and year, because the numbers change when local bodies are reorganised. Read each section, then use the tables, the quick revision table and the key points at the end.

Local Governance in Tamil Nadu at a Glance

Item	Figure	Source and year
Village Panchayats	12,571 (covering 78,997 habitations)	RDPR Policy Note 2026-27
Panchayat Unions (co-terminous with blocks)	397	RDPR Policy Note 2026-27
District Panchayats	37	RDPR Policy Note 2026-27
Earlier widely quoted rural figures	12,525 Village Panchayats; 388 Panchayat Unions; 36 District Panchayats	TNRD website; Statistical Hand Book of Tamil Nadu 2022-23 (12,525 and 388)
Municipal Corporations	25 (including Greater Chennai)	Municipal Administration Department website (24 + Chennai); DT Next, August 2024
Municipalities	138 (2024-25); the Department website now lists 145	MAWS Policy Note 2024-25; Municipal Administration Department website (the count changes with upgrades and mergers)
Town Panchayats	490	MAWS Policy Note 2024-25 (being revised as new town panchayats are formed and some are upgraded)
Grama Sabha meetings	6 a year	Announced April 2022; RDPR Policy Note 2026-27
Reservation for women	50% of seats and offices	Amendments of 2016
State Election Commission	From 15 July 1994	TN State Election Commission website

Background: Ancient Roots and the Colonial Period

- **Chola village assemblies:** village councils reached their height under the Cholas in the 10th and 11th centuries. The **Uthiramerur stone inscriptions** in **Kancheepuram district** describe how village committees were chosen by **kudavolai** – names written on palm-leaf tickets were put in a pot and drawn by lot.
- **Madras Corporation (1688):** the municipal body of Madras (now the **Greater Chennai Corporation**) was set up in **1688**, one of the earliest municipal bodies set up under British rule.
- **British period:** local bodies such as district boards and municipalities were created mainly for administrative convenience of the colonial government, not as real self-government.
- **Older urban laws:** the **Chennai City Municipal Corporation Act, 1919** governed Chennai and the **Tamil Nadu District Municipalities Act, 1920** governed municipalities. Later corporations had their own Acts, for example Madurai (1971) and Coimbatore (1981).

After Independence: The Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950

Article 40 of the Constitution (a Directive Principle) asks the State to organise village panchayats and give them the powers needed to work as units of self-government. To carry this out, Madras State

passed the **Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950** – the first law for democratic decentralisation in the State.

- Panchayats were formed in villages or hamlets with a **population of 500 or more**.
- Not every village was covered, and there was no block- or district-level elected tier.

The Madras Panchayats Act, 1958 – the Two-Tier System

The **Balwantrai Mehta Committee** (1957) recommended a three-tier Panchayati Raj structure. In Madras State a White Paper on the reform of local administration (1957) led to two laws in 1958:

- **Madras Panchayats Act, 1958:** created a **two-tier system** – **Village Panchayats** at the base and **Panchayat Unions** at the block level. Panchayat Unions were made co-terminous with the community development blocks.
- **Madras District Development Councils Act, 1958:** set up **District Development Councils** that were only **advisory**. The State did not create an elected district panchayat at this stage, and the old district boards ceased to function.
- This two-tier system worked well **till 1975**.

Decline and Revival of Elected Local Bodies (1975–1996)

Period	What happened
Up to 1975	Two-tier system working well
1977 and 1979	Tenure of Panchayat Unions extended up to 1 February 1977 and of Village Panchayats up to 12 September 1979
Up to 1986	No elected bodies; Special Officers ran Panchayat Unions (after 1977) and Village Panchayats (after 1979) until the 1986 elections
1986	Elections held; elected bodies served until March 1991
1991–1996	Again Special Officers; no elections until October 1996
October 1996	First ordinary elections under the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments

The two Amendments of 1992 gave local bodies **constitutional status**, fixed a five-year term, made regular elections compulsory and created a State Election Commission and a State Finance Commission in every State.

Feature	73rd Amendment (Panchayats)	74th Amendment (Municipalities)
In force from	**24 April 1993** (observed as National Panchayati Raj Day)	**1 June 1993**
Part of the Constitution	Part IX – Articles 243 to 243-O	Part IXA – Articles 243P to 243ZG
Schedule	Eleventh Schedule – 29 subjects	Twelfth Schedule – 18 subjects
Types of bodies	Village, intermediate and district panchayats	Nagar Panchayat (area in transition from rural to urban), Municipal Council (smaller urban area), Municipal Corporation (larger urban area)
Base body	Gram Sabha (Article 243A)	Wards Committees in municipalities with a population of 3 lakh or more (Article 243S)
Elections	State Election Commission – Article 243K	Article 243ZA (same State Election Commission)
Finances	State Finance Commission – Article 243-I	Article 243Y (same State Finance Commission)
Women	At least one-third of seats and chairpersons' posts (Article 243D)	At least one-third of seats (Article 243T)

The Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994

To implement the 73rd Amendment, the State enacted the **Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994)**, which received the **Governor's assent on 22 April 1994**. For the first time it created a **three-tier system** in rural Tamil Nadu.

Tier	Area	Directly elected	Head
Village Panchayat (கிராம ஊராட்சி)	A panchayat village	Ward members and the Village Panchayat President	President – elected directly by the voters
Panchayat Union (ஊராட்சி ஒன்றியம்)	Co-terminous with a development block	Panchayat Union ward members (councillors)	Chairman – elected indirectly by the ward members
District Panchayat (மாவட்ட ஊராட்சி)	Rural area of a district	District Panchayat ward members (councillors)	Chairman – elected indirectly by the ward members

- **Grama Sabha:** the Act defines it as the body of all persons registered in the electoral rolls of a panchayat village.
- **Term:** five years, as required by the Constitution.
- **Reservation:** seats and offices are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population, and for women (50% since 2016).
- **Elections:** conducted by the State Election Commission under Section 239 of the Act.

Rural Local Bodies: Latest Official Figures

Body	Older figure (TNRD website / Statistical Hand Book 2022-23)	Latest figure (RDPR Policy Note 2026-27)
Village Panchayats	12,525	12,571
Panchayat Unions	388	397
District Panchayats	36 (TNRD website)	37
Habitations	79,395 (Statistical Hand Book 2022-23)	78,997

- **Why the numbers changed:** in 2025 a number of village panchayats were merged into nearby corporations and municipalities, while the RDPR Policy Note 2026-27 records the formation of **nine new Panchayat Unions** and **93 new Village Panchayats**.
- The Policy Note also states that **Mayiladuthurai district**, carved out of Nagapattinam, will get a separate District Panchayat in the next cycle of local body elections.
- **Exam tip:** many books and earlier question papers use 12,525 / 388 / 36. If an option gives the newer figure, read the question for the year or source asked.

Grama Sabha in Tamil Nadu

The **Grama Sabha** is the assembly of all voters of a village panchayat. It is the main tool for transparency: it approves plans, selects beneficiaries of schemes and conducts the **social audit** of welfare schemes. The interval between two meetings must not exceed six months.

Six meetings a year: earlier the Grama Sabha met on four days. On **22 April 2022** the Chief Minister announced in the Assembly that the number would be raised **from four to six**, and the RDPR Policy Note 2026-27 confirms that the Grama Sabha is mandated to meet six times every calendar year.

Date	Occasion
26 January	Republic Day
22 March	World Water Day (added in 2022)
1 May	Labour Day
15 August	Independence Day
2 October	Gandhi Jayanti
1 November	Local Bodies' Day (added in 2022)

Quorum (Tamil Nadu Grama Sabha Rules, 1998, as amended by G.O. Ms. No. 130, RD & PR, dated 25.9.2006, as given on the TNRD website):

Village Panchayat population	Quorum
Up to 500	50
501 – 3,000	100
3,001 – 10,000	200
Above 10,000	300

- At least **one-third of the quorum must be women**, and SC/ST attendance must match their share of the population.
- Attendance and proceedings are recorded in registers, with photographs.
- **Village secretariats:** in the same April 2022 announcement, 600 village panchayat secretariat buildings were planned for that year at about Rs 40 lakh each.

Local Bodies' Day – 1 November

- **G.O. No. 632, RD & PR, dated 26.10.2007** declared **1 November** as **Local Bodies' Day**, to be celebrated every year by all rural and urban local bodies.
- The observance lapsed for some years and was restored in 2022, when 1 November was also made a Grama Sabha day.
- Under the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies (Ward Committee and Area Sabha) Rules, 2022, Ward Committees and Area Sabhas in urban local bodies were scheduled to be launched on Local Bodies' Day, 1 November 2022.

Reservation for Women – 50% (2016)

- The 73rd and 74th Amendments require at least **one-third** reservation for women; Tamil Nadu followed this from 1994.
- In **February 2016** the Assembly unanimously passed the **Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Amendment) Bill, 2016** and the **Tamil Nadu Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2016**, raising women's reservation to **50%**.
- It covers seats and offices in village panchayats, panchayat union councils, district panchayats, town panchayats, municipalities and municipal corporations.

Tamil Nadu State Election Commission

- **Came into existence: 15 July 1994**.
- **Legal basis:** Articles **243K** (panchayats) and **243ZA** (municipalities) of the Constitution, read with **Section 239** of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994.
- **Role:** superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to panchayats and urban local bodies.

Election	Details
October 1996	First ordinary elections to rural local bodies under the 1994 Act
October 2001, October 2006	Second and third ordinary elections
27 and 30 December 2019	Rural local body polls in 27 districts (nine newly formed districts excluded); counting on 2 January 2020
October 2021	Rural polls in the nine newly created districts (Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Vellore, Ranipet, Tirupattur, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi)
19 February 2022	Urban local body elections (corporations, municipalities, town panchayats); counting on 22 February 2022

- **Terms:** as per the RDPR Policy Note 2026-27, rural representatives elected in 2019 served from 6 January 2020 to 5 January 2025; those in the nine new districts from 20 October 2021 to 19 October 2026.
- **Special Officers:** from January 2025 Special Officers have run rural local bodies in 28 districts. In October 2026 the Government extended their tenure from 20 October 2026 to **19 April 2027** and posted Special Officers in the other nine districts as well, citing the ongoing reorganisation of local bodies, ward delimitation and seat reservation.

State Finance Commission (Article 243-I)

Every five years the Governor sets up a **State Finance Commission** to recommend how State revenue should be shared with local bodies.

SFC	Constituted	Chairman	Award period
First	1994	R. Arumugham	1997–2002
Second	1999	Sukavaneshvar	2002–2007
Third	2004	M. A. Gowrishankar	2007–2012
Fourth	2009	K. Phanindra Reddy	2012–2017
Fifth	2014	S. Krishnan	2017–2022
Sixth	6 March 2020	Mohan Pyare	2022–2027
Seventh	28 May 2025	K. Allaudin	2027–2032

- **Sixth SFC devolution: 10% of the State's Own Tax Revenue** goes to local bodies, shared between rural and urban local bodies in the ratio **51:49** (for 2022-23 to 2026-27).
- Among the rural tiers the share is 6 (District Panchayats) : 39 (Panchayat Unions) : 55 (Village Panchayats), as per the RDPR Policy Note 2026-27.
- The Seventh SFC's recommendations will cover the five years from 1 April 2027 (2027–2032).

Urban Local Bodies in Tamil Nadu

Urban local bodies are under the **Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MAWS) Department**. There are three types, matching the 74th Amendment.

Type	Number	Source and year	Administered by
Municipal Corporations (மாநகராட்சி)	25 (Greater Chennai + 24 others)	Municipal Administration Department website; DT Next, August 2024	Greater Chennai separately; others under the Commissionerate of Municipal Administration
Municipalities (நகராட்சி)	138 (2024-25); the Department website now lists 145	MAWS Policy Note 2024-25; Municipal Administration Department website	Commissionerate of Municipal Administration
Town Panchayats (பேரூராட்சி)	490	MAWS Policy Note 2024-25	Directorate of Town Panchayats

Recent upgrades:

- **MAWS Policy Note 2024-25:** 21 Municipal Corporations (including Greater Chennai), 138 Municipalities and 490 Town Panchayats.
- **August 2024: Pudukkottai, Namakkal, Karaikudi and Tiruvannamalai** municipalities were upgraded to corporations, taking the total to **25**.
- **January 2025:** orders were issued to form 13 new municipalities and 25 new town panchayats, and to merge many village panchayats into existing corporations and municipalities.
- **2025:** seven town panchayats – Polur, Chengam, Kanniyakumari, Sankagiri, Kothagiri, Avinashi and Perundurai – were notified as municipalities.

Town panchayats are a special feature: as per the Directorate of Town Panchayats, Tamil Nadu was the first State to classify some local bodies as town panchayats, a stage between rural and urban. A separate Directorate of Town Panchayats was created in 1981 (G.O. Ms. 828, dated 7.5.1981).

The Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 and the 2022 Amendment

- **1998 Act:** the **Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 (Tamil Nadu Act 9 of 1999)** was passed to bring all urban local bodies under one common law after the 74th Amendment.
- **Suspended:** its operation was suspended in 2000 by the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies (Suspension of Operation) Act, 2000 (Act 33 of 2000). Corporations continued under their separate Acts, and municipalities and town panchayats under the District Municipalities Act, 1920.
- **Revived:** L.A. Bill No. 34 of 2022 was introduced on 9 May 2022 "to revive and further to amend" the 1998 Act. It became the **Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies (Amendment) Act, 2022 (Tamil Nadu Act 35 of 2022)**.
- **In force:** the amended Act and the **Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Rules, 2023** came into force on **13 April 2023** (notification dated 12 April 2023).
- **One law:** all existing corporations (including Chennai, earlier under the 1919 Act), municipalities and town panchayats are now deemed to be constituted under this single Act.
- **Ward Sabha and Area Sabha:** each ward has a **Ward Sabha** chaired by the ward councillor; each ward is divided into up to ten areas, each with an **Area Sabha** of all voters of that area – the urban counterpart of the Grama Sabha.

Key Institutions and People

Institution / person	Role
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department	Administers Village Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats
Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department	Administers corporations, municipalities and town panchayats
Directorate of Town Panchayats (1981)	Supervises town panchayats
Tamil Nadu State Election Commission (1994)	Conducts all local body elections
State Finance Commission	Recommends sharing of State revenue with local bodies
Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957)	Recommended three-tier Panchayati Raj; led to the 1958 Act
Special Officers	Run local bodies when elected bodies are not in office (1977/79–86, 1991–96, and from 2025)

Outcomes and Significance

- **Constitutional base:** after 1994, five-year terms and an independent State Election Commission made local elections a legal requirement.
- **Women's leadership:** 50% reservation since 2016 – above the constitutional minimum of one-third.
- **Participation:** six Grama Sabha meetings a year and Area Sabhas in towns widen people's say in planning and social audit.
- **Finance:** successive State Finance Commissions have fixed a share of State tax revenue for local bodies.
- **Challenges:** long gaps without elected bodies (1977/79–86, 1991–96, and the present Special Officer period from 2025); frequent reorganisation of boundaries; dependence on State grants.

Writing Mains Answers on Local Governance in Tamil Nadu (Group 1 / Group 2)

Descriptive papers ask about the evolution, structure and working of local bodies. Build the answer on the points below and back each with a fact from these notes.

Evolution of Panchayati Raj in Tamil Nadu (about 200–250 words)

- **Roots:** Uthiramerur inscriptions – kudavolai under the Cholas.
- **1950:** Madras Village Panchayats Act – first post-independence law, under Article 40.
- **1958:** Madras Panchayats Act – two tiers (Village Panchayat, Panchayat Union); advisory District Development Councils.
- **1975–1996:** decline, Special Officers, few elections.
- **1994:** Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act after the 73rd Amendment – three tiers, State Election Commission (15 July 1994), State Finance Commission.
- **Recent:** 50% women (2016), six Grama Sabhas (2022); latest figures 12,571 / 397 / 37 (RDPR Policy Note 2026-27).

- **Conclusion:** legal structure is strong; regular elections and financial autonomy decide real decentralisation.

Grama Sabha as an instrument of grassroots democracy in Tamil Nadu (about 150 words)

- Definition: all voters of the village panchayat (Article 243A; Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994).
- Six mandatory meetings: 26 January, 22 March, 1 May, 15 August, 2 October, 1 November.
- Quorum linked to population (50 to 300), one-third women.
- Functions: approval of plans, beneficiary selection, social audit.
- Way forward: wider awareness, recorded decisions, follow-up on resolutions.

Urban local governance reforms in Tamil Nadu (about 150 words)

- Three types of urban bodies – 25 corporations (after August 2024); 138 municipalities and 490 town panchayats as per the MAWS Policy Note 2024-25 (later upgrades and mergers change these counts).
- One law: Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 revived by Act 35 of 2022; in force from 13 April 2023.
- Ward Sabhas and Area Sabhas for citizen participation; Ward Committees and Area Sabhas introduced from 1 November 2022.
- Upgrades in 2024–25 reflect fast urbanisation; Sixth SFC gives 49% of the devolved pool to urban bodies.

Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
1950	Madras Village Panchayats Act
1958	Madras Panchayats Act – two-tier system
Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994	Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act
15 July 1994	Tamil Nadu State Election Commission
24 April 1993	73rd Amendment in force
1 June 1993	74th Amendment in force
22 March	Grama Sabha on World Water Day
1 November	Local Bodies' Day (G.O. 632 of 2007)
13 April 2023	Urban Local Bodies Act and Rules in force
Uthiramerur	Kudavolai inscriptions, Kancheepuram district

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **1958 was two-tier, not three-tier:** the elected District Panchayat came only with the 1994 Act; the 1958 District Development Councils were advisory.
- **"Urban Local Bodies Act, 2022" does not exist as a separate Act:** the 2022 law (Act 35 of 2022) revived and amended the 1998 Act.

- **Grama Sabha count:** six meetings now, not four; 22 March and 1 November are the two added days.
- **Women's reservation:** 50% from 2016; the Constitution requires only one-third.
- **Panchayat Union chairman** and **District Panchayat chairman** are elected indirectly; the **Village Panchayat President** is elected directly.
- **Numbers depend on the source year:** 12,525 / 388 / 36 (older) versus 12,571 / 397 / 37 (RDPR Policy Note 2026-27); 21 corporations (2024-25 Policy Note) versus 25 (after August 2024).
- **Articles:** 243K is for the State Election Commission (panchayats), 243-I for the State Finance Commission; 243ZA and 243Y are their municipal counterparts.

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY
www.shanmugamiasacademy.in

Quick Revision Table

Year / date	Event
10th century	Uthiramerur inscriptions – kudavolai (Chola period)
1688	Madras Corporation set up
1919 / 1920	Chennai City Municipal Corporation Act / District Municipalities Act
1950	Madras Village Panchayats Act
1957	Balwantrai Mehta Committee; State White Paper on local administration
1958	Madras Panchayats Act; District Development Councils Act
1977/1979–1986	Special Officers in rural bodies
1981	Directorate of Town Panchayats formed
1991–1996	Special Officers again
24 April 1993	73rd Amendment in force
1 June 1993	74th Amendment in force
22 April 1994	Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act receives assent
15 July 1994	State Election Commission
October 1996	First elections under the 1994 Act
1999 / 2000	Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 (Act 9 of 1999); suspended in 2000
26 October 2007	G.O. 632 – 1 November as Local Bodies' Day
February 2016	50% reservation for women
December 2019	Rural polls in 27 districts
6 March 2020	Sixth State Finance Commission
October 2021	Rural polls in nine new districts
19 February 2022	Urban local body polls
22 April 2022	Grama Sabha meetings raised from four to six
1 November 2022	Ward Committees and Area Sabhas introduced in urban local bodies
13 April 2023	Amended Urban Local Bodies Act and Rules in force
August 2024	Four new corporations – total 25
January 2025	Special Officers in 28 districts; orders for 13 new municipalities, 25 town panchayats
28 May 2025	Seventh State Finance Commission

20 October 2026	Special Officers' tenure extended to 19 April 2027

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- Article 40 (Directive Principle) – organisation of village panchayats.
- Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950 – panchayats for villages with population of 500 or more.
- Madras Panchayats Act, 1958 – two tiers: Village Panchayat and Panchayat Union (co-terminous with block).
- 73rd Amendment: Part IX, Articles 243–243-O, Eleventh Schedule (29 subjects), in force 24 April 1993.
- 74th Amendment: Part IXA, Articles 243P–243ZG, Twelfth Schedule (18 subjects), in force 1 June 1993.
- Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 = Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994; assent 22 April 1994; three tiers.
- Village Panchayats 12,571, Panchayat Unions 397, District Panchayats 37 (RDPR Policy Note 2026-27). Older figures: 12,525 / 388 / 36.
- Grama Sabha: six meetings – 26 Jan, 22 Mar, 1 May, 15 Aug, 2 Oct, 1 Nov; interval not more than six months.
- Grama Sabha quorum: 50 / 100 / 200 / 300 by population; one-third women.
- Local Bodies' Day: 1 November (G.O. 632, 26.10.2007).
- Women: 50% reservation in all local bodies since 2016.
- State Election Commission: 15 July 1994; Articles 243K and 243ZA; Section 239 of the 1994 Act.
- Sixth SFC: 10% of State's Own Tax Revenue; rural:urban 51:49. Seventh SFC: 28 May 2025.
- Urban bodies: 25 corporations (after August 2024); 138 municipalities and 490 town panchayats (MAWS Policy Note 2024-25; counts change with upgrades and mergers).
- New corporations, August 2024: Pudukkottai, Namakkal, Karaikudi, Tiruvannamalai.
- Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 (Act 9 of 1999) revived by Act 35 of 2022; in force 13 April 2023.
- Directorate of Town Panchayats: 1981. Madras Corporation: 1688.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the three tiers of rural local government in Tamil Nadu?

Under the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994), rural Tamil Nadu has Village Panchayats at the base, Panchayat Unions (co-terminous with development blocks) in the middle and District Panchayats at the top. As per the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Department Policy Note 2026-27, there are 12,571 Village Panchayats, 397 Panchayat Unions and 37 District Panchayats; the long-standing figures on the department website are 12,525, 388 and 36.

How many times must the Grama Sabha meet in a year in Tamil Nadu?

Six times. In April 2022 the State raised the number of mandatory Grama Sabha meetings from four to six. The six days are 26 January (Republic Day), 22 March (World Water Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 15 August (Independence Day), 2 October (Gandhi Jayanti) and 1 November (Local Bodies' Day). The gap between two meetings must not exceed six months.

When did Tamil Nadu give 50% reservation to women in local bodies?

In February 2016 the Tamil Nadu Assembly passed two Bills – the Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Amendment) Bill, 2016 and the Tamil Nadu Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2016 – raising the reservation for

women from one-third to one-half of seats and offices in all rural and urban local bodies.

What is the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act?

The Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998 (Tamil Nadu Act 9 of 1999) was meant to be one common law for all urban local bodies, but its operation was suspended in 2000. It was revived and amended by the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies (Amendment) Act, 2022 (Tamil Nadu Act 35 of 2022). The amended Act and the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Rules, 2023 came into force on 13 April 2023. There is no separate 'Urban Local Bodies Act, 2022' – the 2022 law is an amendment.

When was the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission set up?

The Tamil Nadu State Election Commission came into existence on 15 July 1994. It conducts elections to rural and urban local bodies under Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution read with Section 239 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994.

Practise this topic with our free Tamil quizzes, follow daily current affairs (English) and Tamil current affairs, and see our TNPSC PYQ books such as the Tamil Nadu Administration PYQ book and the General Tamil PYQ book. For classroom and online TNPSC coaching at Gandhipuram, Coimbatore and Anna Nagar, Madurai, see our TNPSC course page or call 99941 46662 (Coimbatore) / 73059 47122 (Madurai).

Practice questions

1. Which was the first post-independence law for democratic decentralisation in Madras State?

A. Madras Panchayats Act, 1958
B. District Municipalities Act, 1920
C. Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994
D. Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950

2. Under the Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950, panchayats were formed in villages with a population of:

A. 200 or more
B. 500 or more
C. 1,000 or more
D. 5,000 or more

3. What structure did the Madras Panchayats Act, 1958 create?

A. District Panchayats only
B. A three-tier system of Village Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats
C. A two-tier system of Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions
D. Grama Sabhas only

4. What was the nature of the District Development Councils set up in Madras State in 1958?

A. Elected district panchayats
B. Urban local bodies
C. Judicial bodies
D. Advisory bodies

5. What is the Act number of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994?

A. Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994
B. Tamil Nadu Act 9 of 1999
C. Tamil Nadu Act 35 of 2022
D. Tamil Nadu Act 33 of 2000

6. When did the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act come into force?

A. 26 January 1993
B. 24 April 1993
C. 1 June 1993
D. 22 April 1994

7. Which of the following pairs about the 74th Amendment is correct?

A. Part IX – Eleventh Schedule – 29 subjects
B. Part IXA – Twelfth Schedule – 18 subjects
C. Part IXA – Eleventh Schedule – 18 subjects
D. Part IX – Twelfth Schedule – 29 subjects

8. In Tamil Nadu, Panchayat Unions are co-terminous with:

A. Revenue taluks
B. Assembly constituencies
C. Development blocks
D. Revenue divisions

9. In Tamil Nadu, who among the following is elected directly by the voters?

A. Village Panchayat President
B. District Panchayat Chairman
C. Panchayat Union Chairman
D. District Panchayat Vice-Chairman

10. As per the RDPR Department Policy Note 2026-27, how many Village Panchayats does Tamil Nadu have?

A. 12,525
B. 12,571
C. 12,618
D. 12,482

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY
www.shanmugamiasacademy.in

11. What is the long-quoted number of Panchayat Unions on the TNRD department website?

A. 385

B. 388

C. 397

D. 36

12. How many times a year must the Grama Sabha now meet in Tamil Nadu?

A. Four

B. Five

C. Six

D. Twelve

13. Which of the following is NOT a Grama Sabha day in Tamil Nadu?

A. 26 November

B. 1 May

C. 1 November

D. 22 March

14. The Grama Sabha meeting on 22 March is linked to:

A. World Environment Day

B. World Water Day

C. National Science Day

D. World Forestry Day

15. What is the Grama Sabha quorum for a Village Panchayat with a population of 5,000 in Tamil Nadu?

A. 50

B. 100

C. 200

D. 300

16. In which year was the G.O. declaring 1 November as Local Bodies' Day issued?

A. 1994

B. 2007

C. 2016

D. 2022

17. In which year was women's reservation in Tamil Nadu's local bodies raised to 50%?

A. 1994

B. 2006

C. 2011

D. 2016

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY
www.shanmugamiasacademy.in

18. From when has the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission been in existence?

A. 24 April 1993
B. 22 April 1994
C. 15 July 1994
D. 1 October 1996

19. Which Articles of the Constitution deal with the State Election Commission for panchayats and municipalities?

A. 243-I and 243Y
B. 243G and 243W
C. 243D and 243T
D. 243K and 243ZA

20. Under the Sixth State Finance Commission, what share of the State's Own Tax Revenue goes to local bodies and what is the rural : urban ratio?

A. 10%; 51:49
B. 10%; 49:51
C. 16%; 60:40
D. 8%; 50:50

21. When was Tamil Nadu's Seventh State Finance Commission constituted?

A. 6 March 2020
B. 28 May 2025
C. 13 April 2023
D. 1 April 2027

22. Which of the following was NOT upgraded to a Municipal Corporation in August 2024?

A. Pudukkottai
B. Karaikudi
C. Tiruvannamalai
D. Pollachi

23. Which statement about the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act is correct?

A. It is an entirely new separate Act passed in 2022
B. The 1998 Act has been continuously in force since 1999
C. The 1998 Act was suspended in 2000 and revived by Act 35 of 2022
D. It applies only to rural local bodies

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY
www.shanmugamiasacademy.in

24. When did the amended Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act and Rules come into force?

A. 9 May 2022

B. 1 November 2022

C. 1 June 2023

D. 13 April 2023

25. Match: (a) Uthiramerur (b) 1688 (c) 1981 (d) 1957 — (1) Directorate of Town Panchayats (2) Kudavolai inscriptions (3) Balwantrai Mehta Committee (4) Madras Corporation

A. a-2, b-4, c-1, d-3

B. a-4, b-2, c-3, d-1

C. a-2, b-1, c-4, d-3

D. a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2

Answers with explanations

1. **D) Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950** – The Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950 was passed to implement Article 40.

2. **B) 500 or more** – Panchayats were formed in villages or hamlets with a population of 500 or more.

3. **C) A two-tier system of Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions** – The 1958 Act created a two-tier system; District Development Councils were only advisory.

4. **D) Advisory bodies** – The Madras District Development Councils Act, 1958 set up councils with only advisory powers.

5. **A) Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994** – It is Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994; Governor's assent on 22 April 1994.

6. **B) 24 April 1993** – 24 April 1993 – observed as National Panchayati Raj Day.

7. **B) Part IXA – Twelfth Schedule – 18 subjects** – 74th Amendment: Part IXA, Twelfth Schedule with 18 subjects; in force from 1 June 1993.

8. **C) Development blocks** – Panchayat Unions are co-terminous with development blocks.

9. **A) Village Panchayat President** – The Village Panchayat President is directly elected; Union and District Panchayat chairmen are indirectly elected.

10. **B) 12,571** – Policy Note 2026-27: 12,571 Village Panchayats, 397 Panchayat Unions, 37 District Panchayats.

11. **B) 388** – The TNRD website gives 12,525 Village Panchayats, 388 Panchayat Unions and 36 District Panchayats.

12. **C) Six** – It was raised from four to six following the April 2022 announcement.

13. **A) 26 November** – The six days are 26 Jan, 22 Mar, 1 May, 15 Aug, 2 Oct and 1 Nov; 26 November is not one.

14. **B) World Water Day** – 22 March is World Water Day, one of the two days added in 2022.

15. **C) 200** – For a population of 3,001–10,000 the quorum is 200 (rules as amended in 2006).

16. **B) 2007** – G.O. No. 632, RD & PR, dated 26.10.2007.

17. **D) 2016** – The Panchayats and Municipal Laws Amendment Bills were passed in February 2016.

18. **C) 15 July 1994** – The Commission came into existence on 15 July 1994.

19. **D) 243K and 243ZA** – 243K (panchayats) and 243ZA (municipalities); 243-I and 243Y relate to the State Finance Commission.

20. **A) 10%; 51:49** – 10% devolution; rural : urban = 51:49 (2022-23 to 2026-27).

21. **B) 28 May 2025** – The Seventh SFC was constituted on 28.05.2025 for the award period 2027–2032.

22. **D) Pollachi** – The four new corporations were Pudukkottai, Namakkal, Karaikudi and Tiruvannamalai, making 25.

23. **C) The 1998 Act was suspended in 2000 and revived by Act 35 of 2022** – The 1998 Act (Act 9 of 1999) was suspended in 2000, revived by Act 35 of 2022, and in force from 13.04.2023.

24. **D) 13 April 2023** – By notification of 12 April 2023, they came into force on 13 April 2023.

25. **A) a-2, b-4, c-1, d-3** – Uthiramerur – kudavolai; 1688 – Madras Corporation; 1981 – Directorate of Town Panchayats; 1957 – Mehta Committee.

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS, Bank, SSC, SI – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **More free PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · This page: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/tnpsc-notes/tn-local-governance/en

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in